

UNSETTLING GOOD INTENTIONS: THE DISMANTLING OF BENEVOLENCE AS
DISCURSIVE PRACTICE WITHIN GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

by

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ABSTRACT

This research unpacks the relations of power found within common discursive practices of global citizenship education (GCE). Using critical discourse analysis and document analysis, I make visible the tensions, complexities, and colonial power structures inherent in the discursive constructions used by Canadian-based charity, WE Charity (formally known as Free the Children) – with a specific focus on identifying and problematizing their emphasis on (1) the global citizen, (2) the Southern Other, and (3) their use of benevolence. Using postcolonial theory, my research will explore how these three thematic areas have implications for how WE Charity’s youth come to understand the means through which substantive social change can be realized. Despite their “hand up, not a hand out” approach to development, I argue that colonial power structures continue to operate discretely within WE Charity’s discursive constructions, releasing global citizens from their complicity in maintaining unequal power relations between the Global North and the Global South. Additionally, narratives of Othering persist within WE Charity discourses – despite evolved sloganeering – stripping away agency and further marginalizing the Global South. Furthermore, WE Charity’s emphasis on benevolence within their programming does little to foster critical awareness amongst its youth. Overall, this thesis argues that WE Charity does not provide the appropriate opportunities to help their participants critically engage with the structural problems related to social injustices in the Global South, and continues to recreate postcolonial norms within their programming. Although my research is grounded specifically within WE Charity’s programming, I am primarily concerned about what this organization exemplifies in the context of global citizenship education as a larger movement.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

ARTIFACT: IN THE SHADE OF A TREE, IN AFRICA

The following is an article I wrote as a Program Officer for Youth Challenge International (YCI) while on a short-term field placement in Mombasa, Kenya. During this trip, I was responsible for overseeing a group of young Canadian volunteers as they delivered health-based workshops to rural communities over the course of a summer. This was my third experience as an international volunteer with YCI; prior to Kenya, I had also volunteered in a similar capacity in Costa Rica and Ethiopia. After this final placement with the organization, I returned home to New Brunswick, where I continued to pursue my career as an educator. Near the end of the project, I was asked by YCI to write an article to use as promotional material for their Kenyan program. This artifact is included at the beginning of my project, in order to illuminate the unquestioned assumptions I once held as a global citizen.

Sunrise. When the sun rises over Mombasa, it takes but a few minutes. It's as if someone has turned on a light switch and a heater at the same time. It is nighttime and cool, and then all at once, it is daytime and hot. And it is noisy – 5am rap music mixes with prayer calls, matatus (Mtwapa! Mtwapa!), and vendors selling their plastic buckets and bananas – making it impossible to determine where one sound ends and another begins. When I leave for work, I am greeted by taxi and tuk-tuk drivers – Where are you going? Do you want a taxi?

*There is also no shortage of greetings from strangers.
Jambo. Welcome.
How are you?*

Already it is hot. The buildings provide little shade. The walk to the matatu stage is not long, but upon arrival, I am already sweating and thirsty. This bright, hot and sticky city is the Mombassa I experience everyday the light switch gets turned on.

The volunteers get a slightly different perspective. They live with families outside Mombassa's downtown hub. Their communities have palm trees, small shops and a variety of concrete and mud homes located along twisting dirt roads that have no rhyme or reason. I am told sometimes the power shuts off and the water stops running. One volunteer bathes by candlelight, another gets a cold shower. The 5am prayer call acts as an alarm clock. So do the roosters and the rap music. They get a lot of food. Dinner is a time for family to gather, converse and eat. And then eat even more – Are you full? Your plate is empty. Let me fill it again.

There are many children – I am convinced Mombasa is home to more youth than adults – and they greet the volunteers each morning as they walk to work.

Mzungo! How are you? HOW ARE YOU?

Our work is located in three rural communities outside of town. You can calculate our distance from the city by looking at the faces of children as we drive by: the further away

we get from Mombasa, the more terrified are the expressions on their faces. I am told this is because children in these areas are told that if they do not behave, “the mzungo will take you away.”

The road to the project sites is bumpy – driving some of us to the point of nausea. We pick up workshop participants along the way. They walk far – it would be considered too far for a Canadian or European to walk. Hence the bus.

Suddenly our ride stops. A herd of cows blocks our way and our driver has to nudge the animals with the vehicle. It makes no difference – the bus cannot access the road ahead (it rained last night), so we walk the rest of the way. Our feet soon turn an orangey-red color. The dirt here is red. The homes are made out of this dirt – giving them a reddish tint. The dirt is also on your clothes, on your skin and sometimes on your food. The dirt cakes on your shoes two inches thick. Everywhere it is red.

The volunteers work hard – trying to raise awareness on HIV, presenting new ideas and bridging cultural and linguistic barriers. Each day they seek to achieve their objectives: Stigma. Prevention. Communication. HIV reproductive cycles. They make meaningful connections with community members. They learn how to carry jerry cans full of water on their heads. It is a cultural exchange at its finest.

Most of the workshops have been held inside classrooms, but one of the last project activities was held outside. Youth played soccer in the morning and participated in an open forum discussion on HIV education. The sun weighed heavily on everyone, and so the forum was held in the shade, under a huge mango tree in the center of the field.

Sunset. We have to get back into town before dusk – if that term really exists here. The sun gets turned off by a light switch at night too. At one moment you can make out the faces of individuals passing by, and ten minutes later, you struggle to make out their shadows.

It is apparent the volunteers have all benefited from this project – but I bet they won’t recognize their growth until more time has passed. They might notice a few differences right away – like how strangers do not ask how they are doing, what their name is and where they are from. They might notice how boring it is to drive into town, without the colorful mosaic of matatus. The food may taste a little plainer, the sunsets not so vibrant, and the clothing not so colorful. They might begin to forget things too – like how to make chapattis. How hot the sun feels. How the shade of a mango tree provides the greatest relief.

In a few months, they may notice other differences too. They may notice how they are better communicators and more insightful. They may be less quick to jump to conclusions, more flexible, more resourceful. Their world is a little broader – the borders more fuzzy. All good things. They might also notice how much they miss Kenya – especially when it turns cold and snow visits the East Coast. They want to feel the heat again. To sit in the shade of a tree, in Africa.

-Melissa Keehn, YCI Kenya Program Officer, August 2010.

1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Reasons for the Research

Although several years have passed since living in Ethiopia, the memories from that trip have imprinted themselves on my mind: *the rotting stickiness of the tropics, the over-crowded fruit market, countless coffee ceremonies, people defecating in the streets, the nightly torrential downpours, and drinking red wine mixed with tonic water at the hotel down the road.* I understand that my original interpretation of these memories has changed since then – but time has not changed the sense of curiosity and excitement these memories still evoke, nor does it change how I think and feel about Ethiopia whenever it comes to mind. I arrived home from that trip a mixed bag of emotions: a strong sense of wanderlust, a new awareness of my white privilege, and a curiosity towards the Other.¹

Over the years, as I reflected on the assumptions and understandings I held during my travels through Ethiopia (and then through Kenya, a few years later), I began developing a vague sense of uneasiness towards my international volunteer experiences. At the time, I had sought out the stereotypical Hollywood image of the exotic African: I visited a Massai Warrior camp, I went to a garbage dump to witness extreme poverty, I gawked at people wearing their cultural garments, and felt disappointment when I encountered lackluster individuals living out their daily lives. I also participated in various acts of what I would later come to think of as “do-goodery”: writing literacy action plans for local educators, painting a school library, facilitating gender

¹ The concept of the Other is a term used under the umbrella of postcolonial theory. The Other is used to distinguish people from the North from non-Europeans (Kapuscinski, 2008, p.13). Tyson (2006) furthers this distinction by explaining how an awareness of the Other has led to the idea of othering: we end up judging all “who are different as less than fully human: it divides the world between “us” (the “civilized”) and “them” (the “others” or “savages”)...the “savage” is perceived as possessing a “primitive” beauty or nobility born of a closeness to nature (the exotic other)” (p. 420).

empowerment and health-based workshops, and teaching English to local professionals. Although I struggled unpacking my Northern worldviews onto my experiences, I remember thinking that my youthful expertise might, in some way, be helpful. Although these acts of benevolence² awarded me admiration at home, the reality was that – as time passed – my good intentions had left me unsettled.

I was beginning to slowly dismantle my interactions with the Other: Was the language I had been using to describe my experiences positioning me as the White Savior? Did I believe that solutions to poverty required Northern intervention – and that the expertise of Northern youth could facilitate this solution? Had I been portraying Ethiopia and Kenya as civilized societies or as exotic Others? Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski (2008) writes, “the myths of many tribes and peoples include a belief that only we are human, the members of our clan, our society, and that Others – all Others – are subhuman, or not human at all” (p. 83). My Northern worldviews had contrasted sharply against the backdrop of Ethiopia and Kenya, and I believe that I viewed many of the people I encountered as “less than”. I recall an encounter I had with an Ethiopian child in Debre Sina, Ethiopia who had tattoos and beautification scars over her face. I remember thinking, “why would anyone do this to a child? This child is so unlike the children from home.” On the same note, I was also the Other on that trip: I remember being investigated by young Ethiopian girls who were trying to touch my arm hair. Reflecting back on that experience, I realize that the Ethiopian children were judging me, just as I was judging them. As the idealized and romanticized memories of my time

² Benevolence, according to Beirhoff (1987), is an altruistic act involving an intention to help another person voluntarily, without expectation of a reward from external sources (...as cited in Radley & Kennedy, 1995, p. 686). In regards to GCE, the idea of benevolence is often referred to as overseas volunteerism or charitable fundraising.

abroad started unraveling, I began to question whether my good intentions had actually done more harm than good. That uncritical benevolence towards the Other and the sense of uneasiness that followed – I reason – explains why I have embarked on this project.

1.2 WE Charity

This research is an inquiry into the dismantling of benevolence as discursive practice within the field of global citizenship education (GCE) - that is, the way "do goodery" keeps young people, and ourselves, from a critical analysis of the economic and social relations of power between the Global North and Global South. More specifically, this research is an inquiry into how two bodies of knowledge – post colonialism and global citizenship education – present themselves in the discourse used by WE Charity, formally known as Free the Children.³ There has been an increased interest in the education of young people for global citizenship over the past few years (Allan & Charles, 2015, p. 26). Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are an active stakeholder in promoting this global citizenship trend – many of whom tackle issues like gender equality, diversity, sustainable development, self-empowerment, poverty reduction, human rights, as well as access to health care and clean water. These issues, which are generally synonymous with the Global South, form the backdrop against which global citizenship education extends its influence. A problem is that agreement about what constitutes GCE is blurred – thus the multitude of competing discourses creates dilemmas and contradictions in regard to how global citizenship gets enacted within the classroom, depending greatly on how individual educators choose to understand and

³ During the course of this research, Free the Children changed its name to WE. I have edited my thesis to reflect this change, however, some of my citations use the organization's former name.

interpret the very essence of this pedagogy. Despite the ambiguity of GCE, the trend continues to gain popularity across Canadian classrooms. An emerging field within this trend is youth-focused NGOs, and WE Charity has become a prominent figure among them.

WE Charity is a youth-driven Canadian charity that engages its participants in ideas of social activism and self-empowerment. WE Charity operates alongside two other organizations: WE Day and ME to WE. Together, these organizations form a movement called WE, and all three are becoming increasingly popular in Canadian Schools with the growth of global citizenship education. Within this WE movement, I have chosen to focus specifically on WE Charity and the ME to WE overseas trips, to narrow the scope and breadth of my research.⁴ Through the WE Charity and ME to WE programs, Canadian students are encouraged to act within the framework of global citizenship – extending their ethical responsibilities from local to global – and participate in various fundraising activities, volunteering and social activism events. In 2014, there were over 10,000 schools across North America and the UK involved in WE Charity’s programming (Free the Children/2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 29).

With its headquarters located in Toronto, WE Charity operates throughout Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, and focuses on development projects throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America (Free the Children/Who We Are/About Us, 2016, para. 5). Founded by Marc and Craig Keilburger, the organization implements a program called WE Villages, which is described as a “holistic, five-pillar international development model designed to achieve sustainable change” (Free the Children/Who We

⁴ I will be referring to the WE movement as WE Charity for the remainder of my research.

Are/About Us, 2016, para. 5). The organization touts that each of these five pillars – education, water, health, opportunity and food – are a critical component of breaking the cycle of poverty. WE Charity encourages Canadian youth to fundraise at home for each of these five pillars, as well as to volunteer overseas on one of their development projects. According to the organization, ninety cents of every dollar fundraised goes directly to support their projects and programs (Free the Children/Donate/Financials, 2014, para. 2). To date, the organization has raised over 48 million dollars for local and global causes and currently has 2.3 million youth involved in their programming (Free the Children/2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 29). According to the organization, thousands of travelers have volunteered overseas through their ME to WE trips in 2014 (Me to We/About Us/Our Impact, 2016, para. 6). It is important to note here that, although these overseas experiences are categorized as volunteerism, it is a particular type of altruism where participants pay for the volunteer experience.⁵ Their development model is child-focused: in the Global South, they focus on giving children access to education to help “lift themselves out of poverty”; in North America and the UK, they engage youth “through service learning and active citizenship so that they can be free to achieve their fullest potential as agents of change” (Free the Children/2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 8). This youth-focused approach to development is emphasized throughout their online promotional material and celebrated at WE Day, their annual stadium event held across North America and the UK for volunteers and fundraiser participants. In 2014, over 179,000 youth from North America and the UK attended one of eight WE Day events

⁵ The average overseas trip costs anywhere between three to four thousand dollars US, excluding international airfare (Me to We Trips/Ecuador, 2016, para.1); (Me to We Trips/Tanzania, 2016, para.1); (Me to We Trips/India, 2016, para.1).

(Free the Children/2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 27). WE Charity's influence extends to many young people living in the Global North, creating a culturally-sanctioned space for aspiring social activists to exchange dialogue with like-minded individuals. With its high membership numbers and volunteers, WE Charity is uniquely positioned to bring issues of poverty and injustice into mainstream consciousness and help shape youth's understanding of these issues.

The organization states its purpose is to “educate, engage and empower youth to become active local and global citizens” (WE Day/Files, 2014, p. 2). The term ‘global citizen’⁶ is used frequently within WE Charity's promotional material. This is problematic, as the discourse of global citizenship – soft global citizenship⁷ in particular – is diverse and tends to overlook the North's role in perpetuating paternalistic attitudes towards the South and avoids contextualizing the root causes of global poverty and distribution of oppressive power. In WE Charity's promotional material specifically, discourses of global citizenship manifest themselves in short-term fundraising campaigning, youth leadership camps, ethical consumerism, and overseas volunteer opportunities. Through these programs, WE Charity offers a variety of ways in which youth are expected to embrace global citizenship and enact social change. As such, this research is an inquiry into how global citizenship is being framed by WE Charity, and how this framework – while maintaining oppressive knowledge in some ways and supporting marginalized knowledge in other ways – contributes to the discourses of its youth participants.

⁶ Students participating under the global citizenship framework are generally classified as global citizens.

⁷ Soft global citizenship is a popular approach to GCE coined by Vanessa Andreotti (2006). It is an approach based on moral and humanitarian grounds, universalism, awareness-raising, fundraising, and imposed change (p. 46-48). I will be examining this in detail later on in the research.

1.3 Overview of the Research

Using WE Charity's promotional online material, this thesis will employ critical discourse analysis and document analysis to explore the methods used by the organization to engage students in global citizenship. I will consider the scope in which WE Charity creates spaces for youth to engage in critical understandings of global inequalities by examining the discursive language and activities used by the organization to enact social change. I will collect data from WE.org, with a specific focus on identifying and problematizing WE Charity's emphasis on (1) the global citizen, (2) the Southern Other, and (3) benevolence: I will investigate how WE Charity frames the concept of a global citizen, which is a contested term frequently associated with Northern youth exercising their privilege in the Global South; I will also explore how the Southern Other is positioned in relation to the Northern volunteer, and whether the organization's discursive language promotes ideas of Northern heroism and Southern exoticism; and finally, I will inquire into the extent to which benevolence and "feel good" campaigning/volunteering masks critical understandings of global inequalities within WE Charity's programming. These three discursive practices help to frame popular perceptions of GCE and are connoted with specific images of what it means to be a global citizen, as well as specific images of the Global South and the means through which substantive social change can be realized. My research will explore how these discourses – the blurred boundaries of GCE, the colonial framing of the Global South, and WE Charity's emphasis on benevolent ideologies – have implications for how

Northern youth understand the North's role in maintaining and solving global inequalities.

There are two bodies of knowledge that will inform my thinking: global citizenship education and postcolonial theory. I have selected the models of soft and critical global citizenship as outlined by Vanessa Andreotti (2006), and David Jefferess' (2008) work on global citizenship education to inform my thinking. I have chosen to frame the task of examining this discursive language within postcolonial perspectives by paying particular attention to Said's (1977) work on Orientalism. More specifically, I will explore how development is understood through postcolonial theory, and juxtapose this understanding against WE Charity's programming in the Global South, considering the extent to which they are reproducing postcolonial norms. Like global citizenship education, postcolonial theory is a widely contested and varied term; I will use Said's (1977) work to frame my inquiry, and focus specifically on the postcolonial Other, representations of the North/South paradigm, and development in the Global South.

1.4 Research Questions

The areas of inquiry I have identified are informed by the following five research questions, each interconnected:

1. How does WE Charity's framing of the global citizen attempt to influence how their youth approach global citizenship education?
2. How does WE Charity's framing of the Southern Other attempt to influence their participants' perceptions of global citizenship education?

3. What are the implications of benevolence as discursive practice on WE Charity youth's engagement in GCE?
4. What are the regimes of truth (Foucault, 1980) within WE Charity's program pedagogies and how do these truths dictate how youth are expected to tackle global issues?
5. What assumed power relationships inform and shape the official rhetoric of WE Charity?

1.5 Purpose of the Research

On the idea that truth is political, MacNaughton (2005) writes, “such a position is inevitably risky—people who take this position risk alienating others and being alienated from them” (p.151). With this type of research, there exists a fine balance between avoiding unwanted paternalistic attitudes among students, while at the same time, avoiding cynicism towards GCE (Tallon & McGregor, 2014, p. 1410). As a teacher, it is a struggle for me to speak about topic with Northern students from a critical mindset without disabling their compassion towards injustice and global inequality. As Jefferess (2012) illustrates, many teachers are wary to criticize global citizenship education because “such criticism will silence discourse on global issues” (p. 19). I often wonder about the risks associated with challenging the use of benevolence within the field of global citizenship education: global citizenship has been an integral part of my life for over a decade. It is difficult to challenge and dismantle a pedagogy I once held as a universal truth: the truth that social justice and equity for the Global South can be achieved through the benevolence of charitable individuals from the Global North.

Although the unsettling nature of this project has created a tension between my past experiences and my current pedagogical beliefs, I remain committed to the idea that teacher consciousness needs to be expanded in the areas of critical and soft global citizenship education.

The purpose of my research is to determine the oversight in WE Charity's GCE programs that promote oppressive discourses and asymmetrical power relations; I am also challenging the common perception that global citizenship is unquestionably good. This research is unique in the sense that it employs a review of the discursive constructions found on WE Charity's website through discourse analysis and postcolonial frameworks, with a specific focus on the use of benevolence and Othering within their promotional material. To date, there has been little critical research that extensively reviews WE Charity's practices within the perimeters of GCE. Jefferess (2012) has taken a critical look at the ME to WE brand, focusing on the commercialization of development within the organization. He acknowledges that the ME to WE brand does not engage students in critical analysis of global economic and social relationships (p. 28), which aligns with my own research. Jefferess (2012) acknowledges that the WE Charity franchise is presented as a lifestyle, where compassion for Others is just as important as the happiness and fulfillment of the Northern youth/consumer (p. 23). The closest research to my own is from DeCaro (n.d.), who explores the use of rhetoric in WE Charity's discursive language (p. 3). She uses critical rhetorical analysis to explore how the term global citizen is used to attract youth to the organization, and focuses specifically on consumerism within WE Charity, overseas travel, and establishing the perimeters of being a global citizen. DeCaro's critical analysis aligns with my own, and I

am continuing her research by focusing on the following areas, which she does not address in detail: the soft and critical dimensions of GCE, the use of benevolence in WE Charity's discursive practices, and the process of Othering within the Global North /Global South paradigm. I am also framing my research in postcolonial theory, whereas DeCaro (n.d.) frames her research solely within global citizenship pedagogy (p. 5). I am drawing most of my inspiration from DeCaro and Jefferess's critical analyses and am filling a gap by juxtaposing postcolonial theory against the soft GCE practices of WE Charity.

Global citizenship education is increasingly becoming a priority in schools (Allan & Charles, 2015, p. 26), and this project is a way into thinking critically about its pedagogy. As a secondary teacher, I recognize the need to dismantle a pedagogy that has such an influence on how students and educators come to know Others and the world around them. With WE Charity in particular, educators play a large role in the delivery of their programs and the discourses that accompany it.⁸ Likewise, students – the main ambassadors of WE Charity's programming – represent and reflect these discourses both at home and abroad. As such, this project is an inquiry into raising teacher and student consciousness in the area of GCE. I do not wish to persuade educators and students to abandon discourses of benevolence and charity; rather, I would like to encourage a consideration towards taking up a critical perspective on 1) the means needed to be a

⁸ For instance, teachers can bring students on international volunteer trips (Me to We/School and Group Volunteer Trips, 2016, n.p.), they can use WE Charity's educator resources in the classroom (We Charity/Educator Resources, 2016, n.p.), and they can help students implement many of the organization's awareness-raising campaigns (WE Charity/Campaigns, 2016, n.p.).

global citizen; 2) how the Other is positioned within GCE programs, and 3) the use of benevolence in these programs.

Truth is political (Foucault, 1980, p. 107-103), and I have a desire to make choices as an educator between the truths that honor my commitment to social justice and equity and those truths which do not. As a past international volunteer, I once held the idea that benevolence was needed for youth to embrace social justice and global citizenship. I now question whether internationally-focused benevolence does more harm than good, by simply reinforcing asymmetrical power relations between the North and the South. I also question the ethical impacts of how youth-focused NGOs – WE Charity in particular – choose to represent the Global South. As Said (1977) writes:

How does one represent other cultures? ...Is the notion of a distinct culture... a useful one, or does it always get involved either in self-congratulation (when one discusses one's own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the "other")? (p. 325).

In other words, the way WE Charity chooses to represent the Global South may perhaps promote feelings of cultural superiority amongst its Northern youth. Unpacking the oversight of WE Charity's programs – how the Global South is represented, how the volunteers are positioned in relation to the Global South, and how global issues can be tackled and solved – can perhaps make room for more marginalized knowledge to emerge, thus offering alternative approaches to global citizenship education. A more critical understanding of how power operates in the popular discourse of GCE can perhaps reframe how young people and educators understand and participate in its development in the future.

1.6 Summary of the Chapters

In this chapter, I opened with an artifact I wrote as an international volunteer in Kenya in order to both contextualize the origins of this project and position myself within this research. I provided an overview of how I arrived at a place of unsettling confluence as a global citizen – working my way through my own experiences as a global citizen and formulating critical questions regarding the tensions causing my unease. Furthermore, I provided an overview of WE Charity – the object of my analysis – and laid out a plan for my research, which includes a critical dismantling of the organization’s framing of the Northern global citizen and the Southern Other, as well as of the rhetoric of benevolence used within their online promotional material.

In Chapter Two, I examine postcolonial theory and global citizenship education. I provide an overview of selected research surrounding human development, benevolence, the global citizen and the Southern Other – framing how current literature fits within the parameters of my research project. In particular, I draw upon Edward Said’s (1977) theorizations of *Orientalism* and Vanessa Andreotti’s (2006) soft and critical dimensions of GCE in order to establish the boundaries of this inquiry.

In Chapter Three, I examine the two research methodologies used in this research: Critical discourse analysis and document analysis. I specifically examine power and language within the Global North/South paradigm and outline the specific methods I use to critically dismantle the discourses used in WE Charity’s online promotional material.

In Chapter Four, I explore the concept of a global citizen as it is related to WE Charity’s programs and practices. I investigate how the organization frames the concept of a global citizen, and expose the implications of this framing on how youth are to

understand their role in solving global inequalities. I explore how the shift away from the victimization of the Global South towards the empowerment of the global citizen has not changed the colonial undertones within development practices, and I make visible the hidden relations of power found within the global citizen-Global South dichotomy. Resistant discourses of WE Charity's global citizens are also revealed, illuminating the possibility for marginalized knowledge to emerge amid the benevolence.

In Chapter Five, I inquire into how the Southern Other is represented within WE Charity's online texts. I also uncover how WE Charity uses narratives of pain (bell hooks, 1990) within their promotional material – anguishing the stories of the Other while privileging those of the Northern volunteers, further cementing colonial approaches to development. I reveal how WE Charity denies the Other any semblance of agency or power in order to justify intervention within the South, and in doing so, relations of power are revealed to be more complex than originally thought: authority and power are exposed as fluid, shifting constantly between the organization, its global citizens and the Other.

In Chapter Six, I explore the concept of benevolence as it relates to WE Charity's programs in the Global South, and reveal the four regimes of truth which dictate how the organization approaches development. I also examine WE Charity's involvement in both soft and critical GCE practices and reveal how this impacts their participants' understanding of global poverty and inequity. I tie this analysis into the larger context of charity and international volunteerism within the GCE paradigm.

Chapter Seven concludes by revisiting the initial themes and questions which framed my research in the earlier chapters. I discuss whether organizations like WE

Charity will inescapably internalize and reproduce colonial discourses, and whether or not practices, such as international volunteering, have the potential to be reframed in order to offer youth and educators deeper understandings of global poverty and more equitable outlooks on GCE practices.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO: DISCOURSES OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

In this chapter, I examine two bodies of knowledge which frame my inquiry: postcolonial theory and global citizenship education. I begin with an investigation of postcolonial theory before moving onto an examination of global citizenship education.

2.1 Postcolonial Theory and the Development in the South

I have chosen to frame the task of examining the discursive language used by WE Charity within postcolonial perspectives. This section outlines the basic principles of postcolonial theory, in addition to examining the key issues of this research through a postcolonial lens: global binaries, development within the Global South, and the Southern Other.

2.1.1 Global Binaries

The Northern world has historically divided itself and the rest of the world into binaries. Although the terms have varied – from Said’s (1977) Orient/Occident to the World Bank’s low-income/high-income economies (World Bank/About/Country and Lending Groups, n.d., para. 1) – the trend of creating these global dichotomies has persisted, and continues to persist, in GCE discourses. A dismantling of the power of these dichotomies is fundamental to understanding the relationship between these countries caught in the divide and to understanding the colonial discourse threaded within. As Said (1994) contends here, “so strongly felt and perceived are the geographical and cultural boundaries between the West and its nonwestern peripheries that we may consider these boundaries absolute” (p. 108). It is important to acknowledge

the fluidness of these binaries, despite their (artificial) appearance as concrete, inert geographies in this project.

In 1969, the *Pearson Commission Report Partners in Development*⁹ problematized the multitude of development discourses being used to categorize countries based on their ability to meet the needs of their citizens, emphasizing the lack of a “firm line between developed and developing countries” (Wolf-Phillips, 1987, p. 1317). In an attempt to narrow the discursive field, they toyed with discourses such as “rich-poor,” “advanced-backward,” “highly developed-underdeveloped,” and “donor-recipient,” before finally settling on the developed/developing binary (Wolf-Phillips, 1987, p. 1317). Since then, competing and evolving discourse have emerged – around the same time, the term Third World-First World was gaining in popularity (Berger, 1994, p. 259) – but the terms established in the report are still used today in mainstream Northern discourses around development. The developed/developing binary paints the world in broad strokes – dividing nations with robust economies and infrastructure from those that do not. Important to this research are the meanings embedded within such a division: where the lack of capital in the developing world (Begum, 2001, p. 51) is juxtaposed against the affluence of the developed world. It is against this backdrop of vulnerability that more developed nations give funds and resources to less developed ones. An alternative to the developed/developing binary is the North/South divide – where the Global South (or South) refers to those developing countries located in the Southern Hemisphere (UNDP/South-South Cooperation, n.d., p. 1) and the Global North (or North)

⁹ A commission formed at the request of the World Bank, and charged with the task of investigating “the previous 20 years of development assistance, assess[ing] the results, and mak[ing] recommendations for the future” (The World Bank/Documents and Reports/The Pearson Commission/2013/para. 1).

refers to developed countries located in the Northern Hemisphere.¹⁰ This classification not only accounts for geography, but for differences in cultural and social identity, customs, knowledge, value systems and ideologies.

Despite the ease at which these above classifications are threaded within the rhetoric of development, it is important to note that unifying entire sections of the world under categories like developed/developing or North/South simplifies the diverse identities of individuals. Said (1977) notes the importance of recognizing these inventions of false collective identities (p. xxviii), and I acknowledge that the use of these reductive terms streamlines complex realities, identities and histories. As Said (1977) famously notes, the Orient (the South) is merely imaginative (p. 2) – a Northern creation based on a combination of images formed through scholarly text and Northern imagination. However, many have accepted the basic distinction between North and South (and developed/developing) to help explain “elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, “mind”, destiny, and so on” (Said, 1977, p. 2). The problem, Said (1977) notes, is that the use of these terms leads to further polarization between nations: “the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner more Western” (p. 46).

We can problematize these discursive binaries even further. WE Charity, for instance, uses the terms ‘underdeveloped’ and ‘developing countries’ to describe the locations where they work. The idea that these locations are underdeveloped creates a binary: for example, if Haiti is “underdeveloped” (Free the Children/Where We

¹⁰ Although the North/South binary is a popular term amongst those who reject the developing/developed dichotomy, Weiss (2009) argues that many North-South designations make little geographical sense, including Australia and New Zealand’s ‘North’ status (p. 272).

Work/Haiti, 2016, para. 5), than Canada is more ‘developed’ – implying that Canada is a model which Haiti should aspire to become. This binary thus allows Haitians (or Kenyans, Nicaraguans, Ecuadorians, etc.) to be seen as inferior: Haitian society is separated from Canadian society and viewed as less developed. Morrison (1995) notes that we (the North) have naively categorized “the social formations of Europe and North America during the last few centuries ‘modern society’, and relied upon a basic distinction between the social formations and so called primitive or traditional societies” (p. 25). This binary perhaps makes it possible for incidences generally synonymous with the Global South – inaccessibility to education and clean water, poor health, and high unemployment – to be understood as problems occurring in a world completely unlike our own: a world where poverty, disease, and a need for Northern intervention are the norm.

Additionally, representations of the North/South or developed/developing in development present another problem: the privileging of Northern knowledge over Southern knowledge, which naturalizes understandings of why certain countries are considered developed and why others are considered developing. Battiste (2013), in referencing Canadian Aboriginals, speaks of the depiction of Indigenous peoples as members of a “timeless traditional culture” – where Indigenous cultures “appear to need progress, an economic and moral uplifting to enable their capacities” (p. 31). From such a perspective, deficiencies of indigenous culture and knowledge are juxtaposed against the modernity of mainstream Canadian culture and knowledge. Similar comparisons can be made between the Global North and Global South. As Battiste (2013) argues, once the North became convinced of the virtue and truth of its institutions and values, it set out to

convert all other societies- with which it came into contact (p. 30). Meaning that, since colonization, Northern knowledge has been exported and positioned as a universal truth, and has thus become naturalized. Southern knowledge – recognized as having only local value – is turned into fragmented concepts of culture buried in Eurocentric discourses. Spivak (1990) classifies this process of naturalizing Northern values and interests as “worlding of the West as world” (as cited in Andreotti, 2006, p. 44). In regard to development, this assumption produces a discourse where Northern values/knowledge/institutions serve as a reference point to be measured against and to strive towards.

In this research, I will be classifying North America and Europe as the Global North (or North) and the countries where the WE Charity’s programs operate as the Global South (or South). I recognize that these terms – and the geographical and cultural components of each – are a human construction, and I recognize that these classifications are not representative of every individual living in these geographic locations. I also acknowledge that the use of this binary also reduces the possibility for overlap: for instance, in this research, I do not say that a country is simultaneously a little bit North or a little bit South (Eckl & Weber, 2007, p. 4). I also reject the developing/developed binary – despite its widespread use in mainstream discourses of development – as it assumes a hierarchy between countries. The developed/developing relationship can be seen as replacing the colonizer/colonized relationship – where the developing country attempts to catch up with the North and the developed country believes in its supremacy. The developed/developing paradigm also ignores the role of colonialism in “the creation

of the wealth of what is called the ‘First World’ today, as well as the role of the international division of labor and exploitation of the ‘Third World’ in the maintenance of this wealth” (Andreotti et al, 2010, p. 44). Also within this framework, poverty in the Global South is “constructed as a lack of resources, service and markets, and of education... rather than a lack of control over the production of sources” (Biccum, 2005, p. 1017). From such a perspective, countries within the Global South are responsible for their developing status, and countries within the Global North are released from their complicity in maintaining imperialist systems of development.

2.1.2 Postcolonial Theory

i. Defining Postcolonial Theory

Since the 1980s, postcolonial theory has been emerging as a means of reclaiming historical processes and repositioning/supporting individuals who have been historically forced into the margins (Hudson & Melber, 2014, p. 1). The field observes the multifaceted, diverse, and power-laden circumstances of nations and cultures around the world, and interrogates the historic and current colonial and imperialist practices that are threaded within. Postcolonialism itself, however, is a widely contested term. It is perhaps best to start by defining the terms ‘post’ and ‘colonialism.’ McEwan (2009) explains that ‘post’ can be framed as both the time period directly after colonialization (the temporal aftermath) and the reality that cultures, discourses and critiques continue to be influenced by colonialism (the critical aftermath) (p. 82). Meaning that many countries – the North and the South included – continue to reel from the effects of colonialism to this day. Thus postcolonial theorists are not only interested in past practices of colonialism (for

example, imperialism), but also in how these practices manifest themselves in the present day (international volunteerism). ‘Colonialism,’ on the other hand, refers to the “historical process whereby the ‘West’ attempts systematically to cancel or negate the cultural difference and value of the ‘non-West’” (Ghandi, 1998, p. 16). As reiterated by Said (1977), during colonization, colonial powers “saw the Orient as a geographical—and cultural, political, demographical, sociological, and historical—entity over whose destiny they believed themselves to have traditional entitlement” (p. 221). The Global North, during periods of colonization within the Global South, would control/replace/eradicate existing systems, ideologies and customs already established by its peoples. Hence, postcolonialism is, in part, a process of Eurocentrism that continues to paint a particular image of the world, in which certain knowledge (the knowledge of the North) is valued and Other knowledge (the knowledge of the South) is marginalized. At its simplest level, postcolonial theory explores how the colonizing culture distorts the experience and realities of the colonized, seeking to understand the political, social, cultural and psychological operations of colonialist and anti-colonialist ideologies (Tyson, 2006, p.418). At a more complex level, as postcolonial theorist Robert Young (2003) describes here, postcolonial theory “disturbs the order of the world. It threatens privilege and power, [and it] refuses to acknowledge the superiority of the western cultures” (p. 7).

Notably, Smith (1999a) reminds us that imperialism “still hurts, still destroys and is reforming itself constantly” (p. 20). Although imperialism in the past was more so an extension of European power beyond their own boundaries (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. xii-xiv), imperialism presently takes on a different meaning outside of military control.

Today, imperialism manifests itself discretely within educational, cultural and economic spheres – and whereas imperialism’s most valuable tool used to be colonization, now it is capitalism (Haque & Akter, 2013, p. 101). In this sense, while a Southern nation may be independent and sovereign in theory, in reality “its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from the outside” (Nkrumah, 1965, p. xi). Meaning that, although the Global South remains sovereign, transnational corporations and governments are wielding power and maintaining an unequal balance of capital, thus exerting imperial control. In short, Northern imperialism continues to maintain a strong hold on the Global South, but in a much more subtle way. This subtlety, I argue, allows for colonialism to maneuver itself into educational spheres – in particular, mainstream practices of GCE.

ii. *Orientalism*

Edward Said is responsible for establishing the foundations for postcolonialism in his book *Orientalism* (1977) – a work which addresses the power relationships between the Oriental Other and the Occident. As such, my research is founded within certain components of his theoretical work. Said (1977) established that Orientalism is a biased system of Northern knowledge about – and authority over – the Orient (p. 197). In short, Said (1977) describes Orientalism as:

The corporate institution for dealing with ‘the Orient’—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (p. 3).

Said theorizes that the North's tendency to combine Arab, Chinese and Japanese cultures into a single entity (Oriental) homogenizes and degenerates the value of these separate cultures (Nayar, 2010b, p. 15). The North, by positively separating itself from this homogenous mass, could justify military, economic, and philanthropic intervention (Tyson, 2006, p. 421). Bhabba (1994) highlights this tendency among nations to draw these imaginary boundaries between/among cultures:

The transnational dimension of cultural transformation – migration, diaspora, displacement, relocation – makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification. The natural(ized), unifying discourse of nation, peoples, or authentic folk tradition, those embedded myths of cultures particularity, cannot be readily referenced. The great, though unsettling, advantage of this position is that it makes you increasingly aware of the construction of culture and the invention of tradition (p. 247).

From this perspective, culture cannot be defined in and of itself, but instead must be understood within the boundaries of its construction. *Orientalism* acknowledges this cultural construction of the Other.

Initially, Said's arguments dealt with the relations of power between the West and the East, but his findings have been largely applied to the North and South paradigm of postcolonial studies. Said (1977) describes how the North positions itself as superior to the South: the Occident is "rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient... is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior" (p. 300). This perhaps explains the prevalence of discourses that favor accounts of poverty and disease from which the Global South needs to be 'rescued', rather than ones that contextualize the complicity of the North in helping

to maintain oppression of the Global South. At this point, it is important to note a prevalent criticism of Said's *Orientalism*. Gandhi (1998) argues that Said, amid his focus on the oppressed Orient/superior Occident binary, has unintentionally created another stereotype: the "racist Westerner" (p. 78). From this perspective, the Northerner lacks the agency to challenge the colonial relationship between the North and the South. Despite this arguable limitation, Said's work adds depth and value to my research, giving me a framework to approach the imperialist nature of GCE practices.

Postcolonial theory investigates the current troubling relationships between the North and the South. I will be focusing specifically on these relationships. A concern of postcolonialism is the "epistemic violence of colonialism and the interrogation of European cultural supremacy in the subjugation of different peoples and knowledge's in colonial and neocolonial contexts" (Elliot, Fourali, & Issler, 2010, p. 243). Meaning, postcolonialism addresses the ethics in representations of the power relationships between the Global North and South, and challenges the existing assumptions present in these relationships. Said (1977) perhaps explains this best, when he says that "the relationship between the Occident and the Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (p. 5). Hegemonic practices within GCE play off this hierarchal relationship, begging critical analysis.

iii. Criticisms of Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory is not without its criticisms. Colonialism has a broad meaning, and the umbrella use of the term has attracted some criticism. As Dimitriadis and McCarthy (2001) note here:

[T]he term has a kind of elasticity that makes it all but meaningless, indexing, as it so easily can, all kinds of struggles for all kinds of independence against all kinds of domination in and around all parts of the globe (p. 6).

From this perspective, postcolonial theory can take on many different meanings, and lends itself to many different interpretations. Additionally, postcolonial theory's main linguistic currency is the English language, followed by other European languages (Irobi, 2008, n.p). Meaning that, in order to contribute to academic research on postcolonial theory, a researcher must be able to speak the language of the Global North. Irobi (2008) furthers his point by explaining how Northern academia "evaluates and validates the usefulness, efficiency and accuracy of... theories using its own [Northern] parameters, languages, methodologies and critical yardsticks all of which are culturally situated and determined" (n.p). In other words, anyone from the Global South who wishes to engage in scholarly discussions of postcolonialism must do so within the parameters of Northern knowledge.

I am thus aware of the hypocrisy of my research project: I am criticizing the colonial nature of GCE, one that imposes its language, customs, knowledge and values on the Global South, when I myself am writing in the framework of Northern academia, in the tongue of the colonizer. Tyson (2006) reminds us that we should be apprehensive of postcolonial theory being "colonized" itself, or being interpreted solely by Northern positions of privilege (p. 426). As Ahmad argues, the postcolonial field lends itself exclusively to intellectuals while imperialism and its effects continue to "[condemn others] to labor below the living standards of the colonial period" (as cited in Gandhi, 1998, p. 56).

Although I have no choice but to write in the dominate/hegemonic language, and utilize Northern ideas of proper scholarship, this reality highlights an underlying problem of postcolonial theory: it is, by its very nature, a Northern construction of knowledge, being imposed on the Global South.

Chibber (2014) likewise highlights another problem within postcolonial theory, in the sense that it seeks to undermine various realities:

The reality of capitalist constraints, regardless of culture; the reality of human nature; the centrality of certain universal aspirations on the part of the oppressed, which issue from this human nature; the need for abstract, universal concepts that are valid across cultures; the necessity of rational, reasoned discourse, etc. (p. 623).

In other words, postcolonial theory ignores the reality that certain societies in the Global South strive towards similar aspirations as the North, and seek knowledge within the perimeters of “rational and reasoned discourse.” Meaning that the North assumes the Global South is coerced into development as a result of Northern dominance, rather than a desire to develop on their own accord. This type of assumption denies Southern agency. As for why postcolonial theory continues to persist in Northern scholarship despite its challenges, Said (1994) reminds us that the past cannot “be quarantined from the present. Past and present inform each other, each implies the other” (p. 4).

2.1.3 GCE, Human Development and Postcolonial Theory

In the context of this research, I will confront the hidden standards of colonization that continue to reverberate from the past within the GCE framework, including:

- a) The positioning of the Northern savior against the exotic Other.
- b) The favoring of Northern knowledge over Southern knowledge.
- c) The extent to which Northern volunteers learn about their own role in maintaining global inequalities.
- e) How development is framed and approached.

Within GCE, Northern youth are asked to explore and challenge issues of the Global South (poverty, environmental degradation, clean water access, etc.), as well as volunteer overseas and participate on various fundraising campaigns. A postcolonial approach to GCE thus becomes a tool which educators and students can use to dismantle the colonial undertones inherent in the pedagogy, as well as to reconstruct more mutually beneficial relationships between the Global North and the Global South. As Gandhi (1998) notes here, postcolonialism “holds out the possibility of thinking our way through and, therefore, out of the historical imbalances and cultural inequalities produced by the colonial encounter” (p. 176). I will explore GCE more fully later on in the research.

A key component of GCE and postcolonialism is the idea of human development. Human development is a concept within the field of international development¹¹ and incorporates multiple aspects of an individual’s well-being, from health and education to economic and political freedom (World Bank/What is Development, n.d., p. 7-11). Particularly, it is about “expanding the richness of human life, rather than simply the richness of the economy in which human beings live” (UNDP/Human Development Reports/About Human Development, n.d., para. 1). Generally, the dominant discourses of

¹¹ International development is not an easy concept to define. Including both economic and social development, it encompasses many issues such as “humanitarian and foreign aid, poverty alleviation, the rule of law and governance, food and water security, capacity building, healthcare and education, women and children’s rights, disaster preparedness, infrastructure, and sustainability” (Greiman, 2001, p. 8).

human development¹² are put into practice by the North and, as McEwan (2009) notes, traditional ideas of development see the process occurring in places called “the ‘developing world’, the ‘South’ or the ‘non-West’” (p. 11). Indeed, many countries from the North (among which Canada is prominent) – along with their respective governments, NGOs, private charities, individuals, and companies – partake in both human and international development projects all around the world.¹³ The idea is that the North will help ‘develop’ the Global South – through education, healthcare and infrastructure – with the hope that these developments will alleviate poverty, disease and ‘underdevelopment’.

Development discourses have historically been framed to move the Global South towards the Northern image of modernity. In the post-World War II period, theories of modernization emerged in the Global North (Higgott, 1980, p. 29), and narratives of science and empirical reason dominated development discourse. A reliance on science and empiricism, it was reasoned, would facilitate the transformation of societies from traditional to modern and, in various accounts of modernization theory, traditions of the Global South came to be seen as “hindrances to modernity and development” (Saari, 2016, p. 37). The traditional (non-Northern) cultures and customs of indigenous societies were framed negatively next to the complexity of modern society, and came to be positioned as obstacles to be overcome on the path to development (Bernstein, 1979, p. 146). Development research, pertaining to the Global South, focused mainly on

¹² I will be referring to ‘human development’ as ‘development’ for the remainder of this research.

¹³ For instance, the Canadian Red Cross donated over \$15 million in support of development programs overseas (Canadian Red Cross/Annual Report 2014-2015, 2015, p. 16); a multitude of Canadian organizations send thousands of Canadian volunteers overseas on numerous development projects (see: Youth Challenge International, CARE Canada, Canada World Youth, and World University Service of Canada); during the 2013–2014 fiscal year, the Canadian Government invested a total of \$4.6 billion in development assistance (Global Affairs Canada/Development, n.d., para. 1).

universalizing Northern histories, values, and development paths, while “disregarding local narratives, indigenous sources of knowledge, and social, historical, and cultural particularities” (Saari, 2016, p. 39). These Eurocentric approaches attempted to create a universal path to development “to which the colonial people could be steered by a process of guidance and diffusion” (Nabudere, 1997, p. 209). Beginning in the later 1990s, many development agencies and international organizations adopted more inclusionary approaches to development – ones that did not silence voices from the Global South – in response to criticisms of the exclusionary nature of mainstream development norms and practices (Saari, 2019, p. 39). However, despite the inclusionary language, there continues to be much criticism regarding the colonial nature of development projects in the Global South (Andreotti, 2006; Jefferess, 2012; Smithb, 1999).

Development within the GCE paradigm often highlights the lack of Northern characteristics in the Global South – lack of education, lack of clean water, lack of health care facilities, lack of employment opportunities, lack of infrastructure – while at the same time, creating the belief that the “North is responsible for the South in the same way that it was believed that the white men had the burden of civilizing non-white peoples in colonial times” (Andreotti, 2006, p. 5). In this sense, development is understood as a civilizing mission – the North educates the South in an attempt to help solve their development problems – with the assumption being that countries in the Global South lack the attributes of the North (Andreotti, 2006, p. 5) and that Northern values/resources/infrastructure/funds will enhance the lives of those living in the South. Such an assumption is supported by Northern views about how human society should

progress and Northern notions of culture, development, society and class. The globalization of Northern knowledge and culture constantly reaffirms the North's view of itself as the source of "civilized" and legitimate knowledge (Smith, 1999a, p.63), and this has created a discursive space in which development norms, knowledge, and practices are defined by the Global North.

Development within mainstream GCE practices, it seems, is framed by the following three postcolonial assumptions:

Human history is about human development and progress. Smith (1999a) notes that such a position assumes that societies "move forward in stages of development...the earliest phase of human development is regarded as primitive, simple and emotional. As societies develop, they become less primitive, more civilized...and their social structures become more complex and bureaucratic" (p. 30). In addition to this, ideas of societies in the Global South having their own systems of order have been historically dismissed in popular Northern discourse through a series of negations: that they were "not fully human, they were not civilized enough to have systems, they were not literate, their languages and modes of thought were inadequate" (Smith, 1999a, p. 28). From this perspective, development projects in the Global South – the construction of a classroom, the implementation of a micro-financing enterprise, or English-language delivery – are seen as humanizing initiatives that draw the primitive Other from inertia into enlightenment. In this sense, development – and Northern knowledge – is represented as something better and connotes a higher order of thinking.

Development is 'done' by the Global North. Development discourses have historically maintained a strong Eurocentric core, and this continues to persist in GCE initiatives. Development is generally told from the perspective of the Global North: “Having been immersed in the Western academy which claims theory as thoroughly Western, which has constructed all the rules by which the indigenous world has been theorized, indigenous voices have been overwhelmingly silenced” (Smith, 1999a, p. 29). From this perspective, development within GCE is done by Northern institutions because knowledge of the Global South is theorized and created by Northern academia, religious groups, governments and international organizations. Narratives of development (Free the Children, 2016; Youth Challenge International, 2016; Oxfam Canada, 2016; World Vision, 2016; Care Canada, 2016) are flooded with Northern accounts of how it should be done, what it looks like, where it needs to happen and why particular forms of development work better than others. Rarely, it seems, are Southern narratives prominent in these development discourses, except when they are framed with a certain sense of hopelessness and despair. Thus, development is driven by the assumption that the process can be told in one coherent narrative and that only Northerners can tackle/discuss/oversee the truest sense of development.

Development can be achieved through volunteer placements, charity appeals, and “making a difference” over there. Youth-focused organizations, like WE Charity, develop slick marketing campaigns, promising youth that they have the ability to make significant contributions towards eradicating poverty in the Global South through volunteer work and fundraising. Through these organizations, students raise money at

home – through bake sales, car washes, and selling consumer goods – and the funds are sent overseas to facilitate various development projects in the Global South. Students also can choose to volunteer overseas with these organizations on numerous development projects – ranging anywhere from the construction of a classroom to overseeing health-based workshops in rural communities. These types of approaches to development, however, only encourage students to focus on the ways that they can positively contribute to change, rather than encouraging youth to consider their complicity in maintaining global inequalities and poverty. Concerns have been raised regarding students who may be experiencing superficial and simplistic understandings of the Global South through these forms of development: they may be “locked into ‘ways of seeing’ that are influenced by several factors including... the emphasis on the drive to ‘make a difference’ through charity” (Tallon, 2012, p. 9). As Appiah (2006) contends that if “you ‘save’ the children by dumping free grain into the local economy and putting local farmers out of business – who can compete with free? – you may, indeed, be doing more harm than good” (p. 170). Northern volunteers enter communities in the Global South armed with goodwill in their back pockets. No matter how shrouded their actions are with Northern biases and values, or how damaging their charity may be, their intentions are always justified as being ‘good.’ Development work of this nature remains justified, particularly if people living in the Global South continue to be positioned “as ignorant and undeveloped (savages)” (Smith, 1999, p. 25).

Imperialism and colonialism – through which the North came to see, name, and know the Global South – continue to persist within the discursive language of

development. Within certain GCE organizations – WE Charity in particular – the language surrounding development seems generally centered around charity campaigning and international volunteering. Again, this provides the impetus for why my research will focus on this positioning of campaigning and international volunteering within WE Charity’s framework of development, and why it will seek to make visible how these development practices recreate postcolonial norms. I will now examine the objective of WE Charity’s goodwill: The Southern Other.

2.1.4 The Southern Other

The concept of the Southern Other is a term often used within postcolonial theory when referring to the North/South paradigm, and provides a framework for critiquing how the Other has been represented or excluded from various accounts of Northern discourse. In its most basic form, the Southern Other is often used to distinguish people of the North from non-Europeans (Kapuscinski, 2008, p. 13). The representation of the Other within Northern discourse has historically been one of inferiority and exoticism – being made into an object to be observed, feared, controlled and directed. In addition to this, expressions of primitiveness and savagery have also been embedded into its meaning. Tyson (2006) furthers this point by explaining how the awareness of the Other has led to the idea of Othering: we end up judging all “who are different as less than fully human: it divides the world between “us” (the “civilized”) and “them” (the “others” or “savages”) (p. 420). Kapuscinski (2008) reiterates this point: “the myths of many tribes and peoples include a belief that only we are human, the members of our clan, our society, and that Others – all Others – are subhuman, or not human at all” (p. 83). This

argument is reflected by Said (1977), who writes that “no matter how much a single Oriental can escape the fences placed around him, he is first an Oriental, second a human being, and last again an Oriental” (p. 102). Individuals in the Global South have historically been dehumanized against the backdrop of Northern imperialism – seen not as people, but as problems to be solved by colonial powers (Said, 1977, p. 207). The Global South – its exoticness and its strangeness – is always made inferior to the European equivalent (Said, 1977, p. 72), and its peoples are constructed as individuals to be owned and managed by the North, just because “by definition [they are] not quite as human as we are” (Said, 1977, p. 108). The term subaltern is often linked to the marginalized of the South. Spivak problematizes the representations of the Other within Northern discourse in her highly influential 1988 essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*. In her work, she recognizes the subaltern as a group of people who are rendered voiceless, and have no agency to speak for themselves (Spivak, Landry & MacLean, 1996, p. 302). For Spivak, the exclusion of a subaltern voice in Northern discourse is due to an undermining of subaltern agency by Northern powers. However, other researchers have proposed that the subaltern is not voiceless, and that Northern powers have simply chosen not to listen: Davidson (2001) holds that the subaltern can indeed speak, and that “subaltern voices can be heard and recognized through careful attentiveness to surviving documentation” (p. 172). Thus, if we assume that the Other is not voiceless, one has to wonder about the conditions under which the subaltern voice may be heard and recognized.

In the context of this research, I am using postcolonial theory to explore how WE Charity frames the Other in relation to its Northern volunteers. Many Northern NGOs – including WE Charity – tend to position the Other into a particular narrative – a timeless

narrative that both romanticizes and highlights deficiencies of the marginalized. This is nothing new, as cultures have always been inclined to frame other cultures “not as they are but as, for the benefit of the receiver, they ought to be” (Said, 1977, p. 67). With GCE, the Other is positioned in a way that necessitates intervention from the North. Narratives from the postcolonial Other often speak of suffering, need, and oppression. Drawing from bell hooks’ (1989) observation that colonial powers fetishize stories of the violated, the voice of the Other is often framed with a certain sense of hopelessness and despair: “Tell me your story. Only do not speak in the voice of resistance. Only speak from that space in the margin that is a sign of deprivation, a wound, an unfulfilled longing. Only speak your pain” (p. 209). Narratives of this imagined Other become juxtaposed against the Eurocentric frameworks that privilege Northern volunteer’s stories and anguishes those of the Global South. Friere (1970) reminds us that as long as “the oppressed remain unaware of the causes of their condition, they fatalistically ‘accept’ their exploitation” (p. 64). Meaning that the continued focus on narratives of pain only further marginalize those affected by poverty and injustice. It is within this space of collective despair that NGOs, like WE Charity, extend their influence in order to help/redirect/develop the Other.

2.2 Global Citizenship Education and Development in the South

The second body of knowledge I have chosen to examine is global citizenship education. This section outlines the basic definition of global citizenship education and explores the idea of the global citizen. Additionally, I will focus specifically on the key distinction within GCE relevant to this research: soft global citizenship education and

critical global citizenship education. I will conclude by making visible Foucault's concept of regimes of truth, and explore how these truths dictate ways in which GCE gets enacted within the classroom.

2.2.1 Defining Global Citizenship Education

Students participating in WE Charity's programming act within the framework of global citizenship education. A changing global landscape – refugee displacement, environmental degradation, and growing global inequalities – places demands on educators to become culturally and instructionally competent in addressing issues of globalization, racism, diversity, and social justice. The pedagogy is thus becoming increasingly popular in schools across Canada (Nabavi, 2010, p. 1), as educators and students alike attempt to extend their influence and benevolence beyond their borders into the Global South. Driven by ideologies of cosmopolitanism, benevolence, and social justice, global citizenship education aims to instill ideas of peace and sustainability, as well as enhance the academic achievement and problem solving skills of the next generation. Despite its blooming popularity (Allen & Charles, 2015; Nabavi, 2010), there is no consistent definition of global citizenship, leading to many competing ideas, dilemmas and contradictions in regards to how the pedagogy actually manifests itself in the classroom. Regardless of this, there seems to be a consensus that a global citizen is one who extends their responsibilities beyond their community. As such, it is hoped that exposure to global citizenship education will help students develop the ability to challenge injustice and inequalities, as well as to appreciate and respect human diversity. In addition to the competing discourses surrounding global citizenship, the pedagogy also

encompasses a binary: global citizenship is not available for everyone, but only for those who have the ability to act for others and have access to certain knowledge.

Citizenship education is a fundamental component to educational policy across Canada. This emphasis is influenced by the longstanding view that public schooling should attempt to “train citizens in the widest sense of the term” (Conley, 1989, p. 134). Nabavi (2010) notes that fluctuating demographics in Canada have prompted a “renewed interest and commitment to citizenship education policy and pedagogy,” and that these events have “fuelled educational theorists, policy-makers, curriculum developers and pedagogues to articulate approaches to citizenship education” (p. 1). As such, global citizenship education builds onto this pedagogy by shifting its focus to an international level. Allan and Charles (2015) illustrate the global reality of this trend: within many Western countries, in addition to Canada, curricular documents have emerged to announce “global education” and “increased international outlooks” as priorities for education (p. 26). Within these documents, students have become the agents of change: they are seen as the group responsible for maintaining social justice and human rights. Hebert and Sears (2001), in a discussion regarding citizenship education, provide a justification for why citizenship is so important:

Citizenship is about who (sic) we are, how we live together, and what kind of people our children are to become. As such, it is a normative concept meaning that it stems from a moral point of view. There are many competing proposals about what is necessary for good citizenship and effective citizenship education (p. 3).

Similar to citizenship education, there exists no unambiguous definition of global citizenship education; it remains a contested concept and is multifaceted in the way it is understood, and is subject to a wide range of interpretations. Indeed, the language used to describe global citizenship ranges from vague moral frameworks of “we all belong to a global community,” to more political frameworks that enforce human rights and international law (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 178). The aim for GCE is seen as being closely intertwined with development, and vital in reducing poverty, promoting welfare and improving the quality of life for everyone independent of where they are living. A major argument in support of global citizenship education is that it enables young people to “understand principles of justice and equality in the context of cultural diversity and global change” (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 179). Likewise, Guo (2014) states that the ultimate objective of GCE is to “build a sense of belonging with a global community and a common humanity, and nurture a feeling of global solidarity, identity and responsibility that generates actions that are not only based on, but also respect universal values” (p. 2). In the classroom specifically, ideas of global citizenship manifest themselves across many substantive areas – language learning, environmental awareness, cross-cultural engagement, world history, literature and technological competency (Schattle, 2008, p. 73). In each of these areas, the discourse is vast and composed of various elements, leading to its ambiguous nature within the secondary classroom.

Important to the ideas of this research, I have framed global citizenship within the following four thematic areas:

The idea of GCE involving a sense of individual responsibility. Some definitions of global citizenship emphasize the individual element: Guo (2014) describes it as an “approach to living in which principles of global responsibility and accountability are applied to everyday local actions and complex global problems are addressed on an individual basis” (p. 2). This train of thought aligns with Dower (2003), who sees global citizenship as “a powerful way, in which many individuals choose to identify themselves and by so doing become energized and committed to the actions they take” (p. 13). Likewise, O’Byrne (2003) notes that being a global citizen is about understanding how our everyday lives are bound up within a wider recognition of our roles as individuals living on a single globe (p. 123). Indeed, many researchers argue that students are living in a world where their decisions and actions can affect others on a global scale and thus they should be made aware of this interconnectedness (Brown & Morgan, 2008, p. 285). In this context, each individual’s life has implications in “day-to-day decisions that connect the global with the local, and vice versa” (UNESCO, 2014, p. 14). In this sense, global citizenship places responsibility on the individual to become aware of how their daily actions/inactions contribute to larger global problems.

The idea of GCE involving a direct concern for social justice and human rights, within the framework of human morality. This is perhaps the most universal idea associated with GCE. According to Ibrahim (2005), a significant component of responsible global citizenship is the principle of social justice (p. 178). His views are shared by Toh (1996), who argues that global citizenship must include an “awareness of and commitment to societal justice for marginalized groups, grassroots empowerment,

nonviolent and authentic democracy, environmental care, and North–South relations based on principles of equity, respect and sharing” (p. 185). For Wringe (1999), the key principle of social justice with regard to global citizenship means “ensuring that the collective arrangements to which we give our assent do not secure the better life of some at the expense of a much worse life for others” (p. 6). In other words, under the GCE pedagogy, an awareness of our global interconnectedness is crucial to ensuring human rights are respected. Becoming a global citizen depends upon the conscious cultivation of a global “concern for the welfare of the community as a whole” (Brunell, 2013, p. 18). Further, many argue (Dower, 2002; Noddings, 2005) that global citizenship means to take responsibility for all citizens in the world and accept a moral obligation to address issues of social inequalities and injustices (as cited in DeCaro, n.d., p. 4). From this perspective, GCE entails a component of morality, in which individuals promote the welfare of others. DeCaro (n.d.), in her research, notes the prevalence of moral rhetoric within WE Charity as a way to entreat youth to act on global issues (p. 4). Indeed, Dower (2002) argues that when someone claims they are a global citizen, they are making “some kind of moral claim about the nature and scope of our moral obligations” (p. 146). Many ideas of GCE – soft GCE in particular – encompass this element of morality.

The idea of GCE involving international awareness. Another component of global citizenship is a recognition of international issues. Global citizenship education is about understanding “the nature of global issues as well as the range of ways in which those with power and resources can be influenced to act in a globally responsible way” (Ibrahim, 2005, 178). In this sense, global citizenship also entails a certain knowledge

about the world: students need to be given opportunities to engage with current literature and experts, and extend their own understanding of how these global issues are framed by social, economic and political contexts. Similarly, Davies (2008), in a study on global citizenship and peace education, emphasizes the importance of global citizens having knowledge of world current events, economics and international relations (p. 4). This idea ties into the general consensus that, to be a global citizen, one must extend their responsibilities beyond their own personal and national borders.

The idea of GCE involving a call to action. In addition to breaking down barriers of indifference, global citizenship can also promote social inclusion and solidarity – and solidarity can transform to readiness to take action in support of others (Vodopivec, 2012, p. 61). Similarly, Guo (2014) recognizes that global citizenry requires “action consistent with a broad understanding of humanity, the planet, and the impact of our decisions on both” (p. 2). In this sense, rather than just being a vague concept of “international do-goodery”, global citizenship education means having the ability to understand and influence policies at the international level in order to ensure human rights are recognized and enforced. In this definition, empathy and awareness of social injustices is not enough: there must also be motivation to act. Global citizenship needs to go beyond international awareness, and move towards an enactment of responsibilities to ensure the rights of each person are being met.

In addition to these four thematic areas, Shultz's (2007) three approaches to conceptualizing global citizenship – a neoliberal approach, a radical approach, and a transformational approach – will also inform my thinking:

The Neoliberal approach. This approach to global citizenship celebrates “the dominance of a single global market and the principles of liberal transnational trade” (Shultz, 2007, p. 249). This approach views NGO assistance as helpful in the facilitation of neoliberal development, with charitable assistance being delivered by globetrotting Northern workers and volunteers who bring with them an agenda for “global development” (Shultz, 2007, p. 250). Within this particular version of global citizenship, individuals who are able to successfully participate in the global marketplace are praised, “at the expense of acknowledging issues of unequal power between the North and the South” (DeCaro, n.d., p. 7). From this perspective, Northern global citizens are meant to understand their privileged social positioning as “natural” and as a “sign of success” (Shultz, 2007, p. 252); they are not encouraged to critically reflect on how this positioning contributes to social inequalities. Instead, global citizens are encouraged to participate in charitable donations in order to ease the “suffering” of those individuals in need (Shultz, 2007, p. 252).

The Radical Approach. This approach to global citizenship “presents globalization as an accelerated mode of Western imperialism that uses economic power for domination” (Shultz, 2007, p. 249). In short, this approach makes visible the impact of globalization in perpetuating global inequalities and challenges the structures that reinforce “the hegemony of economic globalization” (Shultz, 2007, p. 253). From such a perspective, a global citizen acknowledges the role of globalization as an oppressive

force for the majority of the world's population. In addition to this, these radical global citizens accept the responsibility to challenge the global institutions which lead to this oppression of the Global South (Shultz, 2007, p. 249). This approach is concerned with power relations and rejects the naturalization of Northern positions of privilege (Shultz, 2007, p. 252).

The Transformational Approach. From this position, globalization is understood as “cultural, social, environmental, and political as well as economic” (Shultz, 2007, p. 249). Within this perspective, the global citizen seeks to engage Others based on the idea of a shared common humanity (Shultz, 2007, p. 254). Fundamental to this approach is the idea that global citizens are connected to individuals on a global scale and belong to an inclusive community (Shultz, 2007, p. 255). Eradicating poverty, while fostering inclusive relationships among all individuals (regardless of geographic location or social positioning) is a priority in the transformational approach to global citizenship. This perspective is grounded in the belief that “a better world is possible” (Shultz, 2007, p. 255).

Despite its ambiguous nature, global citizenship remains an appealing construct frequently used as a means to engage students in acts of benevolence and activism, as well as critical thinking. In addition to the four thematic areas outlined above and Shultz's (2007) models of global citizenship, I will be focusing on two bodies of knowledge as outlined by Andreotti (2006): critical global citizenship and soft global citizenship. Before exploring these, I will unpack the idea of a global citizen.

2.2.2 Global Citizens

Students participating under the global citizenship framework are generally classified as global citizens. Greek and Latin roots of the term citizen refer to a resident of a community, who possesses specific rights and privileges which accompany association to that community (Karlberg, 2008, p. 310). Today, the boundaries of citizenship have expanded beyond one's personal community to a more global perspective – the global citizen – although not yet as a legal construct (UNESCO, 2014, p. 14). The idea of the global citizen is becoming a significant discursive concept through which, it is believed, a more peaceful and just global social order may be achieved (Karlberg, 2008, p. 310). In one sense, being a global citizen encompasses an awareness of human interconnectedness: to be a global citizen is to “adopt a global perspective that allows one to see the experience of the local community as interconnected with the experiences of others around the world.” (Jefferess, 2008, p. 29). Fanghanel and Cousin (2012) define the global citizen as “an activist, being engaged in global economic debates, green issues, social justice, world poverty, etc.” (p. 41). Likewise, Oxfam defines a global citizen as a person who is “aware of the wider world and has a sense of their role as a world citizen, respects and values diversity, has an understanding of how the world works...” (Brown & Morgan, 2008, p. 284). Ikeda explains that students embodying ideas of global citizenship have “the compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places” (as cited in Schattle, 2008, p. 76). In other words, being a global citizen means adopting the elements of global citizenship education and putting them into practice. However, there is another element of being a global citizen that in

entrenched in power relationships and hierarchy: many definitions of global citizenry – and global citizenship education – mean that not everyone can actually be a global citizen. Jefferess (2008) defines the global citizen through an ethics of being: “the global citizen is one who “Stands Up and Speaks” and who works to “make poverty history”” (p. 27). The global citizen – often the Northern student spearheading the fundraising campaign – is “somehow naturally endowed with the ability and inclination to “help” the Other” (Jefferess, 2008, p. 28). Spivak (2003) illustrates how individuals living in the Global North are encouraged to believe that they live in the capital of the world, that they have the responsibility to help the rest of the world and that “people from other parts of the world are not fully global” (p. 622). The term global citizen insinuates a power dynamic: someone is the global citizen, while someone else needs to be served. Being a global citizen implies a certain status in the world – one which gives privilege and the ability to act to those in the Global North.

The master narrative of GCE presents a constant binary of *haves* versus *have not's*, of *us* versus *them*, and of the modern North and developing South. WE Charity has woven many binaries throughout its online promotional material – a common binary being the global citizen versus the beneficiary. The organization frequently presents an image of the Northern youth as the philanthropic global citizen (Me to We/About Us/Our Impact, 2016, para. 3-8). As reiterated throughout their marketing material, many of their programs aim to provide a “blueprint to raise a generation of active global citizens” (We Day/Files, 2014, p. 1). The idea of a global citizen creates a binary between those people who can be global citizens and those people who cannot. This point is echoed by Jefferess (2008), who argues that the idea of the global citizen “reflects both a social

positioning within unequal relations of power and an ethical distinction between those who help and those who are in need of being helped” (p. 27). Meaning, there are those who are capable of acting in a responsible way (the North) and those waiting for help (the South) (Vodopivec, 2012, p. 58). In other words, we have privileged students who get to discuss/evaluate/tackle the evil of poverty, while students in developing nations get to do little. Indeed, the very idea of global citizenship “has historically served to produce a particular kind of community marked by its difference from others: insiders and outsiders; those who belong and those who do not; those who have rights and those who do not” (Jefferess, 2008, p. 29). The problem is that this binary creates a hierarchy of value between Northern students and Southern students, where “the ‘self’ is empowered in relation to the deficiencies of the ‘Other’” (Smith, 1999b, p. 493). For example, WE Charity calls for its youth to become empowered through social action (Free the Children/Who We Are/About Us, 2016, para. 3). This empowerment, however, requires Others to have deficiencies, and allowing one side to exercise their privilege on the other reinforces this global citizen/beneficiary binary. The risk is that this practice can lead to attitudes of superiority amongst youth from the North (Tallon, 2012, p. 9) – making it easy for teachers and students in North America and Europe to look upon Southern nations as the Other and – at one extreme – think of them as failed versions of the Global North.

Whether or not definitions of global citizenship use terms like “helping others” or “offering empathy”, it is implied by its very nature that some people can be global citizens and some people cannot. In the context of this research, a global citizen is a student from the Global North; I will be exploring how Northern youth are positioned in

relation to the Global South, and the extent to which WE Charity's discursive language gives agency to the Global South, in comparison to the global citizen.

2.2.3 Soft Global Citizenship Education

Different understandings of what constitutes good global citizenship have given rise to different conceptions of global citizenship education. The construct of the global citizen – and global citizenship education – is seen as having both a political and moral dimension. Whereas the former addresses the root inequalities of power distribution in a global context (and places responsibility on the individual), the latter embraces the use of images and slogans that emphasize the need to be benevolent and compassionate.

Andreotti (2006) has classified this moral dimension as soft global citizenship education. Soft GCE is an approach based on moral and humanitarian grounds, universalism, awareness-raising and fundraising, imposed change, and colonial assumptions (Andreotti, 2006, p. 46-48) – building off the idea that individuals are morally-just, empathetic and charitable; in this light, global citizenship education “engages both the heart and the mind” (O’Sullivan, M. & Vetter, D., 2007, p. 18). Indeed, many Northern NGOs – including WE Charity – who work in development, tend to frame the Global South to singular ideas embedded in grand narratives of benevolence and charity. Like Andreotti, Brunell (2013) also recognizes this form of soft global citizenship, which he says hinges upon “developing a sense of moral responsibility for global problems” (p. 19). Likewise, Dower (2008) argues that someone who accepts global citizenship is making the claim that “all human beings have a certain moral status, and that we have moral responsibility toward one another in this global moral domain/ sphere or national community” (p. 41).

Individuals who adopt soft global citizenship see donations of time, expertise and resources as solutions to global poverty, and raising awareness about global issues and promoting campaigns are seen as effective strategies. A global citizen who adopts soft GCE sees change happening most effectively through Northern intervention, meaning that improvement happens when the North is present in the Global South in some capacity or another. Through the enactment of soft GCE, participants can expect to achieve a greater awareness of global issues and greater motivations to help (Andreotti, 2006, p. 46-48). In other words, if students are engaged in volunteerism or fundraising, they will be more apt to embrace the ideals of being a ‘good’ global citizen and reiterate popular enduring philanthropic practices. Soft global citizenship gets enacted in many ways; for my research, I will be looking at two methods of soft global citizenship commonly used by WE Charity to engage students in acts of global citizenship: charity fundraising and international volunteering. An overview of the history and impact of Northern benevolence is integral to understanding these two acts of soft GCE, and I will address this below.

- i. The Idea of Benevolence

Framed by the parable of the Good Samaritan and the monastic charities of the Middle Ages, Christian discourses of benevolence have long permeated Northern society. Although initial acts of charity were perhaps more about securing personal salvation for the giver (Gorsky, 1996, p. 233), the rhetoric of helping has become much more focused on alleviating poverty and promoting social justice. Such generosity – freely given by individual people, educational institutions and organizations – allows for engagement in

direct acts of compassion and connection to other people. According to Beirhoff (1987), altruistic acts have been defined as involving particular components including:

- a) an intention to help another person; b) that the act is initiated by the helper voluntarily; and c) that it is performed without expectation of reward from external sources (...as cited in Radley & Kennedy, 1995, p. 686).

However, as Nutt (2011) points out, “doing good” also rewards the charitable giver by providing meaning to their own life, offering a respite from materialism, and fostering a sense of belonging and purpose (p. 136). Additionally, Benson and Catt (1978) note that people are more likely to give when those in need make an appeal that leaves the giver “feeling good”, rather than feeling guilty (as cited in Radley & Kennedy, 1995, p. 687). Charity also encompasses the idea of choice: its validity depends on the scope it provides for individuals to choose whether or not to give (Radley & Kennedy, 1995, p. 687), and whether or not to receive.

In regards to GCE, the idea of benevolence is often referred to as humanitarianism or international aid. The modern (Northern) humanitarian system can, for most intents and purposes, identify its conceptual and institutional roots in the nineteenth century (Davey, Borton, & Foley, 2013, p. 5). The time period after the First and Second World Wars in particular marked the beginning of a period of “unprecedented international concern for the protection of human rights” (Clapham, 2007, p. 42). Within these postwar frameworks, many aid groups were established (Oxfam, Save the Children, World Vision and CARE), framing the current model of the independent NGO (Nutt, 2001, p.110). These NGOs soon began encouraging citizens of Europe and North America to exercise

their social responsibility in response to various human rights injustices occurring across the globe. Such ideas of benevolence, social responsibility, and humanitarian aid are anchored, as Nutt (2011) reminds us, to “the myth of a poor, nebulous “Other”” (p. 135). This is what motivates individuals of the North to give, and it is a combination of these elements of altruism – doing good to help others/the Other and doing good to help oneself – which have shaped the way GCE is being enacted in the Global South. In addition to this, charitable development work is also influenced by the concept of cosmopolitanism: the ideology that all humans are connected through a shared sense of morality. Cosmopolitanism is connected with the idea of universalism and with the “dissolution of difference into a universal whole” (Koczanowicz, 2010, p. 414). Cosmopolitanism, Appiah (2006) contends, requires that we value particular human lives and that every human being has an obligation to every other (...as cited in Jefferess, 2008, p. 30): it constitutes “an obligation to the Other despite perceived differences” (Jefferess, 2008, p. 32). This sense of obligation towards humanity could be considered a driving force behind international volunteerism and charitable campaigning: helping others, regardless of differences.

In the context of this research, benevolence is used as a method by NGOs to engage students in fundraising campaigns and volunteerism. These campaigns can range from a simple bake sale for a Ugandan orphanage, a vow of silence to promote universal human rights and sending used clothing to distant places, to more massive events like World Vision’s 30 Hour Famine or WE Day. Students raise funds and awareness for a particular Global South issue and send the charitable donations back to the NGOs in the

hopes that these donations will make a difference. Groups like WE Charity are required to compete for charitable donations from individuals, schools and organizations in a market saturated with like-minded NGOs. This focus on charitable campaigning – which include flashy, attractive and marketable one-off fundraisers – can make it difficult to approach global citizenship education from a critical mindset. Often, NGOs are praised for their benevolence, rather than challenged on how their work may promote a power imbalance between the North and Global South: as Jefferess (2008) notes, the notion of aid retains the Other as an object of benevolence (p.28). The Northern student is in a privileged position to help the Other, and the recipient of the charity – the Global South – is often unable to reciprocate.

Charitable giving is about constructing and sustaining relationships between the recipient and the charity through which the donation is made (Radley & Kennedy, 1995, p. 705). The power imbalances created by charitable giving has the potential to construct a potentially negative relationship between the donor and the recipient. Governments of countries in the Global South – wanting to achieve development ideals set out by the Global North – accept foreign aid in order to help improve their infrastructure (Begum, 2001, p. 51). In many cases, the aid is “not given without motive on the part of the donor countries or agencies” (Begum, 2001, p. 51). As Nutt (2011) poignantly reminds us, “that aid can be manipulated to prop up corrupt, oppressive regimes or become a form of political and cultural imperialism is not even in debate” (p.109). From this perspective, aid maintains unequal power dynamics between the North and the South – reinforcing an often patronizing and paternalistic relationship reminiscent of past colonial relations.

The benevolence offered by NGOs through the development process is meant to help end global inequalities and social injustices. This is problematic however, as the delivery of aid establishes conditions of power and inequality between the Global South and the North. Students and organizations – bent on “shameless idealism” (Free the Children/Who We Are/Our Team, 2016, para. 1) and good Samaritanism – may impose Northern values, knowledge, and charity onto the Global South without questioning how these acts are framed within colonial undertones. Smeyers and Waghid (2010) highlight this challenge: it is difficult, if not impossible, to “justify a particular idea of the good life that can be shared by all or at least many” (p.450). In other words, Northern intervention is threaded with ideas of how development should look – how education is delivered, how clean water is accessed, how unemployment should be tackled – and these ideas are based on Northern values, customs and knowledge systems. The Global South is thus expected to uncritically accept benevolence and adopt the norms established by the North.

iii. Charity Fundraising

Both students and educators alike participate in globally-focused charitable campaigns in attempt to promote ideas of social responsibility and benevolence. The idea, as explained by Karlberg (2010), is that if students “grow up immersed in discourses of social justice and equality, of caring and compassion, of humanitarianism...then [they] are likely to perceive the world in those ways, to act accordingly, and to support and participate in corresponding social institutions (p. 311). Likewise, Ibrahim (2005) highlights the need for teachers to provide opportunities for youth to actively participate

in school-based activities and projects related to global civil society (p. 192). One way this compassion manifests itself is through charitable fundraising on international issues: WE Charity (2015), for instance, hosts an annual We Are Silent campaign to raise awareness for “the millions of girls around the world facing poverty, exploitation and the denial of their right to education” (Free the Children/We are Silent Campaign/Take a Vow, 2015, para. 1). The organization – under the intonation “take a silent stand so others can be heard” – urges students to stop talking for a single day. World Vision Canada is currently encouraging Canadian youth to go on water walks in order to raise awareness on clean water shortages in the Global South. During the water walk, youth are encouraged to “fill some old pop bottles or jerry cans with water, and carry those during [the] walk” (World Vision Youth Canada/Water Walk, 2015, para. 5). Additionally, World Vision’s 30 Hour Famine campaign – “Go Hungry to Help Hungry Kids” – has students raise funds for the organization, and plan a celebratory event where participants do not eat for thirty hours (World Vision/Thirty Hour Famine, 2014, para. 1). Oxfam Canada hosts a similar campaign called Hungry4Change, where students fast for a period of time and raise funds, allowing the organization “to continue working to eradicate poverty and promote gender justice and human rights” (Oxfam Canada/Hungry4Change, 2015, para. 1). Plan Canada offers educators Poverty Toolkits to help students learn about ‘world poverty’ and plan fundraisers for the organization (para. 1).

The above campaigns are justified as being both beneficial to students and those recipients living in the Global South. However, concerns have been raised regarding students who may be experiencing superficial and simplistic understandings of the Global South through these acts of benevolence: they may be “locked into ‘ways of seeing’ that

are influenced by several factors including... the emphasis on the drive to ‘make a difference’ through charity” (Tallon, 2012, p. 9). Additionally, these benevolent campaigns are seen as only offering “short-term simplistic solutions based on small financial or time sacrifices” and generally avoid more complicated structural issues (Tallon, 2014, p. 1409). Nutt (2011) argues that “the myth of humanitarian assistance and aid... is that there is a simple linear relationship between good intentions and improved lives” (p.118). Funds raised from a bake sale for a rural school in the Global South may send the false message to students that their efforts have solved the systemic problem of poverty. Nutt (2011) further explains that “these campaigns reduce ubiquitous inequalities to simple messages designed to make us believe that these don’t matter as much as one child whose future is in our hands” (p. 136). As Jefferess (2008) reiterates, charitable acts of humanitarian aid may be a means of helping, but “it does little to transform the situation which produces the child’s suffering” (p. 34). From this perspective, while aid-giving helps Northern students feel good, it does little to provide any meaningful understanding of global inequality.

Criticisms of aid appeals routinely highlight the problem of surface campaigning: they are relatively ineffective at promoting meaningful global citizenship education. Urry (2000) notes that:

The most people want is to be a part of a small community concerned about the plight of the Amazonian rainforest, the war in Bosnia, the famine in Ethiopia, but not cognitively to understand the nature of such events or what might be seriously done to eliminate them (p.181-182).

In this sense, global citizens – under soft GCE – want to partake in feel good campaigning and feel responsible for changing/saving the world, but do not want to engage in problem-solving global inequities beyond a surface level. Tallon and McGregor (2014), in their research regarding the emotional consequences of development education, argue that “the emotional campaigns waged by NGOs lead to one-off solutions to global poverty and offer teachers an easy option of closure for a topic” (p. 1409). Instead of exposing the systemic issues surrounding inequality and poverty, these simplistic models of charity can result in an “after we’ve fundraised, we can forget about them” mindset (Tallon & McGregor, 2014, p. 1409). They go on to further explain that much of what passes for development education is simply surface awareness of issues, with “minimal attention given to deeper learning and understanding” (Tallon & McGregor, 2014, p. 1409). In other words, a charitable fundraiser for an overseas issue may give students the impression they are tackling development issues on a deep level, when in reality, the initiative does not go beyond surface campaigning. Bryan (2011) argues that critical thinking, which should accompany discussions of inequality and social injustice, has been reduced to the charitable side, resulting in an approach to learning about development issues that is little more than “fundraising, fasting and having fun” (p. 6). Likewise, McCloskey (2011) argues that “cosmetic engagement with development issues... results in short-term public mobilization and disappointing outcomes” (p. 32). These surface campaigns – while offering attractive feel good approaches to GCE – do not acknowledge or engage with the complexities of power inequalities, nor do they engage in any deeper analysis of development practices.

Another prevalent criticism to charity appeals is the use of sensationalism in campaigning efforts. Sensationalism of the Global South comes from the attempt to raise awareness about issues regarding human rights violations, poverty, injustice, and inequality. Much of this stems from the development sector (NGOs), as it “appeals to emotions in its marketing and education material to raise awareness and funds for its work” (Tallon & McGregor, 2014, p. 1406). NGOs, in attempt to solicit funds for their programming, portray the recipients of charity “at their most vulnerable in order to elicit interest... among audiences who may not otherwise know or care about the plight of ‘distant others’” (Tallon & McGregor, 2014, p. 1407). It comes in many forms – from the trivialization of hunger in awareness-raising campaigns (like the 30 Hour Famine) to using images of poverty-stricken children (a phenomenon otherwise known as poverty pornography). Educators, who gather resources from NGO and media sources, may unintentionally use images of emaciated Southerners or photographs of a Northern person holding a group of sad-looking colored children – stripping these people of their dignity in order to elicit a shock factor for students. By placing an impoverished child on a poster (in an attempt to raise awareness to the public), victims are produced; they get “robbed of agency, of their right to have rights, to be included in the fight” (Vodopivec, 2012, p. 61). Nutt (2011) further explains this practice: it depicts the Other as “passive recipients of charity who are perpetually waiting for outsiders to change the circumstances of their lives” (p. 136). Instead of exposing the systematic causes of poverty, these techniques may only serve to further oppress the marginalized and perpetuate paternalism.

iv. International Volunteering

Perhaps one step above the charity paradigm are the international volunteer opportunities made available to students via soft approaches to global citizenship. These opportunities are experiences “that seek to blend student learning with community engagement overseas and the development of a more just society” (Bamber & Pike, 2013, p. 535). They provide opportunities to develop mutual understanding across cultures and create shared aspirations for social justice (Crabtree, 2008, 29). A more robust definition by Bamber and Pike (2013) state that these volunteer opportunities are structured academic experiences in which students:

- (a) Participate in organized service activity that addresses identified community needs;
- (b) learn from direct interaction and cross-cultural dialogue with others;
- and (c) reflect on the experience in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a deeper understanding of global and inter-cultural issues, a broader appreciation of the host country and the discipline, and an enhanced sense of their own responsibilities as citizens, locally and globally (p. 536).

International volunteering, including gap year programs for high-school graduates, have grown in popularity over recent years (Crabtree, 2008, p. 18). These service-learning trips give students in-country experience ‘doing good’ for Others: youth can interact and read to orphaned children, they can build a school, or they can work with locals to create development projects for a rural community in the Global South. Volunteering – especially in the Global South – is generally highly praised and admired in Western societies, as “adolescents who volunteer show stronger pro-social attitudes than youths who do not volunteer” (Rehberg, 2005, p. 120). The trips usually begin domestically, as

students and educators raise thousands of dollars to support their volunteer trip. They generally last anywhere from a week to an entire summer or semester (Crabtree, 2008, p. 19), and most students return home transformed and satisfied with their service. These cross-cultural experiences offer students a two-for-one combo of travel and philanthropy in a single trip.

A problem is that an international volunteer's privileged social position allows them to be perceived as solutions – sending the message that the problems of the Global South can be mediated by unskilled Westerners. Although youth come with good intentions to help, the majority do not possess the skills (Nutt, 2011, p.139) needed to improve the systemic problems of poverty and underdevelopment. When student volunteers take on the role of expert, regardless of their education or qualifications, this can be perceived as reinforcing the “neo-colonial construction of the westerner as racially and culturally superior” (Raymond & Hall, 2008, p. 531). As illustrated by Simpson (2004), organizations like WE Charity have been accused of promoting the idea that development can be done by non-skilled volunteer-tourists, which “perpetuates a simplistic ideal of development, [and] in turn legitimizes the validity of young unskilled Western labor as a development ‘solution’” (p. 682). These youth, simply by nature of their national identity and ability to pay, are given opportunities to exercise their inexperience in areas full of educated and skilled individuals. They return home with “international development experience,” opening up a wealth of educational and professional opportunities, based on privilege rather than skill.

It is at this point in which I would like to examine international volunteering through the lens of praxis and critical consciousness. Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's work helped illiterate individuals from marginalized and silenced communities obtain a voice and understand their political rights. His work, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, describes his ideas on the process of action (praxis) and reflection (critical consciousness): they are inseparable and a disconnect results in either mindless activism or empty theorizing:

In dialectical thought, world and action are intimately interdependent. But action is human only when it is not merely an occupation but also a preoccupation, that is, when it is not dichotomized from reflection (Freire, 1970, p. 53).

If we apply Freire's pedagogic concepts of praxis and critical consciousness to soft GCE practices, they can be used to illustrate both the imperialist nature of these initiatives and a potential for critical inquiry. Under the praxis and critical consciousness paradigm, it is not the nature of the charity appeal or volunteer work that determines its effectiveness, but rather the meaningfulness of reflection and understanding of those experiences. This is illustrated by Diprose (2012), on a discussion on praxis and critical consciousness within soft GCE:

It aims to develop students' critical awareness of their positionality and power in relation to others, as well as historical and structural forces that mediate these relationships. It raises awareness whilst also encouraging students to see how change is possible in their own actions, nurturing solidarity and ethical intervention. The measure of success in such an approach is not necessarily what volunteers achieve within projects, but their experiences of transformed

consciousness and what enduring impact, if any, this has on attitudes, values and behavior (p. 187).

This practice helps students become aware of power structures and their influence on global inequity, but not necessarily during the overseas experience. From a postcolonial perspective, the application of Freire's pedagogy to development education does not account for those living in the Global South. It is based much more on whether the overseas experience challenged, changed or expanded the Northern volunteers' perception of development upon their return home (Diprose, 2012, p. 188). It focuses on whether or not the lessons learned overseas can be applicable to the returnee's everyday lives. Many of the NGOs mentioned in this research include reflective practices in their volunteer and charity campaigns, but fail to indicate whether the recipients of the charity partake in the reflective process as well. However, the process of praxis and critical consciousness does make visible deeper understandings of why global poverty exists, and as such, Freire's pedagogy is thus reflective of an emerging methodology of development education called critical global citizenship education. By combining the development of critical consciousness with social action, it challenges students and teachers to construct new meanings and enactments of citizenship. It is at this point in which I will discuss this alternative form of GCE.

2.2.4. Critical Global Citizenship Education

In order to understand global issues, a multifaceted network of cultural and material local/global processes and frameworks needs to be scrutinized and unpacked. As research has shown, a failure to do so may lead to simplistic understandings of the world,

through which GCE initiatives will project Northern myths and beliefs onto the South as universal truths – reproducing colonial power relations. An alternative approach to soft GCE has been offered by Andreotti (2006) called critical global citizenship education (p.41). The critical GCE model of development education is partially framed around the concept of critical literacy (Andreotti, 2006, p.49) – which originates from the assumption that all knowledge is constructed based on our specific contexts, and is therefore incomplete because we lack the knowledge constructed in other contexts. If we engage in the perspectives of the Other, we can begin to transform our perspectives and identities to think otherwise (Andreotti, 2006, p. 49). In the context of development education, it is seen as a transformative pedagogy based on critical consciousness and symbiotic relationships amongst all participants (students, schools, and NGOs in both the Global North and Global South) (Costandius et al, 2014, p. 126). Critical GCE frames problems within the Global South as being part of a much larger structural issue of power and exploitation. It focuses on the assumptions, power relations and attitudes that maintain marginalization and silence of the South (Andreotti, 2006, p. 46). Such an approach to GCE recognizes how Northern and Southern elites impose assumptions as universal, and acknowledges the imperialistic and colonial undertones threaded through traditional ideas of development. This model aims to challenge the perceptions and attitudes of students in the Global North by “developing interactive experiential learning practices that would engage them in local social issues and concepts of racial and cultural difference” (Andreotti, 2006, p. 120). Whereas soft development educationists “support campaigns to change structures, donate time, expertise and resources,” critical development educationists “analyze one’s own position/context and participate in

changing structures, assumptions, identities, attitudes and power relations in their contexts” (Andreotti, 2006, p. 47). As Andreotti (2010) states, the role of “global citizenship education is one of decolonization: to provide analyses of how these inequalities came to exist, and tools to negotiate a future that could be ‘otherwise’” (p. 234). Critical GCE can therefore be used to disassemble post colonialist attitudes often found within the charity paradigm and international volunteerism.

Critical global citizenship education promotes change “without telling learners what they should think or do, by creating spaces where they are safe to analyze and experiment with other forms of seeing/thinking and being/relating to one another” (Andreotti, 2006, p. 49). In other words, students participating in critical GCE are encouraged to analyze how their own social, political and economic position maintains unequal power relations between the North and the South. They do not participate in cookie-cutter packages approaches to global citizenship commonly offered to educators and students by youth-focused NGOs, which often dictate how development is done and offer step-by-step ways of how to enact change. Students are empowered to reflect critically on their own cultural legacies and participate actively in changing assumptions, attitudes, structures, and power relations of traditional ideas of GCE. This alternate truth – while not wrapped up in feel good campaigning, overt idealism, and exotic volunteer trips to African savannahs – is one that may provide students an opportunity to enact the change they are seeking through soft approaches to GCE.

Critical global citizenship education is not without its criticisms. As Edelsky and Cherland (2006) remind us, the term ‘critical’ has essentially “become a buzzword” in educational pedagogy and lacks precise meaning (p. 18). Indeed, Andreotti’s descriptors

of critical GCE include very diverse expectations about what student should learn and how they should approach the pedagogy, and she does not provide concrete evidence of how critical GCE gets enacted in the classroom. Additionally, critical global citizenship education lacks an emotional dimension – a dimension commonly associated with the campaigning efforts of soft GCE – which can be a helpful strategy in attracting young people to the paradigm. Further, critical GCE removes the moral aspect of human connectedness – which Gray (2002) defines as a “feeling of compassion for the suffering of others” (p. 42) – and the desire to help others in order to improve their welfare. This feeling of compassion and concern for others, Gould (2007) argues, helps establish relationships of transnational solidarity, encouraging humanitarian aid during times of international crises (p. 158).

In the context of this research, my working understandings of global citizenship education is that it should prepare individuals in the Global North and Global South to work together through collaborative and un-coercive methods. I will be examining WE Charity’s promotional practices through the lens of critical citizenship education, while under the impression that GCE needs to be designed in a way that acknowledges the complexity, interdependence and inequalities between the Global North and Global South.

2.2.5. Regimes of Truth

Foucault (1980) describes sets of truths within a given field as a ‘regime of truth’ (p. 133): he notes that “each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth — that is, the types of discourse it accepts and makes function as true” (p. 131). Regimes

of truth describe those discourses that privilege ideologies of the dominant group, rather than the ideologies of the marginalized (Smith, 2010, p. 193). These truths – sanctioned as official knowledge – become reinforced and redefined within a society and generate specific ways of knowing and maneuvering through the world. In this sense, a regime of truth is not some absolute truth that can be discovered and accepted, but it is rather about “the rules according to which the true and false are separated and specific effects of power are attached to the true” (Foucault, 1980, p. 132). In other words, a regime of truth negotiates which ideologies become authoritative and which become oppressed, radicalized, or falsified.

In the context of GCE, there is a body of thinking about international charity and volunteering that is found within curriculum, NGO promotional material and popular media. The texts produced within these realms – which all exhibit shared language, concepts and methods – form the discourse on GCE and have collectively formed a regime of truth that encourages idealism, humanitarianism and personal empowerment (see: WE Charity, 2015; Oxfam Canada, 2015; World Vision, 2014). These regimes of truth – through the sanctioning of correct ways to become global citizens – frame how teachers and students understand and practice GCE and governs the desirable ways to think and feel about the paradigm. This is problematic, as the pedagogies at the heart of many GCE programs are based on an ethic of morality and often encourage students from the North to become forward-thinking activists, rather than critical thinkers. The problem with these officially-sanctioned regimes of truth is highlighted by MacNaughton (2005), who notes that “a consensus that rests on authoritative and officially sanctioned truth always silences alternative truths, marginalizes diversity and reduces it to abnormality”

(p. 28). However, as Foucault (1980) argues, we have the choice to privilege certain truths, and the possibility of choice offers the possibility of disrupting unequitable regime of truths (p. 133). Thus, it is possible to unsettle the officially sanctioned truths – with its inequitable effects – within GCE pedagogy. Disruption to popular discourses within the pedagogy is already occurring in research (Andreotti, 2010; Andreotti, 2006; Dobson, 2006; Jefferess, 2008; Jefferess, 2012; Murphy, 2011; Smith, 1999; Tallon, 2012; Vodopivec, 2012), but this research does not seem to be influencing the dominate discourses (soft global citizenship) used by Northern charities and non-governmental organizations working within schools across Canada.¹⁴

It is unsettling to disrupt a regime of truth because we invest in that truth both emotionally and politically. Indeed, criticizing humanitarianism and charity is risky: to force people to look through different lenses mean being critical of resilient philanthropic discourses that maintain the status quo in the North. These discourses have historically used charity as a way to improve the welfare of others, especially those individuals living in the South; by introducing a new regime of truth – the truth that international charity is ineffective and colonial in nature – one calls into question people’s understanding of their own sense of decency and morality.¹⁵ In popular Northern culture, an individual is

¹⁴ The Global North is home to many international NGOs whose mandate is to raise awareness about poverty and inequality in the Global South. Indeed, as Tallon (2012) argues, information about the Global South is predominately being supplied to students and teachers through these NGOs (p. 8). Many of these organizations offer school-based programs – ones that have students volunteering and fundraising – which are formulated to meet curricular standards. For instance, War Child’s *Get Loud* program provides lesson plans, educator manuals and study guides on current global issues, all of which are connected to various provincial curriculums (War Child/Get Loud, 2016, n.p.). A problem, however, is that voices from the Global South in NGO resources are sometimes muted, misrepresented or missing (Tallon, 2012, p. 10). The other issue is that many NGO campaigns promote one-off solutions to global poverty and offer teachers an easy option of closure for a topic (Tallon & McGregor, 2014, p. 1409).

¹⁵ Foucault (1992) defines morality as “a set of values and rules of action that are recommended to individuals through... various prescriptive agencies such has the family... educational institutions, churches, and so forth” (p. 25).

bestowed a particular moral status through their charitable actions, and a dismissal of the practice discredits the means by which people achieve this particular sense of intrinsic goodness. Because popular discourse supports the image of the philanthropic Northerner, a disruption – one that turns the Northerner into the perpetrator instead of the solution – may be met with resistance and contempt. In this research, I will offer possible alternatives to soft global citizenship education that embrace the ideals of critical GCE, which WE Charity could employ as methods to encourage young people to conceptualize their own positioning in the global context.

2.3 Applying the Discourses to WE Charity

While I was able to find critical research regarding WE Charity's positioning of a global citizen and their emphasis on consumerism as a form of social activism (DeCaro, n.d; Jefferess, 2012), I was unable to find information concerning how the organization uses benevolence as a form of social activism, their practice of Othering, or the extent to which their discursive language promotes colonialist attitudes among their global citizens. My research will help fill in this gap by addressing these three issues specifically, through a postcolonial framework.

As this chapter has shown, not only is postcolonial theory an investigation into the origins of colonial oppression, but it is also an exploration into the persisting colonial hierarchies of knowledge and power that continue to influence relations between the North and South. As such, my research is based on the assumption that colonialism continues to extend its power in the present day, although through different means. As I unpack WE Charity's popular discourses, I will try and make visible these colonial

undertones. In addition to this, I will consider the ways the organization uses both soft and critical approaches to GCE in their practices.

Although Andreotti (2006), Jefferess (2012;2008) and DeCaro (n.d.) are critical of soft approaches to global citizenship education, they all remain hopeful that the pedagogy has the potential to offer students a chance to meaningfully participate in acts of social justice. This being said, it is also important to recognize that soft GCE is also appropriate to certain contexts (Andreotti, 2006, p. 49). Fundraising and charitable-giving may assist in encouraging empathy among Northern students in primary and elementary school. Involvement on an overseas initiative may help both Northern and Southern youth volunteers gain an understanding of the diversity of people, cultures, values and ways of life across the globe (UNESCO, 2014, p. 34). In the process, both may acquire positive self-images, newfound confidence in their own creative abilities and the desire to collaborate with others across cultural differences. Additionally, involvement in these soft approaches to GCE may also provide opportunities for Northern youth to engage in more critical perspectives, depending how they choose to analyze these experiences. The challenge is to accept a weightier responsibility than running a local fundraiser for WE Charity's development pillars, or volunteering overseas on one of their projects; as Dobson (2006) puts it, it is about accepting the responsibility that "most of us not merely let people starve but also participate in starving them" (as cited in Andreotti, 2006, p. 43). As I will show through my methodology, the challenge is about making visible oppressive discourses that mask these weightier responsibilities with lighter, more feel good tactics, and reframing them to promote more equitable and socially-just approaches to GCE.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I lay out the plan for my research. Two underlying aspects threaded throughout this thesis are power and language within the Global North/Global South paradigm. I explore them in the context of qualitative research, and more specifically, within the framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and document analysis. I start by conceptualizing the notion of power, which is an important concept within CDA. Then I define the general meaning of discourse, and elaborate on the specific aspects of discourse that frames the context of this research. Following this, I define and outline my methodological choice of critical discourse analysis, and review how this is relevant within the field of global citizenship education. Finally, I present the specific methods of my research –using critical discourse analysis to carefully and meditatively unpack the all-encompassing and power-laden discourses that lay within WE Charity’s texts regarding how development should be done, and how the Global North is positioned against the Global South.

3.1 The Notion of Power

For my research, I am framing my understandings of power within Foucauldian perspectives. Foucault (1978) understands power as an all-encompassing force:

Power is everywhere: not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. ... Power is not an institution, nor a structure, nor a possession. It is the name we give to a complex strategic situation in a particular society (p. 93).

Meaning, power is embodied, enacted and integrated in all aspects of society, and is not just possessed by a privileged few. In regards to global citizenship education, this understanding produces the reality that power is not only enacted by those in the North over the South in a totalizing way – those in the South are also involved in negotiating its points of articulation. Although traditional ideas of GCE allocate power and agency to the global citizens,¹⁶ Foucault’s ideas remind us that those in the Global South are not passive dupes, they also possess agency. On this note, Foucault (1991) also recognizes that power is not simply a negative and repressive concept; he recognizes it as a productive force in society – this is to say, one that produces meanings, behaviors and truths:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’, it ‘abstracts’, it ‘masks’, it ‘conceals’. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production (p. 194).

For Foucault, power is both a reductive and productive force; it has the ability to generate change in individual behavior and in society as a whole, be it constructive or destructive. From this perspective, power is not only understood as power over others, but as a relation that can be renegotiated – often through struggle – to put in place different realities. In regards to global citizenship education, this type of understanding can open up new ways of thinking about Northern involvement in the Global South. Meaning, traditional GCE approaches to development in the South – Northern fundraising and

¹⁶ WE Charity frequently reminds its participants that global change is their responsibility, and it is “up to them to lift people out of poverty” (Decaro, n.d., p. 9).

volunteering – can be reframed to redistribute agency and power. As a productive force, power can also reshape and redefine the authoritative role of the global citizen. As such, for the purpose of my research, power is seen as both a tool of oppression against and utility for the Global South.

3.2 Defining Discourse

In a practical sense, discourse is the transmission of messages – verbal and non-verbal – that are passed along from the sender to the recipient; it is a way to communicate, create and share knowledge. Underlying the term is the general idea that language is organized into different arrangements and patterns which people use to communicate within different domains of social life (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 1). Meaning, the language used within educational discourse will form different patterns than the language used within, for instance, political discourse or scientific discourse. Discourse concerns the ways in which language works in our interactions with individuals and the world – thus shaping and influencing the political, cultural and social landscape. McEwan (2009) states, “discourse refers to the ensemble of social practices through which the world is made meaningful” (p. 121). Indeed, GCE prescribes meaning to the practice based on the language used to describe the pedagogy; the different discourses –humanitarian, environmentalism, cosmopolitanism, and neocolonialism – determine how development gets enacted. From this perspective, we can understand discourse as a particular way of talking about and understanding the world. Because we are surrounded by discourses – we participate in them and create them – they both determine and reflect reality. On the same note, discourse also cannot be pinned down to

one meaning because of its diversity of application (Mills, 2001, p. 6); language is unstable – its meaning cannot be permanently fixed – and is based on the customs, culture, social contexts, location and individual to which it is attached. In addition to this, no discourse is an isolated entity: it is continually being shaped through contact with other discourses (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 6). The discourses within socio-political, economic and cultural spheres are always intersecting, expanding and overlapping; meaning that people can be enabled or constrained by multiple discourses at any given point, reacting to them, reflecting them, and at points, being limited by them. Due to the sheer fluidity of its meaning, it is thus difficult to both confine and track down the meaning of discourse. In my research, I will be focusing specifically on one aspect of discourse: the power embedded within language.

Working with the ideas of Foucault, who has elaborately researched the relationship between power and knowledge, Weedon (1987) categorizes discourse to be:

[W]ays of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and the relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the ‘nature’ of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects which they seek to govern (p. 108).

In regards to my own research, I am interested in how power operates in the discourse of global citizenship education, and have chosen to use both Weedon’s (1987) and Jaeger’s (2001) definition of discourse: Jaeger (2001) regards discourse as “the flow of knowledge – and/or all societal knowledge stored – throughout all time, which determines individual and collective doing and/or formative action that shapes society, thus exercising power”

(p. 33). This view has been famously framed by Foucault (1980), who notes how truth and knowledge are underpinned by power dynamics and are socially constructed (p. 133). Discourses negotiate power between and among individuals, and as Jaeger (2001) notes, “they contribute to the structuring of the power relations in a society” (p. 37). Likewise, Habermas (1977) claims that “language is also a medium of domination and social force. It serves to legitimize relations of organized power” (as cited in Wodak, 2001, p. 2). In this sense, we must recognize that discourses not only influence how we view and interact with the world, but they form/reinforce/hide power relations; in the context of GCE, this means discourses will impact how we interact with the Other, how we approach development, and how we both challenge and comply with global inequality. With WE Charity, the construction of knowledge – and the power hidden within – presents itself in the texts the organization uses to engage Northern students in GCE. Since discourses are the medium used to understand reality and gain knowledge (Pastran, 2014, p. 46), inquiring into discourses of development within global citizenship education serve as a starting point to disrupt unequal power dynamics. As such, I acknowledge that although one can be constrained by a discourse, one can also have agency within it. The careful examination of patterns within WE Charity’s texts may problematize practices of soft global citizenship education, making room for subjugated knowledge to emerge. A more critical understanding of how power operates within the organization’s discursive practices can perhaps reframe how young people understand and participate in development in the future. It is at this point that critical discourse analysis can be used to analyze these oppressive patterns.

3.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

There are multiple approaches to examining discourse – including the power relations found within them – and critical discourse analysis is the approach I am choosing to use in my research. I am interested in how language operates in oppression and I accept the idea that language is fundamental in enforcing a hierarchy of value. To engage in critical discourse analysis is to question a text under the assumption that no text is impartial or neutral. In particular, the methodology takes an interest in the relationship between language and power; it is often used as a way to deconstruct meanings of texts in order to determine power relations and marginalization. “Discourse analysis... aims to identify the knowledge (valid at a certain place at a certain time) of discourses and/or dispositives, to explore the respective concrete context of knowledge/power and to subject it to critique” (Jaeger, 2001, p. 33). Critical discourse analysis, or CDA, is a “type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). Discourse analysis is a dismantling of language to uncover power relations, and exposure to these unequal power relations can thus aid in the implementation of social justice. As such, Huckin (2002) states, “the main purpose of critical discourse analysis is to understand how people are manipulated by public discourse and thereby subjected to abuses of power” (p. 158). Once these workings of power are uncovered, steps can be taken towards more equitable practices; the problem is that mainstream discourses are often disguised as natural. Thus, as illustrated by Wodak and Meyer (2001), CDA destabilizes these naturalized discourses through the investigation of social inequalities as they are “expressed, signaled,

constituted, legitimized and so on by language use” (p. 2). In this sense, CDA dismantles meanings within texts and uncovers how power circulates. The methodology can show how public discourse often serves the interests of powerful forces over those of the less privileged (Huckin, 2002, p. 159). In the context of this research, discourse analysis will reveal how the global citizenship programs used by WE Charity serve the interests of students in the North at the expense of individuals living in the South.

CDA approaches share common aims and principles – with the goal of bringing about change through critical understanding. According to van Dijk (1993), the aims of CDA are to help uncover social problems caused by inequitable power relationships, help people understand the real meanings of texts, and encourage people to take “corrective actions” after disclosure of any power imbalances or inequalities (p. 252-254). In conjunction with these aims, van Dijk (1993) outlines various principles of CDA: it address social problems; it views society and culture as historical; it deals with discursive power relations; it sees discourse as representative of culture and society; and it is an interpretive and explanatory methodology (p.252-254). These principles have to be used when using CDA as a research methodology (Gonsalvez, 2003, p. 53).

A fundamental component of CDA is the deconstruction of a text. Deconstruction is a tactic used to dismantle texts in order to reveal power relationships, presumed truths and contradictions (Mac Naughton, 2005, p. 58). It acknowledges the connection between language and power – and through the dismantling of language, it can be used to disrupt hierarchies. It can help us make sense of how we build and reinforce our worldviews through our language choices. Alloway (1995) writes that “deconstruction questions the

meanings of words or concepts (ideologies, practices, texts) that are normally unquestioned using ... a form of analysis which exposes the multiplicity of possible meanings, contradictions and assumptions underlying our understandings and ways of knowing” (as cited in MacNaughton, 2005, p. 57). When we scrutinize the assumptions embedded within our language, we can begin questioning how these assumptions both reinforce privilege and maintain oppression.

It is at this point I would like to discuss the role of ideology in discourse theory. For some theorists, discourse is an umbrella term within which exists a range of different ideologies, while for others, ideologies are manifested through a variety of different discourses (Mills, 2001, p. 46). For my methodology in particular, ideology is seen as an important feature of establishing and maintaining unequal power relations (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 10). As ideological assumptions become normalized (made into truths), they serve to legitimize prevailing social relations and differences of power. Fairclough (1989) argues that “the exercise of power, in modern society, is increasingly achieved through ideology, and more particularly through the ideological workings of language” (p. 2). If dominant ideologies can be dismantled, they can reveal how existing power relations help to sustain and reproduce the status quo. Hodge, Kress and Jones (1979) draw attention to the importance of language in the study of ideology:

Ideologies are sets of ideas involved in the ordering of experience, making sense of the world... The systems of ideas which constitute ideologies are expressed through language. Language supplies the models and categories of thought, and in part people's experience of the world is through language (p. 81).

In this sense, it is difficult to separate language from ideology, as ideologies can only be expressed through language – whether it is verbal or nonverbal. Language also reflects the structure of the society in which it is used. According to Fairclough (1989), “nobody who has an interest in relationships of power in modern society, can afford to ignore language” (p. 3). It is through the dismantling of language that ideologies – apparent or covert – are conveyed. WE Charity, for instance, uses multiple volunteer testimonials in its online promotional material. These testimonials are used as a method to educate future volunteers and convey ideas of development, volunteering, the Global South, and benevolence. These testimonials have the power to frame the volunteers and the Other in certain contexts, and create a particular ideology around volunteerism in the Global South and global citizenship. A dismantling of these testimonials, and the ideologies they embrace/enforce, is amenable through critical inquiry.

Within the context of GCE, critical discourse analysis can help identify oppressive discourses that obstruct and limit our understanding of global citizenship. Wodak (2001) reminds us that “every discourse is historically produced and interpreted, that is, it is situated in time and space and that dominance structures are legitimated by ideologies of powerful groups” (p. 3). In this sense, discourses in GCE serve to maintain the status quo, which largely maintains Northern NGO privileges and ideologies; GCE discourses are also situated in a particular time and space – the “critical aftermath” (McEwan, 2009, p. 82) – and certain truths (for instance, the idea that poverty in the South requires Northern intervention) are naturalized. However, according to Fairclough (1989), one can change truths through changes in discourse – for him, this is the view of

discourse as a creative process, as opposed to the view of discourse as a way to reinforce the actions of the powerful (as cited in Brognolli, 1992, p. 85). By dismantling the discursive framing of GCE, CDA can help in the understanding of how language shapes the concept of global citizenship. Through determining the oversight in citizenship education programs that lead to oppressive discourses, more equitable and critically conscious ideologies can emerge within the GCE landscape. CDA can not only help reveal the underlying motives and narratives that influence the direction of GCE within the school system, but help reveal how power operates in the popular discourse of GCE. Educators can then use that knowledge to help raise teacher consciousness on oppressive or inequitable practices within GCE and take up a critical perspective in regards to where global citizenship ought to go next.

3.4 Document Analysis

A document is a written text (Ahmed, 2010, p. 2). To engage in document analysis is to conduct a form of qualitative analysis in which the researcher interprets and attempts to give meaning to a text (Gonsalvez, 2013, p.68). Textual content can also be coded into themes, and I am using this thematic approach within my own inquiry. The document analysis method is “used in investigating and categorizing physical sources, most commonly written documents, whether in the private or public domain” (Ahmed, 2010, p.2). Yanow (2007) asserts that:

Document reading can also be part of an observational study or an interview-based project... They may corroborate observational and interview data, or they may refute them, in which case the researcher is ‘armed’ with evidence that can

be used to clarify, or perhaps, to challenge what is being told, a role that the observational data may also play (p. 411).

Scott (1990) reminds us that documents “must be studied as socially situated products” (p. 34), meaning that texts are not isolated entities which exist outside of discourse or meaning. In this sense, document analysis is not a mere summary or description of a text, but rather an investigation of the motivation and purpose of a document within a particular context. Despite its usefulness in critical inquiry, Caulley (1983) asserts that “though document analysis is routinely carried out in program evaluation, its full potential is rarely tapped” (p. 28). Although resources and “literature on the subject of document analysis is very meager” (Caulley, 1983, p. 28), Prior (2003) provides some useful information regarding the nature of documents in organizations:

- a) Documents form a field for research in their own right, and should not be considered as mere props for action.
- b) Documents need to be considered as situated products, rather than as fixed and stable things in the world.
- c) Documents are produced in social settings and are always to be regarded as collective (social) products.
- d) Determining how documents are consumed and used in organized settings, that is, how they function, should form an important part of any social scientific research project.
- e) In approaching documents as a field for research we should forever keep in mind the dynamic involved in the relationships between production, consumption, and content (p. 26).

Document analysis is fitting for my study of GCE as there are numerous documents (volunteer testimonials, development policies and practices, teaching resources and country descriptors) that provide a wealth of textual research evidence on WE Charity's online material. According to Bohnsack, Pfaff and Weller (2010), documentary analysis is being used in cross-cultural contexts, "(e)specially in the field of youth research studies investigating young people's experience and orientations guiding action in different cultural and socio-economic settings" (p. 25). From this perspective, document analysis should be very suitable to a research study that is addressing how to renegotiate youth's engagement in GCE practices.

Document analysis is not without its challenges, and I want to acknowledge two areas of criticism. Document analysis has had an overlooked history in the social sciences, reducing its legitimacy within academic circles. As illustrated by Prior (2003), this method is not given the same scholarly weight as more quantitative approaches to research: she claims that "in most social scientific work, of course, documents are placed at the margins of consideration" (p. 4). Likewise, Bredo (2009) addresses the quantitative-qualitative hierarchy in research, speaking of the popular assumption that "quantitative research is the truly scientific form of education research that can (and should) be purified by separating it from qualitative research" (p. 442). Qualitative research is seen as an imaginary phase of inquiry that can be "verified" by quantitative research later on. However, Ahmed (2010) reminds us that document analysis is "just as good as and sometimes even more cost effective than the social surveys, in-depth interview or participant observation" (p. 2). From this perspective, textual documents

provide exemplary representations of ideas, intent, and meaning; they can be dismantled to reveal oversights and hidden power relations. One way to approach document analysis is through CDA, which focuses specifically on identifying discourses of oppression and narrative intent. As illustrated in the previous section, CDA is therefore a valuable research methodology.

There is also a risk in engaging with document analysis when researching the Global South. Tuck and Yang (2014) note that, in social science research, stories of pain and humiliation are considered the most compelling and authentic, and that researchers must learn to negotiate these documents without “serving up pain stories on a silver platter for the settler colonial academy, which hungers so ravenously for them” (p. 812). Document analysis of the discursive language used within GCE shows that it often recirculates the pain narratives of the Global South, as it highlights, uncovers and republishes images and texts of the marginalized and oppressed (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 812). As such, it is important to recognize that narratives and images of pain in social science research have the power to re-humiliate when circulated (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 811).

I will bring multiple narratives into my research, meaningfully pack them together, and hopefully arrive at alternative knowledge as to where global citizenship education ought to go next. However, as Tuck and Yang (2014) remind us, social science research is “favored reaping grounds are Native, urban, poor, and Othered communities” (p. 813). Although I am deconstructing how WE Charity uses narratives of pain within their discursive language, I have to be wary that my inquiry is framed within a field of

research that has been “over-coded” (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 811). I am actively seeking narratives of pain from an already marginalized, overly-researched, and overly-exploited group of individuals. I recognize the sensitive nature of analyzing these documents, and understand that I am in a position of power which allows me access to these documents. I must acknowledge the fine line between seeking patterns within these documents to find oppressive discourses within WE Charity’s framework, and seeking patterns which ignorantly pigeonholes marginalized individuals living in the Global South into a “globalized, homogenous, impoverished system of meaning” (Fox, 2008, p. 341). I outline how I approach document analysis within the framework of CDA next.

3.5 Research Method

I use critical discourse analysis and document analysis to help identify oppressive discourses used by WE Charity that obstruct, inform and limit our understanding of global citizenship education. I consider the scope in which WE Charity creates spaces for youth to engage in critical understandings of global inequalities by examining the discursive language and activities used by the organization to enact social change. I have decided to collect data from WE.org – the organization’s main source of distributing information regarding its programming. WE Charity’s website lends itself to critical analysis as the language it uses to position the North in relation to the South is read, repeated and used by thousands of educators and students (Free the Children/2014 Annual Report, n.d., p. 29). I have decided to use their website because (1) it provides detailed explanations regarding their development model; (2) it thoroughly outlines the eight countries where they work in the Global South; (3) it offers a wealth of local and

international volunteer testimonials; and (4) its design lends itself to easy access of multiple photographs and videos.

The website itself is divided into the three organizations of the WE franchise: WE Day, ME to WE, and WE Charity. Each of these can be accessed from the WE main homepage. I will be analyzing data from both the ME to WE and WE Charity pages. In the ME to WE section, I will be collecting data from the Trips section, which can be accessed on the top of the WE to ME homepage. This section breaks down the development model of the volunteer trips in the Global South, offers a multitude of volunteer testimonials, and provides an overview of the general logistics of the overseas program. I will be paying particular attention to their trip documentary page, where they offer multiple documentaries featuring youth and Canadian celebrities volunteering overseas on their many projects. Said (1994) reminds us that stories are “the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history” (p. xii), and I will be using the volunteers’ testimonials and stories to make visible how they are exerting their colonial identity during their time abroad. In the WE Charity section, I will be collecting data from the following three subsections: (1) About Us; (2) WE Movement; and (3) WE Villages. Each of these can be accessed at the top of the WE Charity homepage. I will be specifically collecting data from the subsections that outline the organization’s history, their development model, the country descriptors, and their use of charity. I acknowledge that the content on their website is susceptible to change, and is constantly evolving as the organization develops and changes its programs.¹⁷ This thesis is intended to provide a snapshot of the most recent material used by WE Charity.

¹⁷ Notably, while in the midst of my research, WE Charity did a complete overhaul of their webpage layout and organizational structure in July 2016.

In regard to the process of discourse analysis, I have read through the material multiple times, looking for deeper patterns (Andrus, Huckin, & Clary-Lemon, 2012, p. 119), and organized the data into the following three thematic areas: (1) the global citizen, (2) representations of the Southern Other, and (3) benevolence as discursive practice. I analyzed the data with a specific focus on identifying and problematizing WE Charity's emphasis on these three themes. I also paid particular attention to the extent to which the discourses within these three thematic areas were reproducing postcolonial norms. I continued adding material to each theme until no new information emerges, and each theme contained substantial data.¹⁸ I investigated how (1) WE Charity frames the concept of a global citizen and how they are positioned in relation to the Global South; (2) how the organization frames the South, and whether their discursive language promotes Northern heroism and Southern exoticism; and (3) the extent of which benevolence and feel good campaigning/volunteering masks critical understandings of global inequalities within their programming.

My analysis of WE Charity's framing of global citizenship was guided by the aforementioned thematic areas. In addition to the five overarching research questions I outlined in my introduction, here are the specific questions that informed my reading within each of these themes:

- i. The Theme of the Global Citizen
 1. How does WE Charity frame the concept of a global citizen?
 2. How does this framing influence WE Charity's perceptions of global citizenship?

¹⁸ It is important to clarify that I was open to creating new themes, as well as subthemes, depending on what my investigation had yielded.

3. Has the evolution of discursive sloganeering – from the victimized Other to the empowered global citizen – changed the colonial undertones within development narratives?
4. How does power operate within WE Charity’s discursive constructions of the global citizen? What power relationships inform and shape the rhetoric of the benevolent global citizen as a solution to global inequality?

ii. The Theme of the Exotic Other

1. How is Otherness framed within WE Charity’s discourses?
2. How is the postcolonial Other represented by WE Charity?
3. How does this representation of the Other influence WE Charity participants’ perceptions of global citizenship education?
4. To what extent is WE Charity’s Other given power within the organization?

iii. The Theme of Benevolence

1. What are the regimes of truth (Foucault, 1980) within the WE Charity’s program pedagogies and how do these truths dictate how youth are expected to tackle global issues?
2. How is benevolence (soft global citizenship) being enacted by WE Charity?
3. In what ways does WE Charity’s promotional material reinforce critical global citizenship practices?
4. What are the implications of benevolence as discursive practice on WE Charity youth’s engagement in GCE?

When I left Ethiopia, and then Kenya a few years later, I had no idea of my complicity in colonial discourses which privileged my own social positioning in the world. I was surrounded by language that praised my involvement in international development, and I truly believed that my work was carving a path towards social justice. Upon return from the Global South, I endorsed a truth that my work had been impactful, and passed this along to my family, friends, students and colleagues. Indeed, I was in control of the knowledge I collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to my own community at home. Moulard-Leonard (2012) writes, “it is a peculiar privilege of oppressors everywhere to claim monopoly on truth-making, be it through imperialist history-making, attempts to control language, or projection of their shadows upon those they marginalize” (p. 832). Indeed, if we recognize that Northern volunteers monopolize truth-making – they maintain the master narratives of their experiences – then we must recognize that the truths of the Southern countries will be marginalized. Likewise, Morales (1998) writes that “one of the first things that colonializing powers do is to control the story of who the colonized think they are” (as cited in Moulard-Leonard, 2012, p. 834). I believed that my host communities were impoverished and held many deficiencies – alongside their exotic and romantic components I had imagined and admired – and I actively sought out narratives of pain. As I question the intentions behind the agency I had felt as a volunteer, I am slowly unpacking the layers of oppression I once endorsed. Now, in lieu of activism, I feel that I am carving out a path of critique towards current Eurocentric practices within the global citizenship framework – thus honoring the commitment to social justice I had once made as an international volunteer

myself. Although such a critique is risky and disruptive, I have to believe that we can engage ourselves and our students in social justice practices in ways which are critically conscious and ethical. Once we recognize how certain GCE pedagogies have constructed a white savior view of the world, we can begin dismantling these structures in order to act more equitably.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: THE GLOBAL CITIZEN

Clichés of the Northern philanthropist venturing into the heart of the Global South have long permeated Northern imagination. As such, a considerable body of literature – at times contradictory, at times complementary – has developed regarding the discourses surrounding who this Northerner is and the role they are expected to assume (Andreotti, 2010; Barker et. al, 2014; WE Charity, 2015; Jefferess, 2012; Oxfam, 2015; Simpson, 2005; Simpson, 2004; World Vision, 2015). The discursive evolution of language used to describe the Northerner in the South – first as an explorer, a colonizer, and a savior; then as a humanitarian, a helper, and a global citizen – establishes the parameters of how human development is approached: at one extreme, the Northerner changes, improves, educates and saves; at the other extreme, the Northerner learns from, collaborates and becomes empowered. Within these roles, Northerners have historically been given a narrative authority over the South: how the Global South is described and categorized – how it is collected, classified and then represented back to the North – rests on the shoulders of the Northern traveler. Within this, the Northerner paints an image of the South, positioning themselves as the central figure in the narrative and telling the story of the Other through a particular lens. Indeed, the story of development and humanitarianism has become primarily “about the helpers” (Barker et. al., 2014, p. 8). Today, being one of these helpers – or what current discourses have branded ‘global citizens’ – entails more than just extending benevolence into the Global South. Now, the Northerner is sent on two simultaneous journeys: an outward journey of cultural and geographic exposure and an inward journey of self-exploration. The image of the benevolent savior has largely – but by no means entirely – been replaced by the

empowered Northerner. These two images, among others, continue to be integral to global citizenship narratives, and this is evident within WE Charity's initiatives and overseas programs.

I am particularly interested in examining a pedagogical term commonly used in WE Charity discourse – the global citizen – in order to reveal how the use of this term influences their participants' understandings of global inequality. My critical inquiry is informed by the following questions:

1. How does WE Charity frame the concept of a global citizen?
2. How does this framing influence WE Charity's perceptions of global citizenship?
3. Has the evolution of discursive sloganeering – from the victimized Other to the empowered global citizen – changed the colonial undertones within development narratives?
4. How does power operate within WE Charity's discursive constructions of the global citizen? What power relationships inform and shape the rhetoric of the benevolent global citizen as a solution to global inequality?

I begin by examining the construction of the figure of the global citizen within WE Charity's promotional material. I unpack five reoccurring thematic constructions of the global citizen found throughout WE Charity discourse. Within this, I argue that WE Charity's framing of a global citizen reflects a social positioning of privilege where Northerners (a) are empowered in relation to the deficiencies of the Other; (b) can consume pre-packaged experiences of the Global South; (c) are given narrative authority; (d) claim deep understandings about the Global South; and (e) use volunteerism as a

means to travel. Drawing from Said's (1977) *Orientalism*, I explore the implications this framing has on WE Charity's perceptions of global citizenship and argue that the organization's programs release global citizens from their complicity in maintaining colonial systems of development. I then explore how the shift away from discourses victimizing the Global South and recent focus on the empowered individual has not changed the colonial undertones entrenched in development practices: in short, evolved sloganeering, becoming a member of the WE community, and working alongside the Global South has not transformed the relationship between the historically colonized and the historically colonizing. To conclude, I explore the relations of power operating within WE Charity discourses and the forces informing the rhetoric of the global citizen within the GCE paradigm. In this chapter, I search specifically for discourses that reflect colonialism. Davies (2000) notes that:

[B]y making the constitutive force of discourse visible and thus revisable, power shifts dramatically [...] [the subject] can begin to imagine how to reposition themselves, realign themselves and use the power of discourse they have to disrupt those of its effects they wish to resist (p. 180).

With this in mind, I intend to illuminate oppressive discourses operating in WE Charity's texts, in order to shift the power structures established by the organization which give authority to their global citizens.

4.1 WE Charity's Framing of a Global Citizen

A global citizen is an individual who identifies with both their local and global community (Jefferess, 2008, p. 27). Beyond this, the parameters of what it means to be a

global citizen are blurred. WE Charity, in particular, currently provides no active definition of a global citizen within their online promotional material. However, they periodically use the term when referencing their staff members and volunteers, describing themselves as a “movement of informed and compassionate global citizens motivated to shift the world” (Free the Children/2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 3). Likewise, they reference the term again when speaking of their participants’ agency to act: “Day after day, we work with youth from every corner of the world to empower the next generation of global citizens” (Free the Children/2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 35). Despite the lack of parameters contextualizing what it means to be a global citizen, WE Charity’s discursive language presents the idea that a global citizen is someone who has the agency to change the world: “[WE Charity] is part of WE which empowers people to change the world. WE invite you to join a community of people who are making the world a better place” (Free the Children, 2016, para. 3). Being directed solely towards Northern youth, this statement implies that the global citizen, first and foremost, is a Northern citizen. From this perspective, the global citizen is also seen as a philanthropic individual endowed with the responsibility to enact change on others (Others). Although WE Charity does not directly define what it means to “change the world,” they imply through their development model¹⁹ that it means to combat poverty, and all the problems – unemployment, lack of healthcare, lack of clean water, lack of infrastructure, lack of education – that arise as a result of this poverty. Such a framing has created a discursive space in which WE Charity’s norms, knowledge, and practices are defined and driven by this image of the global citizen. The boundaries of this image reveal themselves through

¹⁹ WE Charity approaches development through their WE Villages model, claiming it’s holistic approach will help break the cycle of poverty (Free the Children/Who We are/About Us, 2016, para. 5).

WE Charity's discursive language, which I will address through five themes in what follows.

i. The Global Citizen as a World Traveler and Explorer

Roddick (2008) makes the claim that global citizens are often “privileged individuals who have the opportunity to learn about the world, often through travel” (p. 55). This sentiment is echoed by Andreotti (2006), who notes that becoming a global citizen depends on whether or not a person has the “choice to traverse from the local to the global space” (p. 43). WE Charity currently offers seven volunteer trips globally. In addition to the volunteer projects, these trips give Northern youth the opportunity to experience the vibrancy and geography of far-off places. The organization frequently reminds its potential global citizens that their projects are “more than a stamp in your passport” (Me to We/Youth Trips, 2016, para. 1); they offer a chance to “explore a new culture” (Me to We/Youth Trips, 2016, para. 3) and experience “an adventure packed to the brim” (Me to We/Ecuador, 2016, para. 1). The allure of traveling to remote locations off the tourist trail is plentiful throughout WE Charity's online discourse. Language like “experience lush rainforests” (Me to We/Nicaragua, 2016, para. 1), “explore spectacular India” (Me to We/India, 2016, para. 1), and “explor[e] the savannah” (Me to We/Tanzania, 2016, para.1) are geared more towards a travel-savvy wanderer than a global citizen.

Alongside promises of school-buildings and orphanage visits, the discourses surrounding each overseas trip highlights additional promises of once-in-a-lifetime adventures: “Experience the sights and sounds of a new culture, and have one-of-a-kind

adventures led by expert local guides on a journey off the beaten path” (Me to We/Youth Trips, 2016, On Your Me To We Trip You Will Section). In addition to school-building in the Amazon rainforest, volunteers are told to expect immersion “in an indigenous culture on a rainforest adventure” (Me to We/Youth Trips, 2016, Where Do You Want to Go Section). Further, discourses promote exotic experiences on the Kenya trip, where volunteers can expect to “work alongside rural communities in the heart of the vast savannah” (Me to We/Youth Trips, 2016, Where Do You Want to Go Section). The Tanzania trip offers a wealth of exotic escapades:

Be among the first: the explorers, the adventurers, the leaders of change. Deep in Tanzania’s Longido District, in the shadows of Mount Kilimanjaro, travel to rural Maasai communities... Along the way, soak in the region’s unique history and culture, whether you’re learning Swahili... or exploring the savannah on an unforgettable safari (Me to We/Tanzania, 2016, para. 1).

The volunteer project itself is presented as a part of the overall trip, and thus the global citizen is inadvertently also branded as a traveler. Perhaps used to balance the arduous work of constructing a school or a new water system, the idea of trotting around a foreign country would appeal to a global citizen’s more adventurous – rather than benevolent – side.

Although many of WE Charity’s global citizens inevitably become world travelers once they embark on an overseas trip, the decision to promote the globetrotting aspect of a project constructs a particular image of the Global South within the organization, and puts to question the motivations of the global citizens themselves. I will unpack these issues below.

A Simplified Geography

WE Charity's categorization of their global citizens as world travelers is problematic in that the language used to describe their voyeur experiences has created a simple geography of the Global South: one that offers "prescribed cultural experiences" (Simpson, 2004, p. 683) and homogenizes vast geographical/social/cultural areas in order to be recognizable to a Northern imagination. The geography of all WE Charity's projects are presented in a similar manner –nostalgic, natural, and ancient destinations awaiting "discovery" by volunteers: in Ecuador, volunteers can expect "well-worn dirt paths lead[ing] into the jungle, where the thatched roofs of houses can be seen peeking out of the trees" (Me to We/Adult Trips/Ecuador, 2016, para. 1) and in India, volunteers can experience "a sundrenched landscape marked by towering white temples and wheat fields" (Me to We/Adult Trips/India, 2016, para. 1). This simplistic promotional approach – one that marries global citizenship with alluring geographical constructions – is consistent with Said's (1977) concept of an 'Oriental' space: "The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences" (p. 1). Such imaginative geography, Said (1977) argues, legitimizes a particular vocabulary – exotic, vast, indigenous – and a "universe of representative discourse peculiar to the discussion and understanding... of the Orient" (p. 71). Thus, the language used to depict the Global South characterizes it as mysterious, unknowable, and as a theatrical stage whose "audience, manager, and actors" are for the Global North (Said, 1977, p. 71). Furthering this point, Said (1977) recognizes how "human identity is not only not natural and stable, but constructed, and occasionally even invented out-right" (Said, 1977, p. 332). Such

homogenous descriptors of people and geography – relied on to produce colorful and recognizable imagery in the imaginations of WE Charity’s global citizens – produces an appealing backdrop for global citizens to both “do good” and be explorers. This is problematic, as these descriptors polarize the North and the South into binaries of modern/traditional, changed/unchanged, and complex/simple. In addition to the simplified geography, the variety of countries presented in WE Charity’s advertising seem to be firmly fixed into the simplified past: the India trip offers a “traditional prayer ceremony” (Me to We/Adult Trips/India, 2016, para. 5), the Ecuador trip offers immersion “in an indigenous culture” (Me to We/Adult Trips/Ecuador, 2016, para. 1), and volunteers on the Kenya trip can learn about the “traditional craft of beading” (Me to We/Adult Trips/Kenya, 2016, para. 6); as Echtner and Prasad (2003) explain, although the Global South is characterized as extravagant and exotic... the people inhabiting these legendary lands are characterized by their enduring peasant simplicity” (p. 669). Such a simplistic view of the Global South – of its citizens and geography – make it easy for global citizens to consume, assert their authority, understand and discover.

A Place to Discover

WE Charity also uses exploration discourses like “discover the spirit of the jungle” (Me to We/Adult Trips/Ecuador, 2016, para. 1) and “off the beaten path” (Me to We/Youth Trips, 2016, On Your Me To We Trip You Will Section) to create the historical image of the Northern explorer travelling through uncharted territory in the Global South. Such discursive language is reminiscent of colonial travelers’ stories, which were “generally the experiences and observations of white men whose interactions

with indigenous ‘peoples’ or ‘societies’ were constructed around their own cultural views” (Smith, 1999a, p. 9). In a sense, the Global South is presented as a canvas for global citizens to discover, understand and come to know. Continuing an argument first launched by Edward Said, Canton and Santos (2009) liken this to “the relationship of colonial anthropologist to the people and cultures they studied: non-Westerners were to learn about, not with or from” (p. 200). Indeed, travel to the Global South has always been fraught with Orientalist undertones: WE Charity volunteers embark on an overseas trip, experience a foreign culture, and return home with knowledge to share about the Global South. This is reminiscent of the early explorations of the Orient, in which it would be “reconverted, restructured from the bundle of fragments brought back piecemeal by explorers into lexicographical, bibliographical, departmentalized, and textualized Orientalist sense” (Said, 1977, p. 166). Volunteer testimonies found throughout WE Charity’s online material have positioned volunteer Northerners as the main observers of the Global South. As “explorers” (Me to We/Tanzania, 2016, para.1), they have fortified the recounting of their travels as authoritative.

WE Charity expresses its distance from colonial practices – frequently toting that they are “not about a hand out, but a hand up” (Free the Children 2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 10). However, they still make reference to colonialism’s historical roots: similar to Aime Cesaire’s description of the colonial benevolent initiative as being “spear-headed by the pirate, the opportunist, the adventurer and the merchant (as cited in Nayar, 2010b, p. 11), WE Charity’s trip descriptor for Tanzania writes, “be among the first: the explorers, the adventurers, the leaders of change” (Me to We/Tanzania, 2016, para. 1). Such discourses draw upon an image of the ‘first’ Northern explorers in the Global

South, and all the exoticism and adventure that comes along with it. As Simpson (2005) notes, the historical motivations for travel (to colonize) are not a forgotten legacy, and can be used to inspire current day travelers (p. 457). As a result, the construction of these volunteer experiences draws “direct lineage from the geographies constructed through and by colonialism” (Simpson, 2005, p. 457). In short, to conjure up the idea of the global citizen as being likened to a pioneer voyeur is rooted in colonial history. Global citizens do not exist separated from the past, their culture and their privilege: their power, their social positioning, and their history are all vested in their legacy as colonizers (Smith, 1999a, p.7).

A Desire to Travel

WE Charity’s positioning of their global citizens as world travelers also calls into question whether these youth are motivated by the desire to “change the world” or by a desire to travel. On a WE Charity promotional video for Kenya, a participant notes her lifelong desire to travel to Kenya, having had it “on her bucket list forever” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Kenya, 2016, 20:15). Indeed, the organization promotes their trips as offering global citizens a chance to “quench that travel bug” (Me to We/Why Me to We Trips are Different, 2016, If You Are Going to See the World Section). It seems natural that globetrotting youth would find a liking in combining a desire to travel with a desire to help, as it is a means by which youths can “stretch out beyond the local to draw in places from around the globe” (Desforges, 1998, p. 176). Nonetheless, Sin (2009) argues that many volunteer tourists are motivated more by a desire to travel than by a desire to help their host communities (as cited in Lyons et al, 2012, p. 362). His research finds that

“many volunteer tourists are typically more interested in fulfilling objectives relating to the ‘self’” (Sin, 2009, p. 497) or visiting exotic destinations (p. 481). Along the same lines, Broad (2003) suggests that motivations typically associated with volunteering are also associated with those of recreational travelers, such as “a search for fun, excitement, adventure, and meeting others” (p. 64). From this perspective, this makes the decision to volunteer abroad similar to conventional decisions that tourists make in deciding where to go on vacation.

ii. The Global Citizen as Having Authority over Others

A statistic on the WE Charity website informs potential volunteers that “95% of ME to WE Trip participants report feeling a strong sense of responsibility for the well-being of people in developing countries when they return home” (Me to We/School Trips, 2016, The Impact of Me to We Trips Section). Such a sense of responsibility aligns with Jefferess’ (2011) argument that, in Canada, to be a global citizen requires helping Others in need (p. 79). From this perspective, the idea of a global citizen insinuates a power dynamic: someone is the global citizen, while someone else needs to be helped. Furthering his point, Jefferess (2008) reiterates that the global citizen “reflects both a social positioning within unequal relations of power” (p. 27). Within this relationship – in which the North is naturally endowed with the ability to provide for the South – global citizens are given a certain sense of authority over the individuals they are “helping.” From this perspective, as global citizens, WE Charity’s youth “have the authority to speak of and for the suffering of Others” (Jefferess, 2011, p. 73). With this authority, they also have the power to control the master narratives of the volunteer experiences. As

Morales (1998) writes, “one of the first things that colonializing powers do is to control the story of who the colonized think they are” (as cited in Moulard-Leonard, 2012, p. 834). As WE Charity’s youth assume the responsibility to speak about the volunteer experience, they may ultimately re-arrange and re-present the stories of the Southern host communities.

This authority manifests itself primarily within WE Charity’s promotional documentaries for their overseas trips. In this particular video series, the organization films a volunteer named Michelle as she experiences the local culture and volunteer projects on three of their overseas trips. While looking through this video series, I looked for Michelle to assert her authority in the following ways: (a) offering advice to her host community; (b) speaking about the host community’s suffering or ‘lack’; (c) assuming the emotions of the Other; and (d) implying a knowledge and understanding about the host community. I have highlighted these four authoritative lenses below:

The discourses Michelle uses to describe her host communities become representative of the entire WE Charity experience abroad, and further solidifies the distinct roles of the North and the South: as Said (1977) writes, “the former writes about, whereas the latter is written about. For the latter, passivity is the presumed role; for the former, the power to observe, study, and so forth” (p. 308). Upon visiting a rural Ecuadorian community supported by WE Charity, she comments, “it was really eye-opening to see a community with such isolation and so little resources be so appreciative and thankful of what they did have” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Ecuador, 2016, 16:15). While Michelle helps construct a school, she notes, “I couldn’t help but think of all the

kids in this community, how the school will change their lives, and the small role I played in that” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Ecuador, 2016, 19:02). In these two cases, Michelle asserts her authority by assuming the emotions of the Other, and speaking about her host community’s ‘lack’. When she goes on a ‘water walk’²⁰ in rural Kenya, she comments:

I couldn’t help but think that if these women had this water source in their homes or right in their front yards, and they didn’t have to do this water walk five times a day, they could do so much. They could go to school, they could have another job to provide any alternative income, and even just spend more time with their family (Me to We/Trip Videos/Kenya, 2016, 5:20).

In this case, Michelle exerts her power by offering suggestions and alternative lifestyles for these women, assuming a position to place judgment on whether her host community requires intervention and support. Through her suggestions, Michelle has thus positioned herself as a cultural and societal expert of her host communities, reflective of Tomlinson’s (1991) argument that the dominance of the North is tied in “with the need to assert its discovery of the way of life appropriate to all human societies” (p. 154).

Further, while visiting one of the WE Charity schools, she observes the female students: “I mean they are so passionate to learn and they would do anything to be in school. And now to know that I’m part of helping to build this school that girls will be able to attend, just means so much to me”(Me to We/Trip Videos/Kenya, 2016, 10:08).

The discourses used by Michelle have her impose sentiments and judgments onto the Global South (as well as her own role in their happiness) – thus asserting her authority

²⁰ WE Charity gets their volunteers to experience a water walk during their trip: they walk from a water source to a local community carrying water on their backs/heads, to simulate the experiences of women living in the community.

and knowledge to ‘know’ and ‘understand’ the experiences of the host community, effectively silencing the voices or truths of the South. In a similar manner, another volunteer testimonial echoes Michelle’s sense of authority:

Taking a water walk in India and spending a day in the life of a woman made me realize how fortunate I am. What amazed me was how content these people were. Living in a world of materialism, it’s a true eye-opener (Me to We/Amazon, 2016, Hear from our Travelers Section).

In this sense, authority is manifested through the juxtaposition of the global citizen’s own privilege against the deficiencies of the South.

Comments like these reflect how the North comes to see, name and know indigenous communities in the Global South, and justify intervention as a result. As Said (1994) suggests of colonial powers, their “narratives, histories, travel tales, and explorations... [were] represented as the principal authority” (Said, 1994, p. xxi). By controlling the story of these communities – and using discourses which highlight the lack within these communities – WE Charity’s youth reaffirm/justify their role as global volunteers. This colonial (re)positioning of the Global South allows for Northern observers and volunteers to make sense of what they see and “(re)present their narratives back to the North through the authority of their representations” (Smith, 1999a, p. 60).

iii. The Global Citizen being Empowered through Agency

WE Charity’s youth are frequently reminded of their own potential for empowerment and happiness through participation in the organization’s programming: “Our innovative model is designed for sustainable change, empowering young leaders

everywhere to achieve their fullest potential as active, compassionate and involved citizens” (Free the Children/2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 4). Further, a volunteer echoes WE Charity’s sloganeering by claiming that their volunteer trips are about “people, connections and self-discovery” (Me to We/Youth Volunteer Trips, 2016, para. 1). Messages like these are found throughout WE Charity’s online promotional material, which hosts a plethora of volunteer testimonials accounting for how their lives have changed by observing Others, participating on the projects, and playing a role in the happiness of Other children. On their documentary series, Michelle states that “going on a Me to We Trip presents you with a lot of challenges but there’s so much reward in it for everything that you do... it’s something you take with you for the rest of your life” (Me to We/Trip Videos/India, 2016, 12:36). Through its promotional material, WE Charity promises its global citizens that they will be personally transformed by the experience of taking part in a volunteer trip to Sierra Leone, Kenya, or Nicaragua. As Jefferess (2012) reminds us, “the promise isn’t simply fulfilling the obligation to help others but of happiness and fulfillment for the individual consumer” (p. 28). In short, the global citizens “learn that children in these place are ‘unfortunate’ and it is their own ‘empowerment’ as helpers that is the primary learning goal” (Barker, K. et al, 2014, p. 9).

The problem is that this promise creates a hierarchy of value between Northern students and Southern students, where “the ‘self’ is empowered in relation to the deficiencies of the ‘Other’” (Smith, 1999, p. 493). In other words, in order for WE Charity’s global citizens to find empowerment and happiness through volunteerism and charity, they require Others needing their help – thus reaffirming the colonial

construction of a dichotomy between the giving global citizen and the needy Other recipient. The self can only be defined in relation to the Other (Jefferess, 2002, p. 16), and the compassionate and empowered global citizen is created in relation to the needy Chinese, Ecuadorian or Kenyan child. On WE Charity's India trip video, Michelle notes:

I can honestly say my life has been changed since coming to India... I've learned so much about myself; how I can make better choices when using resources we so often take for granted, value my education, and continue to help those in need around the world and in Canada (Me to We/Trip Videos/India, 2016, 19:20).

By highlighting the 'need' of the Global South (or representing the differences between the North and South as 'lack'), a fulfilment of this need becomes "a means for self-realization and fulfillment" for the global citizen (Jefferess, 2002, p. 15). While in China, Michelle states:

I think one of the most impactful moments was... we started to learn about how much money they make per year, and what their income is like, and it just sort of showed you how lucky we are and how grateful we should be (Me to We/Trip Videos/China, 2016, 0:36).

In this sense, the global citizen finds empowerment by juxtaposing their privilege and luck against the 'lack' of the Global South. More critical narratives point to the self-interested nature of these types of volunteer projects: Bamber and Pike (2013) acknowledge that these experiences provide participants with "the opportunity to leave behind chaotic, over-stimulated, and fragmented everyday lives that divides their attention and over-complicates their being. It may also mark the beginning of a spiritual journey" (p. 550). As Waters (2001) reminds us, "the point is not the good feelings of

clients, the refugees, but those on the other end of the mercy calculation, the feelings of the donors” (p. 41-42). Michelle notes that WE Charity’s trips will “will teach you all about what’s really important in life, and sometimes leaves you reevaluating your own” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Kenya, 2016, 21:07). Here, her comments echo Bamber and Pike’s (2013) assertions of the self-serving nature of overseas volunteer experiences. In short, WE Charity’s discourses surrounding youth empowerment, like the ones above, send the message that: (a) the poverty of the South can be used to teach the global citizen more about themselves; (b) the global citizen will be able to feel appreciative about their own social positioning from their encounter with the South; and (c) it could be fun. In short, the empowerment of the global citizen is reason enough to volunteer abroad, and empowering the Other is the indirect benefit.

The idea of bettering oneself through overseas volunteerism seems to align with the notion of voluntourism – although WE Charity does not use this term in their discursive construction of their overseas projects. Voluntourism (or volunteer tourism) combines travel with voluntary work, appealing to individuals seeking:

A tourist experience that is mutually beneficial, that will contribute not only to their personal development but also positively and directly to the social, natural and/or economic environments in which they participate (Wearing, 2001, p. 1).

In this sense, voluntourism provides a more mutually valuable form of overseas travel, in which both the volunteer and the Global South are able to benefit from the experience (Raymond & Hall, 2008, p. 530). WE Charity, however, does not advertise their pre-packaged volunteer experiences as voluntourism. Simpson (2005) finds a similar

dynamic in her research: despite discursive constructions of “changing the world”, she argues, these overseas experiences are about cultivating a professional and careerist persona (p. 447), in addition to bettering the lives of those living in the Global South. WE Charity’s contention that their global citizens are not volunteer tourists²¹ is puzzling, given such strong discursive language promoting both the volunteer and travel aspects of their overseas trips.

iv. The Global Citizen as (Mis)understanding Other Cultures

Overseas volunteerism has been known to potentially provide opportunities to develop cross-cultural understanding between global citizens and the Global South (Raymond & Hall, 2001, p. 541). Indeed, WE Charity tells its global citizens that their overseas travel experience will unlock for them an understanding of different global cultures. Threaded throughout their online material is a plethora of testimonials, trip overviews, videos, and country descriptors reminding potential participants that they will gain a more holistic and real understanding of their host country than they could have gained through more conventional forms. It has been argued that these experiences provide a backdrop for cross-cultural understanding because of the multiple opportunities for interaction and exchange between global citizens and the Global South (Raymond & Hall, 2001, p. 532). For example, on Michelle’s trip to India, she notes:

On this Me to We trip, the lessons I’ve learned have just become so much more real, and leave so much more of an impact because I’m seeing it. I’m not reading

²¹ WE Charity labels voluntourism as “travel which includes volunteering for a charitable cause” (Me to We/FAQ/Volunteer Travel, 2016, Are me to We Trips “Voluntourism?” Section). They argue that, although their trips are overseas and have a volunteer component, they differ vastly from most voluntourism experiences.

about it anymore or seeing it on T.V, its right here in front of me (Me to We/Trip Videos/India, 2016, 6:51).

In this sense, Michelle believes her firsthand experience has given her a better understanding of the operations of global poverty. In a similar manner, another WE Charity project descriptor reminds volunteers that these experiences will help them to cultivate a deeper “understanding of different traditions, customs and environments” (Me to We/Adult and Family Volunteer Adventures, 2016, Community Immersion Section). WE Charity tells its participants that their trips will “change the way you understand the needs of marginalized communities throughout the world” (Me to We/Why Me to We Trips are Different, 2016, para. 3). Such language is reminiscent of the historical image of the Global South – exotic, needy, unknowable, mysterious, impenetrable – and the drive of Northern explorers everywhere to capture the essence of the South, package it, understand it, and bring it back to the North to consume (Said, 1977, p. 166).

Similarly, the language WE Charity uses to capture the essence of their overseas trips – “exotic flora and fauna” (Me to We/Nicaragua, 2016, para. 1); “work among some of the most spiritually rich people in the world” (Me to We/Nicaragua, 2016, para.1); “moving into the lush forest, everything grows more exotic and tropical” (Me to We/Ecuador, 2015, para. 1); “sweeping savannahs, dense forests” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Kenya, 2016, para. 1) – establishes an exotic and mysterious backdrop for global citizens to attempt to explore and understand. The idea of exoticism dominates WE Charity discourse²², and this fascination romanticizes and brands the

²² Exoticism is a term used to describe how the West experiences fascination towards distant cultures (Bolaffi, 2003, p. 112).

Global South as different – offering an opportunity for global citizens to embark on a cultural journey of understanding.

WE Charity and its global citizens speak to their ability to understand the Global South, in which they will, “through hands-on work experience, gain empathy, compassion and understanding for different cultures and environments” (Me to We/University and Collage Volunteer Trips, 2016, para. 2). The idea that a simple two week immersion in the Global South provides enough context to understand the complex histories and conditions of its residents is one that the organization stands by, as they illustrate on their trip to China: claiming that the experience will help youth “understand the challenges local communities face” (Me to We/Trip Videos/China, 2016, Access to Clean Water Section). Similarly, a Kenya volunteer notes:

Over the entire trip the most profound moment for me was the culture day when we got to make chipate with the mamas and go for a water walk. It was moments like these, moments when I could interact with the community members, that really made me take a step back and realize what we were doing and how differently some people live” (Me to We/School Trips, 2016, The Impact of Me to We Trips Section).

This perceived difference – emphasized time and time again in WE Charity discourse – opens up opportunities for global citizens to claim understanding about the Global South, simply by equating “seeing” with “understanding.” WE Charity’s volunteer ambassador Michelle notes that “for me, I wanted to step into a new world, and learn about it by walking in someone else’s shoes” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Kenya, 2016, 0:42). However,

as Huffman (2005) notes, “few travelers are experts in the country they are visiting, at least when they write their early reports” (p. 34). For Raymond and Hall (2008), cross-cultural understanding is by no means a given outcome (p. 533). It is beyond the scope of this project to inquire into whether this perceived understanding of the host culture is a reality, but it cannot be assumed that short term contact with the Other will equate to deep understanding and respect of the host community’s culture.

A claim of cross-cultural understanding can also confirm cultural stereotypes held by WE Charity’s participants. Many famous travel texts are littered with Western accounts of exotic natives – and these unfortunately reveal more about the narrator’s prejudices than about the actual nature of the society they are travelling through (Huffman, 2005, p. 34). Indeed, Simpson (2005) argues that these volunteer projects can also be used as an opportunity for people to confirm, rather than question, previously conceived ideas regarding the Global South (...as cited in Raymond & Hall, 2001, p. 533). After Michelle completes a water walk on WE Charity’s India promotional video, she notes:

Doing that water walk was a huge eye-opener. It was a very very short walk, and we only did it one time; and they do it for much longer distances, up to fifteen times a day. But when you see the work that they go through, to get just that very very small amount of water, just for their basic needs in a day, it really makes you think (Me to We/Trip Videos/India, 2016, 6:38).

By embarking on a water walk, Michelle claims that she has a deeper understanding of the struggles of the Global South. One must also consider the ways in which these

overseas trips can potentially reinforce, rather than reduce, stereotypes. Indeed, Griffin (2004) argues that “the assumption that “seeing” equates to “knowing” means stereotypes in the mind of the observer could perhaps be strengthened rather than challenged” (p. 70). Undeniably, there is potential value for a global citizen to appreciate their own privileged social positioning through such an exchange, and this may symbolize an important step away from taking this for granted and recognizing the realities in which many individuals live. However, the issue becomes whether the global citizens’ stereotypical perceptions of the Global South are reinforced on their overseas experience. For instance, in the testimonials below, WE Charity volunteers make the assumption that their host communities are content with themselves (despite their poverty) and content with the involvement of the Northern volunteers:

What amazed me was how content these people were. Living in a world of materialism, it’s a true eye-opener (Me to We/Amazon, 2016, Hear from our Travelers Section).

We met so many incredible people that were always smiling and cheerful, despite the challenges they faced (Me to We/Nicaragua, 2016, Hear From Our Travelers Section).

You’d get off the boat and see all the kids lined up at the shore waiting for you, with massive smiles on their faces. It was such hard work but we were happy doing it because you got to see the reaction from not just the kids, but the community itself (Me to We/Ecuador, 2016, Hear From our Travelers Section).

Such language reinforces the stereotypical image of the South as both lacking and filled with smiling and happy natives. The portrayal of the hosts as always happy and waiting to cater to the benevolence of every global citizen, Canton and Santos (2009) argue, makes invisible the hardships that individuals in poorer countries face and “ignores their innate complexity as human beings” (p. 200). Such a stereotypical image, in which people are presented without a care in the world and waiting to be empowered by the authoritative expertise of the global citizen, makes possible the asymmetrical relationships between former colonizers and colonized.

v. The Global Citizen as a Consumer

WE Charity’s global citizens are consumers: they consume pre-packaged cultural experiences – much like your average tourist – and arrive in the Global South with certain expectations of how their adventure should look. As previously mentioned, global citizens pay thousands of dollars to volunteer on a FTC project: the 15-day Ecuador trip costs \$3,095 (Me to We/Ecuador, 2016, para. 1); the 20-day Tanzania trip costs \$3,845 (Me to We/Tanzania, 2016, para. 1; and the 18-day India trip runs \$3,345 (Me to We/India, 2016, para. 1).²³ As part of this investment, volunteers are given the chance to “transform” (Free the Children/2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 5) a community in the Global South on picturesque, feel-good projects. It is doubtful that a WE Charity volunteer would pay thousands of dollars to meet wealthy Kenyans, partake in less-glamorous community projects (latrine building or hauling dead cows from local water sources), or experience cultures similar to their own. One can assume that these global

²³ Although these projects are considered volunteer trips, they differ from conventional volunteer opportunities in the sense that the participant actually pays for the volunteer experience.

citizens are expecting to experience jungles, savannahs, smiling indigenous children, appreciative host communities becoming empowered through Northern intervention, and *just enough* poverty to ensure the volunteers have a role to fulfill. In addition to the projects, volunteers also expect to fill their time with more pleasurable and leisurely pursuits: making bracelets with Kenyan mamas, cooking traditional dishes, meditating with Indian monks and playing soccer with children. WE Charity's brand has created a space where global citizens embark on consumable experiences of the Other – the commodity which is for sale. So, whether it is the struggling Indian women on water walks, the smiling Kenyan children, or the dense rainforests of the Amazon, their travelers know what to expect and how to consume the experience.

A difficulty with equating benevolence as something to be consumed is that, as Simpson (2004; 2005) suggests, organizations (like WE Charity) create a simplistic view of the Other so that 'difference' can be sold and consumed (as cited in Raymond & Hall, p. 532). This is not a new phenomenon however: Smith (1999a), in referencing the collection of indigenous cultures, stereotypes, materials, and the "exotic and the fantastic" during colonial times, points to the lengthy history of the European consumption of the Other (p. 89). This trading of the Other, Smith (1999a) argues, was and is an industry based on the positional superiority of the North and is more highly concerned with images and fantasies about the Other than any other industry (p. 89). As mentioned earlier, the need to establish a simple geography of the Global South – one that offers prescribed cultural experiences, "images and fantasies," and evidence of successful consumption – allows for the consumers (the global citizens) to expect spaces (slightly impoverished locations set against exotic backdrops) that suit their Northern

imaginations. In its contemporary form, trading the Other is, for bell hooks (1992), the “commodification of Otherness”. She argues that this commodification:

Has been so successful because it is offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling. Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture (p. 366).

bell hook’s metaphor fits nicely within the international volunteerism paradigm: global citizens consume the differences of the Other in order to undergo the satisfaction of a successful overseas trip. Through this lens, the consumption of volunteer projects as exotic, luxurious adventures with an implied altruistic philosophy, are catered more to meet the needs of the global citizen than the host community (Benson & Wearing, 2012, p. 243). These sentiments are echoed by Barnett, who argues, “it’s a new form of colonialism; really... the market is geared towards profit rather than the needs of the communities” (...as cited in Benson & Wearing, 2012, p. 243).

Indeed, certain WE Charity overseas trips, in an attempt to appeal to their volunteer consumers, straddle a blurred line between volunteerism and luxury travel. Although not outwardly marketed as the latter,²⁴ with WE Charity’s Kenyan Bogani Cottages and Tented Camps, the global citizen can expect “a property designed with authentic detail and luxurious comfort”, “relaxing spaces to recharge and refresh”, “modern conveniences including flushing toilets”, “delicious meals prepared daily by Bogani’s in-house chefs” and “a natural design palette inspired by the surrounding

²⁴ These experiences are strictly marketed as volunteer experiences.

landscape” (Me to We/Adult Trips/Kenya, 2016, Accommodation Section). Alongside understanding “the challenges mamas face” as they accompany Kenyan women on a water walk, volunteers can also expect sunrise and sunset safaris. Although not every WE Charity trip offers such luxuries²⁵, these trips use such indulgences to attract a particular individual (a compassionate consumer) overseas. However, the positioning of certain projects as luxury volunteer experiences – in which volunteers are lodged in wealth between projects – makes possible asymmetrical power relationships: such an image impedes social action by barring the possibility of recognizing how the global citizen is “implicated in the structures that produce suffering and inequality” (Jefferess, 2012, p. 19). Meaning, these types of projects normalize ideas of the global citizen experiencing luxury and home comforts, and normalize the idea of natives living in “homesteads and “traditional huts” (Me to We/Adult Trips/Kenya, 2016, para. 1). As Said (1994) makes note about the Orient, “they are always symmetrical to, and yet diametrically inferior to, a European equivalent” (p. 72). In short, although WE Charity’s global citizens collaborate with their host communities – working “alongside community members” (Me to We/Adult Trips/India, 2016, para. 2) – their consumption of the more luxurious volunteer experiences is problematic because it reinforces a stereotype (the Northerner is wealthy and the Southerner is impoverished) that privileges the North at the expense of the South, and naturalizes and romanticizes power imbalances between these two locations.

²⁵ These trips are geared more towards university students, adults, families and corporate groups.

4.2 Implications of this Framing on WE Charity's Youth

As discussed earlier, I have framed global citizenship education within the following four thematic areas: (a) the idea of GCE involving a sense of individual responsibility; (b) the idea of GCE involving a direct concern for social justice and human rights, within the framework of human morality; (c) the idea of GCE involving international awareness; and (d) the idea of GCE involving a call to action. Juxtaposing WE Charity's framing of their global citizens against these four lenses reveals a few truths about how the organization perceives the global citizenship paradigm.

The idea of GCE involving a sense of individual responsibility. From this perspective, global citizenship is about understanding how our everyday lives are bound up within a wider recognition of our roles as individuals living on a single globe (O'Byrne, 2003, p. 123). In short, global citizens should be able to identify how their individual actions affect others (Others) on a global scale. WE Charity takes a positive spin on this understanding and encourages their global citizens to take up an individual responsibility to "change the world" (Free the Children, 2016, para. 3). However, nowhere within WE Charity's organizational structure do they venture into discussions on how their global citizens' *individual lives* may be complicit in sustaining global inequity. Their global citizens are meant to be proactive (asking themselves: how can I change the world?), and not critically reflective (instead of: how does this volunteer trip further marginalize the communities I am supposed to be helping?). This rejection of critical thinking is made visible when the organization attempts to educate their

participants on matters of global inequality. When explaining the causes of poverty, WE Charity writes:

Child poverty involves a significant lack of the basics for healthy physical, mental, emotional and spiritual development. When children can't afford school fees or supplies, or when they drop out to help earn money for their family, they're left with little chance of learning the skills to start successful businesses, find well-paying jobs and bring financial stability to their families And so the cycle of poverty continues (WE Day/Global/Poverty, 2016, para. 3).

Nowhere does WE Charity state why this lack of resources exists in the first place, nor does it address the role of institutions and structures that perpetuate global inequality (Shultz, 2007, p. 253). Instead, responsibility is placed on the Global South. Further, when speaking about the lack of access to clean drinking water, WE Charity states:

Sometimes they swallow deadly bacteria in dirty water from rivers or ponds. Sometimes their wells are contaminated because they have no safe place to dispose of waste. Without access to clean water and sanitation facilities, diseases like cholera, typhoid and dysentery spread quickly (We Day/Global/Access to Clean Water, 2016, para. 1).

Again, there is no mention of the more systemic causes of these types of conditions in the Global South – colonialism, globalization, political unrest, uncompensated exclusion from natural resources, and unequal appropriation of global wealth (Pogge, 2007, p. 143). Focus is placed on unclean water, but not on why individuals are forced to drink it in the first place. For instance, when Michelle goes on a water walk in Kenya, she says, “the first thing I noticed was that this water is not clean. It's very very dirty water” (Me to

We/Trip Videos/Kenya, 2016, 3:20). Instead of exploring how their own lives are wrapped up in maintaining these global structures of inequality, the colonial nature of their overseas volunteer trip, or how the global South is enmeshed, as Said (1977) puts it, in a “debt trap” (p. 348), these feelings of responsibility are lost among the global citizens’ desires to improve the lives of Others (Michelle later suggests building a more localized water source to solve the dirty water problem). Although WE Charity’s global citizens do not feel personally responsible for the impoverished conditions within the Global South (responsibility is placed elsewhere), they feel personally responsible for helping the Global South.

The idea of GCE involving a direct concern for social justice and human rights, within the framework of human morality. WE Charity’s global citizens are concerned with social justice and human rights, and their focus on rights-based issues (education, healthcare access and clean water access) makes this quite evident. Fundamental to this perspective, however, is the moral drive behind this concern. Dower (2002) notes that when someone claims they are a global citizen, they are making “some kind of moral claim about the nature and scope of our moral obligations “(p. 146). In addition to this, these global citizens accept that they have:

Obligations in principle towards people in any part of the world: for instance, help[ing] alleviate poverty, work[ing] for international peace, support[ing] organizations trying to stop human rights violations, or play[ing] one’s part in reducing global warming (Dower, 2002, p. 146).

This rhetoric of global citizens as helpers and change makers, driven by some kind of moral claim, is prevalent throughout WE Charity discourses. As illustrated earlier, through WE Charity's programming, global citizens can "explore what they can do to help" (We Day/We Schools, 2016, We We Schools? Section) and initiate this help through school building, tree planting, and trench digging in the Global South. Global citizens are encouraged to consume WE Charity's projects, volunteer internationally, and give charitable donations based on a personal ethic of goodwill, framed by actions informed by empathy and compassion (Free the Children/Who We Are/About Us, 2016, para. 3), and the "power of community" (Free the Children 2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 4). The rhetoric of morality makes possible the idea that it lies in the hands of the Northerner to improve (save) the lives of many or, by doing nothing, to let these people continue living in impoverished conditions. This is problematic, Andreotti (2006) claims, because an emphasis on creating change "based on a moral obligation to a common humanity" masks more critical understandings of the political causes of poverty (p.42). From such a perspective, a global citizen holds the "the moral supremacy and vanguardist feeling of being responsible for changing or saving the world 'out there'" (Andreotti, 2006, p. 40).

The idea of GCE involving international awareness. Global citizenship education is about understanding "the nature of global issues" (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 178). As such, WE Charity's global citizens are free to learn about global poverty, hunger, child labor and food security using the information provided by the organization on their website (We Day/Issues/Backgrounders, 2016, Global Backgrounders Section). However, the information provided does not allow their participants to critically engage with the

structural causes of global inequalities. For example, when discussing the root causes of child labor in the Global South, WE Charity states:

The underlying causes of child labor are complex. In some cases, poverty can force parents to sell their child to a mine or factory owner. In other cases, children bring their earnings home to an unemployed parent or guardian... In sub-Saharan Africa, HIV/AIDS has orphaned more than 15 million children, taking them out of school to care for their siblings, run the household and earn an income in any way they can (We Schools/Global/Child Labor, 2016, para. 9).

Within this explanation, WE Charity isolates the causes of child labor to the Global South (removing any notion of Northern complicity). From this perspective, their global citizens are meant to be aware of social injustices, but only at a surface level. This cosmetic engagement with social issues is common within development education, Tallon and McGregor (2014) argue, with “minimal attention given to deeper learning and understanding” (p. 1409). This appears to be the case with WE Charity. Contrary to this, a deeper approach to global citizenship has been conceptualized by Shultz (2007), as mentioned earlier, called the radical global citizen (p.249) – an approach to GCE which challenges the global structures that serve to create deep global inequalities (p. 252). Central to this approach is an understanding of how the system of globalization “creates poverty and oppresses most of the world’s population” (Shultz, 2007, p. 249). Within such an approach, global citizens are encouraged to challenge global systems of oppression, which Shultz (2007) identifies as institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (p.252). WE Charity’s

global citizens are not framed as radical global citizens, and thus are not given the tools needed to truly understand the structural causes of global inequality.

The idea of GCE involving a call to action. According to Vodopivec (2012), global citizenship encompasses a readiness to take action in support of others (p. 61). WE Charity's global citizens are called into action specifically through charity fundraising, international volunteerism, and changing the world. For their participants, it is not just about solving global inequalities and building schools, but it is also about finding personal fulfillment, developing leadership skills, globetrotting around the world, and consuming cultural experiences of the Other. WE Charity paints a very specific idea of how its global citizens respond to social injustice: on an international trip, volunteers help the Global South by "roll[ing] up [their] sleeves" (Me to We/Adult Trips/Kenya, 2016, para. 5) and "dig[ging] trenches for water systems, lay[ing] foundations for schools, plough[ing] farmland or plant[ing] crops" (Me to We/FAQ/Volunteer Travel, 2016, Are Me to We Trips Voluntourism? Section). As Hall (2001) points out:

Just as discourse 'rules in' certain ways of talking about a topic, defining an acceptable and intelligible way to talk or write, or conduct oneself, so also, by definition, it 'rules out', limits and restricts other ways of talking, of conducting ourselves in relation to the topic or constructing knowledge about it (p. 72).

By establishing a specific story of the global citizen, WE Charity has inevitably limited other ways of understanding who this global citizen is (or could be). In short, WE Charity sees the global citizen as the Northerner. Lacking within their online discursive material is the mention of the Southern individual assuming the role of the global citizen. This is

not surprising, as their programs offer experiences and ‘calls to action’ only accessible to a wealthy minority: to WE Charity, the global citizen is a traveler and a consumer. The Southern communities visited by WE volunteers, by their very nature, are more than likely unable to answer WE Charity’s calls to action because these calls are outside of their economical grasp.

In short, WE Charity’s framing of their global citizen makes visible how global citizenship education gets enacted within this organization: youth participants can learn about social injustices and attempt to solve them, but only at a surface level; participants can feel personally responsible for the lives of Others, but they do not have to feel personally responsible for being a part of the structures and institutions which negatively impact the lives of Others; participants can participate in WE Charity’s programming as moderate global citizens, but they cannot participate as radical (Shultz, 2007) global citizens; and global citizenship is best enacted by those from privileged social and economic positions. I will now examine the power relationships informing the rhetoric of the global citizen within WE Charity.

4.3 The Change in the Discursive Sloganeering

The overt juxtaposition of the needy Other against the benevolence of the global citizen has, for the most part, become obsolete in development practices. Early shock factor images and language (the emaciated and vulnerable child of the South) have been largely replaced with more “positive imagery” of the Global South (Chouliaraki, 2010, p. 108). Indeed, WE Charity carefully crafts a specific construction of the Global South,

which includes plenty of smiling and happy Southern children (you will not find fly-infested faces and swollen bellies within their promotional material). WE Charity prides itself on the fact that they reject the poverty pornography approach to development – an approach that relies on discourses of deficiency and dying children to motivate the sympathies of Northern individuals – and instead focuses on a more positive image of the Global South: one that has children becoming empowered through education (Free the Children/Our Development Model, 2016, Education Section) and global citizens becoming empowered through agency. With this in mind, the issue now becomes whether this evolution of discursive sloganeering – from the victimized Other to the empowered global citizen – has changed the colonial undertones within development practices.

I argue that, while this obvious rejection of the needy South is notable, the discursive evolution has not removed the colonial subtexts within the organization. Instead, it has simply further concealed paternalistic development practices. As mentioned earlier, over the past decade, there has been a shift in how individuals living in poverty are being represented in development discourses (Shultz, n.d., p. 1); and youth-focused Canadian NGOs, for the most part, have made strides to shift discourse away from an emphasis on helping victims in desperate countries towards empowering Northerners to become engaged global citizens (see: Canada World Youth, 2016; Cuso International, 2016; Youth Challenge International, 2016; War Child, 2016). Drawing from Shultz's (n.d.) work, I am arguing that, in the shift away from the pitiful aid recipient to the empowered global citizen, organizations (like WE Charity) have neglected to transform the colonial relationships that had earlier established the victim

and Northern savior binary. Although WE Charity's programs promote the empowerment of the global citizen, the organization continues to perpetuate a relationship where there is a charitable Northern giver helping the needy Southern community:

In Haiti, WE Charity offers "help by providing clean water systems, including wells, hand pumps, spring harvesting, piping, and rain water collection" (Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti, 2016, Clean Water and Sanitation Section).

In Sierra Leone, WE Charity "helps by building schools to support higher quality education and providing libraries and administrative offices" (Free the Children/Where We Work/Sierra Leone, 2016, Education Section).

Discourses of help, such as this, are repeated throughout the organization's website. It is evident that WE Charity, despite repeated usage of the rhetoric of empowerment, continues to maintain a giver/receiver relationship with the Global South. The final example below demonstrates how the North is implicated in continuing the dependence of the Global South on the empowered global citizen:

It starts at home. Domestic programs empower and engage youth, families and schools to raise awareness and funds for issues affecting families around the world (We Day/We Act Program Guide, 2013, p. 9).

Here, youth are made to feel empowered to enact change, but the change originates in the Global North and the global citizens are in charge of enacting this change. Through this lens, the colonial rhetoric becomes evident. Despite the change in language from 'needy' Southerner to 'empowered' global citizen, these discourses continue to enforce power

imbalances between the North and South and “justify the exploration, exploitation, colonization, and ‘civilization’ of the East” (Echtner and Prasad, 2003, p. 667).

WE Charity’s discursive language continues to be situated as a call to action for changing the lives of people living in the Global South, with the central narrator to this action being the empowered Northern citizen. Thus, the issue now becomes whether one can consider WE Charity’s change in discursive language “evolved” if it continues to demand an ongoing positioning of the Global South as lacking agency: indeed, there remains an unspoken assumption that those affected by poverty are not able to help themselves in WE Charity discourse. The focus on the engaged global citizen, rather than the helpless Southerner, has not been helpful in transforming how the majority of the world’s people are viewed and understood within the organization: in each of their country descriptors, each location is described first by their deficiencies – “plagued with poverty and illness” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Sierra Leone, 2016, para. 2); “unsafe, ill-equipped, overcrowded” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti); “in shambles” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti); “woefully underfunded” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Rural China) – and then by how WE Charity (and its empowered global citizens) are enacting change within these communities. WE Charity’s discursive sloganeering of “you can change the world” (Free the Children/Who We Are/About Us, 2016, Careers Section) will continue to reinforce the colonial relationships if this language is not securely rooted in creating decolonizing relationships between the North and the South (Shultz, n.d., p. 3). The shift from “impoverished victim” to

“empowered global citizen” has done little to decolonize this relationship; it has simply shifted the lens away from the Southern victim.

4.4 Power within the Global Citizen Discursive Practices

The discursive constructions of WE Charity’s overseas trips bring together economically powerful volunteers (who have enough wealth to be able to afford such a trip) with less powerful host communities (who are deemed ‘poor enough’ to place them in the position of necessitating Northern intervention). As figures of global citizens, WE Charity’s youth are presented in relation to the Global South and to people in need. The very idea that global citizens are defined by the neediness of Others illustrates the inherent power relations built within certain GCE paradigms. On WE Charity’s website, global citizens are often presented interacting with the Other, sometimes in solidarity, or recounting these interactions with the Other. For example, on one page there is an image of a smiling volunteer holding hands with two young African children (Me to We/Trip Digital Image, 2016, n.p.). The image of this Northerner holding hands with these Southern children – an image repeated by NGOs time and time again – stages their relationship as a shared and meaningful bond, covering over the power relations inherent in the “historically repeated image of the white male humanitarian and the redeemable black child” (Jefferess, 2011, p. 83). Indeed, global citizens gain their power based on their ability to reach the Other – building authority and legitimacy – and impacting the Global South.

The ensuing power dynamic created through this relationship is multifaceted and constantly shifting. Yet the discursive constructions found throughout WE Charity's promotional material consistently place power in the hands of the global citizens. Gramsci (1971) argues that dominant groups are able to preserve their power because they successfully use cultural channels to drive the consent of both privileged and marginalized groups (...as cited in Caton & Santos, 1999, p. 192). Within the global citizen education paradigm (and WE Charity), the idea of the global citizen is one such cultural channel: it is the center from which the construction and preservation of discourses about Others, geography, and cultures preserve particular balances and imbalances of power. As shown by this project, the promotional material used by WE Charity mediate this discursive construction by positioning the global citizen as the singular narrative. Said (1994) argues that "the power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them" (p. xiii). Throughout WE Charity's volunteer testimonials, a single dominant voice – the familiar Northern personality of the global citizen – is consistently heard. Their voices, and the narration of their experiences, continue to paint a particular image of the Global South, and its people and places, within WE Charity's organizational culture. And within these narrations, the global citizens become a part of WE Charity's own regime of truth as one "who [is] charged with saying what counts as true" (Foucault as cited in Hall, 2001, p. 77).

The notion of the global citizen as the dominant voice within North-South relations is certainly nothing new: Foucault argues that the past constructs the reality of

the present, and so “to re-meet our history is to have effects and power in the present” (as cited in MacNaughton, 2005, p. 147). WE Charity’s discursive constructions of the global citizen as an explorer and adventurer are weighed down by the colonial past. It is impossible to refer to the Northern global citizen using such language without acknowledging its historical colonial significance. Said (1994), furthering on Foucault’s point, reminds us that the past cannot “be quarantined from the present. Past and present inform each other, each implies the other” (p. 4). The hidden standards of colonization – one that positions the Northerner as an explorer who consumes cultural experiences of the Global South – continues to reverberate within this particular GCE framework.

Power within WE Charity’s discursive constructions of the global citizen fluctuates. Within each of the three promotional trip videos, Michelle sets up her authority from the beginning (she is going to the Global South to help change the world) and at the end of the volunteer trip (she takes credit for having helped build a school). Embedded in the middle of the discursive experience however, are a number of contradictions that questions her authority and power over the Global South: she struggles with the task of carrying water with the Kenyan mamas on the water walks (Me to We/Trip Videos/Kenya, 2016, 4:49); she has difficulty during an attempt to bead bracelets with skilled Kenyan women (Me to We/Trip Videos/Kenya, 2016, 18:30); she struggles using a blow gun while being taught by a local (Me to We/Trip Videos/Ecuador, 2016, 6:00); and she admits her initial nervousness about embarking on a trip to India (Me to We/Trip Videos/India, 2016, 17:56) – each of these experiences weakening the power of her initial authoritative discourse. Culturally, Michelle is outside

her comfort zone, and her lack of power is acknowledged during these experiences and redistributed to the Other.²⁶ Foucault writes:

[People] are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing or exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are like vehicles of power, not its points of application. (as cited in Gandhi, 1998, p. 14).

Despite the contradictions within her experience, it is very evident throughout the entire process that Michelle still holds a sense of power within these communities. The degree of her power fluctuates as she experiences the unfamiliar, but she is still able to assert her authority as the central voice within the narration. Foucault (2000) writes, “that [it] is the difficult relationship with truth, the way in which the latter is bound up with an experience that is not bound to it” (p. 243). Michelle’s struggle to maintain her power reveals that there are multiple truths attached to the overseas experience, not just that of the authoritative volunteer. The overseas experience is thus made more complex by the weakening of her authoritative discourse. Gandhi (1998) writes, “postcolonialism also holds out the possibility of thinking our way through, and therefore, out of the historical imbalances and cultural inequalities produced by the colonial encounter” (p. 33).

Although Michelle continues to maintain the master narrative and her privileged positioning throughout these promotional documentaries, the shifting of power to the Other²⁷ (as her narrative becomes weakened) is quite evident.

²⁶ It is important to note that the empowerment of the Global South within WE Charity discourse comes at the weakening of the global citizen; implying that Other does not hold power until the Northerner releases it.

²⁷ This shift in power will be explored in the next chapter.

The singular narrative of the global citizen is problematic because, by assuming the authority of speaking about the South, they pigeonhole complex cultures into homogenous descriptors. As Said (1977) notes:

Any attempt to force cultures and peoples into separate and distinct breeds or essences exposes not only the misrepresentations and falsifications that ensure, but also the way in which understanding is complicit with the power to produce such things as the “Orient” or the “West” (p. 347).

In an attempt to understand the Global South, WE Charity’s global citizens gain power over their host communities by reducing multifaceted histories and cultures into stereotypical images like “traditional huts within bustling villages” (Me to We/Adult Trips/Kenya, 2016, para. 1), “the art of throwing a spear and shooting a blowgun” (Me to We/Adult Trips/Ecuador, 2016, para. 6), and “traditional prayer ceremon[ies]” (Me to We/Adult Trips/India, 2016, para. 5). Through discursive constructions such as these – ones that position the contemporary volunteer against the traditional backdrop of the South – global citizens are given the power of being more “modern” and more “advanced.” As Foucault (1980) reiterates, it becomes about “the rules according to which the true and false are separated and specific effects of power are attached to the true” (p. 132). WE Charity’s global citizens position their host communities within a particular framework, thus redistributing power and agency from the Global South to themselves. I will now unpack three underlying forces of power that drive the rhetoric of WE Charity’s global citizen.

4.4.1 The Forces Informing the Rhetoric of the Global Citizen

Midway through her Kenya trip, Michelle notes, “I wanted to meet people who were impacted by the change I was coming here to make” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Kenya, 2016, 8:00). Narratives of global citizens, like the one above, initiating change by building schools in Kenya or volunteering in orphanages in China have come to occupy a moral grounding in our collective imaginary that is given uncritical praise. However, this unrelenting support of these global citizens begs critical analysis of their ambitions, strategies and claims. For this research, it is less about strategizing solutions on the global citizens’ role in the Global South, and more about questioning our perceived ideas of how social justice can be achieved, and the unequitable power relationships which allow these ideas to pass, as Foucault (1980) puts it, as universal truths. It seems, within popular discursive practices of global citizenship education, that social justice can be achieved through the benevolence of Northern global citizens. The question then becomes: what power relationships inform and shape the rhetoric of the benevolent global citizen as a solution to global inequality?

i. Colonialism

One of the most powerful forces informing and shaping the global citizen is colonialism. Alongside Jefferess (2012) and Andreotti (2006), I argue that an asymmetrical relationship between the North and the South continues to dominate mainstream GCE pedagogy due to the presence of colonial power structures. This relationship is held together by discourses of benevolence – as Michelle reminds us, “*I’m part of helping to build this school*”(Me to We/Trip Videos/Kenya, 2016, 10:08) – which

allow the Northern global citizen to exert their authoritative expertise onto the Global South. Benevolence aside, the very act of arriving in the Global South, evaluating their host community's experiences and hardships, and assuming the right and expertise to help better the situation in their host community is problematic in that it reinforces a colonial structure reflective of Said's (1977) *Orientalism*: Said (1977) reminds us, "the relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (p. 5). Fundamental to this understanding is the idea that this asymmetrical power balance still exists in contemporary society, and the Global North continues to deal with the Global South by "making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it" (Said, 1977, p. 3). Juxtaposing Said's (1977) work onto contemporary global citizenship paradigms makes visible the colonial undertones that maintain a constructed global power structure which both privileges and harms: as a world traveler, the global citizen assumes the power to experience the Global South and describe it, categorize it, and make statements about it, reminiscent of early explorers who would return to the Occident with compartmentalized fragments of the Orient (Said, 1977, p. 166). As a consumer, the global citizen assumes the power to consume the Other through participating on exotic trips, buying indigenous goods, observing stereotypical cultural traditions through a colonial gaze in ways that suit their Northern imaginations, and consuming "its strangeness, its difference, its exotic sensuousness" (Said, 1977, p. 72). As an authoritative figure, the global citizen assumes the power to speak about the neediness and underdevelopment of Others, similar to when Said (1977) brought to our attention the Northern construction of the Orient as "aberrant, undeveloped, inferior" (p. 300). As

supposed solutions to poverty, global citizens assumes the power to develop the Global South in the mirror image of the North, and as Said (1977) put it, “to instruct (for its own benefit) the Orient in the ways of the modern West” (p. 86).

ii. Benevolence

Although colonialism operates discretely within mainstream GCE discourses, benevolence – as a discourse informing the narrative of the global citizen – takes center stage: in addition to colonialism, I argue that benevolence acts as a force of power that informs the rhetoric of the global citizen as a solution to global inequality, since “the rhetoric of power all too easily produces an illusion of benevolence when deployed in an imperial setting” (Said, 1994, p. xvii). In short, benevolence is a vehicle through which oppressive power operates, as it requires the Global South to always be in a position that necessitates this benevolence. As Riggs (2004) notes, “the ability to be benevolent is always already predicated on the power to do so—it does not require the giving up of power, but rather is reliant upon an imbalance of power to instantiate the categories of giver and receiver” (p. 8). From such a perspective, benevolence normalizes the authoritative power of the global citizen and normalizes the powerlessness of the Global South. Power is taken away from the Global South because the global citizen’s relation to the suffering of Others is framed in terms of their benevolence (Jefferess, 2011, p. 80); it becomes about the global citizen’s compassion and motivation to act, rather than about the historical conditions of conflict and poverty. Thus, the story of the Global South becomes about the global citizen’s actions of benevolence and about an ethical relationship aimed at helping the Other in need.

iii. Discourse

Another power force shaping the role of the global citizen is the language driving WE Charity's GCE paradigm. As Foucault notes, "discourse transmits and produces power" (as cited in Mills, 2004, p. 40), and the discourses informing the rhetoric of the global citizen certainly serves the interests of powerful forces over those of the less privileged (Huckin, 2002, p. 159). Smith (1999a) reminds us that "[i]mperialism still hurts, still destroys and is reforming itself constantly" (p. 20) and in order to understand how the power of imperialism operates, one must dismantle the tools that maintain "cultural and hence mental and spiritual subjugation" (wa Thiong'o, 1993, p. 42). There is little doubt that the discursive constructions of international NGOs, particularly ones that actively participate in development initiatives in the Global South, are particularly powerful tools in the subjugation of the Global South. How organizations, like WE Charity, choose to discursively represent their Northern participants has the power to frame the volunteers and the Other in certain contexts, and create a particular ideology around volunteerism in the Global South and global citizenship. Further, Said (1994) reminds us that "the power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism" (p. xiii). From this perspective, the positioning of the global citizen within the GCE paradigm allows them to center themselves within narratives of development – securing the position to speak "about" the South as the primary narrative and securing all Other narratives as secondary.

WE Charity's cultural discourses also serve as a way to further solidify their brandscape (or brand image), a term referencing how consumers form constructions of "personal meanings and lifestyle orientations from the symbolic resources" provided by a

brand (Sherry, 1998, p. 112). The hegemonic brandscape of WE Charity shapes their participants' identities by functioning as a cultural model that participants think, act, and feel through. Although WE Charity participants are free to provide personal testimonials online and organize local charitable fundraisers under the WE brand, they must do so using the 'rules' the organization discretely lays out in its promotional material. In other words, their youth have to "think and feel through the discourses and material forms that constitute the brand's cultural form" (Thomson & Zeynep, 2004, p. 50). The discursive sloganeering of WE Charity— personal empowerment, "be the change", and working "alongside" the Global South – provide the framework which help youth create and articulate their own discursive constructions of their experiences. This brand image is an extremely powerful force shaping WE Charity's global citizens, both enabling them to connect with global issues, and constraining them from forming radical or critical representations of their experiences.

4.5 Conclusion

WE Charity's youth involvement within the organization is significant because their testimonials and actions are extremely influential in permeating the cultural landscape of GCE. Although popular constructions of GCE, it seems, operate outside the direct control of youth, we must give credit to the potential ability of youth to negotiate the "social constructions made of them" (Saul, 2010, p. 460). Having explored discourse as I have, it is important to note before concluding that youth are not just passive recipients of WE Charity's discursive practices (Saul, personal communication, July 1, 2016) – we get clues of this through some of the very testimonials they offer. In other

words, youth – although certainly influenced by discourses – will create experiences that are not completely determined by these discourses. For researchers and educators involved with youth participating in GCE practices, paying particular attention to the identity and practices of these youth can offer a pedagogical space of critique regarding how these youth are defining, conforming, and challenging their positioning as global citizens.

Foucault (1997) reminds us about the importance of critical inquiry, by which “the subject gives himself the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth” (p. 32). Through this lens, WE Charity’s global citizens can be read as both conforming to and resisting traditional conceptions of the GCE paradigm. For instance, one WE Charity volunteer disputes the rhetoric of help by exclaiming that “Me to We trips [are] not about going to help a person. [They’re] about enabling a young person to become a global citizen” (Me to We/Why Me to We Trips Are Different, 2016, 0:08). It is important to note here that WE Charity’s global citizens may in fact transition in and out of their colonial roles in practice: at times, rejecting the idea they are helpers – “it’s not about going and helping people” (Me to We/Why Me to We Trips Are Different, 2016, 1:26) – while at times, conforming to traditional notions of benevolence – “Me to We Trips create lasting change for...the communities visited” (Me to We/Why Me to We Trips Are Different, 2016, If You Are Going to See the World Section). Such conflicting discourses function as reminders of the agency of youth to critically “participate[e] in and contest[e] the knowledge and representations made of them (Saul, 2010, p. 468); in other words, while global citizens have the power to oppress the South, they also have the power to challenge this oppression.

The idea of the selfless global citizen, venturing into the heart of the Global South to enact change onto their host community, presents a problematic image: Illich (1968) argues that good volunteers are hypocritical because “they prefer to ignore the forms of inequality that give them the right to impose [their] benevolence on [the Global South]” (p. 4). If we embark on an honest evaluation of international volunteering programs, like the ones WE Charity offers, the colonial undertones informing this type of travel become painfully evident. As Jefferess (2012) reminds us, central to the GCE paradigm is the need to critically dismantle the extent of which the pedagogy continues to preserve “colonial frameworks of identity and difference, as well as neoliberal social and economic ideology” (p. 19). Void of any critical inquiry, WE Charity positions their global citizens as being outside of these discreetly operating colonial forces, bestowing them with the designations of world travelers, consumers, and change-makers. As such, development in the Global South continues to be situated as an urgent call to change the lives of people elsewhere, with the essential player being the global citizen who is empowered to act. Indeed, WE Charity in particular privileges their global citizens’ experiences and attitudes over the larger unequitable power relationships that makes these experiences possible in the first place. It is evident that although they may be global in their mobility, WE Charity’s global citizens lack the information and tools that would equip them with a stronger understanding of global social injustices.

Despite this, it is promising that organizations, like WE Charity, have invested in the agency of Northern young people, giving them opportunities to travel the world and to think about important social issues. However, such spaces – ones where the role of the

global citizen is being negotiated, lived and (re)created – necessitate critical inquiry.

Although I believe that engaging students in the global space is commendable, educators need to reconsider the implications of having global citizens making themselves as objects of knowledge regarding the Global South. There is power in the way we think and talk about people, places, and cultures, and thus it is hopeful that WE Charity's global citizens might think about – with some degree of humility – how to de-center themselves from the Northern savior narrative.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: THE OTHER

Stereotypical images of the Southern Other have long permeated the discursive landscape of Northern imagination: the exotic Other, the unknowable Other, the ethnic Other, the needy Other, the nonwhite Other. Such a traditional construction continues to inform Northern perceptions of the South and frames how Others are talked about, imagined, desired, explored and, inevitably, silenced. It is against such a backdrop in which the global citizenship paradigm extends its influence – simultaneously negotiating, rejecting and upholding notions of difference between the Self (the North) and the Other (the South). Recent research (Andreotti, 2006; Canton & Santos, 2009; Echtner & Prasad 2003; Jefferess, 2012; Simpson, 2004), however, has troubled this sense of Otherness littered throughout mainstream GCE discourses and made visible the colonial undertones – exoticism, neediness, and powerlessness – operating discretely within the paradigm. WE Charity is no exception. The Other maintains a strong presence within its online cultural landscape and, despite a rejection of traditional notions of passive charity, the organization continues to block alternative (decolonized) representations of the South from emerging.

Before framing my research questions, there are a few ways in which I must position myself in this research more concisely. I first became curious about the Other while living in Ethiopia as an international volunteer. That curiosity – I reason – was spurred on, not only by the trip, but by a book I acquired while traveling through Addis Ababa: Ryszard Kapuscinski's *The Shadow of the Sun*. A work of nonfiction, it tells the journalist's story as he travels throughout numerous African countries during the end of colonial rule in the late 1950s. As a foreign correspondent for the Polish Press Agency,

Kapuscinski's career was by definition spent as an outsider amassing information overseas. This led him to create his discourse on Othering. First, on how people distinguish the Other: by skin color, nationalism, and religious identity; then how the encounter develops: cooperation, separation, and confrontation. He writes, "the myths of many tribes and peoples include a belief that only we are human, the members of our clan, our society, and that Others – all Others – are subhuman, or not human at all" (Kapuscinski, 2008, p. 83). Over the years, as I read the book through different lenses – first as a self-proclaimed wanderlust, and now as a graduate student – Kapuscinski's accounts have changed in their meaning. At first, the book represented the exotic and unfamiliar, and I would read his work to evoke the memories of my travels across Ethiopia and Kenya – his words capturing that unedited sense of wonder felt by travelers experiencing something foreign and unfamiliar.

Now, Kapuscinski's insights on Othering allow me to reflect critically on the patriarchal assumptions and understandings I had held during my travels through Ethiopia (and then through Kenya, a few years later) – and his words are littered throughout this chapter. Kapuscinski (2008) writes: "Others...are the mirror in which I look at myself, and which tells me who I am. When I lived in my country I was not aware that I am a white man and that this could have significance for my fate" (p. 45). Unlike Kapuscinski, I lacked the postcolonial lens to help me acknowledge my white privilege and ability to think Otherwise while in Ethiopia. Relevant to this research, I argue that WE Charity's participants lack a similar critical framework to help them, as Gandhi (1998) notes, think their "way through, and therefore, out of the historical imbalances and cultural inequalities produced by the colonial encounter" (p. 33).

In this chapter, I draw upon my object of study – the online profile of WE Charity’s Other – to explore how contemporary forms of global citizenship both reject and make possible colonial conceptions of the South. Drawing from Kapuscinski’s work (2008), I inquire into whether WE Charity’s language positions the South as civilized societies or as exotic – cultured and traditional – Others. I investigate the narratives of pain (bell hooks, 1989) found within WE Charity’s promotional material and the extent of which the organization’s discourses privileges Northern volunteer’s stories and anguishes those of the Global South. After a close reading of their online material, I identify three reoccurring thematic representations of the Other within the organization: the Other as (a) exotic; (b) needing; and (c) a happy and grateful recipient. Further, I tie this analysis into the broader operations of power emanating within WE Charity’s organizational structure, and the implications this has on their participants’ perceptions of GCE. Inspired by the works of Said (1977) and Kapuscinski (2008), my inquiry will be driven by the following four questions:

1. How is Otherness framed within WE Charity’s discourses?
2. How is the Southern Other represented by WE Charity?
3. How does this representation of the Other influence WE Charity participants’ perceptions of global citizenship education?
4. To what extent is WE Charity’s Other given power within the organization?

Research has pointed to two kinds of knowledge that can lead to harm of the Other: the first kind of knowledge is the knowledge about what society defines as normal and normative (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 31). In other words, Otherness is contrasted against the

norm: the impoverished Southerner is juxtaposed against the developed and modern Northerner (the norm). The second way of thinking is one based on stereotypes and myths of the Other (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 32). This way of thinking reinforces misunderstandings about the South: for instance, Southerners are needy, exotic, and grateful for Northern support and intervention. These two kinds of knowledge, I argue, inform WE Charity's construction of the Other; with this in mind, I explore the Otherness of WE Charity's discourses – looking for ways the organization shapes the Other at the center of their texts, and reading that center against the peripheral Other (Said, 1994), who exists on the margins of the text. Of particular interest to me is how these positionings and silences make possible and impossible different ways of thinking about the Other within GCE discourses.

5.1 Otherness in WE Charity Discourse

i. Defining the Other

My inquiry is concerned with the representations of the Southern Other in WE Charity discourse, and how this Otherness is manufactured, experienced, and understood within their organization. Otherness is not, of course, a new topic. The binary of the self and the other has been a long withstanding concept of human identity which claims that the existence of an other allows for the possibility and recognition of a self (“you are not me, therefore I am me”) (Schalk, 2011, p. 197). In other words, this binary makes possible how an individual understands who they are, by recognizing who they are not. Levinas (1981) argues that the self cannot have a concept of itself without the other: “I am defined as a subjectivity, as a singular person, as an ‘I’, precisely because I am

exposed to the other. It is my inescapable and incontrovertible answerability to the other that makes me an individual ‘I’” (p. 192). This juxtaposition of the self against the Other is a concept used frequently within postcolonial discussions, and is used to distinguish people of the North (the self) from people of the South (the Other) (Kapuscinski, 2008, p. 13). With this in mind, when discussing Otherness, I will limit myself to intercultural relationships between the North and the South, as this is the space in which WE Charity’s programming operates.

The Other also generally refers to groups of people who have been traditionally marginalized and oppressed in society (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 24). For this research, oppression is conceptualized as the assumptions about and expectations for the Other that negatively influence how the Other is treated (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 27). I am predominantly concerned with the Northern ways of characterizing the South that justify and reinforce this oppressive treatment of the Other. These characterizations often focus on colonial ideas of the South, which include exoticism, neediness, dependency, timelessness and a lack of agency. Such ways of valuing, feeling, and thinking about the South, Said (1977) argues, produce systems of discourse by which the world is “divided, administered, plundered, by which humanity is thrust into pigeonholes, by which ‘we’ are ‘human’ and ‘they’ are not” (Said, 1976, p. 41). Indeed, Said (1977) argues that the postcolonial Other is constructed as an individual to be owned and managed by the North, just because “by definition “it” is not quite as human as “we” are” (p.108). Kapuscinski (2008) echoes these sentiments when he states:

The image of the Other that Europeans had when they set out to conquer the planet is of a naked savage, a cannibal and pagan, whose humiliation and

oppression is the scared right and duty of the European – who is white and Christian (p. 22).

Thus, what is of particular interest to me is how an awareness of the Other often leads to the idea of Othering: whereas Otherness refers to notions of difference, Othering is when we end up judging all “who are different as less than fully human: it divides the world between “us” (the “civilized”) and “them” (the “others” or “savages”)...the “savage” is perceived as possessing a “primitive” beauty or nobility born of a closeness to nature (the exotic other)” (Tyson, 2006, p. 420). Indeed, Said first brought to our attention the Northern construction of the Orient as “primitive, savage, pagan, undeveloped”, and within the soft GCE paradigm, such a construction enables the Northerner to justify their presence in the Global South: the impoverished indigenous communities need to be governed by the ‘more developed’ global citizen (Nayar, 2010a, p. 160). Postcolonial scholars call attention to the power imbalances that ensue from this North-South relationship, where “the former assumes a privileged, authoritative and central ideological position, marginalizing the latter to the peripheries” (Echtner and Prasad 2003, p. 668).

ii. WE Charity’s Other

WE Charity’s Other encompasses all the individuals living in the eight Southern countries where the organization works. This Other is presented as an individual which the Northerner is responsible for, and WE Charity participants are frequently asked to assume this responsibility through volunteer work, ethical consumerism, and activism. Levinas (1989) speaks about this unbounded and total responsibility for the Other, and he

explains, “my responsibility of the other man...extends(s)... even to responsibility for his responsibility” (p. 245). This conception of responsibility, one which positions the Northern self in an asymmetrical position of privilege against the Southern Other, is one which has underpinned the colonial enterprise and is found throughout WE Charity’s discourses. Their Other is unique in the sense that the organization outwardly rejects traditional notions of the passive and needy Southerner:

Our development approach is rights-based; conventional programming is most often needs-based. What’s the difference? A rights-based approach accepts that communities are active partners in their development; a needs-based approach accepts that communities are passive recipients of aid (Free the Children/What We Do/Where We’re Different, 2016, para. 2).

Although the traditional image of the emaciated, fly-infested African child has, for the most part, been substituted with more optimistic images, a postcolonial re-reading of WE Charity’s material exposes continuing colonial interactions with and representations of the Other. Positive images – smiling children (presumably African) next to WE Charity-installed water pumps (Free the Children, 2016, Digital Image) and children standing in front of a school built by WE Charity (Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti, 2016, Digital Image) – repeat themselves throughout the organization’s online material. Although meant to demonstrate the empowerment of the Other, it also implicitly demonstrates the inferior positioning of the Other as an aid recipient. As Said (1977) so poignantly reminds us, even if the Other (the Oriental) can escape the labels placed on them, they are “first an Oriental, second a human being, and last again an Oriental” (p. 102). Again, Kapuscinski (2008) echoes Said: “conquer, colonize, master,

make dependent – this reaction of Others recurs constantly throughout the history of the world” (p. 23). Despite WE Charity’s outward rejection of the Other as a passive recipient of aid, notions of the Other’s dependency and Otherness continue to persist and, as I will explore in detail later on, WE Charity’s practices of objectification and commodification subtly remove an element of their humanness.

Further, the Southern Other in WE Charity discourse is used to make possible a desired image of the benevolent global citizen (the Self) by using Otherness as an image of contrast. Zilcosky (2008) agrees when he writes, “travel writing – created mainly by upper-class white men – has produced the rest of the world: how it has invented others – women, people of colour, and the poor – in order to craft a certain image of Europe” (p. 10). An informational video on the ME to WE homepage provides an example of the positioning of the Other in contrast to the global citizen. The video begins by establishing a distinct binary between the WE Charity global citizen and the Southern Other: the first frames show multiple (mostly white) Northern individuals claiming that ME to WE is “a movement of people like [them]” (Me to We/Video/It Started As A Book, 2016, 0:10), and continues by stating that their choices and actions – socially conscious consumerism and overseas volunteerism – can change the lives of individuals in the South (Me to We/Video/It Started As A Book, 2016, 1:04). At one point, after an ethical WE Charity consumer states, “I know that when I buy a book”, the frame changes to an African child saying, “I get a book too” (Me to We/Video/It Started As A Book, 2016, 0:52). Throughout the video, WE Charity participants are shown in action (building a school, buying a product made by a Kenyan mama, and planting trees), while on the other hand,

the Other is shown benefiting from the gifts of the organization (using a water pump, sitting in a classroom, and being employed). Near the end, the video goes through multiple frames, showing three different Southern children speaking about WE Charity's presence in their own communities: "Now I can provide clean water for my family"; "now I can go to school"; "I am empowered" (Me to We/Video/It Started As A Book, 2016, 1:16). This promotional video provides a perfect example of how WE Charity positions the Other (and maintains Otherness): the Other is the (indirect) benefit of Northern benevolence, the Other holds power and agency only when associated with Northern intervention, and the Other is not the global citizen.

WE Charity's positioning gives them authority to craft a very particular image of the Other. Said (1977), speaking on the authority of travel texts, notes that these texts describe countries as being:

Colorful, expensive, interesting, and so forth. The idea in either case is that people, places, and experiences can always be described by a book, so much so that the book (or text) acquires a greater authority, and use, even than the actuality it describes (p. 93).

Likewise, WE Charity's discursive language to describe the Other takes a position of authority within the GCE paradigm. Below, I make visible this authority by unpacking three thematic representations of the Other in WE Charity's promotional material. I rely mainly on their country descriptors and videos promoting their overseas trips, including footage of WE ambassadors Hedley (a Canadian music group), Jesse (an MTV host), and Michelle (a youth volunteer) experiencing India, Kenya and Ecuador respectively.

i. The Other as Exotic

The production of narratives within WE Charity programming paint the Other as an exotic individual. Traveler narratives have historically contributed to the general impressions that have informed Northern constructions of the Other (Smith, 1999a, p. 78), and WE Charity certainly contributes to these constructions through their powerful online discursive strategies. Their narratives – coming from both the organization itself and from its global citizens – seem to depend on essentializing difference and emphasizing highly exotic events and practices. Such portrayals echo Kapuscinski’s commentary regarding his travels through the African continent during the 1960s:

Africa was a mystery, wild and primitive, its peoples were passive cavemen and, topped up with palm trees, the shadow of the jungle, the roar of lions, and the hiss of snakes, the whole thing presented a scene where the white savior could play his historic role as the Messiah in a pith helmet (as cited in Domoslawski, 2012, p. 110).

One WE Charity volunteer, offering his insights on India, captures the essence of this image of the South: “If I were to describe India to people back home... I would be able to tell them... how spiritually connected to the earth the people are here, to themselves; it is an enchanting place” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Hedley in India, 4:50). Indeed, WE Charity presents their host counties as lush, natural paradises, where Southerners lives are closely tied to nature: in their descriptor for Nicaragua, WE Charity writes: “lush valleys and rainforests, stunning mountains, lakes and volcanoes, picturesque beaches, and Spanish-colonial towns” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Nicaragua, 2016, para. 1); Kenya is

positioned for its “beauty and abundant wildlife” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Kenya, 2016, para. 1); Haiti is described as “beautiful and haunting” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti, 2016, para. 1); and Sierra Leone has “abundant natural resources” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Sierra Leone, 2016, para. 1). A Degrassi volunteer in Ghana, mirroring the official language of WE Charity, states, “everything here is so rich and full of life” (We to We/Trip Videos/Degrassi in Ghana, 2016, 0:25). Such depictions reflect a “highly nostalgic version of the era of colonial exploration” (Echtner & Prasad, 2009, p. 675), by producing host communities as natural and untamed, awaiting “discovery” by WE Charity volunteers. This sense of unrestrained geography is echoed by WE ambassadors Hedley as they visit a rural village during their trip to India: “Surresh’s village was really cool; it was very feral, and very old, and rural” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Hedley in India, 16:34). Depictions of India as “feral” and “old”, for example, rely on the polarization of Southerners and Northerners – where the former needs to be tamed and modernized by the latter.

bell hooks (1992) reminds us that “encounters with Otherness are clearly marked as more exciting, more intense, and more threatening” (p. 370). Indeed, WE ambassador Jesse speaks about her upcoming trip to Kenya on a promotional video with a sense of fear:

I am getting on a plane to Kenya, where I will be living with a tribal family in a mud hut... So they will be welcoming me with a traditional goat ceremony. I’ve been a vegetarian since I was a small child, and they eventually came back to me and said ‘okay, you don’t have to eat the goat, as long as you drink the blood’

[Jesse pauses for dramatic effect]... The warm, fresh blood from the slaughtered goat (Me to We/Trip Videos/Jesse in Kenya, 2016, 1:05).

Within this description of Kenya, her emphasis on the words “tribal”, “traditional” and “mud hut” position her host community as both threatening (for slaughtering a goat and drinking its blood) and timeless (for living in a mud hut). Later on, Jesse revives this sense of fear by saying, “my mom was convinced I was either going to die or be stricken with malaria” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Jesse in Kenya, 2016, 2:11). Jesse does eventually experience the goat being slaughtered in her honor during her stay in the Maasai village: “And even though I knew it was for food and survival, I could not help but get a little bit hysterical” (Me to We Trip Videos/Jesse in Kenya, 2016, 17:40-19:00). She cries throughout the entire process and at one point, as she’s watching a few people drink blood from the goat’s throat, she comments through her tears, “It’s so morbid” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Jesse in Kenya, 2016, 17:40-19:00). Descriptions, like the ones above, have their roots in colonialism – stemming from eighteenth-century travelers who would, in an attempt to understand the South, interpret the Other both as primitive (with basic needs) and dangerously unstable (Lane, 2006, p. 22). These travelers would represent the Other back to the North with images of “the 'cannibal' chief, the 'red' Indian, the 'witch' doctor, or the 'tattooed and shrunken' head, and stories which told of savagery and primitivism” (Smith, 1999a, p. 8). When Michelle visits a museum in Quito, Ecuador, she sees a shrunken head, and staring wide-eyed into the camera, she comments, “that’s a shrunken head... don’t really know how I feel about that” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Ecuador, 2016, 1:39). The video montage continues by showing a shrunken sloth head, a stuffed boa constrictor and a few tarantulas. The focus on these images constructs

Ecuador as a dangerous and savage place, and such an emphasis foregrounds the threatening nature of the Amazon, where Michelle would soon be volunteering. Echtner and Prasad (2003) argue that such representations of the Other allow for those “inhabiting these areas [to be] distinguished by their tribal features and unpredictable dispositions” (p. 675). Indeed, for Amazonians to be living against the backdrop of such exotic danger would require them to fulfill a particular image. This image is realized later on in the documentary, when Michelle’s face is painted in tribal patterns (“traditional warrior paint”) and taught by a local how to use a blow gun, throw a spear, and eat raw bugs (Me to We/Trip Videos/Ecuador, 2016, 5:40-10:22).

Cultural differences are highlighted in WE Charity’s depictions of the South, where the Other is often shown wearing ethnically distinct clothing and accessories, and participating in traditional activities. There are a plethora of examples of WE Charity volunteers being juxtaposed against indigenous traditions and lifestyles: Jesse receives a traditional Maasai shuka (Me to We/Trip Videos/Jesse in Kenya, 2016, 5:16), she cringes as she applies hot cow dung to a community home (10:58) and participates in a Massai women’s chant wearing traditional beading (19:38). Likewise, Michelle watches as an Ecuadorian Shaman uses traditional medicine on her fellow volunteers (Me to We/Trip Videos/Ecuador, 2016, 17:48). Such images clearly mark the Other as being traditional, cultured, and ethnic. While one would expect to see these kinds of scenes on a WE Charity trip, one would also expect to see Kenyans and Ecuadorians using cell phones, driving cars, and using modern amenities. However, such scenes are never shown, implying – however unintentional it may be – that their host communities are firmly fixed

in the past. The problem is that when WE Charity mentions how Ecuadorians are “drawing on their cultural heritage to build their future” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Ecuador, 2016, Empowerment in Action Section) or how they “honor the value of ancestral knowledge and cultural identity” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Tanzania, 2016, What We Do Section) of Tanzania, such emphasis on the traditional embraces the myth of the unchanged: it “polarizes the West and the Rest into changed–unchanged, modern–ancient, and advancing–decaying” (Canton & Santos, 2009, p. 194).

Perhaps such positioning of the Other can be best explained by imperialist nostalgia. A term coined by Renato Rosaldo (1989), the concept contends that agents of colonization – government officials, missionaries and (we can add here) international volunteers – often experience a sense of nostalgia for the colonized culture as it was traditionally (what it looked like pre-colonization) (p. 69). Indeed, many WE Charity volunteers often express a need to experience the traditional culture of the Other (as was the case with Jesse living in a mud hut and Michelle donning tribal paint to throw a spear) – idealizing the simplicity and sense of unchanged purity of their host communities with a sense of nostalgia. For instance, one volunteer reflects on his trip to India by commenting, “just being welcomed into the area and having them show us the different rituals they do... was just so special to me, to be included in such a sacred space” (Me to We Videos/Hedley in India, 2016, 5:04). Another volunteer notes of his Indian host community, “I think we could all kind of draw from those simple beliefs and values” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Hedley in India, 2016, 18:40). Further, bell hooks (1992) contends that imperialist nostalgia celebrates a continued sense of primitivism within the

Other (p. 369). Indeed, WE Charity volunteers identify their host community members as embodying the natural essence of their country and many volunteers try to reconstruct traditional culture by positioning the Other into ancient and timeless roles. When Jesse sees her homestay for the first time in the Maasai community, she places emphasis on the mud hut and her bed, which is “made up of tightly woven sticks covered in cowhide (Me to We/Trip Videos/Jesse in Kenya, 2016, 5:00); likewise, there is a two minute video montage of her grimacing as she helps apply “reeking, warm, dripping, smelly” cow feces on her mud hut (10:40). Amid her labor, she notes, “there’s a huge social element to [this]; there’s a lot of love and a feeling of community even when you are working” (11:00). Although these authentically indigenous and traditional representations nostalgically glorify the Other, this positioning also recreates colonial relations of power: by maintaining a sense of primitiveness in the Other – by memorializing the Other into a frozen past that represents what the Other always was and what the Other still should be (an indigenous individual living in a tribal mud hut, sleeping on cow hide) – WE Charity can justify development in these communities.

Further, nostalgia itself is generally associated with notions of innocence and recollections of the past; through this lens, Rosaldo (1989) argues, imperialist nostalgia establishes a sense of innocence on behalf of the colonizer, allowing the colonial agent to become an innocent bystander (p. 70), thus softening their postcolonial guilt. WE Charity volunteers can “honor the value of ancestral knowledge and cultural identity” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Tanzania, 2016, What We Do Section) of their host

community, and think that they respect what they themselves have tried to historically destroy/oppres. Ahmed (2004) explains this sense of innocence below:

The West gives to others only insofar as it is forgotten what the West has already taken in its very capacity to give in the first place, [for example] feelings of pain and suffering which are in part effects of socio-economic relations of violence and poverty, are assumed to be alleviated by the very generosity that is enabled by such socio-economic relations. So the West takes, then gives, and in the movement of giving repeats as well as conceals the taking (p. 22).

Through this process, WE Charity participants are removed from their complicity in maintaining unequal balances of power between the North and the South. Northerners innocently mourn the loss of what they have changed, irradiated and transformed in the Other, without considering their own colonial legacy.

ii. The Other as Disadvantaged

WE Charity tends to replicate specific stereotypes of the needy and suffering Other, which contrasts sharply against their pleasant and exotic geographies. Within this space, WE Charity's testimonials portray the Other as underprivileged and disadvantaged, although this is often discretely hidden amongst images of smiling natives and positive "work[ing] in partnership" narratives (Me to We/Why Me to We Trips are Different, 2016, para. 2). Drawing from bell hooks (1989) and Simpson's (2004) work, I will frame WE Charity's Other within two existing fields of study to provide context to my inquiry.

A Geography of Need

Simpson (2004) points out that volunteer tourism organizations often make multiple references to the need within host communities, as this need is crucial if a volunteer project is to be worthwhile (p. 686). This “geography of need” (Simpson, 2004, p. 686) is found throughout WE Charity’s promotional material. For instance, they are keen to stress the neediness of Haiti, one of their host countries:

When we arrived [in Los Palais] in 2010, the old school was crumbling.

Classrooms were dark, leaky and overcrowded (Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti, 2016, Transforming a Community Section).

Such geographies of need are able to legitimize statements about the Other, like the ones here: when describing Kenya, WE Charity states, “the health infrastructure in rural Kenya is especially underfunded” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Kenya, 2016, Health Section); likewise, in Haiti, there is “a dire shortage of medical staff” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti, 2016, Health Section); in rural China, their education system is “woefully underfunded” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Rural China, 2016, para. 3). Similarly, when describing an Ecuadorian community prior to WE Charity’s involvement, the organization states:

The school was equipped with plumbing and latrines, but no one was properly trained in how to use and effectively maintain these services. Students would develop infections regularly and miss school (Free the Children/Where We Work/Ecuador, 2016, Transforming a Community Section).

In addition to highlighting the lack within this Ecuadorian community, WE Charity also points out the inability of the Other to resolve their own neediness, which is found periodically in WE Charity's discourses:

Despite hard work and best intentions, the country [Haiti] is far from achieving a plan for universal education and schools are unsafe, ill-equipped, overcrowded, or, too often, non-existent (Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti, 2016, Education Section).

Likewise, in WE Charity's country descriptor for Kenya, they write: "the high cost of food have left many Kenyans unable to properly feed themselves" (Free the Children/Where We Work/Kenya, 2016, Agriculture and Food Safety Section). Here, WE Charity strips away any sense of agency for the Other to lift themselves out of such spaces of need. Such representations of the needy and dependent Other infantilizes the Global South: narratives paternally position the Northerner as the rescuer – through the donation of funds and knowledge – to the infantilized (failed and needy) South (Burman, 1994, p. 241).

The framing of this geography of need is also evident in the descriptive language WE Charity uses to describe their host communities. For instance, on their country descriptor page for Sierra Leone, they use language such as "polluted" (Free the Children/Where We Work/Sierra Leone, 2016, Clean Water and Sanitation Section) and "plagued with poverty and illness" (Free the Children/Where We Work/Sierra Leone, 2016, para. 2). To describe Haiti, they use language like "infrastructure in shambles" (Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti, 2016, para. 2), "plagued by deadly waterborne illnesses" (Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti, 2016, para.3), "extreme poverty"

(Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti, 2016, para. 3) and “underdeveloped” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti, 2016, What We Do Section). By framing poverty using such evocative language – and framing the Other as “needing leadership and guidance, described always in terms of lack” (Carr, 1985, p. 50) – WE Charity can now establish justifications for intervention and validate their presence in these communities.

Narratives of Pain

Narratives of the postcolonial Other often speak of suffering, need, and oppression. Drawing from bell hooks’ (1989) observation that colonial powers fetishizes stories of the violated, the voice of the Other is often framed with a certain sense of hopelessness and despair: “tell me your story. Only do not speak in the voice of resistance. Only speak from that space in the margin that is a sign of deprivation, a wound, and unfulfilled longing. Only speak your pain” (p. 343). Indeed, WE Charity focuses specifically on narratives of pain throughout their online promotional material, speaking of and for the suffering Other elsewhere.

In describing Kenya, WE Charity writes, “one in 10 children still die before reaching their fifth birthday” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Kenya, 2016, para.3); in describing Haiti’s failed agricultural system, they write, “this leaves people malnourished, [and] vulnerable to disease” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti, 2016, Agriculture and Food Security Section); prior to WE Charity’s involvement in Sierra Leone, its “people were struggling to re-build their lives” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Sierra Leone, 2016, Transforming a Community Section); in rural China, many students “must take a long, difficult, and often dangerous trek to get to

class” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Rural China, 2016, para. 3). Similar discourses of the suffering foreign Other are found throughout WE Charity’s country descriptors.

WE Charity prides itself on promoting the Other as an empowered and happy individual, and notably rejects the poverty pornography approach to advertising its development programming. However, on the promotional video for Hedley’s trip to India, the white savior/suffering Other binary becomes blatantly palpable: upon entering a rural Indian community – one that has yet to enter a partnership with WE Charity – the group notices that many of the children are “suffering from a variant of ailments”; they immediately bring out first aid kits, and in the video montage that follows, the group members administer medical attention to many of the children (Me to We/Trip Videos/Hedley in India, 14:38). Various frames show dirty children crying, injured and – for the first time – not smiling. It turns into a very dramatic scene, with Hedley – bandaging the children’s limbs, giving them water and attending to injuries – assuming the role of the white savior. Following the experience, one group member notes, “actually working with these kids, and putting Band-Aids onto knees and bricks on the school, took away that sense of helplessness because I was watching it taking place, it really does work” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Hedley in India, 16:05). Such an approach – and such language – carves a space for WE Charity to alleviate this suffering. As Chouliaraki (2010) argues, such imagery of suffering makes possible “the sufferer’s gratitude for the (imagined) alleviation of her suffering by a benefactor and the benefactor’s respective empathy towards the grateful sufferer” (Chouliaraki, 2010, p. 112). I will explore this imagined gratitude in more detail below.

iii. The Other as the Happy and Grateful Recipient

Against the pristine and culturally-untouched backdrop of the Amazon rainforest and Kenyan savannah, resides the suffering and grateful Other who, it seems, is always happy. The image of the “poor but happy” Other (Simpson, 2004, p. 688) is repeated throughout WE Charity discourse: in Kenya, community members “wave and offer a friendly ‘Jambo’ at people passing” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Kenya, 2016, Empowerment in Action Section); on their homepage, laughing and smiling (presumably African) children drink from a WE Charity water pump (Free the Children, 2016, Together We Change the World Image); in one promotional video, a Southerner speaks about having WE Charity volunteers visit his community: “At the school level, me, my kids, my community members and staff... we all feel so happy when guests come to our school. We feel so happy to welcome them” (Me to We/Me to We Trips, 2016, 0:20).

Not surprisingly, WE Charity’s promotional material – full of happy, friendly and hospitable Others – is reflected in the discourses of its global citizens. As Jesse sits in her mud hut, she becomes reflective: “You have all these families coming together to eat every night and its so amazing because there’s no arguing, there’s no fighting, nobody raises their voices. It’s sort of just this community existing together in happiness and peace” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Jesse in Kenya, 2016, 12:10). Later on, she notes, “this was so amazing to me because here are these kids who have nothing, who barely have enough to eat every day, and here they are celebrating life” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Jesse in Kenya, 2016, 12:25). Likewise, a Hedley group member makes note about a young Indian boy:

It's heartwarming to know that a boy that age isn't upset that he doesn't have video games or isn't upset that he doesn't have better clothes than all of his friends. And he's just content with the fact that...he can go to school and learn (Me to We/Trip Videos/Hedley in India, 2016, 8:24).

A problem with these last two testimonials, as Simpson (2004) argues, is that these volunteers believe that their host communities do not mind being poor (p. 688), and that they are, in fact, happy in spite of their poverty. Whether or not this is true – and there is no evidence of Jesse or Hedley asking these children about their emotional wellbeing – such an assumed image of happiness may allow for volunteers to relieve themselves of some postcolonial guilt.

Discourses romanticizing the emotional state of the Other continue: a Hedley group member notes that, “people here [in India], they seem to have smiles on their faces” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Hedley in India, 2016, 6:00). Similarly, upon visiting a rural Ecuadorian community supported by WE Charity, Michelle makes notes of the children, “their smiles... were the perfect motivation for us to get to work on the school they would soon be filling” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Ecuador, 2016, 10:55). Further, a Degrassi volunteer in Ghana notes, “these people are the most selfless people I ever met in my whole life. It's breathtaking.” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Degrassi in Ghana, 2016, 0:52). Canton and Santos (2009) argue that the portrayal of the Other as “always happy, always eagerly waiting to welcome Western visitors, masks the hardships that residents of poorer countries face” (p. 200). Indeed, such a representation trivializes the reality of poverty by suggesting that Northern volunteers can alleviate hardships, and make the Other happy, simply through their good intentions.

Further, although meant to promote more positive images of the South – rather than the desolate and emaciated Other – the static and flat portrayal of the Other simplifies their emotional complexity as human beings (Canton & Santos, 2009, p. 200). Whereas WE Charity volunteers experience a whole range of emotions and experiences – culture shock, happiness, excitement, anger, empowerment, sadness, and fulfillment – the Other, by comparison, seems to only experience two emotional states: first, they experience the pain of poverty pre-WE Charity intervention, and then they experience happiness post-WE Charity intervention. Additionally, creating a space where the Other is happily waiting to be served by the Northern volunteer resurrects, as Echtner and Prasad (2003) argue, “the asymmetrical relationships between former colonizers and colonized, relationships often characterized by the power divisions between master and servant” (p. 674). Indeed, discourses surrounding the Other, like the ones above, send the message that: (a) the Other is always grateful for WE Charity’s help; (b) the Other is meant to enhance the experience of the WE Charity participant through their positive nature; and (c) they are happy doing it.

To conclude, by framing the Other as needy, exotic and grateful, the organization can clearly justify their presence in the Global South: By maintaining a sense of primitiveness in the Other – using traditional medicine, drinking water from parasitical ponds, and living in mud huts – WE Charity can justify development in these communities; likewise, by maintaining a sense of neediness of the Other – a need for education, clean water, employment, medicine and food – WE Charity can position themselves to fill this need; finally, by maintaining a sense of unquestionable gratefulness

of the Other – always welcoming to Northern volunteers – WE Charity can justify sending youth into these communities, knowing that their participants will feel safe and satisfied with their experiences. Thus, this framing has created an urgent and troubling space – albeit a beautiful space – for youth to extend their benevolence. In the next section, I will explore the implications of this framing on WE Charity’s perception of GCE, as well as the power structures that fluctuate between the Other and the organization.

5.2 Implications of this Framing on WE Charity’s Youth

The methods in which WE Charity packages the Other has implications for the experiences of its youth participants. In this section, I wish to briefly discuss how the above framing of the Other – exotic, needy and grateful – inform how WE Charity and its global citizens approach global citizenship. Centrally, I argue that by positioning the Other into these three frameworks, WE Charity creates a ‘third world’ space within the GCE paradigm in which Northern youth naturally assume a position of authority over the Other. I also argue that such positioning removes an element of humanness from the Other, allowing WE Charity to approach GCE in a superficial manner.

Bhabha (1990) contends that the “objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types... in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction” (p. 75). In a similar but not identical fashion, WE Charity tries to conceptualize the Other in highly specific ways – needy, exotic and grateful – in order to justify their involvement in the Global South. In keeping with Said’s (1977) theories of “Orientalizing the Orient,” (p. 167), the Other can never

exist outside the parameters set for them within the confines of WE Charity's programming. When Jesse describes how she will be living with "a tribal family in a mud hut" (Me to We/Trip Videos/Jesse in Kenya, 2016, 1:05) or when WE Charity describes Haiti as being "plagued by deadly waterborne illnesses" (Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti, 2016, para. 3), this conceptualization of the Other makes possible an imagined third world space within the GCE paradigm. Within this space, the Other becomes a problem to be solved by colonial powers (Said, 1977, p. 207) and made inferior to the Northern equivalent (Said, 1977, p. 72). These third world spaces, Simpson (2004) argues, become "defined by needs, which are described in terms that make them simple, predominantly requiring the labor and enthusiasm of non-skilled volunteers" (p. 686). From such a perspective, WE Charity youth will enter into these spaces with preconceived constructions of the presumed neediness of the Other and with an entitled sense of authority to speak for and about it. When Jesse talks about the hygiene practices of her Kenyan host family, she states (with obvious paternalistic undertones), "I was so happy to see that this family was washing their hands. Most rural Kenyan families do not know the importance of that" (Me to We/Trip Videos/Jesse in Kenya, 2016, 8:28). Here, against the WE Charity-constructed backdrop of neediness and primitiveness, Jesse freely exercises her own authority to speak about the reality of rural Kenyan families. Then, assuming that her host family would be naturally grateful for her advice, she helps wash the children's hands (Me to We/Trip Videos/Jesse in Kenya, 2016, 8:40). Thus, GCE becomes defined by both the superiority of WE Charity's knowledge and the inferiority and inability of the Other. Such a framing turns GCE into a conceptual space where Northern youth learn *about*, not *from* the Other.

Such framing also removes an element of humanness from the Other. By positioning the Other so simplistically, their complexity as human beings becomes diminished. Photos, sound bites, and videos of the static Other participating on WE Charity's projects position them as objects to be consumed by the organization's participants: their exoticness can be admired, their neediness can be fixed by a new school, and their gratefulness allows for volunteers to feel nostalgic about the South and feel good about themselves. The Other's presence becomes represented by parts – defined by their neediness and timelessness – and rendered available for use by WE Charity. Through this lens, the Other is dehumanized. Distant from any social and political contexts, the focus on the exotic, needy and grateful Other avoids, as Burman (1994) contends, confronting the larger circumstances that give rise to the underlying causes of poverty (p. 247). Thus, WE Charity can approach global citizenship from a superficial angle, focusing instead on a small signifier of the Other to avoid addressing the enormity of the issues at hand.

5.3 The Power/lessness of the Other

Power moves in many directions and, as Foucault (1978) reminds us, it comes from everywhere (p. 93). Although traditional ideas of GCE allocate power and agency to the global citizen, Foucault's ideas remind us that the Global South also possesses the agency and power to produce change. Indeed, within WE Charity discourse, power shifts constantly between the organization's global citizens and the Other. However, as previously mentioned, power is generally assumed (and strictly controlled) by the former; as Said (1977) reveals about the Orient, "they are always symmetrical to, and yet

diametrically inferior to, a European equivalent” (p. 72). WE Charity frequently reminds its participants that global change is their responsibility, and it is “up to them to lift people out of poverty” (DeCaro, n.d., p. 9). The empowerment of the Global South within FTC discourse, it seems, comes at the weakening of the global citizen²⁸; implying that the Other does not hold power until the Northerner releases it: powerlessness is often associated with poverty (Smith, 1999a, p. 89), and WE Charity’s discursive language clearly positions the Other as impoverished.²⁹ It is only when WE Charity “empower[s] families to lift themselves out of poverty” (Free the Children/What We Do/Why We’re Different, 2016, para. 3) that the Other is given any semblance of power. Now, in that regard, I will explore – in spite of WE Charity’s attempts at retaining it – the multiplicity of power within the organization’s discursive practices. I will first explore how the organization attempts to hold onto power, and then show how alternative forms of power reveal themselves, albeit unintentionally, through their texts.

i. Knowledge about the Other/Knowledge about Development

Northern involvement in the South is a “story of the powerful and how [the Northerners]... use their power to keep them in positions in which they can continue to dominate others” (Smith, 1999a, p. 34). WE Charity attempts to hold power over the Other by positioning themselves as the epicenter of all knowledge concerning the South, as well as knowledge concerning how to solve their problems. Said (1977), in speaking of

²⁸ The power of the global citizen, and its subsequent weakening, was explored in Chapter Four.

²⁹ For instance, WE Charity positions rural China as being “hobbled by poverty” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Rural China, 2016, Education Section); likewise, WE Charity reminds its participants that “more than half of Ecuador’s indigenous population lives in poverty” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Ecuador, 2016, para. 3). Similar discourse is found throughout their online material.

the Northern knowledge of the South, contends that “knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control” (p. 36). WE Charity’s country descriptor page centers themselves as having familiarity about the Other (and their subsequent development). Indeed, Kapuscinski (2008) writes, the “concept of the Other is usually defined from the white, European point of view” (p. 86): for each of the eight countries where they work, WE Charity describes the country’s geography, infrastructure, and poverty levels, while offering Northern-led solutions based on these descriptions (Free the Children/Where We Work, 2016, Country Descriptor Section). Through such descriptors, WE Charity becomes the “nexus of knowledge and power [in] creating "the Oriental"” (Said, 1977, p. 27). Nowhere in their discursive material do they explore indigenous knowledge in detail, instead focusing on detailing (normalizing) their own development model. Although they “honor the value of ancestral knowledge and cultural identity” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Tanzania, 2016, What We Do Section), implicit within this statement is a hierarchy of knowledge, with Northern knowledge at the top and local Southern knowledge at the bottom – where development occurs through their WE Villages Model, with local knowledge fitting *within* this framework. As Said (1977) reminds us, “the Orient must be made to perform, its power must be enlisted on the side of "our" values, civilization, interests, goals” (Said, 1977, p. 238).

Despite this, we can see indigenous knowledge (and subsequently, indigenous power) emanating from within the organization’s discourses, although unintentionally. WE Charity attempts to portray these knowledges as being static and timeless, somehow frozen in time: like when Michelle watches an Ecuadorian Shaman (“with feathers on his

head”) using traditional medicine; commenting that “it was a totally unique cultural experience” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Ecuador, 2016, 17:40); or when she is taught by an Ecuadorian community member how to use a blow gun – the video montage foregrounding Michelle’s failed attempts against comical, circus music (Me to We/Trip Videos/Ecuador, 2016, 6:50); or when a group of Degrassi volunteers accompany community members in Ghana to collect water from a nearby stream; with one volunteer commenting, “it’s by no means clean by our standards at all” (YouTube Video/Degrassi in Ghana, 2012, 8:20). Here, although WE Charity frames these as exotic, ethnic and primitive experiences, we see the Other’s knowledge emanating in spite of this. The Other has knowledge about themselves and their surroundings, and thus they have the power to self-sustain and thrive in their communities with the resources they have at their disposal.

ii. Constructions of Southern Childhood

The organization also attempts to deny the Other power by their frequent use of Southern children in their texts. Discourses of Southern childhood infiltrate WE Charity’s programming, and its global citizens are constantly speaking about, interacting with, and improving the lives of this youthful Other:

WE Charity’s country descriptor for Ecuador: “Children often have to walk for hours to reach the nearest school” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Ecuador, 2016, para. 2).

An Ecuadorian child speaking about WE Charity's involvement in her community: "I have learned to lose my fear... Now I can talk with people who aren't from my community with more confidence and participate in my class. Before, just the boys were participating." (Free the Children/Where We Work/Ecuador, 2016, Empowerment in Action Section).

A tearful volunteer speaking about the Ecuadorian children in a nursery: "You want to just scoop them all up, and take them to a hospital back home, and give them that kind of chance, but you can't. You can only work from the ground up...which is what we are doing" (Me to We/Trip Videos/Degrassi in Ecuador, 2016, 14:39).

WE Charity's discourses rely heavily on images of the Southern child. These children, attaching themselves to the volunteers in nonthreatening ways, do not challenge WE Charity's youth about "global power imbalances" (Caton & Santos, 2009, p. 200). Their texts are full of depictions of innocent children being cared for by Northern volunteers – often notably absent of parental presence – and gives the impression of vulnerability, ultimately shifting power to the Northerner: through this lens, "we have the power to 'help'; 'they' are the helpless unfortunates" (Burman, 1994, p. 241). Thus, the powerless and dependent child comes to stand as an idiom of powerlessness and dependency for the entire Global South.

However, we can critically unpack these texts to reveal power emanating from these Southern children. Against a video montage of Northern volunteers running with

Guyanese children on a beach, and spinning them around joyfully, one Degrassi volunteer comments:

I just love the fact that we can come here and teach them hand games. We can play soccer with them, we can do things to try and get them away from the pressure to go and help their parents fish, to have to go clean up and smoke fish, to cook (YouTube Video/Degrassi in Ghana, 2012, 14:35).

Such a comment, it seems, relies on the Northern construction of childhood, which is predicated on the notion that children are dependent and innocent individuals, in need of protection by family, community and “caring institutions” (Burman, 1994, p. 239). By superimposing Northern constructions of children onto these Southern children, WE Charity strips away their agency by making it unacceptable for them to be contributing members of their household (i.e. helping to clean or cook). But we can use our critical dispositions to see Otherwise: that these children have the power to be happy – as one volunteer states, “these kids are just so, so excited about life” (YouTube Video/Degrassi in Ghana, 2012, 15:12) – and the power to be responsible members of their community.

iii. Voice and Agency

Finally, WE Charity attempts to strip power away from the Other by positioning them as voiceless. For instance, as Jefferess (2012) highlights, their Vow of Silence campaign urges youth to remain silent for a 24 hour period in order to raise awareness for children denied of their basic human rights (p. 25). The organization states that “everyone deserves to have their voice heard, but issues like lack of access to education drown out the voices of children around the world” (We Day/Vow of Silence/Campaign Resources,

2016, para. 1). However, as Roy (2004) contests, there is “really no such thing as the ‘voiceless’. There are only the deliberately silenced or the preferably unheard” (as cited in Jefferess, 2012, p. 25). The reliance on “voicelessness” reinforces the idea that the Other is a passive victim of social injustice (Jefferess, 2012, p. 26). The Other, it seems, only gains a voice in WE Charity’s promotional material when speaking positively about the organization:

An Indian woman states: “[WE Charity] is helping us advance and improve methods of agriculture, well deepening and the goat rearing project” (Me to We/Me to We Trips, 2016, 2:10).

A Haitian community member speaks about the failure of past water projects: “Lots of water projects which have failed... but this [WE Charity waterpump] is a sustainable way for us to continue to get water from a natural spring (Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti/Video, 2016, 1:22).

A Haitian community member comments: “The [WE Charity] school represents light for our community. It is as though we were in the dark and now we see the light for our children and our future” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Haiti, 2016, Health Section).

The Other does indeed speak in WE Charity’s promotional material, but only through the framework of the organization’s programming. Thus, in this sense, WE Charity attempts to limit their power to a form of pre-packaged empowerment gained only through Northern intervention.

However, we can begin to see power emanating from the Other through their positioning as resilient individuals within the organization's texts. Framed against the impoverished conditions of their communities, WE Charity writes about the Southerner:

The people of Kono District in eastern Sierra Leone fill the word 'resiliency' with meaning, and their ability to pull through the trauma and destruction of this country's brutal 11-year civil war is remarkable (Free the Children/Where We Work/Sierra Leone, 2016, Transforming a Community Section).

After Michelle spent some time with the Kenyan mamas, she notes, "these women are so strong and so powerful, it just totally put things into perspective for me" (Me to We/Trip Video/Kenya, 2016, 4:49).

A Degrassi volunteer comments about the Ecuadorian woman washing her clothes in a stream: "these women and their children are down there every single day, for like six hours, just toiling and it looked like really backbreaking work" (Me to We/Trip Videos/Degrassi in Ecuador, 2016, 10:27).

These Northern perspectives on the Other's agency can be read as just another nostalgic portrayal of the Southern Other, and I argue here that this is most likely the organization's intent. Testimonials of the Other thriving and 'pulling themselves through' (although not out of) poverty are found throughout WE Charity's material, giving the impression that the Other holds enough power to resiliently (and nostalgically) survive through poverty (carrying water for kilometers, washing clothes in a stream, building homes out of cow dung, and drinking goat's blood), but not enough power to

actually lift themselves out of it. However, a critical reader can unpack these texts and see the power of the Southern peoples existing without Northern intervention. For instance, below a volunteer makes note of children carrying water on a water walk:

The kids were walking with us, and they were just like, running, with like no shoes on these rocks and it was... just absolutely amazing to see that (Me to We/Trip Videos/Degrassi in India, 2016, 8:46).

The text is portraying this encounter nostalgically, but in spite of itself, we can craft a picture of children – running with no shoes on – who are much more complex than the descriptions suggest. One can critically unpack this quote and use it against what WE Charity intends it to be used for (Saul, Aug 2016, personal communication). Although the organization is attempting to evoke Northern nostalgia within such a text, this image of shoeless, running children can be dismantled: first, we can begin to inquire as to why they are shoeless and question the global political economy that has helped create the situation in the first place; further, we can self-reflect about our own privilege as someone (with shoes) who consumes these images and feels good about ourselves for feeling bad about shoeless children (Saul, 2016, personal communion); finally, we may realize that these shoeless children can still run happily without shoes and do not need a volunteer intervening in their communities for their own happiness. Power is fluid, and this is one source of power of the Southern people. WE Charity might deny them this power, but the meanings they try to fix about shoeless children in the Global South for us is unstable – and we can use our critical dispositions to see their power regardless.

My point here is to argue that WE Charity's texts, in spite of itself and its aims, reveals the power of the Global South – that the Other has agency separate from the organization's programming, and that there are multiple ways in which the Other fights for, negotiates and asserts power within their lives. Indeed, Smith (1999a) reminds us that Others can “employ multiple discourses, or act in incredibly contradictory ways, or exercise power [them]selves in multiple ways” (Smith, p. 34). WE Charity's texts themselves are framed within hierarchal power relationships, and as Said (1994) reminds us, narratives are “the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history” (p. xii). Their texts are framed around a paradigm of assumed Northern superiority, but a close reading of these texts reveals applications of power emanating from the Other (Saul, Aug 2016, personal communication). You can see their power even though the text is, in a sense, asking you not to see it. The text works to fix in place a certain power relation (North over South), but if you look a little closer, you can see unintentional holes in this attempted fixed meaning. Alternative expressions of power unintentionally bleed out, revealing the fluidly of power.

5.4 Conclusion

In the form of some concluding comments, I wish to argue that WE Charity constructs the Other as a homogenous entity. More bluntly, to turn the Kenyan or the Tanzanian, for example, into the “needy and exotic Other” is reflective of our tendency to compress a continent of a billion people living in fifty-four countries – along with their complex histories, modern societies, and endless narratives – into a simplified and superficial cliché. In fact, Said (1977) recognizes this tendency to “make out of every

observable detail a generalization and out of every generalization an immutable law about the Oriental nature, temperament, mentality, custom, or type” (p. 86). Such an approach – one that assumes the authority to define who the Other is, who they are not, and who they should be – ensures a continuing colonial relationship between the North and the South. As Fiske (1993) reminds us, discourses of power rely on “their ability to produce representations of the world and, more importantly if less explicitly, of themselves in the world” (p. 147). Thus, WE Charity – although claiming to be progressive – ends up participating and enjoying the oppressive systems of relations that dictate the marginalization of the Global South.

Despite more awareness and understanding of the Other, it is obvious that the vocabulary used to describe the Global South remains specialized and ethnocentric in nature within WE Charity’s discursive practices. Perhaps this inability to evolve the language since colonial times can best be explained through differential racialization, a theory that makes visible the dominant society’s tendency to “racialize different minority groups [in different ways] at different times, in response to [its shifting] needs” (Tyson, 2006, p. 375). Perhaps we continue to use such colonial language because it reinforces our need for the Other to remain unable to govern itself and thus dependent on Northern benevolence. We have created such a culture of ‘save the Other’ in the North, and this paternalistic discourse requires constant reconfirmation of the Global South’s need to be saved from itself. When we associate Haiti, for example, with descriptive words like “plagued with poverty” and “underdeveloped”, we are confirming that the country needs guidance from more ‘modern’ civilizations.

WE Charity promotes a particular image of the Other, an image which in turn informs the experiences of its youth participants. Currently, this image encompasses homogenous and consumable notions of the Other, making them easy to pigeonhole into accessible, albeit colonial, ideas of “us” and “them.” As Kapuscinski writes, “I consider myself to be an explorer of Otherness: other cultures, other ways of thinking, other types of behavior. I want to come into contact with strangeness in order to understand” (as cited in Kuprel, 2006, p. 382). We can assume that, like Kapuscinski, WE Charity volunteers – and we get clues of this through some of the testimonials they offer regarding the Other – want to experience Otherness in order to understand it. The problem is that the simplistic and homogenous representations of the Other in WE Charity discourse make this understanding quite superficial. Despite this, although the organization operates within a space dominated by colonialist discourses – inevitably internalizing and (re)producing these discourses – I remain hopeful that critically engaging with the colonial images they endorse provides a space to (re)negotiate and make visible those tensions and binaries. If WE Charity is to evolve from simplistic descriptors of the Other, and engage with the Global South and imagine its people and cultures in more productive and decolonizing ways, then they need to extend their thinking beyond the rhetoric of exoticness and neediness and onto the very programming they offer. In the next section, I will deconstruct the rhetoric of benevolence found throughout WE Charity discourses, in an attempt to make visible the colonial foundations inherent within their programming.

CHAPTER SIX: BENEVOLENCE AS A FORM OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

The rhetoric of benevolence, exercised on the individuals of the Global South, continues to be a driving force behind popular GCE practices. Inherent within this force is the idea that teaching children English, volunteering in an orphanage and installing water pumps are important steps in helping to combat poverty. However, to approach development through altruistic gifts of time, money and help has an unsavory underbelly, as such methods can mask deeper understandings of the structural causes and conditions of poverty, and (re)enforce colonial relations between the North and the South. WE Charity's emphasis on benevolent ideologies, in particular, begs critical inquiry, as their programming and influence extends to thousands of Northern youth, encouraging them to become involved in the Global South through awareness raising, gift-giving, international volunteerism, and ethical consumerism (Free the Children/2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 29). Their programming seems to remain grounded within one cultural understanding of how to address poverty – through benevolent Northern youth – and this is something I believe needs to be problematized.³⁰

In this chapter, I explore the concept of benevolence as it relates to WE Charity's programs in the Global South. To begin, I dismantle the regimes of truth fostering the benevolent undercurrents within the organization's programming. Using Andreotti's (2006) models of global citizenship, I then explore the ways WE Charity balances both soft and critical approaches to global citizenship education within their programs, and what implications this has for (1) how Northern youth understand their own complicity in maintaining unequal power relations between the North and the South; and (2) how

³⁰ Recently, WE Charity's co-founders described their organization as a "massive army for good" (WE/WE Movement Video, 2016, 0:47).

Northern youth come to understand and participate in development projects. I argue that WE Charity's feel good programs – which are almost entirely reflective of soft (benevolent) GCE practices – release global citizens from their complicity in maintaining colonial systems of development. As previously discussed, aid maintains unequal power dynamics between the North and the South – throughout this chapter, I also explore how WE Charity establishes their authority through benevolence in the Global South. As Said (1994) contends, “the rhetoric of power all too easily produces an illusion of benevolence when deployed in an imperial setting” (p. xvii). My inquiry is guided by the following four research questions:

1. What are the regimes of truth (Foucault, 1980) within the WE Charity's program pedagogies and how do these truths dictate how youth are expected to tackle global issues?
2. How is benevolence (soft global citizenship) being enacted by WE Charity?
3. In what ways does WE Charity's promotional material reinforce critical global citizenship practices?
4. What are the implications of benevolence as discursive practice on WE Charity youth's engagement in GCE?

WE Charity's discursive practices are powerful – claiming to “work in partnership” (Me to We/Why Me to We Trips are Different, 2016, para. 2) with the Global South and outwardly rejecting traditional notions of passive-recipient charity (Free the Children 2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 10). Indeed, their discourses undoubtedly distance themselves from the ‘donate and save a child's life’ rhetoric. Yet these altruistic undertones manifest themselves in different ways – albeit discrete ways – making it even

more difficult to examine the organization through a critical lens. As I have previously mentioned, humanitarianism and charitable-giving informs and shapes the Northern rhetoric of goodness and morality. To challenge a regime of truth – one that many Northerners invest in both emotionally and politically – is risky: forcing people to look through different lenses means being critical of resilient philanthropic discourses which maintain the status quo in the North. WE Charity’s benevolent programming certainly works to maintain this status quo, and it is my intention to illuminate how these programs continue to marginalize and colonize the Global South, with the intent to encourage young people and educators to conceptualize more decolonized approaches to global citizenship.

6.1 Regimes of Truth: The Humanitarian Sentiments

Foucault (1980) reminds us that “each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth — that is, the types of discourse it accepts and makes function as true” (p. 131). Within GCE, there is a body of thinking which frames correct ways for organizations, like WE Charity, to engage in global citizenship. Coined by Rosaldo (1989), these “humanitarian sentiments” – moral uplift, the value of education, and the white man’s burden (p. 78) – operate (sometimes discretely, sometimes not) within the confines of WE Charity’s programming. I argue that these three regimes of truth, and (I will add here) benevolence, inform and shape the organization’s narratives, dictating how its youth tackle global issues. Bhabha (1983) argues that “in order to understand the productivity of colonial power it is crucial to construct its regime of 'truth'” (p. 19). Before examining WE Charity’s specific programming – looking for ways benevolence

transitions in and out of the organization's ideological practices – I will unpack/problematicize these regimes of truth below, to provide context for the discussion that follows.

i. Moral Uplift

Global citizenship enterprises have long capitalized on appealing to the morality of its participants: global citizenship theorist Nigel Dower (2002) likens the paradigm to “some kind of moral claim about the nature and scope of our moral obligations” (p. 146); likewise, Dill (2013) contests that current global citizenship practices are more about a “moral ideal [and] a vision of what the good person should be” (p. 3), than a desire to deconstruct the historical processes which create inequality. By taking up a concern towards the Other, a Northerner can attain specific moral values like compassion and empathy, respect for differences, tolerance, and justice (Zahabioun et al., 2013, p. 204). When it comes to global citizenship in particular, these moral values are enacted through acts of gift-giving, awareness raising and overseas volunteerism, constructed by WE Charity specifically as a desire to “make a difference” in the lives of Others (Free the Children/2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 27). Indeed, DeCaro (n.d.), in her research, notes the prevalence of moral rhetoric within WE Charity as a way to entreat youth to act on global issues (p. 4). The organization strategically uses moral uplift to encourage Northern youth to take up a responsibility towards the Other – along the lines of what Butcher and Smith (2010) liken to as the creation of “morally justifiable lifestyles” (p. 30). Here, WE Charity describes their overseas trips as follows:

Through hands-on volunteer experience, they [the volunteers] gain empathy, compassion and understanding for different cultures and environments” (Me to We/FAQ/Volunteer Travel, 2014, What are the Benefits Section).

Mirroring the official language of WE Charity, one volunteer states after speaking with a child laborer in India, “After my interaction with him, I just felt empty inside...I knew that there has to be something that I could do, and that it just can’t stay the same, and walk away, and not do something to make a difference in this kid’s life” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Hedley in India, 2016, 11:34).

Here, the volunteer articulates a moral obligation to act in terms of his own sense of empathy and sadness towards this child. He later goes on to help build a school in a nearby community, his sorrow dissolving as he lays bricks for the building’s walls. Through this framing, a particular sense of morality is created, in which Northern youth can exercise their privilege on the Other, feeling compassionate and gaining feelings of empathy. The problem with grounding global citizenship around moral obligations, Halttunen (1995) argues, is that the ‘lack’ of the Other actually affirms the moral superiority (moral uplift) of the Northerner, by positioning them as outsiders with the ability to ‘save’ their host communities (as cited in Barker et al., 2014, p. 12). Further, Jefferess (2008) argues, through the lens of moral responsibility, poverty also becomes “conceived of as natural or outside of history and material relations of power” (p. 33). The paradigm becomes more about the compassion of the global citizen towards the needy Other and less about the reason why the Other is needy in the first place. This form of “moral consumption” (Butcher & Smith, 2015, p. 1) allows volunteers to consume

experiences (i.e. volunteering overseas) in order to construct their identities as moral global citizens. The volunteer is not implicated in the historical processes that create inequality, they merely seek to help and shape their moral compasses.

ii. The Value of (Northern) Education

The second regime of truth informing the official rhetoric of WE Charity is the value of education. Their development paradigm aligns with many Northern NGOs, who generally define the meaning of development, Smith (2004) argues, through their “marketing, fundraising and education work” (p. 742). Indeed, the organization places a strong emphasis on education in helping to eradicate poverty in their host communities:

If we’re going to talk seriously about ending child poverty, we need to talk about education. Giving a child an education is the best way to set them up for success and break the cycle of poverty (WE/Our Development Model, 2016, Education Section).

This construction of poverty as being rooted in a lack of education underlies many of their development efforts, and WE participants are regularly reminded that they can help alleviate poverty by, among other initiatives, building a school in the Global South. Their rhetorical appeals regarding the value of education are significant: first, the construction of a school stands as a tangible and measurable symbol of the volunteer’s success in the South. In a video montage of Michelle and her fellow volunteers building a school in Kenya, she comments:

It’s really nice to know that soon these classrooms will be full of kids...we’re all here working towards this common goal to build a school...I’ve always imaged

coming to Kenya to build a school, and now I've done it (Me to We/Trip Videos/Michelle in Kenya, 2016, 19:19).

Problematic within this symbolic representation of development is the idea that the construction of a school (or thousands of schools) will eradicate poverty within the South.³¹ Although such cosmetic engagement makes for a great photo op, and leaves volunteers feeling good about their contributions, it does little to help volunteers go beyond, as Tallon & McGregor (2014) argue, a surface awareness of global issues (p. 1409). Nor does it change the political and economic conditions that lead to illiteracy and educational absenteeism in the first place. Second, a promotion of Northern-influenced education (i.e. education happens in a classroom, it is delivered by a teacher, students sit in desks, and knowledge is categorized into subjects) moves knowledge from the North to the South, hence imposing a Northern knowledge system onto Others. This is problematic, from a postcolonial perspective, as the globalization of Northern knowledge and culture constantly reaffirms the North's view of itself as the source of "civilized" and legitimate knowledge (Smith, 1999a, p. 63). This is perhaps best explained by Helena Norberg-Hodge:

There is an assumption that Western education, Western knowledge, is something that is superior... there is an idea that we have evolved to a higher level of being, and that these people, however lovely they are, they're going to benefit from this superior knowledge (as cited in *Schooling The World/People*, 2015, People Section).

³¹ WE Charity does not just build classrooms; they engage in a more holistic approach to development and I will explore this in detail shortly. My point here, however, is that their youth participants – without being provided space to engage with the structural causes of poverty – may come to equate school-building with successful development.

Further, Zemach-Bersin (2007) reminds us that education is an “assimilative force”, determined by those in power, which attempts to construct shared understandings of the world (p. 21). The authority of Northern education becomes imposed onto these communities and produces a discourse of development where Northern understandings of education serve as a reference point to be measured against and to strive towards.

iii. The White Man’s Burden

WE Charity’s programming is also influenced by the white man’s burden,³² a rhetorical idiom first laid out by Rudyard Kipling in his 1899 poem titled *The White Man's Burden*. Whether perceived to be satirical or serious, this poem justified colonialism on the basis that it was the responsibility of the privileged Northerner (the American) to save the inferior “half-devil and half-child” Other (the Philippian): “Take up the White Man's burden / The savage wars of peace / Fill full the mouth of Famine/ And bid the sickness cease” (Foster & McChesney, 2003, n.p.). Although WE Charity certainly distances themselves from similar ideologies, the perpetuation of the white man’s burden is still prevalent within its discourses. Jefferess (2008) makes a correlation between this idiom and GCE in his research:

Humanitarian aid discourses continue to rely upon benevolence in a way that is reminiscent of the colonial “white man’s burden”...[where] the “native” was either a savage to be tamed or eradicated or an unfortunate soul to be educated and civilized (p. 34).

³² This term is more recently referred to as the white savior complex, and I will be using this updated terminology for the remainder of my research.

At times, WE Charity's volunteerism discourses continue to perpetuate the myth of the white man's burden – bestowing upon the privileged Northerner the responsibility and moral duty to intervene in the South. When a group of volunteers from the Canadian television show *Degrassi* arrive in their Ecuadorian host community, one volunteer looks upon a communal kitchen pre-WE Charity intervention:

It's pretty unbelievable that this is supposed to be a place to cook food (the camera pans over the roofless, charred kitchen). So, we're hoping we can build them something a little better (Me to We/Trip Videos/Degrassi in Ecuador, 2016, 5:15).

Later on, another volunteer comments, "I think so much of this experience is not only coming here to help, but also just to experience what their lives are like. You know, the girl had to go home and do her homework after [washing clothes]. To even have the opportunity to have homework is so important, and that's something that we're kind of bringing to them" (Me to We/Trip Videos/Degrassi in Ecuador, 2016, 11:00).

In this particular sense, the global citizen is charged with the duty (the burden) of bringing Northern ideas of education and opportunities to Southern communities. Rather than questioning the systems in place which led to these conditions of poverty, the volunteers rely upon a discourse of heroism – helping to bring opportunities to these 'less developed' communities – and establishing a dichotomy of the privileged Northerner and underprivileged Southerner to justify this intervention. It seems that the Kenyans, Nicaraguans, and Tanzanians are background noise to the Canadian youth and WE

Charity, whose narratives position themselves as the heroes of the story. Along the same lines as Kipling's white man's burden, Hudson and Pierre (2014) coin this act of constructing the "heroic" white saviors – who devote their time towards the betterment of Others – as the "white savior industrial complex" (para. 7). Next to the stories of poverty and have-nots, the North becomes the paternal figure who will help guide the South out of chaos.

iv. Benevolence

WE Charity's discursive practices easily fit into Rosaldo's (1989) original humanitarian sentiments. I argue here that benevolence could be the organization's forth humanitarian sentiment (or regime of truth). Benevolence, Beauchamp (2013) illustrates, refers to the "morally valuable character trait—or virtue—of being disposed to act to benefit others" (para. 4). In other words, acts of altruism towards the Other are closely related to an essence of morality which, in regards to this research, is upheld and enacted by the Northern volunteer. Further, to draw from Kohlberg et al. (1990), benevolence is enacted "through the lens of intending to promote good and prevent harm to the other" (p. 156). This intention to promote good is threaded throughout the discursive practices of WE Charity: the organization, it seems, chooses to relate global citizenship – not as a means through which structural causes of global poverty are unpacked and challenged – but as a demand of *being good* towards the Other. Hume (1751) argues that "nothing can bestow more merit on any person... [then] having a very high degree of the sentiment of benevolence" (p. 7), and WE Charity frequently emphasizes the uplifting nature of this sentiment – and its ability to confer distinction and value onto its participants – in its

promotional material. Values of compassion, kindness and empathy exist all along the peripheral of the master narrative which characterize each testimonial of its global citizens. For example, one Degrassi volunteer, upon talking with some rural Indian girls, starts crying:

I started to cry halfway through when we were asking them questions.... And all the girls were like ‘what? Why are you crying? Why is she crying?’... I told them that all of us [Canadians] have had the opportunity to go to school and we just want the exact same thing for them. And then they [the Indian girls] immediately ran over to me and gave me a big hug, like, everyone who was there, all of the kids ran over to give me a hug... I mean, they were giving me hugs so I would stop crying, and they’re in such a terrible situation (Me to We/Trip Videos/Degrassi in India, 2016, 18:46).

Here, the volunteer expresses her empathy and compassion for her host community. Immediately after this scene, the documentary counteracts this sense of compassion and sorrow towards the Other by showing a clip of another volunteer, offering a solution:

Step forward and take some kind of action. I mean, we really don’t know what we can do, but we are building a school. So, instead of, you know, standing around or whatever, let’s build that school and do as much as we can, while we’re here, for them (Me to We/Trip Videos/Degrassi in India, 2016, 20:05).

Implicit within this dialogue is the idea that solving global inequality is possible through acts of compassion and benevolence towards the Other. In other words, as Jefferess (2012) summarizes here, it becomes about “what can we, the fortunate, do to help the unfortunate” (p. 20). Scenes like the one above play out frequently in WE Charity’s trip

videos: the benevolent global citizen encounters the needy Other, feels empathetic and overwhelmed by their neediness, and then builds a school to make a difference. Certainly, the organization frames “the social problem of poverty as how the Other lacks” (Jefferess, 2012, p. 20), and then solves this problem through the benevolence of its global citizens. As Dower (2003) explains here:

A global citizen may also accept an ethic of more extensive benevolence. She does not merely help those in front of her, she accepts a general responsibility and seeks out appropriate ways of helping, including helping at a distance (p. 92).

For the often unskilled and inexperienced youthful global citizen, benevolence and empathy (along with a little bit of hard labor) is sometimes the only appropriate way they can ‘help’ these Southern communities.

These four regimes of truth – moral uplift, the value of education, the white man’s burden, and benevolence – all work to inform the discursive practices and programming of the WE Charity enterprise. Although they can, at times, be read at the center of the text (the value of education is outwardly promoted), more often than not, these truths exist peripherally and can generally only be read subliminally. Practices of benevolence, the moral uplifting of Northerners and the white savior complex primarily (and discreetly) manifest themselves through charity fundraising and overseas volunteerism within WE Charity’s programming. At this point, I will now problematize these soft GCE practices and seek ways that WE Charity attempts to employ more critical GCE practices within their promotional material.

6.2 Soft Approaches to GCE in WE Charity's Programming

Like there are five or six people living here; there's one bed and all the rest of them sleep on the floor, and the floor is made of cow-dung and dirt. And its pitch black in there right now, I couldn't even tell how many people were in the room.

A WE Charity volunteer, after visiting a rural Indian home.
(Me to We/Trip Videos/Degrassi in India, 2016, 8:57)

Comments like the one above illustrate a prevailing paradigm within development discourses, one that embodies a sense of privilege and is indicative of the way in which WE Charity's volunteers sometime engages with the Other. Inherent within this discourse is the idea that feelings of empathy, compassion, and doing good can make the lives of the marginalized Other better. As explained earlier, Andreotti (2006) frames this approach to development as soft global citizenship education – an approach based on moral and humanitarian grounds, awareness-raising and fundraising, imposed change, and colonial assumptions (p. 46-48). Building off the idea that individuals are empathetic and charitable, this form of global citizenship hinges upon “developing a sense of moral responsibility for global problems” (Brunell, 2013, p. 19). Individuals who adopt soft global citizenship see donations of time, expertise and resources as potential solutions to global poverty, and see change happening most effectively when the North is present in the Global South in some capacity or another. The problem with these soft approaches, Andreotti (2006) argues, is that Northern youth, charged with the motivation to make a difference through volunteerism and charitable giving, will project their beliefs as universal and reproduce power relations similar to those in colonial times (p. 41). Within such a framework, GCE becomes more about a moral obligation to humanity, rather than a political responsibility to negotiate through the structural causes of poverty.

I argue here that WE Charity's programming are heavily informed by soft global citizenship ideologies, with a strong focus on feel good programming and benevolence. Driven by their discretely operating regimes of truth, WE Charity continues to reproduce colonial assumptions by fixing highly crafted meanings of development onto their practices, which ultimately inform the discourses of its participants. Below, I will deconstruct how their charitable practices and overseas programming emulate soft GCE, as well as make visible the consequences of such practices. I will also highlight the regimes of truth operating peripherally, paying special attention to how benevolence in particular provides a "structure of attitude and reference" for understandings of global social and economic inequality (Said, 1994, p. 193).

6.2.1 Charity Fundraising

i. Gift Giving

Throughout WE Charity's online promotional material, youth are reminded that they hold the power to change the world through consumerism. For instance, when consumers buy a Me to We product, WE Charity reminds them that their purchase has "transformed the world" and "transformed a life" (Me to We/Track Your Impact, para. 1). Headlined by the slogan "A Better World is Yours to Give" (WE Charity/Donation, 2016, webpage title), consumers can spend their charitable funds on sixteen internationally-focused initiatives. Each initiative comes with a photograph of a smiling Southerner, happily benefiting from the gifts of We Charity: consumers can "give a lifetime of good health and cheer" when they purchase clean water for a family (WE Charity/Donation, 2016, International Section); they can purchase the iconic goat, one

that “gives back”, and opens “a world of possibilities for a family” (WE Charity/Donation, 2016, International Section); consumers can also donate a school kit, and by doing so, they will “remove a barrier to education and ensure that every student can learn to their fullest potential” (Free the Children/Donate, 2016, School Kit for a Child section). Appealing to a morally conscious volunteer, WE Charity is selling a feeling. As Heath and Potter (2004) contend:

People buy what makes them feel superior, whether by showing that they are cooler (Nike shoes), better connected (Cuban cigars), better informed (single-malt Scotch), more discerning (Starbucks espresso), morally superior (Body Shop cosmetics) or just plain richer (Lois Vuitton bags) (p. 103).

By purchasing WE Charity’s products, consumers can feel morally superior and momentarily minimize their culpability with poverty in the Global South, basically buying out, Butcher and Smith (2010) argue, the guilt associated with their privilege (p. 33). With such an identity, WE Charity’s consumers can temporarily feel satisfied with their ethical purchases (and themselves), while the organization can further capitalize on this moral image of their brand. Although a few individuals will benefit from the goat or school supplies, by viewing GCE as a form of social action through consumption, the paradigm remains an after-the-fact solution which ultimately distracts global citizens from the role that excessive consumption plays in maintaining poverty.

Gift-giving sloganeering like the ones above create further problems: such initiatives promote the idea that global citizens can solve poverty through simplistic

actions, like subscribing to a mailing list or buying a Me to We Rafiki bracelet.³³ With the latter, WE Charity consumers are told that each bracelet purchase supports a female entrepreneur in Kenya, “empowering her to earn a living and create a better future for her family and her community” (Me to We/Rafiki Shop, 2016, para. 1). Although employment and gender empowerment are crucial issues to address in the Global South, the idea that poverty can be lessened through this gift-giving paradigm fails to engage youth with the conditions that produce global inequality in the first place (Barker et al, 2014, p. 10). From a more critical perspective, it also situates Northern youth into a position which perpetuates this inequality; Peter Buffet (July 26, 2013) writes of this philanthropic colonialism in a New York Times article:

Nearly every time someone feels better by doing good, on the other side of the world, someone else is further locked into a system that will not allow the true flourishing of his or her nature or the opportunity to live a joyful and fulfilled life (para. 8).

Further, gift-giving creates a counter-narrative which reflects a relationship of dominance between the North and the South, where Northerners can establish their authority through benevolence: charity can unwillingly create dependency (Nutt, 2011, p. 137), as the gift reaffirms the South’s dependency on the North and establishes the parameters of power between those who are ‘fortunate’ and those who ‘lack.’³⁴ Ralph Waldo Emerson (1844)

³³ Operating along the peripheral of this assumption is the idea of benevolence (WE Charity’s fourth regime of truth) as a solution to global poverty – using compassion and empathy towards the Other to guide one’s consumer choices.

³⁴ Further, operating silently on the margins of these gift-giving initiatives is the white savior complex (“A Better World is Yours to Give”) – offering a platform for Northerners to swoop in and ‘fix’ the problems of the South with their money.

writes about the unwelcome expectations imposed on the receivers of gifts in his 1844 essay entitled *Gifts*:

We are either glad or sorry at a gift, and both emotions are unbecoming. Some violence, I think, is done, some degradation borne, when I rejoice or grieve at a gift. I am sorry when my independence is invaded, or when a gift comes from such as do not know my spirit, and so the act is not supported (p. 25).

According to Emerson, the gift challenges the recipient's self-worth and degrades a person's will to remain independent. It seems that the gift, intended to be an act of kindness, is never quite received as such: the recipient shoulders the burden of repaying the gift because their independence becomes jeopardized. According to Mauss (1950), "the gift is thus something that must be given, that must be received and that is, at the same time, dangerous to accept" (p. 58). The gift that remains unpaid shifts power away from the person who accepts it.

ii. Local Initiatives

Aside from gift-giving, WE Charity participants can also participate in local initiatives to help raise awareness for international issues. Currently, the organization offers five global campaigns for Northerners (We Charity/We at School, 2016, Global Campaigns Section). In their *We Bake for Change* campaign, for example, participants can "apron up with [their] BFFs and hold a bake sale to make a world of difference for developing communities" and make the world "a sweeter place" (We Charity/We Bake for Change, 2016, para. 1). Although such an initiative provides an outlet for Northerners to think about their privilege within the global community, it can also promote the idea

that the underlying causes of poverty are simplistic in nature (since they can be tackled by something as simple as a bake sale). Indeed, We Charity endorses this belief, stating in a promotional video that “changing the world is a piece of cake” (We Charity/We Bake for Change/Promotional video, 2016, 0:52). Each of WE Charity’s five campaigns are informed by similar thinking: solving poverty is as simple as holding a walkathon [“Get your sweat on with a danceathon, walkathon or sports fundraiser in support of empowering programs in developing communities” (WE Charity/We Step Up, 2016, para. 1)] or by donating spare change [“turn your small change into big change for families overseas” (WE Charity/We Create Change, 2016, para. 1)]. The ‘problem’ of the South is thus simplified (imagined) into something tangible (and solvable) for those donating the money. You can see this in the oversimplified clichés of poverty within WE Charity’s discourses; they often formulate sentences like “more than half of Ecuador’s indigenous population lives in poverty” (Free the Children/Where We Work/Ecuador, 2016, para. 3) and “nearly half of all children in rural areas are underweight” (Free the Children/Where We Work/India, 2016, para. 4). Poverty becomes a simple and plausible image (often supported by a statistic or a number), which can easily be smoothed over by the bake sales and walkathons of the Northerner.

6.2.2 Overseas Volunteerism

WE Charity’s global citizens are also told they can change the world by enacting benevolence in an overseas community in the South. Coining it “Travel with Purpose,” the organization defines the volunteer experience as being about “people, connections and self-discovery—all working together to change the world” (Me to We/Youth Trips,

2016, para. 1). Potential volunteers are told that they have the chance to “create lasting change in the communities [they] visit” (Me to We/Youth Trips, 2016, para. 2). For instance, on WE Charity’s India promotional video, Michelle notes:

We made such a big difference and impact in this community, and those are the lasting sustainable changes that are going to stay with them [the Southerner] and hopefully change their lives forever (Me to We/Trip Videos/India, 2016, 19:08).

Indeed, WE Charity’s idea of volunteerism aligns with the popular perception that volunteering involves an aspiration to help others (Butcher & Smith, 2010, p. 28). However, WE Charity moves the organization beyond this definition through their frequent use of the slogan “change the world” – which implies that WE Charity’s global citizens can not only help Others, but they can help to reverse the conditions of poverty through volunteer projects. Indeed, in their 2014 Annual Report, the organization argues that the “spirit of volunteerism” can stop global injustice (Free the Children/2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 25). Initiatives that send idealistic youth into the Global South to change the world reveals a few ways how development issues are being conceived in an organization like WE Charity. I argue here that their overseas discursive practices, framed by the humanitarian sentiments, construct the idea that: (a) their volunteers are world changers; (b) their volunteers need to experience poverty to understand it (slum tourism); and (c) their volunteers can gain empathy towards the Other by becoming the Other (going native). I will now explore these three constructions below.

i. Changing the World

First, WE Charity's overseas initiatives promote the idea that volunteers can actually change the world³⁵. Research, however, has revealed that the impacts of volunteer work on communities in the Global South are often assumed, rather than researched (ATLAS/TRAM, 2008, p. 39). In a highly frank speech delivered to a room full of soon-to-be volunteers in Mexico, Austrian philosopher Ivan Illich (1968) argues that the only thing volunteers can do "in a Mexican village is create disorder" (p. 318). He argues that "there is no way for [volunteers] to really meet with the underprivileged, since there is no common ground whatsoever for [them] to meet on" (p. 318). Meaning that the distinct cultural and social upbringings of Northern volunteers act as a barrier between themselves and the Global South, making them powerless to do the "good" that they intend to do (Illich, 1968, p. 320). Furthering on Illich's (1968) arguments, Butcher and Smith (2010) reason that the funds used by volunteers to travel on these projects would be better suited to pay a greater amount of local labor than the "individual volunteer could ever hope to provide" (p. 33). Indeed, these short term volunteer groups, Van Engen (2000) argues, almost always "do work that could be done (and usually done better) by people of the country they visit" (p. 21). This reality is highlighted in a We Charity documentary following a group of Degraasi volunteers around Kenya³⁶. During the process of building a school, the group returns to the community one morning to find their school almost completed by local builders. The dejected volunteers are discouraged:

³⁵ As this research has shown, this 'change' is believed to come from the benevolent actions of Northerners (the fourth regime of truth informing the organization's approach to development).

³⁶ Only a portion of this video is found on WE Charity's website. The complete version is found on their Free the Children International YouTube channel.

One upset volunteer notes, “The locals have finished our school that we wanted to build by hand ourselves. But, um, it’s alright I guess” (Free the Children/ MTV Presents/ Degrassi in Kenya, 2011, 11:43).

Reduced to moving the construction debris away from the nearly constructed school, another volunteer comments, “Now that the walls are up, we’re cleaning up the rest of the rocks. So we’re just a bit discouraged, uh, that we wanted to do a little more”³⁷ (Free the Children/ MTV Presents/Degrassi in Kenya, 2011, 12:10).

When the WE Charity facilitator provides a space for the volunteers to express their frustration, one volunteer maneuvers herself into the white savior position, “I guess I have a problem with the fact that, um, it doesn’t feel like when it’s done, we would be able to say that we built it. It’s kind of a matter of being proud of what we’ve done afterwards” (Free the Children/ MTV Presents/Degrassi in Kenya, 2011, 12:33).

Here, in spite of WE Charity’s attempts to allocate power to the global citizen, this exchange (once again) reveals applications of power emanating from the South. The locals are able to complete the school without the help from dejected volunteers, although the video quickly attempts to hide these alternative expressions of power in the next frame, when a local Kenyan states:

³⁷ When faced with the prospect of not being able to exercise benevolence, and assume the role of the white savior, the volunteer becomes frustrated. Such dialogue reveals how these two regimes of truth frame the experiences and expectations of WE Charity’s participants.

They've [the host community] seen a lot of help from you guys. So when you just visit them they just feel... there's hope (Free the Children/ MTV Presents/Degrassi in Kenya, 2011, 15:35).

Further, although WE Charity stays within their host communities for extended periods of time (We Charity/Our Development Model, 2016, How WE Villages Work Section), the frequent comings-and-goings of their (generally unskilled) volunteers would, we can assume here, require nearly constant assistance. Roberts (2004), in highlighting the difference between long-term and short-term volunteers, explains:

It is worthwhile [for the Southerners] to invest a considerable amount of time inducting [the volunteers]. However, if they are only going to be with them for a couple of months and don't have any... qualifications or experience, it may well not be considered a constructive use of time (p. 42).

Juxtapose this comment against the scene which unfolded above, and one can begin to see the surface impact of these international volunteers. By positioning the Northerner as a solution to global poverty – teaching English or laying bricks – and reducing the complexities of poverty (for the benefit of the volunteer), the end result becomes almost tokenistic in nature: where Northern volunteers complete a development project (under the intonation of 'changing the world') which could have been completed (undoubtedly cheaper, faster, and with less colonial fanfare) by skilled locals. Thus, the volunteer project may be more for the volunteer's benefit, and less about actually changing the world.

ii. Slum Tourism

You can read about poverty or watch documentaries on it, but seeing it firsthand is very difficult A WE Charity volunteer in Kenya.
(Me to We/Youth Trips, 2016, Hear From Our Travelers Section).

All of a sudden, all of this money that you are fundraising becomes a person, and it becomes a name and a face
A WE Charity volunteer.
(Me to We/University and College Volunteer Trips Video, 2016, 0:57).

Existing along the perimeter of the organization's discourses is a highly colonial practice called slum tourism (or poverty tourism) – an almost unavoidable phenomenon of the overseas volunteer experience. Through this practice, Northerners tour around observing poorer communities of the Global South, and under their privileged gaze, poverty becomes framed as a product for their consumption (Freire-Medeiros, 2009, p. 586). The attraction to slum tourism is rooted in the “starkness of difference it displays” (Frenzel et al., 2012, p. xv) and plays on the ‘lack’ of the South and ‘privilege’ of the North. Although WE Charity does not officially offer these types of experiences to its participants, inseparable from their programming are the encounters between the volunteer and the impoverished Other,³⁸ in which the former assumes the position “to observe, study, and so forth” (Said, 1977, p. 308), and the latter goes about “fixed, stable, in need of investigation, [and] in need even of knowledge about himself” (Said, 1977, p. 308). For instance, while touring a local Indian community, Hedley watches a group of girls working alongside a road. One band member comments:

³⁸ These encounters (at least the ones deconstructed in this research) seem to be informed by the white savior complex; the volunteer's firsthand experiences with poverty are always followed by a desire to help ‘make a difference’ in the lives of Others.

It's just really tough to digest. I've always read about child labor and heard about it, but I've never seen it right in front of me. I've never seen the fact that they have to work every single day out here, nine hours a day, under the hot sun, sweating, bending their backs.... When they should be learning, when they should be furthering their education³⁹ (Me to We/Trip Videos/Hedley in India, 2016, 9:09).

The volunteers continue to observe, imagining alternative existences for these children and expressing their shock at the scene playing out in front of them. As the dejected group drives away from the girls with sorrowful music playing in the background, another member comments:

They've got beautiful young women in beautiful saris [working]; these are jobs for men with hard hats that are sweating too much. It's not that far from the haven they can be enjoying. I want to do something that can make it so that they can be free⁴⁰ (Me to We/Trip Videos/Hedley in India, 2016, 12:00).

This whole encounter, it seems, becomes about validating the Northern volunteer's own personal experience through the lives and experiences of the Southern Other. Indeed, the volunteer, after observing the child workers, positions himself in the foreground of this narrative. In this sense, it is about taking the struggle of the Other – a sometimes imagined or embellished struggle – and making it about the benevolence of the global

³⁹ Here we see WE Charity's second regime of truth, the value of Northern education, surface in this volunteer's comments.

⁴⁰ Shouldering the 'burden' of helping these child workers, this volunteer's comments are informed by the white savior complex – he assumes he can help make a difference in their lives because of his privileged position as a Northern volunteer.

citizen. As a result, “these short-timers take home more from their slumming in the Third World than [they] leave behind” (Kwa, 2007, n.p.).

Similarly, a group of Degrassi volunteers are brought by WE Charity facilitators to meet a child worker in India. After the meeting, one volunteer states:

When that little boy saw the way that we reacted [to his situation], he now knows that the way he is living is not normal... maybe we’ve changed his point of view⁴¹, and now he feels like he can fight for something (Me to We/Trip Videos/Degrassi in India, 2016, 15:00).

Here, the volunteer’s comments are loaded with colonial fanfare: upon establishing her position as a privileged observer, she normalizes her Northern values and experiences, constructs the Other as “backward... deviant, and peripheral” (Canton & Santos, 2009, p. 192), and perpetuates the so-called inferiority complex onto the child – a term used to describe how colonized individuals internalize their oppression and see themselves as colonized peoples (Fanon, 1952, p. 2). Driving away from the encounter, the group comes upon a man lying in the middle of the road. As the camera pans over the man in a thirty-second uninterrupted shot, one volunteer comments:

An interesting thing for me, when we were coming back, was just seeing the guy lying across the road. And you know, we all got upset, you know. Why is no one doing anything? I didn’t get off the car to help the guy, neither did the next person. So I think it is very easy to get upset about all the situations around, but

⁴¹ Here, the oppression of the boy affirms the heroism of the volunteers. She positions herself as the guiding force behind this child’s potential escape out of poverty, assuming the role of the white savior (the third regime of truth).

you can't get upset and expect the next person to get up and do something for you⁴² (Me to We/Trip Videos/Degrassi in India, 2016, 19:33).

At this point, the volunteer maneuvers himself into the colonial position, making snapshot observations from his privileged position and looking at, as Meschkank (2011) sardonically highlights, “the poverty and misery of the slum residents from behind tinted windows” (p. 47). Slum tourism problematically confines the South into the present moment, without contextualizing or historicizing anything beyond the current ‘lack’ or ‘need’ of the community, for the benefit of the Northern observer: children who do not go to school are shown building roads and working as vendors; families without access to running water are shown walking kilometers to a dirty stagnant water source; communities that have yet to receive support from WE Charity are shown malnourished and disease-ridden. Foregrounded against this backdrop is the Northerner, extending their gaze on all the lack and reconfirming (again and again) the stereotypical image of the needy Other. As Said (1977) reminds us, anyone employing Orientalism “will designate, name, point to, fix what he is talking or thinking about with a word or phrase, which then is considered either to have acquired, or more simply to be, reality” (Said, 1977, p. 72). In these volunteers’ attempts to experience (gawk at) poverty firsthand – to empathize with it, to acknowledge it – they may in fact be further positioning the Other into their traditional role as the deprived and oppressed.

⁴² The volunteer articulates a desire to help, based on moral grounds (compassion and empathy). Such a comment reflects WE Charity’s first regime of truth, moral uplift.

iii. Going Native

WE Charity's overseas discursive practices construct the idea that its participants can gain empathy towards the Other by becoming the Other. Coined 'going native', the motif describes "lapses" from Northern behavior, in which Northerners partake in "native rituals and [adopt] the practice of local [Southern] customs such as food, dress and entertainment" (Mihaly, 2010, p. 102). For Northern volunteers wishing to immerse themselves wholly in their host communities, this consumption of the Other is, in the words of bell hooks (1992), "a contemporary revival of interest in the "primitive," with a distinctly postmodern slant" (p.366). Volunteers can embrace the romanticized version of the Other by wearing colorful fabrics, eating "ethnic" food, and sleeping on cowhide beds, while still maintaining their privileged position by freely transitioning in and out of this cultural appropriation. Intrinsic within this paradigm is the assumption that the "exploration into the world of difference, into the body of the Other, will provide a greater, more intense pleasure than any that exists in the ordinary world of one's familiar racial group" (bell hooks, 1992, p. 369). Volunteers can selectively pick which indigenous experience they want to experience – learning how to throw a spear instead of contracting typhoid by drinking stagnant water – and walk away with an assumed empathetic awareness of the Other.⁴³ On the surface, we might interpret these spaces as intercultural understanding, but a critical reading quickly reveals the colonial subtexts within these encounters.

⁴³ Going native is partly informed by WE Charity's forth regime of truth (benevolence). Inherent within this paradigm is the belief that compassion and empathy is fostered through the adoption of practices and traditions of the Other – the idea being that the volunteer can empathize with the Other better by both living the indigenous lifestyle (eating exotic foods) and undergoing some of their hardships (partaking in water walks).

Implicit within the going native paradigm is what Bhabha (1994) describes as colonial mimicry: “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (p. 86). The discourse of mimicry requires the Other to be almost the same as the Northerner, but slightly altered. Their difference is signified by their exoticness and timelessness, which can then be comfortably slipped into by the volunteer. For instance, although the organization’s volunteers do not generally live with host families during their time abroad, WE Charity ambassador Jesse resided within a Maasai community during her time in Kenya. Donning a Maasai shuka, Jesse fully integrates herself into her host community: living in a mud hut, collecting water, helping with chores, drinking goat’s blood, and wearing Maasai beads. At the end of her trip, she is given a Maasai name (‘the Blessed One’) in order for her to “become a member of the community” (Me to We/Trip Videos/Jesse in Kenya, 2016, 19:38). Similarly, when Michelle visits a rural community in Ecuador, she too dons tribal paint and learns how to throw hunting spears. Normalizing her Northern eating habits, she spends twenty minutes trying to eat raw bugs:

This entire process of eating the live bug probably took me about twenty minutes. I [didn’t] even know how to get into the mindset... all I [felt] was just like its guts and insides squirting all over my mouth, it was so gross... oh my god, so gross. When I finally finished the whole live bug, I was pretty proud of myself (Me to We/Trip Videos/Ecuador, 2016, 8:16).

WE Charity participants who do not volunteer overseas can also ‘go native’ by purchasing indigenous-inspired products, like a Maasai beaded necklace made by a Kenyan Mama (Me to We/Shop/Maasai Maji Necklace-Maasai, 2016, n.p.) or a “limited

edition rustic” shuka – the same “fabric garments worn by Maasai Warriors as they tend to herds of grazing cattle” (Me to We/Shop/ Limited Edition Rustic Shuka, 2016, n.p.). WE Charity consumers can thus partake in a colonial catwalk from home, effectively blurring the line between cultural immersion and cultural appropriation.

Each of these above examples rely upon the idea of an accessibly consumable difference – one that mimics familiarity, but different enough to be sought after by the Northerner. Problematic within this crossover of the Northerner becoming the Other are a number of colonial ideologies – the first being the stereotypical reproduction of the timeless Other. In the words of Bhabha (1983), this discursive strategy “is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated” (p. 18). This is evident in WE Charity’s framework of the Other, as their volunteers are continuously participating in water walks, partaking in the traditional song and dance and eating the exotic and ethnic meal. Displays such as these, Urry (2002) argues, are cultural signifiers that become the leading perception of the South, conceptualized by ethnicity, tradition, and framed by an idea of “naturalness” (p. 156). Indeed, the Northern volunteer is never seen becoming the modern Other (talking on a cell phone, shopping, or driving a car), leading to a consumption of difference which results in the framing (stereotyping) of the North as the norm, and the Other as exotic and strange.

Further, going native can also result in the watering down of Southern culture. It is understandable that volunteers have a desire to consume diversity (as many globetrotters do). However, within this consumption, difference can be watered down or taken out of context through cultural appropriation (Germann Molz, 2012, p. 38). Maasai

culture, for instance, becomes about whatever visual experiences are consumed by the volunteers: intricate beadwork, goat's blood, chanting, and colorful shukas. Intercultural understanding is replaced by a desire to consume/become the Other, perpetuating colonial views of Otherness, like exoticism. As Beck (2006) argues here:

The glitter of cultural difference fetches a good price. Images of an in-between world, of the black body, exotic beauty, exotic music, exotic food and so on, are globally cannibalized, re-staged and consumed as products for mass markets (as cited in Germann Molz, 2012, p. 39).

Through this lens, going native is comprised of the craving to consume an idealized, diluted version of the Other, effectively denying the significance of their history “through a process of decontextualization” (bell hooks, 1992, p. 373). Void of any historical context, the indigenous backdrop – generally framed by WE Charity as a problematic space needing to be fixed by the Northerner –ironically becomes desired scenery (albeit simplified scenery) for the volunteer-turned-Other.

6.3 The WE Village Approach to Development

The school system became one of the most important vehicles of development strategy, being presented to the excluded as the answer to all the problems of their 'underdevelopment,' the redeeming genie which could henceforth save their children from misery and shame, in reality, schools served other purposes
(Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997, p. 158).

WE Charity's overseas involvement is framed by their Adopt a Village approach to development. Although most of their projects are enacted and funded by benevolent global citizens with benevolent ideals, their WE Village program drives the organization's involvement in the South. The entire program is outwardly informed by

their second regime of truth, the value of education, and at this point I will now problematize this foundational building block of their organization.

We Villages is a development model that “addresses the five primary causes of poverty with holistic and sustainable solutions that work in tandem to transform communities” (We Charity/Our Development Model, 2016, para. 3). Every fundraising campaign and overseas project is geared towards one of these five primary causes of poverty (referred to as the Five Pillars). These Five Pillars, each focused on the value of education, are framed as follows:

The Five Pillars	WE Charity’s Rational
Education	“Giving a child an education is the best way to set them up for success and break the cycle of poverty”
Water	“Children—especially girls—can only attend school if they have access to clean water... So we work with communities to provide sustainable clean water solutions like wells and hand pumps”
Health	Children can only attend school if they and their parents are healthy... So we partner with communities on health initiatives like clinics and vaccination programs”
Food	“Children can only attend school if they are well fed... we work with communities to provide programs that promote food security and improved agriculture, like school gardens and irrigation projects”
Opportunity	“Children can only attend school if their parents have the financial means and time to invest in their education and their basic health... So we teach parents, often mothers, skills such as animal husbandry that help them generate an income and accrue savings”

(We Charity/Our Development Model, 2016, Why These Five Pillars Section).

Each of these pillars are designed to work towards providing a space for marginalized children to attend school, carried out by well-meaning Northerners.⁴⁴ For

⁴⁴ The curriculum taught in each WE Villages school typically follows the national curriculum of their respective countries. The organization states that “standardized tests are typically given in the respective countries where the organization works, and government-determined curriculum coincides with the test” (WE Charity/Frequently Asked Questions, 2016, What We Do Section).

many volunteers filmed in the WE Charity videos, the signifier for education becomes the iconic WE Charity one-room school house. As one Degrassi volunteer in Kenya comments while building a school, “this is about education, not about playing with the kids, you know?” (Free the Children/MTV Presents/ Degrassi in Kenya, 2011, 12:59). However, the organization moves beyond this signifier, as WE Charity Co-founder Marc Kielburger states:

It’s still all about the concept of education. But we very very quickly came to realize that we had to mitigate the barriers to education in order to achieve our goal. We needed to make sure that people had everything possible [employment, health, food and clean water] so that they could actually send their kids to school in the first place (We Charity/ Mitigating the Barriers to Education Video, 2016, 0:52).

Problematic within their education-based approach to development is the system of inequality inherent within schooling itself. As Battiste (2013) highlights, the current structure of mainstream schooling helps to “preserve class structures and a ruling elite rather than sort out everyone according to their inherent capabilities” (p. 29). Kielburger himself indirectly acknowledges this while watching child workers alongside a road in India:

The Free the Children school is literally five minutes up the road, and then these girls don’t have a chance to go to school. So hopefully as we continue to grow, the Adopt a Village [We Village] model will happen here... and as you guys saw in Kenya, as soon as that happens, then the parents will sacrifice to send their kids to school (Me to We/Trip Videos/Hedley in India, 2016, 9:47).

Although meant to demonstrate the benefits of the WE Villages model, such a comment reveals the inequality created by establishing exclusionary pockets of schooling among marginalized communities: some students get to go to school, and some do not. Those students attending one of WE Charity's schools are provided with social and economic privileges, and those youth living close to (but not within) one of the organization's WE Villages become further marked (and may be marking themselves) as underdeveloped. Below, post development theorist Majid Rahnema (1997) reveals the problem with focusing on schooling as a development model:

Schooling is first offered as a scarce commodity reserved for the few. On the other hand, development does everything to give the school graduates social prestige and economic rewards. As a result, the commodity creates a need, one which responds less to the urge to learn than to a craving to be recognized by the system (p. 120).

Rahnema's remarks are unsettling. Although outside the scope of this study, the potential for WE Charity schools to turn education into an exclusive commodity, rather than a space of learning, may in fact be a possibility. Further, Rahnema and Bawtree (1997) contend that introducing Northern school systems into the Global South instills students "with homeopathic doses of new alienating values, attitudes and goals, [and] drives them gradually to reject or even despise their own cultural and personal identity"(p. 159). The presence of a school reserved for a select few produces a system of exclusion, where local forms of knowledge are discredited and a cultural gap between the schooled and the unschooled is created (Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997, p. 159). In the end, those who graduate from one of WE Charity's schools will be bestowed with educational credentials

and opportunities that would have, we can assume here, been absent without their presence in the communities. So while I do not doubt that these students' lives will be forever changed by WE Charity's involvement in their communities, I am less confident that such efforts will address the broader social, political and economic forces that cause deep-seeded social injustices.

6.4 Critical Approaches to GCE in WE Charity's Programming

As I have argued throughout this research, WE Charity's programs and discourses are informed by soft GCE ideologies. Notable, however, are the organization's attempts at distancing themselves from this pedagogy, trying to align themselves with what Andreotti (2006) refers to as critical GCE practices. As explained earlier, this alternative form of global citizenship frames the problems of the Global South as being part of a much larger structural issue of power and exploitation. It focuses on the assumptions, power relations and attitudes which maintain the marginalization and silence of the South (Andreotti, 2006, p. 46). Within such a space, youth are encouraged to consider their own complicit roles in global injustices, rather than partake in benevolent acts of kindness. Transitioning in and out of soft GCE discourses, WE Charity carefully crafts their language to position themselves as Otherwise. For example, they frequently use the slogan "sustainable development is not about a hand out, but a hand up" (Free the Children/2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 10); their projects are "led by the community" (We Charity/Our Development Model, 2016, How We Villages Work Section); their host communities "lift themselves out of poverty" (Free the Children/2014 Annual Report, 2014, p. 10); and the organization "works in partnership with the communities" (We

Charity/Why We're Different/What We Do, 2016, How We Work Section). Further, WE Charity states that:

Our goal is to reach a point where our partner communities don't need our help any more. Instead, they have the training and tools to thrive for generations. In other words, we're in the business of putting ourselves out of business (We Charity/Our Development Model, 2016, How We Villages Work Section).

The organization attempts to decenter themselves from their own narrative. Implicit in this statement, however, is the idea that without WE Charity's "tools" and help, these communities will continue to exist in a cycle of poverty. Important here is Irwin's (1992) argument regarding marginalized communities:

We [the Other] don't need anyone else developing the tools which will help us to come to terms with who we are. We can and will do this work. Real power lies with those who design the tools - it always has. This power is ours (p. 5).

Through this lens, WE Charity falls short of critical GCE practices: their development paradigm assigns authority to the Northerner – supposing that they have the tools (i.e. the WE Village model) to enact change – effectively recreating an ongoing colonial relationship with the South.

Alongside the organization's attempts at critical GCE, there is also evidence of WE Charity's global citizens rejecting soft GCE practices. For instance, one volunteer reflects:

I come here and, you know, I see the kids and I build the school, but in some sense I feel very selfish and fake, because I come here and then I leave... But then

there's the other thing, you are building a school and you're leaving that behind, and that will always be there (Me to We/Trips Videos/Degrassi in India, 2016, 10:32).

Here, the volunteer acknowledges his privilege and reveals his apprehension about volunteering in his host community. However, his frame of reference locates himself outside the poverty he is witnessing but still responsible for acting to solve it (and, notably, not responsible *for* it). Further, another volunteer mirrors the official language of the organization:

One of the main reasons why I chose Me to We was because I believe in the hands up, not the hands out approach, because I don't want to be a hero or a savior; I'd much rather be a friend and a companion, and work alongside the community members (Me to We/Trip Videos/Nicaragua, 2016, 1:10).

The volunteer rejects WE Charity's third regime of truth as she tries to maneuver herself away from her privileged position. Similarly, another volunteer states:

It's not about the rich people coming to help the poor people; it's really about a global community building effort... for the benefit of everybody (Me to We/Me to We Trips, 2016, 1:28)

We can see the volunteers rejecting the colonial undertones of international volunteerism, and critically challenging their roles as Northern saviors. Despite this, the volunteers continue to operate within the framework of WE Charity's soft GCE practices: building schools, (re)producing the official benevolent rhetoric of the organization, and imposing Northern forms of knowledge onto the South. The meanings WE Charity tries to fix about their critical GCE practices in the Global South is unstable, and we can use our

critical dispositions to see the inherent soft GCE practices regardless. The language WE Charity uses is carefully constructed to give the illusion of the Other's agency to "lift themselves" out of poverty, but such discursive constructions do not change the structural components of their organization – in which a Northern institution enters a Southern community and establishes a microcosmic village which mirrors Northern knowledge of development, all the while being framed by the good intentions of unskilled Northern youth. Further, despite efforts to position themselves Otherwise, WE Charity creates cookie-cutter spaces for their participants to partake in overseas experiences, dictating how development is 'done' and offering step-by-step ways on how to enact change. As Andreotti (2006) states, critical global citizenship education promotes change "without telling learners what they should think or do, by creating spaces where they are safe to analyze and experiment with other forms of seeing/thinking and being/relating to one another" (p. 49). WE Charity participants are undoubtedly denied such critical spaces.

6.5 Implications of Benevolence as Discursive Practice on WE Charity's Youth

Based on the organization's discursive practices and benevolent-focused programming, WE Charity's youth participants may in fact approach GCE without a consideration towards their own complicity in maintaining global poverty. At no point within WE Charity's online material does the organization, or its global citizens, take responsibility for being, as Larsen (2014) argues, "a part of the problem, as well as a part of the solution(s)" (p. 6). Rather, development is maneuvered into feel-good actions (laying bricks or holding a bake sale), rather than any type of critical consideration as to why "certain people, or institutions, are in the position to help or 'make a difference'"

(Jefferess, 2008, p. 35). Centrally, I argue that this failure to take responsibility for the legacies of Northern culture is what distances WE Charity from the critical GCE paradigm. For instance, below a tearful volunteer holds a crying child:

It's definitely hard hearing... hearing them [the children] say that they're hungry and thirsty, and you wanna do so much to give them everything you have, but you can't and that's what really hard (YouTube Video/Degrassi in Ghana, 2012, 14:50).

Here, the volunteer observes poverty, but is unable to reflect critically on the larger (Northern) structures which maintain these conditions of hunger in the South. Indeed, conditions of global poverty, food security and child labor are explained by the organization using simplistic headlines, denying a space for WE participants to critically engage with the structural causes of global inequalities. For instance, when discussing the root causes of food insecurity in the Global South, WE Charity states:

Economic barriers are often the cause of food insecurity—a family is struggling to make ends meet and the cost of food is too high. Sometimes, the challenges are related to a community's geography... Natural disasters like drought can destroy an entire season's crops (We Schools/Global/Food Security, 2016, para. 3).

Here, WE Charity isolates the causes of food insecurity to the Global South (removing any notion of Northern responsibility). This cosmetic engagement with social issues is littered throughout WE Charity's online material, with "minimal attention given to deeper learning and understanding" (Tallon & McGregor, 2014, p. 1409). Smith (1999a) likens such engagement to the broader conditions which frame Northern diagnostics of poverty in the South, claiming:

Researchers investigating poor health or educational underachievement among indigenous communities often focus on the community as the sole source of the problem and, because this is their focus, obviously fail to analyze or make sense of the wider social, economic and policy contexts in which communities exist.

Often their research simply affirms their own beliefs (p. 92).

Thus, WE Charity participants are relieved of their postcolonial guilt and are able to observe hungry children through tear-filled eyes without any consideration towards the social, economic or political structures that maintain ongoing poverty in the South.

Further, WE Charity's participants may in fact approach GCE seeking highly emotional experiences – going native, observing poverty, building schools for smiling children, buying goats – and feel justified doing so due to their economic positions of privilege. Emotion, Orgad and Vella (2012) argue, is a key marketing tool used by NGOs to attract Northern volunteers (p. 5), and can problematically be used as a form of coercive power – indeed, that people should feel a certain way when they see the Other living differently or that they should feel compelled to act seems to be assumed by WE Charity. As social justice writer Teju Cole (2012) so poignantly states, “the White Savior Industrial Complex is not about justice. It is about having a big emotional experience that validates privilege” (Twitter post). Based on the discursive language observed in this research, these big emotional experiences seem to frame the majority of the volunteers' experiences in the South. First, the privileged Northerner travels overseas wanting to “make a difference”, as demonstrated below by a volunteer speaking about her assumed impact in Nicaragua:

The minute I started laying bricks or using the shovel, it really hit me that we're really making a difference (Me to We/Trip Videos/Nicaragua, 2016, 0:27).

Then, they become emotional after observing or experiencing poverty firsthand. Below, one teary-eyed volunteer comments after visiting a rural India village:

They have no idea how we live back home [in Canada]. This is it. This is their life. This is... everything they have (Me to We/Trip Videos/Degrassi in India, 2016, 10:10).

At some point, they romanticize the Other by acknowledging their generosity – in spite of their 'lack' – as Jesse does while talking about her trip to Kenya:

These people have nothing and they gave me everything (Me to We/Trip Videos/Jesse in Kenya, 21:05).

Finally, they build a school and return home changed; this transformation is captured by the following volunteer as he reflects on his experience in Nicaragua:

One thing that I was hoping to get out of this trip was to change someone else's life, but in reality, it was my life that way changed from this journey (Me to We/Trip Videos/Nicaragua, 2016, 1:25).

Such emotional displays repeat themselves frequently within the organization's material. WE Charity, it seems, approaches GCE in a way that makes it acceptable for individuals to undergo an emotional transformative experience in other peoples' lives. They cultivate feelings of empathy and benevolence among their volunteers, and allow them to do things "in other people's hospitals and schools that would never be allowed at home" (Brown, 2003, n.p.). Problematic within this approach to GCE is that the volunteer may seek to empathize and exert benevolence towards the Other primarily for their own emotional

experience. GCE, as a result, becomes about privilege and feel good experiences, with little attention paid to the damaging consequences of this new form of colonialism.

6.6. Conclusion

WE Charity, it seems, does little to help their participants develop the skills needed to critically contextualize their privileged social positioning and the root causes of global issues. Instead, the organization focuses on more benevolent programming – advertised as both meaningful and exotic – intended to empower the lives of Northern youth and fuel their moral uplift, but consequently reinforcing the white savior complex and maneuvering youth into a position of assumed power. WE Charity disputes this – arguing that their overseas trips encourage youth, upon returning home from an overseas trip, to continue engaging with global issues in meaningful ways (Me to We/Why Me to We Trips are Different, 2016, para. 3). However, in a study of international volunteer trips, Cermak et al. (2011) found that although youth had the dissonance necessary to want to make a difference upon returning home, they were unable to conceptualize how to act on that desire (p. 10), which I would argue suggests that the organizers of such overseas experiences, like WE Charity, do not make it a priority to make visible the constructions which enable the poverty they would like to address, focusing rather on fostering benevolence and feel good experiences for youth.

My point here is not to claim that benevolence has no value. I argue that youth should engage with frameworks of morality, and pedagogies that encourage feelings of compassion have significant social value. Indeed, Andreotti (2006) contends that such a soft approach to GCE is “appropriate to certain contexts and can already represent a

major step” (p. 49). The problem lies with favoring benevolence as the ultimate goal of global citizenship education. The root of global poverty does not reside exclusively in how youth feel towards, imagine about and treat the Other, and thus, a heightened moral compass cannot be the solution. While efforts like building a school or buying a product made by a Kenyan mama do help the Other, they do not, as Kumashiro (2000) argues, bring about “structural and systemic change, they do not change the norm, and thus, they do not disrupt the process that differentiates the Other from the normal” (p.35). Further, the ability to be benevolent, as Riggs (2004) argues, is always already predicated on the power to do so – “it does not require the giving up of power, but rather is reliant upon an imbalance of power to instantiate the categories of giver and receiver” (p. 8). Thus, benevolence problematically requires the Other to lack a particular sense of agency in order for the Northerner to engage in a charitable act. Despite this, WE Charity, at least in their current form, continues to shape how their participants enact GCE through these benevolent lenses.

I also argue that WE Charity participants are unable to think critically about the structures which lead to global poverty because the organization does not give them the language to do so. Throughout their online material, their discursive sloganeering only reflects feel good notions of engagement with the Global South – using simplistic headlines like “make a difference” (Me to We/Why Me to We Trips are Different, 2016, para. 3), “change the world” (We Charity/About Us, 2016, Our Vision Section), and “make the world a better place” (We Charity/Our Beliefs, 2016, I Am We Section). Such discursive practices means that their global citizens will encounter malnourished children (as we saw with Hedley in India) or come across poverty-stricken villages (as we saw

with Degrassi in Ecuador), and through tear-filled eyes, they will pick up a shovel, make grandiose statements of “making a difference”, and begin a weeklong process of breaking ground for a new school without any consideration towards their own privilege, colonialism or the asymmetrical power relations that they are recreating. Nor are the volunteers – based on the testimonials made available on WE Charity’s website – able to construct critical questions like: How do my Northern assumptions about development silence this host community’s voice? How does my presence in this community give me power over the Other? How am I exercising my privilege by partaking on this volunteer trip? How does observing poverty from behind ‘tinted windows’ diminish and strip agency from the Other? How do my volunteer efforts perpetuate the white savior complex, even though I am working alongside these community members? The challenge for educators, then, is to create spaces in which youth can engage in critical interrogations of the structural issues of poverty.

That being said, it may be difficult to engage students in critical thought against the backdrop of WE Charity’s programming. The issue becomes whether or not critical inquiry can coexist alongside current constructions of the global citizen and the Other, and whether WE Charity specifically needs to abandon current practices in order to make room for a more equitable GCE paradigm. In my concluding chapter, I will discuss whether conscientious engagement between the North and South could in fact exist within the current parameters of WE Charity’s framework, and the GCE paradigm in general.

7.0 CONCLUSION

There's charity which is a hand out and a short term solution. Sometimes instead of helping, it actually creates a cycle of dependency, where charity needs more charity. Sometimes, such charities make us feel guilty, and rely on images of despair. Then there's charity that empowers; a helping hand that enables and aids us to lift ourselves even further. The best charity betters both the giver and the beneficiary – helping us to connect with the core idea that we all have so much to give with our time, energy, compassion and heart. And this is what WE Charity is all about.

(WE Charity/About We Charity Video, 2016, 0:15)

Comments like the one above are indicative of the way in which WE Charity approaches GCE. The organization's discourses tend to transition in (charity "creates a cycle of dependency") and out of ("we all have so much to give with our time, energy, compassion and heart") critical GCE practices. At times they acknowledge the downfalls of traditional charity, but ultimately, the structure of their organization aligns with the very practices they are trying to distance themselves from. Despite attempts at critical global citizenship, their colonial undertones bleed out into the discourses of its global citizens and into their patriarchal representations of the Other. Benevolence, it seems, frames their current parameters of GCE and gives the illusion that poverty is something that can be tackled (and solved) by well-meaning youth. Unfortunately, from a postcolonial and critical GCE perspective, such an approach tends to further reinforce the systems which favor a privileged few and oppress Others.

In this final chapter, I revisit the initial themes which framed my research in the earlier chapters. Centrally, I inquire into whether the North can ever actually engage with the South in decolonized and meaningful ways. I outline three suggestions for organizations, like WE Charity, to consider as they engage youth in GCE practices. Finally, I encourage future research into how popular GCE discourses might be reframed

to offer youth and educators deeper understandings of global poverty and more equitable outlooks on development practices. This chapter will be informed by the lingering question:

1. Is it inevitable that organizations like WE Charity, because they arise in a space dominated by colonialist discourse, will inescapably internalize and reproduce it?

If I have led you to think that I will be laying out a utopian blueprint which would allow Northern youth decolonized opportunities to volunteer in the Global South, then I have failed in the previous chapters at explaining the intrinsic colonial nature of the overseas volunteer paradigm. Such a mentality – one that sees Northern youth as having starring roles in the development process – is degrading to the Global South (from a postcolonial perspective). As Bindra (2008) notes:

For too long we have been misled into thinking many fallacious things: that poor countries (particularly African ones) cannot make it on their own; that rich countries owe some historical debt to the poor ones, and must therefore keep slipping them some money to alleviate their guilt; that more development money equals more growth; that development plans can be orchestrated from up and above and far away; that poverty can be ‘made history’ by the rich nations (p. 151).

To have WE Charity’s youth enter into the Global South under pretenses that school building will “change the world” further perpetuates a colonial practice that maneuvers the South as dependent on Northern nations. Further, the Other becomes background noise for Canadian youth – who do not necessarily have the technical skills or historical knowledge of their host communities – to exercise their privilege, guilt, or good

intentions on. However, while I argue that a decolonized volunteer relationship between Northern youth and the South is not possible under the current conditions of WE Charity's framework, I do remain hopeful that more critical GCE practices will emerge as further thinking continues to shed light on the hidden colonial agendas of this paradigm.

7.1 WE Charity and the GCE Paradigm

The goal of this research was to determine the oversight in WE Charity's programs that promote oppressive discourses and asymmetrical power relations, as well as challenge the common perception that global citizenship practices – especially those which send idealistic youth into overseas communities – are unquestionably good. Further, my goal was to encourage a consideration towards taking up a critical perspective on (1) the means needed to be a global citizen; (2) how the Other is positioned within GCE programs; and (3) the use of benevolence as discursive practice within these programs. Through critical inquiry, I collected data from WE Charity's online material, paying particular attention to its overseas programming and promotional videos documenting the benevolent journeys of its global citizens. My research was guided by the following five overarching questions: (1) How does WE Charity's framing of the global citizen influence how their youth approach global citizenship education?; (2) How does WE Charity's framing of the Southern Other influence their participants' perceptions of global citizenship education?; (3) What are the implications of benevolence as discursive practice on WE Charity youth's engagement in GCE?; (4) What are the regimes of truth (Foucault, 1980) within WE Charity's program pedagogies and how do these truths dictate how youth are expected to tackle global issues?; (5) What

assumed power relationships inform and shape the official rhetoric of WE Charity?

Approaching my inquiry within postcolonial frameworks, I organized data (and my inquiry into these five questions) into three thematic constructions: (1) the global citizen, (2) the Southern Other and (3) benevolence as discursive practice. I will summarize my findings below.

i. The Global Citizen

In regards to WE Charity's global citizens, I showed that WE Charity frames their global citizens in a multitude of ways which reflect their social positioning of privilege: their participants' empowerment depends on the deficiencies of the Other; they are given narrative authority over the Other, making a space where it is acceptable for the unskilled Northerner to be experts in all matters Other; they are positioned as travelers voyaging through exotic lands, reminiscent of the early colonial explorations of the South; they are assumed to have an understanding for their host communities, at times confirming their preexisting stereotypes of the Other; finally, they are consumers, consuming the Other's impoverished conditions in order to undergo transformative experiences. In short, WE Charity privileges their global citizen's experiences over the larger unequitable power relationships that make these experiences possible in the first place. Such a framing, I argued, means that their global citizens may approach global citizenship without considering their own complicity in maintaining systems of poverty and thus they may only engage cosmetically in social issues. Further, I argued that WE Charity's discursive language continues to be situated as a call to action for changing the lives of people living in the Global South, with the central narrator to this action being the empowered

Northern citizen. Such a focus, I argued, has not been helpful in transforming how the majority of the world's people are viewed and understood within WE Charity.

ii. The Southern Other

The second theme I explored was the construction of WE Charity's Other. I argued that the organization partakes in the process of Othering frequently in their online material. Within this process, I unpacked three thematic representations of the Other: the first being the portrayal of the Other as an exotic and timeless entity. Descriptions of the Other positioning themselves into ethnic, primitive and cultural roles seem to be used to justify Northern intervention into the South and further perpetuate the colonial stereotype of the Southerner; second, the Other is represented as disadvantaged, where geographies of need and narratives of pain carve a space for WE Charity and its benevolent global citizens to alleviate this suffering; finally, the Other is portrayed as a one-dimensional grateful recipient of Northern aid, further perpetuating the myth of the industrial savior complex and reducing the emotional complexities of the Southerner into static states for the benefit of the volunteer. Imbedded within these three thematic representations is a highly colonial approach to GCE inherent within the organization: by diminishing the Other into these highly specific roles, WE Charity creates a 'third world' space which maneuvers their participants into a position of authority over the Other. Within this space – one which is defined by the Other's need – We Charity's youth enter the South with preconceived constructions of the presumed neediness of the Other and with an entitled sense of authority to speak for and about it. Such a framing, I argued, also removes an

element of the Other's humanness, diminishing their complexity as human beings and further reducing the Other into their colonial roles.

iii. Benevolence as Discursive Practice

The final thematic construction I explored was WE Charity's use of benevolence to frame their participants' experiences with the Global South. Centrally, I argued that the organization – despite attempts at distancing themselves from traditional notions of charity – continue to perpetuate soft GCE practices, which frame the colonial discourses of its global citizens and its ongoing colonial treatment of the Other. Inspired by Rosaldo (1989), I unpacked the organization's four regimes of truth – moral uplift, the value of Northern education, the white man's burden and benevolence – which work together to bestow authority on Northerners and release them from their colonial guilt. I showed how WE Charity's overseas programming is entrenched in colonial thought-processes, including the promotion of slum tourism, the practice of going native, and the belief that Northern youth can change the world. I made visible the inherent inequality built into their foundational regime of truth (the value of Northern education), including their iconic build-a-school-in-Kenya program, and argued that establishing a WE Village among marginalized communities creates pockets of exclusion and promotes Northern knowledge and education over indigenous, local knowledge. Finally, I highlighted two key problems emerging from the use of benevolence as discursive practice within their programming: (1) that their participants may in fact approach GCE without any consideration towards their own responsibility in inequitable global affairs, and (2) that

their participants may in fact approach GCE seeking highly emotional experiences in the lives of the marginalized and oppressed.

iv. Power

As shown, the three themes – the Other, the global citizen, and benevolence – influence popular perceptions of GCE and are connoted with specific images of what it means to be a global citizen, as well as specific images of the Global South, and the means through which substantive social change can be realized. Further, in each chapter, I also explored the fluidity of power as it operates within WE Charity discourses. I argued that power constantly shifts between the organization, its global citizens, and the Other; however, power is often assumed by WE Charity and its privileged participants through their singular narratives, use of benevolence and constructed positions of privilege. Indeed, their participants do hold power, but unfortunately they do not seek to understand their own power in maintaining global inequality. Despite this, power exists just as much with the Other, although the organization denies them this power – their texts asking us not to see this power. But through a critical lens, we see it emanating along the peripheral of the master narrative: Southern children being happy without the help of the volunteers, individuals who have adapted to their environment and are thriving using their non-Northern knowledge, community members completing development projects without the help of the Northerner, and Northern volunteers themselves questioning their presence within their host communities. These discretely operating narratives – the ones with the Other as the central player – are important. They show us that there are alternative forms

of GCE, ones which do not necessarily need a Northerner venturing into the South with Northern forms of knowledge and development.

7.2 Colonialism... No Matter What?

At this point I would like to make visible an underlying query which has been quietly lingering among the parameters of this entire project: Is it inevitable that organizations like WE Charity, because they arise in a space dominated by colonialist discourse, will inescapably internalize and reproduce it? Based on the findings of this research, it is evident that some organizations – most particularly the ones which send volunteers into the South – reproduce colonial power structures for several reasons. The first being that a power imbalance is established before a volunteer project has even begun, by virtue of the global citizen's position of relative privilege and their freedom to transition in and out of the Southern community. As Said (1977) reminds us about the colonialist ideology:

A certain freedom of intercourse was always the Westerner's privilege; because his was the stronger culture, he could penetrate, he could wrestle with, he could give shape and meaning to the great [Oriental] mystery (p. 45).

Further, within this power imbalance, a binary is created where the server becomes the “one who knows and who helps a dependent Other”, denying a space of reciprocity (Keith, 2005, p. 14). As Simpson (2004) argues here:

The processes that allow young westerners to access the financial resources, and moral imperatives, necessary to travel and volunteer in a ‘third world country’, are the same as the ones that make the reverse process almost impossible (p. 690).

Current constructions of the GCE volunteer experience do not allow the Southerner to reciprocate the benevolence bestowed upon them. Finally, the transformation of these Southern communities into spaces of Northern development and knowledge perpetuates a colonialist ideology where, Tyson (2006) points out, the Other may experience shame towards their own culture, which is positioned as inferior by comparison (p. 421). As Smith (1999) so poignantly reminds us, Northerners do not exist separate from their past, their culture and their privilege: their power, their social positioning, and their history are all vested in their legacy as colonizers (p. 7). Thus, I argue, current constructions of soft GCE – like the ones implemented by WE Charity – have created an impossible colonial loop: where Northern youth impose themselves on impoverish Southern communities – paying thousands of dollars in the process – bringing with them their Northern beliefs about education and their if-they-just-have-what-we-have mentalities, exercising their power in picturesque feel-good projects with minimal insight towards local indigenous knowledge, and believing that they, simply by nature of their privilege and desire to be benevolent, have played an important role in the eradication of global poverty.

But I must regress. To say that it is inevitable for all Northern organizations to internalize and reproduce colonialist ideologies would do a disservice to theorists like Friere (1970), whose pedagogical concepts of praxis and critical consciousness illuminate a potential for critical inquiry amongst Northern volunteers. Or Foucault, whose theorizations reveal that power also produces new realities and “rituals of truth” (Foucault, 1991, p. 194). Through this lens, power has the ability to generate change in individual behavior and in society as a whole. Therefore, although many organizations

may reproduce colonialist ideologies (like we saw with WE Charity), Foucault reminds us that they also have the power to change their regimes of truth and produce different realities. Centrally, although I argue that colonial history frames the experiences of Northern volunteers and that such a history is inescapable, I believe that conscientious discursive engagement between the North and the South is possible. As Canton and Santos (2009) argue, “we have choices as to the kind of world we imagine; resistant discourses are always at play, and we can choose to be a part of them” (p. 203). I will now illuminate some of these resistant discourses below.

7.3 Conscientious Engagement between the North and South in GCE

The findings of this research reveal that while there is discursive evidence of WE Charity’s global citizens expressing awareness for global affairs and inequality, there is no evidence to suggest that their particular experiences with WE Charity have helped them come to understand the more complex processes connected to the more critical dimensions of global citizenship. In short, their programs offer youth a chance to “ease their conscience and to gloss over the fact that foreign debt, imposed economic reforms, unfair trade policies, corrupt governments, not to mention centuries of slavery and colonialism, are among the main causes of poverty” (Warah, 2008, p. 13). My argument is not around whether or not WE Charity, or any similar organization, should engage with the Global South, but rather how they *intend* to engage with them. Although I accept that there is no universal solution to GCE that will serve all contexts, I do believe, based on the findings of this research, there are specific qualities that would make possible a more conscientious discursive engagement between the North and the South possible.

Understanding that this is not a comprehensive list, I will now outline three qualities below:

An adoption of critical GCE practices. A growing concern among researchers is that “a successful ‘learning experience’ [about the Other] promises moral sanitization and absolution from the complex, historically implicated locations inhabited by privileged readers” (Taylor, 2011, p. 179). What is offered instead is “consolation rather than the critical and ethical tools to respond to this crisis” (p. 181). First and foremost, my primary recommendation is that WE Charity, along with other likeminded organizations, begin to incorporate aspects of critical global citizenship, as defined by Andreotti (2006), into their discourses and programming. Although I recognize that Andreotti (2006) herself has been careful in acknowledging that “soft global citizenship education is appropriate to certain contexts – and can already represent a major step” (p.49), a more critical level of learning is necessary in other contexts. Within such a space, Andreotti (2006) makes a very crucial point:

Critical literacy is not about ‘unveiling’ the ‘truth’ for the learners, but about providing the space for them to reflect on their context and their own and others’ epistemological and ontological assumptions: how we came to think/be/feel/act the way we do and the implications of our systems of belief in local/global terms in relation to power, social relationships and the distribution of labor and resources (p. 49).

With this in mind, I suggest that GCE organizations provide a space for their participants to critically unpack the implications of their own regimes of truth and challenge long

withstanding assumptions – the humanitarian sentiments – which work to maintain oppression and privilege. Charania (2011) offers the following questions related to global justice, Northern privilege, and silencing of the Southern voice:

How for example, might we engage a whole body of critical scholarship by Southern activists and scholars to help reformulate or at the very least challenge our notions of global intervention and assistance?...How does an understanding of colonialism help us to better understand current trade practices, regulations, and the production of poverty? Why are so many Northerners and Northern institutions in a position to ‘help’? How might we get skeptical about our own desires to feel good and innocent? (p. 23).

Global citizens could use these questions to spur more critical explorations in global affairs, dismantling their own attitudes and assumptions, and hopefully opening up with a more equitable GCE paradigm. Secondly, an adoption of critical GCE may encourage discussions as to whether program initiatives enable Southern autonomy, or are superficial solutions that maintain the recipients’ dependence on privileged Northerners. For instance, rather than encouraging youth to use their money to buy specific improvements for an overseas community, organizations could get youth to instead consider how societal structural change may be a more effective solution. Further, a critical lens may draw attention towards Northern representations of the Other – the manner in which need is communicated and how the Global South is represented has the ability to either patronize or make visible the deficiencies of the system which generates the need in the first place. Moving forward under the critical GCE paradigm, organizations may move away from development projects dominated by Northern

knowledge and strive for initiatives which stress Southern autonomy, agency and authority. What this looks like in practice, however, is something which could be explored in future research.

An adoption of critical discourses. I also suggest that organizations like WE Charity give their participants the language needed to make visible the postcolonial power structures which exist between the North and the South. As Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) reveal, “what something means to individuals is dependent on the discourses available to them” (p. 961). GCE participants – as perpetrators of colonial discourses – can only view the world with the language made obtainable to them through organizations like WE Charity. Currently, WE Charity’s online presence is dominated by simplified language like “make a difference” and “change the world”, and these positivist discourses may not necessarily encourage critical consideration as youth work through global issues. Todd (2009), in addressing the forward-looking mission of soft GCE practices, points to how such positivist discourses on development can gloss over the messiness of poverty and inequality (p. 19), leading to utopian (albeit ineffective) solutions. Exploring colonialism, decolonization, privilege, asymmetrical power relations, exoticism, exploitation, oppression, Othering, slum tourism and cultural appropriation, among other things, may open up spaces for students to engage with the regimes of truth operating along the perimeters of mainstream GCE initiatives. The issue is that in mainstream GCE, discourses of humanitarianism, charity, empowered global citizens, and needy Others have become naturalized – their power residing in their invisibility. Lewis talks about “[the] common and unremarkable/unremarked in everyday

details of our everyday lives that we have learned to live—learned to live so well, in fact, that their political intent is no longer obvious to us” (as cited in Strong-Wilson, 2008, p. 19). If youth have no understanding of how they are implicated in the colonial discourses that uphold a power structure which both privileges and harms – the discourses being invisible to them – their agency to enact change becomes diminished. As Davies (2000) argues here:

By making the constitutive force of discourse visible and thus revisable, power shifts dramatically... [the individual] can begin to imagine how to reposition themselves, realign themselves and use the power of discourse they have to disrupt those of its effects they wish to resist (p. 180).

Global citizens, instead of using discourses to reinforce unequal power relationships with the South, can use them to think Otherwise – repositioning themselves alongside the South in solidarity. Andreotti (2006) argues that “we need to engage with our own and other perspectives to learn and transform our views, identities and relationships to think otherwise” (p. 49). What I argue for is a reduction in the powerful discourses that position youth as givers and change makers, and dilutes the power and agency of the Southern Other. Young people in the Global South are also global citizens, and new discourses need to be explored in order to expand the authority of Other. As Graves (2007) argues, “an informed perspective from Southern activists can be a meaningful contribution to development education practice and demonstrates that people are involved in their own struggles at different levels” (p. 89).

Unsettling Good Intentions: reframing overseas volunteer placements. I

recommend here that organizations like We Charity, who implement soft GCE practices, should reconsider the benevolent frameworks through which they send unskilled youth into overseas communities. Kapoor (2004), drawing inspiration from Spivak, claims that “we cannot pretend to have a pure or innocent or benevolent encounter with the subaltern. To do so, [is to] perpetuate, directly or indirectly, forms of imperialism, ethnocentrism, appropriation” (p. 635). As this research has shown, such benevolent volunteer trips are besieged with colonial undertones.⁴⁵ Primarily, I suggest that alternative forms of engagement between Northern youth and the South should be explored. For starters, Northern youth could be offered spaces to foster critical discussions about the Southern Other. Below, Cook (2008) offers several questions regarding the entrenched colonial practices often found in volunteer work, which could be used to jumpstart these discussions:

How do Others lead their daily lives and under what circumstances? What do they need? What do...volunteers have to offer? How do relations of power organize current ideas and practices of development? How can those ideas and practices be changed to realize less oppressive development agendas and a more just social reality? (p. 24-25).

⁴⁵ The experiences seem built on homogenous representations of the exotic Other (Canton & Santos, 2009, p. 199); they are inundated with geographies of need and an oversimplification of the conditions of poverty (Simpson, 2004, p. 686); they tend to reinforce existing stereotypes of the Other (Raymond & Hall, 2008, p. 538); they are often more concerned about the empowerment of the volunteers than enacting systematic change (Waters, 2001, p. 41-42); and they rely upon soft approaches to GCE, which do little to change the structural causes and conditions of global poverty (Tallon & McGregor, 2014, p. 1409).

Instead of focusing on surface symptoms of poverty by building a school overseas, global citizens and the organizations that recruit them could focus on the issues that often stem from an unfair global economic order. Using the above questions to frame their civic engagement, global citizens could, for example, advocate and campaign for IMF and World Bank reforms (especially around foreign debt), they could advocate for their own countries to change unfair trade policies, or they could also volunteer locally. Osler and Starkey (2003) suggest that it is “insufficient . . . to feel and express a sense of solidarity with others elsewhere if we cannot establish a sense of solidarity within our own communities” (p. 252). Below, Illich (1968) starkly highlights the benefits of local volunteerism for youth activists:

You will know what you are doing, why you are doing it, and how to communicate with those to whom you speak. And you will know when you fail... It is incredibly unfair for you to impose yourselves on a [Southern] village where you are so linguistically deaf and dumb that you don't even understand what you are doing, or what people think of you (n.p).

Through these lenses, organizations encourage their youthful participants to think globally, but act locally. As stated by Karlberg (2010), if youth “grow up immersed in discourses of social justice and equality...then [they] are likely to perceive the world in those ways, to act accordingly, and to support and participate in corresponding social institutions” (p. 311). By providing spaces for critical discussion regarding global issues and local activism/volunteerism, and helping youth go beyond surface engagement with development, organizations like WE Charity can foster meaningful and equitable

engagement amongst youth without compromising marginalized communities (and without necessarily sending them abroad).

Lewis (2006) asks the question: “Can international volunteering produce ‘win-win’ outcomes in which both the sender and the receiver can benefit, and if so, in what measure?” (p. 9). I do not believe there is a utopian blueprint or singular answer to this question, and in the words of Easterly (2006), “the only big answer is that there is no Big Answer” (p. 382). As such, I would be wrong in suggesting an abandonment of overseas volunteer programs: not only because of Easterly’s (2006) above remarks, but because the scope of my research was limited – unpacking only one volunteer program of many. However, with WE Charity in particular, I align myself with Nutt (2011), founder of Canadian-based charity War Child, who argues that youth with an aptitude towards social justice should become involved in advocacy work at home instead of volunteering abroad (p. 142) – doing this advocacy work with organizations who approach development from equitable and decolonized frameworks (for all the reasons mentioned in this project). She argues that social change begins with education, and states the following:

Our collective ability to reject misinformation, challenge assumptions, and explore alternatives [to development] is enhanced by reading and by engaging in civic action – whether by voting in elections, participating in thoughtful protest, writing a blog, joining an GNO, running for public office, or attending an open lecture (Nutt, 2011, p. 183).

Based on the proliferation of Orientalist discourses uncovered within WE Charity’s volunteer programs, I suggest that such an approach to GCE may offer an accessible

alternative for their many youthful participants who are eager to engage themselves in social justice and global affairs. As Nutt (2011) makes note, the desire to volunteer is commendable, but sometimes the best of intentions “do not guarantee the best outcomes” (p. 142).

7.4 Moving Forward: Implications for Future Research

Global citizenship education is a relatively fresh ideology, and its meaning is still fluid. My contribution to this field of research served to encourage critical thinking around discourses of benevolence and international volunteering. By making visible the discourses related to global citizenship and the implications they have on young people, I hoped to add to the growing set of literature which encourages a consideration towards facing our own Northern privilege, and the inequity facing Others. Discourses concerning the South and structures defining global citizenship education will not change overnight, and further thinking is required in order to better understand the complex relationship between them. As Jefferess (2012) contends, it is important to continue questioning the extent to which global citizenship pedagogy continues to enshrine “colonial frameworks of identity and difference” (p. 19).

Centrally, I suggest that more research be conducted in regards to the delivery of critical GCE practices – Andreotti (2006), in particular, does not detail specific ways to implement the critical GCE paradigm in practice in her research. I suggest that further research investigate how this paradigm can be married with current constructions of GCE, with particular attention being paid to the overseas volunteer experience, and whether or not a critical recontextualization of such programs will offer more

decolonized and equitable experiences for all involved. I offer the following questions to jumpstart such discussions: (1) How can the North engage in the Global South in ways that balance the enrichment of both Southern and Northern youth's experiences with meaningful social change? (2) How can youth partake in cross-cultural experiences that empower all participants while neither reinforcing nor exacerbating colonial and patriarchal relationships? (3) How can Northern youth engage in responsible critique of their own privilege without becoming paralyzed or cynical towards the GCE paradigm? The answers to these questions will not come by easily, and I suspect no satisfactory solutions to the dilemmas they present. Giroux (2004) argues that we need to consider "what kind of educational work is necessary within what kind of public spaces to enable people to use their full intellectual resources... to make the operation of freedom and autonomy possible forces for as many people as possible in a variety of spheres (p. 75-76). If the Northern organizations offering volunteer opportunities in the South begin to create spaces for their participants to unlearn their privilege, decolonize their minds and better understand the historical processes that have led to global inequality, it may open up possibilities to act together *with* the *Other*, instead of doing things *for* the *Other*. Young people – from both the South and North – have the power to help to promote equitable partnerships and solidarity, and as educators, we have the power to engage our youth in social justice practices in a way that is critically conscious.

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