

Someone to Keep Me: Emotions, Labor, Trauma, and Orphanhood in Haiti

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“Petit se richès malere” Children are the wealth of the poor. Children are the future, they are our riches. - Haitian Proverb

Preface

“All my life, I have searched for a family, for someone to keep me, show me love, and mean it. Truly mean it.” - Augustine, 2020

It was starting to get dark outside as I walked into the brightly lit room, my eyes were adjusting to the change when I noticed Augustine holding up a shirt, smiling to show all his teeth as he half waved with one of his hands still holding the shirt, and repeated the words “thank you,” several times while a young woman, visiting on a mission trip, recorded him on her phone. I walked over and sat down in one of the chairs, watching as she grabbed another shirt from the pile of clothes and handed it to Augustine to hold up, continuing to take photos and video, and telling him to smile and wave. I had come to know Augustine well enough to realize his smile seemed forced, his body was tense. I felt guilty watching the scene unfold as Augustine visibly grew more uncomfortable with every shirt, she handed him from the pile of donated clothes in the suitcase he stood over. She explained she was making a thank you video for the people back home who had donated the clothes and wanted Augustine to show them how happy he was to receive them. In Kreyol, I asked Augustine if he wanted to be doing this to which he replied “Noo, but she asked.” I told Augustine he could leave the room as the woman started to object and turned to me looking for an explanation. I asked her why it mattered that she took his photo with the donated clothes. She looked at me, confused for having to answer something she saw as a simple explanation, and repeated that the people who donated the clothes would want to see that the clothes they donated went to someone in need. Her response left me feeling frustrated. I was empathetic towards Augustine who I felt had been used and as I sat at my desk that night, writing over the day’s notes, began to ask myself what was it that compels people who participate in

mission trips or engage in volunteering to view these types of interactions as not only normal, but expected during interactions between themselves and beneficiaries like Augustine?

Furthermore, how does “someone in need” require that person to exhibit a certain type of need, the right amount of vulnerability, and what seemed the most important, the correct form of gratitude? Later that night, I knocked on Augustine’s room door and asked if I could talk to him about what happened. Sitting on two worn down and weathered chairs on the balcony looking out onto the property below us, I asked him how he felt and if he knew he could tell people no when they asked for his photo. He began crying and we sat in silence for a few minutes, me holding back my tears, while he decided on what to tell me. Finally, he spoke so softly I almost did not hear him as he whispered,

“I grew up taking photos for people like that..... In the orphanage, I did that a lot..... When people give you something, they expect you to act like that.”

His response would be the starting point of my journey to understand how emotions, benevolence, and religious beliefs are intertwined within the larger racialized, gendered, and socio-political landscape of humanitarian aid.

I have spent the better part of my life traveling back and forth from Tennessee to Haiti. Almost 15 years later, when someone asks me why Haiti, and why I choose to be here, I still do not have a nicely packaged answer, and I am not sure that I ever will. When I arrived as a young, naive 16-year-old back in 2009, I imagined changing the lives of the people I met here; when in reality, it would be the people I met and the experiences we shared that would change my life forever. Growing up in a small town in East Tennessee, I was raised in an evangelical household.

Like many teenagers, I began to rebel and act out, falling into a crowd that led me down a path of drugs and dangerous situations, resulting in the loss of a childhood friend. In the months after his death, my parents would bring me to church where I often sat resentful and angry that I was forced to attend until one day an announcement was made about a mission trip to Haiti in a few months over summer break. My parents urged me to go, again, I was reluctant but they beamed with joy when I finally agreed. Thinking to myself that this would be like some mini vacation away from the confinements of my small city. The preparation for the trip itself was minimal, where most of our meetings consisted of fundraising events, learning basic information about Haiti geared towards showing the worst and most impoverished side of Haiti, and the activities we would be participating in once we reached our final destination of a little village in the northern area of Haiti known locally as *Petit Pigeon*, or little pigeon. Our agenda was to host several days of bible study, renovate the local church, and host community prayer time which consisted of walking around the village asking to pray over people randomly as they tried to carry on about their daily chores. Walking around a remote village in Haiti, 1,000 feet above sea level can be pretty tranquil. Showering in buckets of freezing cold stream water and cooking in an outdoor kitchen can humble a person very quickly, and the excitement you get from visiting a place so distant from what you have ever experienced can make one long for more. Like Augustine, I was searching for someone or something to keep me, something that gave me purpose as a young teenager discovering myself and the world around me. Haiti became that purpose. It would not be until some years later that I would realize how I was once just like the young woman in Augustine's story; chasing an emotion, seeking validation in the acts of service I performed, and reinforcing a system of emotional labor at the expense of those I interacted with.

This research aims to highlight and examine what I have learned and observed conducting doctoral research over 12 months from March 2022 to March 2023. To some extent, my understanding of and interest in Haiti inevitably is built on what was discussed in observation, and as I grew so did my understanding of my positionality as a foreigner visiting Haiti for the past 15 years, since my first visit in 2009. I was interested in learning how everyday interactions between orphans, nannies, and volunteers are woven into a system of emotions perpetuated by orphans, managed by nannies, and consumed by volunteers. Furthermore, I aimed to understand how the intricacies of racial, gendered, and age-based inequalities, underlying these emotional exchanges, reproduce discourses about the proper conduct of orphans, specifically how orphans are expected to learn to properly express their vulnerability and gratitude to volunteers and outsiders.

Although scholars are increasingly giving attention to the processes of emotion and feeling management within humanitarian endeavors like orphanages, little attention has been given to how orphans and nannies understand their roles in producing and regulating emotions on behalf of the orphanage and themselves. I sought to understand how managing or regulating emotions, defined as emotional labor (Hochschild 1983), impacts children in orphanages long-term, and how both orphans and nannies understand their reliance on using emotional labor as it relates to their roles as key figures in the constitution of humanitarian work in orphanages. Specifically, I examined how orphans and nannies understood their relationships with each other in the context of care work and emotional labor within orphanages.

Nannies and orphans often share similar economic backgrounds and come from the same neighborhoods that surround the orphanage. Positioned between volunteers and orphans, nannies

act as supervisors of orphans' interactions with volunteers. However, nannies are also dependent on the orphanage for employment under precarious conditions. For example, job instability and high unemployment rates force women to remain employed by an orphanage. Orphanages specifically target women to fulfill roles as caregivers to children in the orphanage. Thus, a second concern of this study was to learn how nannies understand the work they do and their place in the orphanage system as temporary care providers. While much attention is paid to orphanages in terms of their impacts on the lives of orphans, the fact that orphanages need orphans as humanitarian subjects to function remains understudied. Therefore, a third question I researched was how the emotional labor that binds together orphans, nannies, staff, and volunteers becomes critical to the orphanage's ability to maintain donor interest and support. While orphanages bring together orphans, nannies, and volunteers to produce outcomes deemed beneficial to orphans, they must sustain donor support and interest. As sites that intertwine levels of emotional responses, social relationships, and religious benevolence, I saw how orphanages also operate with forms of economic exchange, commodification, and labor through the emotional labor of orphans and nannies. Taken together, this research aimed to provide important insights into how emotional labor structures the everyday practices of care in Haiti's orphanages and the long-term impacts of emotional labor on orphans and nannies.

When thinking about what specifically I wanted to investigate to explore the workings of emotional labor in the orphanage system, I decided upon the following analytical propositions: firstly, I hypothesized that nannies' care work produces a particular type of orphan subject deemed productive to the orphanage. Secondly, I proposed that orphans learn to become humanitarian subjects through the inculcation of specific behaviors and emotional states. My third proposition was that nannies distinguish between specific tasks that can be easily identified

as routine work, and emotional labor, which involves their having to go beyond what is expected, to fulfill their roles as caregivers and as caring individuals with the orphan. My fourth proposition was that care work performed by nannies is shaped by gendered and racialized processes of work that place nannies in specific relationships with non-Haitian staff and volunteers. Finally, I considered the extent to which orphans' work involves a substantial proportion of emotional labor required to meet orphanages' agendas and more generally that faith-based organizations, like orphanages, require a steady supply of emotional labor from nannies, orphans, and staff through a variety of structured practices to continue attracting donor interest.

Abstract

In Haiti, the orphan occupies an important place in humanitarian discourse and practice as the key figure underlying the institution of the orphanage. Crucial to the orphanage and the orphanage is work done by house mamas as nannies for the children, drawn primarily from the same communities and economic backgrounds as orphans. This ethnography explores how interactions between orphans, nannies, and volunteers are woven into a system of emotions used by orphans, managed by nannies, and consumed by volunteers. Furthermore, how the intricacies of racial, gendered, and age-based inequalities, underlying these emotional exchanges, presume to reproduce discourses about the proper conduct of orphans and nannies. As sites that intertwine levels of emotional responses, social relationships, and religious benevolence, orphanages operate with forms of economic exchange, commodification, and labor through the emotional labor of orphans and nannies. This dissertation contributes to understanding how managing or regulating emotions, defined as emotional labor (Hochschild 1983), impacts children in orphanages long-term, and the nannies who care for them. This research provides important insight into how emotional labor structures the everyday practices of care in Haiti's orphanages. The goal of this research is to uplift the voices of the children and families who have fallen victim to the orphanage industry, providing them a platform to educate others and advocate for change in their own words.

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Introduction

Literature Review

The literature engaged for this research explores concepts of emotional labor, social reproduction theory, faith-based humanitarian aid, orphanages, the identity of an orphan, and care work in Haiti's humanitarian landscape. With this research, it is my goal to interject into the current literature discussing the aspects in which the use of emotional labor and acts of religious philanthropy, like orphanages, produce particular conditions of care work in Haiti. Furthermore, how the use of emotional labor produces a certain project, i.e. the orphanage, as well as the orphan.

In looking at processes of productive and reproductive labor, scholars have often focused on the two concepts as separate dichotomies that work together or in contrast to each other. Nancy Fraser's (2018) research on migrant care workers discusses how social reproduction at home allows for productivity in the workplace to occur. Fraser (2018) draws attention to the devaluation of unpaid reproductive labor as it becomes gendered toward women's roles inside the home, defining reproductive labor as synonymous with affective labor. Tithe Bhattacharya (2018, 2020) views productive and reproductive labor as a part of the same socio-economic processes that are constrained by concepts of gender and race. I am offering to look at productive and reproductive labor as simultaneous, fluid processes to recognize labor as labor regardless of whether it is waged or unwaged. I am applying this concept to orphanages as spaces of both productive and reproductive labor where paid care work challenges previous ways of examining

labor as care workers are essentially paid to be figurative mothers and conduct reproductive labor.

Drawing attention to the relationship between labor and emotions, Arlie Hochschild's research on flight attendant's management and manipulation of emotion as a form of labor has provided the concept of "emotional labor" to describe how an employee manages feelings and emotions at work (1983:7). Hochschild's work frames emotional labor within the concept of affect, or the physical, visible, behavior expressed, like smiling or saying hello to a customer, referred to as surface acting (1983:10). For Hochschild, emotional labor is the hidden, unobservable sense of feeling that requires changing or regulating one's internal thoughts during an interaction, or deep acting. Similarly, Grandey (2000), Wharton (2009), and Grandey, Diefendorff, and Rupp (2012) situate emotional labor as part of the organizational system of work which standardizes employee's behavior but relies on individuals to change the way they feel or react while at work. For Hochschild (1983), Grandey (2000), Wharton (2009), and Grandey, Diefendorff, and Rupp (2012), emotional labor is personalized and can vary in production based on how individuals process their feelings. They argue emotional labor frames the affective response and is the most crucial aspect in researching productive labor.

In comparison, Anat Rafaeli and Robert Sutton (1987) describe the emotional management of employees as a collective process rather than personal. Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) argue that emotional management is determined more by the affect, or conditions of surface acting, that are framed by the participants and their surroundings. For Rafaeli and Sutton (1987), expressions by employees, like smiling or being polite to a rude customer, are what produce "emotional transactions" between customers and employees. When employees are at work, they

are expected to behave alike towards customers. Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) believe employees' behavior, or affect, is dictated by the workspace, not the employees' personal desires or feelings to regulate their behavior, and therefore emotional management can be processed similarly amongst employees to display the same behavior at work. As you will see in the stories provided by participants, emotional management and mitigation between both children and the nannies is vital in maintaining the imagery the orphanage has set up for visitors, as well as a strategic tool used to keep both the children and nannies in line with the orphanage's agenda.

Therefore, rather than studying the difference between affect and emotional labor as separate processes that cause one or the other to occur, I am inviting researchers to think of how they are in relation to each other in order to understand labor. Instead, I am offering a perspective on the difference between what is displayed as affect and the emotion being felt and how they may be at odds with each other. Throughout this dissertation, you will be introduced to participants whose lived experiences in the orphanages will demonstrate how a child in the orphanage, labeled an 'orphan' behaves may be in contention with how they are truly feeling. To clarify how I interpret this phenomenon of contention, I specifically associate feelings and emotional management with emotional labor, and expressions or displayed behavior as affect. What I have learned over the process of this research and will elaborate on further in the rest of this dissertation, is that children are using emotional labor to produce affect, like smiling for photos with volunteers even though they may not truly wish to have their photo taken or feel happy as their smile may portray them to be.

In looking at the application of emotional labor, scholars have drawn attention to emotion as it relates to humanitarianism. Current literature has begun to analyze how humanitarianism

provokes, manages, and utilizes the emotions and feelings of donors and recipients (Guiney and Mostafanezhad 2014). In her study of humanitarianism efforts in New Orleans, post-hurricane Katrina, Vincanne Adams documents the business-like structure of humanitarian aid that is rooted in capitalist ventures. Adam's research defines processes of "affective labor" as they relate to the privatization of humanitarian intervention and the intertwining of capitalism and welfare (2013: 13,123). As welfare services are increasingly shifting from the responsibility of the state to private organizations and companies, humanitarian projects benefit from the free labor of volunteers and funds from donors. For Adams (2013), the affect expressed during humanitarian intervention is the act of volunteering which provides free labor that organizations do not have to pay for and can exploit to gain project support. In this case, the emotional labor of empathy towards aid recipients is what frames the affective labor response. Adams (2013) argues that as welfare systems are increasingly more privatized, affective labor replaces paid labor, and competition between projects to bring in more volunteers becomes the focus. Her argument can be applied to the setting of orphanages, whereas you will read from the testimonies of both children who have or live in an orphanage and the women who work in them, the agenda of the orphanage is not necessarily led by the desires and wishes of the children residing in them, but rather are donor-driven, breeding competition amongst orphanages to bring in more children, hiring more staff, and seemingly expanding their care project as they gain more donors' attention.

Tess Guiney's research in Cambodian orphanages explores how humanitarianism is embedded in neoliberal policies which market moral consumption to donors. Guiney (2017) uses the concept of affect to describe experiences of volunteering. In her research, affect is the behavior during the interaction between volunteers and recipients that elicits emotions and

feelings between participants. Guiney (2017) defines these interactions as “affective experiences” that humanitarian projects use to promote their project and draw in volunteers and donors (126). Similarly, Monika Krause’s (2014) research on MSF and other global humanitarian organizations working in post-disaster areas, approaches the concept of affect in terms of measuring the success of a humanitarian project. For Krause (2014), affect, or what she describes as ‘good projects,’ is the project’s ability to initiate its agenda effectively. For example, a project may measure their success based on how many bags of food or hygiene kits they were able to distribute that day. In Haiti, orphanages are essentially selling care-based projects that can then report back to donors x number of children have been cared for this month, y number of nannies are being employed that indicates success. Notions of having the biggest house, having more children in their facility than other orphanages in their area, hiring more nannies, cooking for multiple children three times a day, and increasing the number of children under school sponsorships are all what Krause (2014) would view as affects of a “good project,” and by extension, the orphans as humanitarian subjects become the ‘project’ sold. Furthermore, these tangible and measurable affects are also what catches the attention of donors who then view the orphanage as a credible, successful, and necessary project of care they can support.

As research has dived headfirst into critiquing humanitarian practice, there has still been hesitancy to examine faith-based humanitarian projects due to the complications of measuring or examining a person’s acts related to their religious requirements. However, humanitarian projects have increasingly tapped into a market of emotions and religious benevolence (Fassin 2012; Bornstein 2012). For example, Erica Bornstein’s work discusses how faith-based humanitarian efforts produce systems of “ethical engagements” she describes as the intertwining of emotional response and religious benevolence with forms of economic exchange,

commodification, and neoliberal policies (Bornstein 2012: 88). Here, religion provides a common ground for people to connect across time and space, physically, mentally, economically, and between cultural divides that utilize empathy to make these connections (Freidus 2010: 52). Participants in this research will highlight how components of faith-based organization's agendas use the bond of Christian brother and sisterhood to call upon empathetic support for donor aid and volunteering as well as express how they felt during these interactions and view religious charity. Drawing from Biblical scriptures that call for Christians to "look after the widows and orphans in their distress (James 1: 27 NIV)," orphanages position themselves as devout sites extending the care of God through the care work performed inside their facility. As a result, using God's will to care for the poor and vulnerable, many faith-based organizations can then request donations to fund projects, like orphanages (Friedus 2012: 52). For example, in Haiti the average donor sponsors a child for roughly \$20 a month through their church or other global, faith-based institutions (Schwartz 2010: 137). Part of the faith-based narrative of Christian morality is that they are 'rescuing' children from poverty and the ability to place children inside these facilities are miracles of faith that are possible because of donors and volunteers (Friedus 2010: 57).

Based on almost 15 years of experience in Haiti, I observed that faith-based organizations are the most common form of humanitarianism and often provide various forms of religious-affiliated programs, like orphanages, that rely on donor support to maintain their projects that are Eurocentric in the way they view childcare practices. Although there is much attention in the literature given to examining how donors and recipients form monetary, emotional, and physical bonds within humanitarian spaces; how recipients understand donor's reasons or expectations for giving and how recipients respond accordingly to meet donor standards needs to be further

examined. This dissertation aims to help answer that and explain how orphanages setup the projects focused on the orphan subject and the care given to them, both as marketable products to donors.

Diane Hoffman's (2022) work on the white savior complex within Haiti's NGO and faith-based humanitarian landscape sheds light on how foreigners have gained control over the narrative of 'empowerment' and what it means when applied to the humanitarian context. For Hoffman, when organizations, like orphanages, use terms like empowerment, it implies that the person stating someone has power is the person who really has the power (2022: 6). Echoing her previous sentiments, Hoffman's (2023) most recent work explores neoliberal ideology applied to family dynamics and responses to Haiti's orphanage crisis. Her research critiques using a global North, Christianized perspective of family dynamics when shaping childcare practices in Haiti's orphanage system, specifically reunification (2023:580). Furthermore, how the orphanage system in Haiti and foreigners directly linked to reunification efforts, may also be somewhat disconnected from the realities of Haiti's social fabric which does not view a family unit in the same neoliberal, nuclearized perspective with one mother, one father, and the child at the center of the family dynamics (2023: 582). Interestingly enough, her work reiterates some of the very challenges I have discovered in my own research as it relates to reunification and the impact emotional labor has on the family dynamic once children return to their families. Adding to her work, I want to raise awareness about how foreigners view and understand Haitian family structures. In the epilogue of this dissertation, I elaborate on the struggles families face when children are returned to their homes but also when done in a way that is outlined and applied through a Eurocentric lens, it can cause further burden and stress on the family unit. To put it simply, families may be happy to welcome back their children and loved ones from the

orphanage, but that does not negate the fact there are now more mouths to feed, more childcare to be provided, and added stressors to the already vulnerable family dynamic. What can often be overlooked is how childcare in Haiti is not individualized or even nuclearized to the two-parent household, but rather it is communal and extended to both biological and fictive kinship ties. Hoffman, with whom I agree, criticizes the control over the narrative of both how the problem was created, and what solution should be provided for it. At present, the narrative surrounding childcare and the family unit of Haitian society is dictated by the very people who historically first determined there was an ‘orphan’ problem in Haiti to which orphanages are the solution. Even more so, the narrative of alternative childcare solutions and reunification efforts are exclusionary to the existing support systems in place in Haitian society that view childcare as a collective practice.

When viewing how donors and volunteers feel about their ‘orphanage experience,’ much literature has drawn focus to the critique of voluntourism and by extension, orphanage tourism. Volunteer tourism has been referred to as a spiritual pilgrimage (Howell 2009), a global tourist industry (Reas 2016, Conran 2011), a gap-year project to ‘do good’ (Simpson 2004, Guttentag 2009), cultural immersion experience (Friedus 2013, Crossley 2012), and a new form of colonization (Freire-Medeiros 2012). The term volunteer tourism defines the act of touring the area, culture, and history of the population you are volunteering for and combines leisure vacation with volunteering projects (Simpson 2004). Kyle Outterson, Evan Selinger, and Kyle Whyte’s research in Mexico and Brazil define volunteer tourism synonymously with the concept ‘poverty tourism,’ highlighting how financially privileged volunteers from the global North exploit the vulnerability of recipients in the global South to witness and relieve suffering firsthand (2011: 39). Outterson et al raise awareness to lack of power recipients have to say no

to volunteers and projects when they often rely upon those projects to meet basic needs. While reading this dissertation, you will see how participants, both the children and nannies, similarly describe feeling a lack of agency in determining who they interacted with and how they were expected to interact. Furthermore, the very framework of poverty tourism is parallel to orphanage tourism in which those seeking to ‘do good’ are doing so for their own self-gratification rather than the benefit of those they aim to serve. This power dynamic is one in which orphanages try to hide through the use of religious sanctity and affiliation as well as the overall project of caring for vulnerable children.

Similarly, Jane Reas’ (2013,2015) research in Siem Reap, Cambodia examines volunteer tourism in orphanages from a Marxist perspective on labor. Reas (2013,2015) describes how volunteer programs believe in the efforts of volunteer staff to transform an orphaned child’s neediness and poverty into a “once-in-a-lifetime experience” for volunteers. The orphanage experience, for volunteers, then becomes produced, packaged, marketed, and finally regurgitated in the form of testimonies and media images. In relation to Reas’ work is Emilie Crossley’s (2012) research on the objectification of humanitarian aid recipients in the global South by volunteers from the global North, which highlights fantasies as processes of “othering” (239). Fantasies of poverty and desolation in ‘other’ communities far away appeal to volunteers’ desires to immerse themselves in “authentic” environments that must be poverty-stricken for volunteers to feel their experience was real. Mary Conran (2011) examines volunteer tourism in orphanages in Thailand and variations of emotional interactions between volunteers and orphans that depoliticized volunteer projects. For example, when volunteers expect forms of emotional intimacy with the orphans they support, validation for volunteering shifts from acknowledging structures of inequality and violence to self-gratification. In contribution to these scholars’ work,

my research provides a supporting argument to how orphanages set up, utilize, and benefit from the interactions between visitors and the children, as well as how nannies caring for the children are also central in satisfying volunteers' desired experiences when visiting the orphanage. I argue that is the children themselves and the nannies' work of caring for those children that become the project sold to donors which becomes replicated and advertised when volunteers and donors share their experiences with others and on social media.

Scholars documenting the global orphanage phenomenon are starting to examine the contentions and inequalities within orphanage systems between local communities that host orphanages and the international community that supports them. Orphanages have been described as spaces of social recognition and alienation (Freidus 2010), religious benevolence (Bornstein 2003,2012), and businesses that produce marketable exchanges of emotional labor between donors and recipients (Guiney 2012; Reas 2013). Andrea Friedus and Caro Lennin's research in orphanages in Northern Malawi highlights how orphanages advertise their work as places of care that temporarily relieve the suffering of vulnerable children (2012:349). According to Friedus (2010), orphanages provide an "artificial life" that is rooted in colonial, paternalistic narratives of poverty, childcare, and humanitarianism (300). By using the term artificial life, Friedus (2010) acknowledges that life inside the orphanage has been created by the orphanage and does not usually reflect the reality of what is happening outside the orphanage space or what an orphan would experience without the intervention of the orphanage. For example, participants, like Augustine whom you were introduced to in the introduction of this dissertation, have spoken at lengths to the disconnect they feel within their own culture, their own community, and how things done in the orphanage are more westernized at times that can leave them to have unrealistic expectations once they leave the orphanage. It further separates and

ostracizes children and young adults when they return to their families and communities when they have very little in common with others who did not grow up in an orphanage setting and makes relating with their family and community more difficult. For example, those who are reunited may experience being made fun of for being placed in an orphanage, may not be as respected by others due to having the support of the orphanage, or the families may be receiving continued support in a post-reunification program which further places the child reunited in a position both coveted and rejected.

Touching on relationality and empathy, scholars like Erica Bornstein whose work of *New Delhi humanitarianism* provided a vivid account of emotional encounters inside orphanages between volunteers and orphans, evoke what she defines as “relational empathy” (2012: 146). Relational empathy requires the acknowledgment of one’s own rights to witness and relieve the suffering of others (Bornstein 2012:147). One could argue that it is Bornstein’s theory of relational empathy that could link the missing pieces of Diane Hoffman’s critique on how foreigners are not necessarily able to relate with those they provide aid to. I would take it further to even state that to truly have relational empathy, one must also take into account how their actions, like volunteering in an orphanage, may be perpetuating the very structural violence that forces families to place children in orphanages. In contrast, Tess Guiney (2012, 2017) and Guiney and Mary Mustafanezhad (2014) draw on Hochschild’s definition of emotional labor and apply it to feeling management performed by orphans in Cambodia that exposes assumed gratitude-based responses of recipients, like smiling for toys, that volunteers and donors’ desire, mimicking tourist sites where the children become spectacles for volunteers. For example, encouraging orphans to smile in pictures with or for volunteers or interact with volunteers is a way that orphans can emotionally express their gratitude for the volunteers’ presence. Tess

Guiney and Mary Mustafanazhed research orphanages as spaces of political economy where orphans' feelings are regulated to present them as proper humanitarian subjects for donor consumption (2014). It is through this process that orphans are being made into the product the orphanage sales alongside of the care it provides them.

Thus, orphans become “symbolic capital” (Krause 2014:109), the forefront of orphanage labor (Guiney and Mustafanzhed 2014), and provide what the orphanage alone cannot, emotional labor, making them a direct product of the orphanage. Timothy Schwartz (2008) refers to orphanages as market-driven charities that cannot guarantee continuous aid when funds dry out (75). This requires the reproduction of new orphan subjects to continue tapping into the humanitarian market and compete with other humanitarian projects. For example, orphanages in Haiti promote themselves as temporary spaces of childcare that can offer children what families in poverty cannot: education, access to food and water, and other basic needs. However, once a child is placed in an orphanage, they typically reside there until they age out and return to family or the streets. This allows for orphanages to continue producing new orphan subjects in Haiti as older children age out and younger children are placed in their care. My dissertation research draws attention to the relationships between volunteers, NGOs, FBOs, and orphanages and how orphanages utilize the emotional labor of orphans to maintain donor support. Furthermore, my research describes orphans' self-recognition of how they use emotional labor to produce affective responses, and from whom they learn to exhibit these desired behaviors, making themselves the perfect ‘final product’ of the orphanage.

Scholars focused on childhood development under capitalism have increasingly drawn attention to children's agency and under what conditions children understand their authority in

interacting with others. Jenny Huberman's (2012) research on children's emotional labor in Banaras, India examines how emotional labor is used during interactions between tourists and local children. She argues children use emotional labor to produce the affect of displays meant to fulfill a fantasy the tourists have based on emotionally charged desires, such as self-gratification for helping a child in need (27). Drawing on Huberman's work, Susan Ferguson's (2018) examines how children's social reproduction shapes the way in which children relate to their environment and how their social reproduction helps to mold them into capitalist subjects. For Ferguson (2018), children come to understand the spaces they occupy using physical and imaginative displays of affect (117). In this case, affect displayed by children can be sourced as beneficial towards reproducing a capitalist subject, like doing chores, or working against it, like playtime (Ferguson 2018:116). What I am interested in demonstrating through this ethnography is how leisure activities, like playtime, have become beneficial towards reproducing a capitalist subject, the orphan, as playtime becomes a marketable form of affect when it is sold as an opportunity for volunteers to interact with the children in orphanages who become products of the orphanage's project.

To examine how nannies understand and view their work in the orphanage, a review of the literature on the processes of gendering and racializing care work must be addressed. Black feminist scholar, Kimberlee Crenshaw's (1993) definition of intersectionality provides a foundation to examine how socio-political, economic, and systems of oppression intersect with identities of race and gender. For Crenshaw, identities are not formed separately from socio-economic and political systems, instead, social constructs about race and gender are produced by those systems and are exploited under capitalism. Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality is useful in analyzing how Haitian nannies view their labor in the orphanage as it relates to the

gendering and realization of care work. Patricia Hill-Collins (2000) provides an analysis of race and class as it relates to black women's unpaid labor in the homes of predominantly white families. Hill-Collins (2000) examines the concept of 'home' as a site of resistance and oppression for black women historically under slavery and contemporarily in new forms of domestic care work. Hill-Collins (2000) approaches the site of the home from two perspectives, black women's labor inside their home and their care-work inside the home of employers. For example, black women's unpaid labor in their own homes contributes to the social reproduction of resistance for black families. However, black women's labor inside the homes of predominately white families contributes to employing families' social reproduction processes that can reproduce discrimination against people of color. When reading through the stories shared by the nannies working in orphanages, one can see that these women are well aware of their contribution to processes of social reproduction that inherently work against them in the public sphere of production and paid labor both inside and outside of the orphanage setting. Furthermore, they recognize how their contribution to the orphanage is parallel to their contribution to reproductive labor within their own households. The work provided by nannies is both formal, preparing food for the children, and unpaid, like staying to console a crying child after designated work hours (Cheever 2002: 56). Nannies are required to act and perform professionally while also providing an informal, invisible form of emotional labor that is linked to the care of the child (Macdonald 2010: 34). What is also noteworthy is the unequal power dynamics between the nannies who care for the children and employers, sponsors, and founders of the orphanages who are predominately middle class, white foreigners. Throughout the section discussing women caregivers in the orphanage, the women interviewed discuss how they navigate these unbalanced relationships, and how they work with or resist certain components

that may position them with little to no power in their workplace. My dissertation situates itself within current literature that aims to understand the racialized and gendered processes of aid and contributes to how researchers have previously explored the relationship and interactions between Haitian nannies, orphans, and non-Haitian staff and how Haitian nannies understand their work in the context of emotional labor in the orphanage system that makes their work vital to the project's success.

When taken together, this dissertation contributes to the engagement of the literature examining how processes of emotional labor become incorporated into humanitarian practices, like orphanages, and highlights how the critical factors of race and gender intersect with social and economic inequalities within care work. Furthermore, this research provides context to discussing how emotional labor harnessed by orphans and nannies becomes critical to the image of care-work orphanages portray that can be observable through the testimonies shared with me during fieldwork.

Homecoming

Stepping off the plane in December of 2021, the sun warming my face, I welcomed the feeling after leaving the cold chill of winter in Tennessee. I was met by the familiar process of going through immigration, collecting my bags, and then meeting my friend, Bernard, who chauffeured me over the past 8 years when I stayed in Port-au-Prince. As we drove only 5 minutes down the road to the national airport, a trip I used to walk in 15 minutes, I asked Bernard how bad it had gotten here...His simple wave of the hand indicated that my short trip from one airport to the other should be enough explanation. Port-au-Prince was not safe, not

even to walk a street that I have walked more than a hundred times over the past 15 years. That same road where it is not uncommon to see art graffiti, had walls now spray painted with “Aba USA, Aba okipasyon USA” down with the USA, against the U.S. occupation and a very blunt “Fuck USA yo se criminal” - The US are criminals. It felt like coming home to a house where the lights had been disconnected and all the furniture had been rearranged. It was no longer a Port-au-Prince I recognized; this was not the same home. This was new, the tension was new, and the eyes of passersby darting left and right across the streets in anticipation of something about to happen unexpectedly was new, but in Haiti, the unexpected was always something you had to prepare for. The once-busy streets were less crowded. The usually heavily packed sidewalks lined with street vendors selling art, food, and changing dollars for Haitian Goude to everyone that came out of the airport, were vacant. I arrived in Port-au-Prince in November of 2021, just a few months after the assassination of President Jovenel Moise in his home in Petionville, Haiti. The country’s leadership had been taken over by the de facto Prime Minister, Dr. Ariel Henry, causing tensions to mount as more news pointed to his involvement in the assassination that led him to take power only weeks after being appointed Prime Minister. Once again, Haiti had made global headlines weekly as the population, *pep la*, were left to face the uncertainty and violence that would follow.

Haiti has been a hotspot for kidnapping and disappearances ever since the infamous Duvalier regime began in the early 1950s, but this was different. In a few short years from 2019 to 2021, kidnapping increased by 300% where both Haitians and foreigners were targeted daily, making Haiti the third most at-risk country for kidnapping in the world according to the Human Rights Watch. Following the assassination, the streets throughout Haiti were spray painted with “*Ariel = Asasen*” and “*Ariel se vre Bandi*,” Ariel equals the assassin, Ariel is a gangster.

Because of this increased insecurity in the capital, I decided to head to the southern department of Les Cayes to conduct my doctoral research for the year. Landing in Les Cayes was an experience in itself, being my first time that far south in Haiti. I was not sure what to expect and the familiarity of Port-au-Prince, no matter how chaotic, was more reassuring than the new countryside area of Les Cayes where I had no friends or contacts except one, Morgan. Morgan is a Canadian woman who has worked and lived in Haiti since 2010, where her experience of living in an orphanage as a volunteer for almost a year, also exposed her to the reality of institutionalization for children. In 2012, she started a child protection and social work NGO in Les Cayes, Little Footprints Big Steps (LFBS) with Institut du Bien-Être Social et de la Recherche (Institute of Social Services and Research/IBESR) in the southern regions and were the main organization in the south for family reunification once orphanages are shut down and children's families are located. Organizations, like LFBS provide resources and financial support to IBESR in helping track down family members of children living in or formerly living in an orphanage, while also providing them a safe house to stay in until families can be identified. More importantly, LFBS works with Haitian social workers, who engage with the family during the reunification process and several years after to monitor the transition process and give support to the families. Knowing of Morgan's work since 2015 but never actually meeting her in person, I was a bit nervous. Upon arrival at the small airport in Les Cayes, I sat on the edge of the sidewalk and waited for a few hours for her to pick me up. Two hours later, Morgan arrived, holding her toddler who was waving out the window at me and my dog I had brought from Tennessee. Loading up all 5 of my suitcases, a carry-on, and a dog into the truck we started off down the road as she and I exchanged stories, talking like we had been friends for years, bonding over similar experiences we had while working in Haiti. Unlike Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes is a

much smaller city, taking only about 15 minutes to drive through it entirely. After driving around for almost an hour, finding a hotel that had vacancy until my apartment became ready proved to be a difficult task since most rooms were being rented out by NGOs who sent emergency responders after the earthquake hit Les Cayes on August 14th, 2021, almost three months before my arrival and almost one month after the assassination of the president. Their presence in Les Cayes made prices for rooms increase from what normally would be \$13-15 dollars per night to almost \$200 plus and monthly rates at over \$2k. After a hectic beginning to my introduction in Les Cayes, we finally found a place for me to stay with a friend of Morgan's whose hotel used to serve as the transition home for LFBS to house children until relatives or a foster care placement could be found. As I settled in for the night, listening to the chirping of cicadas outside mixed with the distant sound of waves crashing against sand and rocks at the nearby beach, I began noticing the differences between the Haiti I was used to and the Haiti I now was living in for the foreseeable future. The increase in insecurity caused massive repercussions felt throughout all regions of Haiti, where the majority of the population was already suffering under the suffocating weight of structural violence that resulted in food insecurity, higher rent costs, increase in school tuition, and more. Since 2019, inflation has been steadily rising, and gang violence has become more ruthless and frequent. Schools had been closed since 2020 first due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and then as a result of the increasing threat of kidnappings of students on their way to school. People in the downtown areas of Port-au-Prince were forced to flee their homes causing an influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the neighboring zones and countryside as people ran away from gangs who took over their communities, burnt their homes, murdered hundreds, and sexually abused thousands of men, women, and children (Hassan 2022). Many parents felt forced to send their children to orphanages in the countryside where they could

remain hidden and safe from the war zone that Port-au-Prince had become. The number of children being placed in orphanages since 2019 has increased even as the number of orphanages being shut down by IBESR has also increased. There was no exact data yet on the number of children entering orphanages since the 2018 mandate had been put in effect declaring it illegal to place a child in an orphanage without IBESR approval and documentation and criminalizing the opening of new orphanages that went unregistered with IBESR. However, out of the 18 orphanage sites I visited in the southern region, all but two admitted to taking in new children since the 2018 mandate and an estimated 300 children had come to live in an orphanage in the south as a result of the insecurity in the capital. The stage had been set for orphanages - at least in the eyes of parents - to serve as emergency care facilities. However, long before the present period of insecurity, orphanages were already seen as temporary spaces of care for many parents who had little to no income or had lost a partner, and therefore already struggling to take care of the children they had. Conducting this research allowed me to examine how parents felt about orphanages and placing their children in them, how children placed in an orphanage understood their situation, and how the women taking care of the children in orphanages were caught somewhere in between caring for other people's kids while also ensuring they prevent their own child from going to an orphanage.

A History Silenced

In the news, Haiti is described as “the republic of NGOs,” “the poorest nation in the Western hemisphere,” and is seen as the ‘problem child’ to which the global North must come to save without ever addressing who the ‘parents’ of this problem child narrative are, i.e. the very foreign powers that be, like the United States, Canada, and France who have historically set-up

the very scenarios of chaos and instability that have plagued Haiti for centuries. The news never mentions how Haiti was the first black republic, having the only successful revolution in colonial history, nor does it draw attention to the resources both in terms of minerals like gold and its geo-political location that make Haiti attractive to international stakeholders like foreign banks, companies, and governments.

When discussing the country of Haiti, scholars have drawn attention to the complexities of the nation's history and examined the intricacies of the long-lasting repercussions felt from slavery, colonialism, and the revolution that would redefine the Western Hemisphere. Haiti's history also provides a context for analyzing issues with the production of knowledge surrounding formerly colonized nations, examining factors of continuous international intervention politically and economically under neoliberal policies, and giving examples of the problems of when a state works against the interests of its own citizens as we see playing out in the current increase in insecurity throughout Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince since the assassination of President Jovenel Moise in July of 2021 (See figure 1.1). Haiti, formerly known as Hispaniola, was once defined as the "Pearl of the Antilles" and was one of the wealthiest and most successful colonies under French rule, producing more than half of the world's sugar and making France one of the most powerful countries in the world (Dupuy 1989: 37). Under colonialism, those who were enslaved would experience the harsh realities of "chattel slavery" one of the most inhuman forms of slavery that led to a high mortality rate and increased demand for slaves coming to the Caribbean colonies.



Figure 1.1 Photo of protest flyers demanding justice for assassinated President Jovanel Moise

The beginning of the Haitian Revolution started in 1791 with smaller rebellions on plantations and by 1804, Haiti won its independence from France, but not without punishment. Haiti would be kept isolated from the global trading economy for almost 35 years until an agreement was made that Haiti would pay back 90 million francs for freeing itself from France, a debt that would be paid in full by 1947 and have a lasting impact that would essentially strip Haiti of any economic independence (Schuller 2012:40). For freeing itself from the chains of enslavement, Haiti would continue to pay the price long after the original indemnity was paid.

It was not until the 1840s that Haiti would open its ports to the rest of the world as well as open its doors to the influence of U.S. foreign policies. By the early 20th century, as the U.S. expanded its authority in Latin America and the Caribbean under imperialism, Haiti became a central focus for U.S. economic interest in the form of land and agriculture (Schuller 2012: 42). The U.S saw an opportunity to expand its wealth and secure its control over Haiti by invading the nation in 1915 post the assassination of Haiti's then-president, Jean Vilbrun Guillaume Sam, on the grounds of helping Haiti secure its political stability and agreement known as the "Convention Hatiano-Americaine" (Renda 2001). This strategy can be seen being played out again after the 2021 assassination of Jovenel Moise that led to the U.S.-backed installment of Ariel Henry which sparked public outrage as Henry did not have the support of the majority of the Haitian population and ignored the Montana Accord decided upon in August of 2021 post the assassination by the reigning political parties in Haiti which provided Haitian-led solutions to solving political and economic insecurity and was supported by the population. Looking at the similarities, the invasion of 1915 started a 35-year occupation of Haiti by U.S. marines and provided the U.S. a chance to decide Haiti's economic and political future. During the original occupation by the United States, the Haitian constitution was written under the supervision of the

United States and elected officials from Washington, similar to what is currently happening with CARICOM agreements led by the U.S. and Canada since March of 2024 to elect a 7-member council to govern Haiti until elections can be held in 2025. During the occupation, the United States held elections and put in place a government of officials selected by the U.S government, not the Haitian citizens, and would ultimately control Haiti through a puppet government that funneled money to Haitian leaders in exchange for an open-door policy to access land and resources for U.S interest that favored foreign banks and investment (Farmer 1994: 24).

Looking at the parallels in history to the current situation, President Ariel Henry's only power comes from the support of countries like the United States and France who have allowed insecurity to increase after the assassination as a means to come in and 'clean up' the mess they have allowed to unfold, under the guise of helping solve Haiti's instability issues. This manipulation of language and socio-politics is nothing new in the relationship between Haiti and what I refer to as the "unholy trinity" or the "Core Group" made up of the United States, France, and Canada. It is important to note that prior to this redrafting of Haiti's constitution, it was illegal to own land unless you were a Haitian citizen and did not permit companies to buy and own land, only individuals (Renda 2001: 69). This matters because it provided Haitians protection from depending on international actors for sustainability as many families were formerly small-scale farmers who relied on local economic trading to maintain livelihood (Farmer 1994: 26). By the end of the U.S occupation, Haiti would have financial agreements of loans and investments from U.S. banks and other international lending agencies that controlled Haiti's treasury as it worked to pay back indemnity to France and borrow loans to keep Haitian banks afloat (Farmer 1994: 30). I highlight these points of interest in Haiti's historical

relationship with the U.S. because it provides context as to how foreign actors have been able to maintain control of Haiti, even as a sovereign nation, and reinforce the cycle of exploitation.

To examine the shift in economic policies pursued by the U.S. from development aid to neoliberalism and the impacts it had on Haiti's contemporary development and progress, I draw inspiration from the work of Paul Farmer (1994) to examine, what he refers to as "structural violence." Paul Farmer's book, *The Uses of Haiti*, raises questions about how we address the link between a nation's history with its issues of the contemporary. For Farmer, the answer is defining "structural violence" or what he explains as the expression of a political and economic order that grew from slavery and colonialism; creating a globalized social web of exploitation, stemming from an abiding interest in "the ways in which epic poverty and inequality, with their deep histories, become embodied and experienced as violence" (1994: 21). The concept of structural violence allows for an examination of the subtle, not always visible, processes at play that become institutionalized and a systemic rule of law; requiring justification and reinforcement to produce structures of violence as normal and hide larger inequalities. Examples of structural violence in Haiti can be traced through development initiatives and neoliberal policies.

Under the Duvalier regime between 1953 and 1989, Haiti increased development projects assisted by the United States, known as USAID, which funneled millions of dollars into the hands of the Haitian government, meant for the uses of infrastructural development and economic advancement (Schiller and Fouron 2001; Trouillot 1990). It is here, that I want to take a moment to address the impact development had on Haiti's political and economic power. In Michel-Rolph Trouillot's (1990) book, *Haiti: State against Nation, the Origins and Legacy of*

Duvaliersim, he describes Haiti as a “predatory nation” where the state acts against the interest of its citizens, in favor of those in charge of the government. His use of the term predatory is not coincidental, but rather tactful in referring to the actions the state takes to protect its financial security over the social welfare and security of its people. The ‘nation of citizens’ acts as the prey who produce, work, and live within the social economy controlled by the state, who as the predator, can weaken the economy through various policies that go against the best interests of citizens' economic and social security (Trouillot 1990: 60). Examining this definition, Trouillot gives a space for thinking of the ways the responsibilities of the state are in contention with its practices. However, to understand the entirety of Haiti’s contemporary issues, one must consider the options of Haiti’s government to act, and what it means to have a state without any influential economic and political power to use in coemption with global hegemonic power, like the United States.

Scholars focused on Haiti’s contemporary political and economic struggles shed light on the function of neoliberalism in depleting Haiti’s local economies and weakening the state’s power. Neoliberalism, defined as “the ideology and practice based on the assumption that the free market, unfettered by regulation or government interference, is the best engine for growth and fairest distributor of wealth” (Schuller 2012:42) has been debated by scholars as either the root cause of Haiti’s contemporary socio-economic and political issues or the result of historical implications that paved the way for the present-day instability.

In their ethnography, *Georges Woke up Laughing: Long-Distance Nationalism and the Search for Home*, Nina Glick-Schiller and Georges Fournon (2001) outline Haiti’s contemporary struggles under development and neoliberal policies enacted by global entities, such as the

International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. They refer to Haiti's government as an "apparent state" to explain Haiti's sovereignty as a political ideology rather than a political reality (2001:212). For Schiller and Fouron, the apparent state exists as an artificial environment in a strategically designed set of structures, appearances, and policies that appear to have real power and authority but in fact, are only simulations projected by the state. In the case of Haiti, the government's political and financial activities are heavily monitored and controlled by international stakeholders and governments, like the IMF and the United States, so much so that governments like Haiti are left without space to take meaningful actions that benefit its citizens. For example, when the Haitian government received loans from both the IMF and the World Bank, it was under the condition that Haiti's government would strip social welfare budgets and allocate that money towards paying back loan interests (Schiller and Fouron 2001; Farmer 2010; James 2010). As a result, in the early 1970s- 80s, Haiti saw an increase in urbanization and industrialization as rural farmers were migrating from farmlands that were being bought out by U.S companies through development agreements with the Haitian government, or who no longer had fertile lands to harvest from and were unable to receive subsidies from the government (Schiller and Fouron 2001: 74). Education sectors and healthcare became privatized by the end of the 1980s and Haiti's government held little power over its government-owned industries. What this meant was stipulations put in place by lending agencies stripped Haiti's government of protecting its citizens from the repercussions of borrowing money at high interest. This kept Haiti's government in a cycle of borrowing and agreeing to preconditions that further weakened the state's power and local economies. For example, Schiller and Fouron highlight that USAID development programs framed by neoliberal market ideas that the free-market economy will provide coemption and thus economic growth, even if it is gradual growth like claims made for

the case of Haiti by the United States (2001:55). One program in particular, Food for Peace, was meant to be a food assistance project to aid rural farmers in the aftermath of the Duvalier regime collapsing and the violence that followed during the military coup (Schiller and Fouron 2001: 221). The idea was to remove 20% of all tilled land in Haiti from domestic crops, like bananas and rice, and replace them with crops to be exported, such as coffee (Schiller and Fouron 2001:222-223). Instead, Haitian farmers were unable to compete with the increased food assistance programs and cheaper imported goods that flooded Haiti's market.

In her book, *Democratic Insecurities: Violence, Trauma, and Intervention in Haiti*, Erica James (2010) analyzes the “theories and practices of intervention that arise in relationship to the crisis of the state” post the Cold War era (16-17). As it relates to humanitarian intervention, James situates ethics and morals in contention between practices and ideas of the government about post-conflict rehabilitation (2010:20). She argues that humanitarian interventions, under conditions of neomodernism, are torn between the “economies of terror” and the “economies of compassion;” turning the response to disaster and conflict from the welfare of the state’s responsibilities to marketable commodities for humanitarian projects which we can see unfolding in the context of Haiti (James 2010: 85). For James (2010), it is spaces inhabited by the economies of terror and compassion where an abundant stream of material resources, knowledge, expertise, technologies, and various forms of exchange distributed amongst the humanitarian network and its recipients, and between humanitarian projects and its donors (85). It is important to address what James (2010) defines as neomodernism, other scholars note are the processes of neoliberalism. Her argument of neomodernism is in contention with the ideas of Trouillot's (1995) production of knowledge, and Farmer's (1994) concept of structural violence. To explain clearly, James (2010) would state that Haiti's contemporary issues are predominately a result of

neomodernism practices which she believes have confined Haiti's government into the dependency upon development and aid intervention. The problem is that James' (2010) explanation falls short of explaining the complexities of historical nuances that set the backdrop to the current precarious situation which places Haiti once again at the mercy of foreign intervention to "fix" the insecurity issues that have risen since 2018.

Instead, I pull from the work of Mark Schuller and his book *Killing with Kindness: Haiti, International Aid, and NGOs* where his focus is centralized on the intricate workings of Haiti's relationship with foreign intervention historically and contemporarily, which for him has changed very little over time. Like Fouron and Schiller (2001), Schuller views neoliberalism as the direct result of historical foreign intervention in Haiti. Schuller discusses how foreign policy, like the U.S. occupation, is what exacerbated urbanization and in the name of "modernization" has allowed for continuous exploitation disguised as neoliberal free market initiatives, meant to 'boost' Haiti's economy (2012: 41). For example, Schuller critiques the implementation of neoliberal economic policies, particularly structural adjustment programs (SAPs), in Haiti. He argues that these policies, which emphasize privatization, deregulation, and austerity measures, have disproportionately harmed the most vulnerable segments of Haitian society, exacerbating poverty and inequality (2012:43). SAPs also helped pave the way for similar foreign intervention in both the livestock and agricultural sector and Schuller examines how trade liberalization and the influx of subsidized food imports, such as rice from the United States in the 1990s and the killing of Haitian pigs in the 1980s, have undermined local farmers and contributed to food insecurity in Haiti. This has led to increased dependence on imported food and a decline in domestic food production. Furthermore, Haiti now has the lowest tariffs for importing and exporting, hindering the country's GDP and the most open economy in the Western hemisphere

available for setting up work with cheap labor and inexpensive costs for shipping material goods (Schuller 2012: 48). As a result, NGOs have responded to the context of a deteriorating welfare system by stepping in and filling the gaps between what the government is supposed to be providing but cannot or will not, with the humanitarian needs of the population. Although consistent aid intervention and NGO presence play a significant role in providing humanitarian assistance, their presence also perpetuates dependency, undermines local initiatives, and prioritizes donor interests over the needs of Haitian communities.

The situation in Haiti, involving the influence and actions of the Core Group, is a complex case of international geopolitics led by the United States, especially in how it undermines the country's sovereignty, justifies external intervention, and intensifies ongoing crises. Haiti, was made the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere due to a history of foreign interventions leading to political instability, lack of capacity to respond to natural disasters, and chronic poverty, which have in turn precipitated repeated military and economic interventions by foreign powers and international organizations. Haitian scholar Jemima Pierre draws attention to how imperialism has stripped Haiti and Haitians from having a say in their own country's politics, economy, and interests. The cycle of imperialism that regenerates itself every few decades through updated policies is maintained today by what she defines as the "imperialist machine," operated and sustained by what is now known as the "Core Group" (2024:245). This Core Group includes the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the European Union, and the so-called "Friends of Haiti" group—specifically the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, and Brazil. Formed in 2004 following the ousting of Haiti's democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the Core Group has played a significant role in Haiti's politics, ostensibly aiming to support democracy and stability, but in effect

undermining both. Fast-forward to the present-day April of 2024, the repercussions of the assassination in 2021 are being felt in full force and are directly linked to the Core Group's interference when they rejected the Montana Accord written by Haitians to solve the insecurity issues and address next steps for the government in the wake of the assassination. The Core Group, have also pushed for economic policies and reforms that benefit foreign companies and investors at the expense of Haiti's workers and local industries. As Pierre (2024) argues, the ongoing influence of the Core Group and other international actors is a form of neocolonialism, where Haiti's political and economic systems are heavily influenced by foreign powers, undermining the country's autonomy and the will of its people. The latest of these policies imposed on Haiti is the "Global Fragility Act (GFA)" written by the Trump administration in 2019 which echoes the Monroe Doctrine, asserting the right to militarily intervene in countries like Haiti that are deemed "fragile." Accordingly, the U.S. presumes the right to lead and direct international forces to stabilize and essentially 'rescue' Haiti from the very symptoms of structural violence its own policies have created and exacerbated (Pierre 2024: 245-246). The current violence and political instability in Port-au-Prince can be linked to several historical and contemporary geopolitical machinations of the U.S. and members of the Core Group. This includes the U.S. occupation of Haiti between 1915 and 1934 (Pierre 2024: 245). U.S. support for the Duvalier regime and its brutal rule, which also led to the imposition of neoliberal policies that ultimately forced Haiti into agreeing to IMF and WB loans along with subsidies to privatize many social welfare sectors, like education and healthcare (Pierre 2024: 247). Further, the orchestration of two coups by the U.S., one in 1994 and again in 2004, targeted the democratically elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide whose anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist stances led to his forced removal by the U.S. (Pierre 2024: 249). Finally, the installation of the

neo-Duvalierist political party, Tèt Kale Party (PHTK), which was supported by the U.S. led Core Group, the United Nations, and the Organization of American States (OAS) in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake that made Michel Martelly and then his successor Jovenel Moïse, president, despite the fact that neither had been officially elected by the Haitian electorate (Pierre 2024: 246). To be clear, there has not been a true democratically elected Prime Minister or President in Haiti for over a decade nor are there any Haitian representatives within the Core Group, OAS, or UN entities that are deciding Haiti's socio-economic and political fate.

In the present, I sit in my living room having returned back to Port-au-Prince for work at the end of February 2024, watching the news display scenes of chaos on the ground here, as I listen to the constant hum of helicopters flying in a 'no-fly zone,' dropping aid and evacuating those with enough money to afford the 15 thousand dollar private charter, as I watch a mass exodus of humanitarian aid workers sent to safe locations while Haitians are still trapped in their homes in the metropolitan area, I wonder how history will tell the story of the events unfolding here in the past few months. Speaking to my Haitian friends about what is happening one friend, Oneil, mentioned, "They tell our history for us, they interview the blan but where are the blan?! They have left! There is no solidarity with the suffering of Haitian people." His words echo in my mind as my phone rings; another reporter wants to talk to an 'expert' on Haiti. They want to show the violence and misery, but they do not want to hear the history of how Haiti ended up in like this. They do not want to report on who is responsible and who has exploited Haiti since its first breath of freedom they have continued to choke. They do not want to see Haiti's history because it forces them to admit responsibility. As Haitians have taken to the streets in recent years holding signs with the words "*nou bouke*" we are tired, it goes beyond just the simple interpretation that Haitians are tired of being treated unfairly and without dignity. It is more than

just being fatigued from the constant weight of structural violence they face daily. *Nou Bouke* is not entirely a mindset, but rather is more of a plea, and a feeling that Haitians recognize they deserve better. A plea to the international community to stop the exploitation and dehumanization of Haiti and its people. The media with its poverty porn headlines, the aid apparatus with its neoliberal agenda, the foreign governments with their exploitative failed interventions, and the Haitian government with its corruption; are all responsible and who is left to suffer under the chaos? The Haitian people who never get the chance to share their side of history.

The Aftermath of an Earthquake and the Creation of an Orphanage Phenomenon

On Jan 12th, 2010, Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince, and surrounding areas were hit by a devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake that leveled most of the city. I sat in stunned silence in my living room in the United States, watching as image after image flashed across the TV screen displaying the surreal amount of damage and loss of life. In a matter of seconds, more than 80% of the Haitian government would perish under the collapsing buildings, leaving Haiti with little to no governmental authority and even less say so in the country's emergency response and the reconstruction that would come years after the initial disaster (DesRoches et al. 2011:S2).

Although an accurate number was never collected, it is estimated that over 300,000 people lost their lives that day. More than a million people became internally displaced, and NGOs flooded Haiti with minimal collaboration with the local community, little organization of supply distribution, and almost zero coordination between each other and the beneficiaries they aimed to serve. In the years following the earthquake, Haiti would become known as the "Republic of NGOs" (Schuller 2016: 33). In the midst of all the chaos, post any type of disaster, the

immediate response is to attend to the needs you can accomplish quickest with the most effective results that subdue the impact of the disaster. For many children who became displaced or separated from families, the response was to house them in institutions, predominantly run by faith-based organizations until an alternative solution could be put in place. Consequently, the number of orphanages established in Haiti increased by 150% with over 90% of them faith-based with direct funding from the United States (Vernalde 2017). Faith-based organizations have since then expanded the orphanage system with donations of over 20 million annually from the United States alone (Schuller 2012: 35). In the aftermath of the earthquake, churches were sending teams down to collect children to fill their newly established orphanages, with some even trying to smuggle children out of the country. In one such instance, 10 Baptist missionaries from Idaho gathered 33 children to take them across the border to the Dominican Republic to be adopted out by church members only to discover that more than half of the children still had living parents or relatives (Quinn 2010). Today, Haiti's orphanages are funded by predominantly white faith-based organizations that view orphanages as manifestations of their religious benevolence. Regardless of religious or secular motivations, however, orphanages depend on having a vulnerable child population to fulfill their agenda of caring for orphans. When the urgency of the earthquake subsided, orphanages became strategic in how they maintained donor support while attracting new funding sources. By tapping into the tourism market, orphanages are selling an experience to visitors tied to their faith and practices of charity that give visitors an immersive experience into the lives of children in these institutions.

Methods

Haiti provides a unique landscape of various non-governmental humanitarian aid organizations. I have been traveling to Haiti since the year 2009 and have volunteered in orphanages through faith-based humanitarian programs. Research conducted for my master's thesis from the year 2016 to 2018 investigated the negative impacts of short-term missions in Haiti. During this period, I participated in trips to orphanages with mission teams and witnessed interactions between nannies, orphans, non-Haitian staff, and volunteers. I observed the behavior of both orphans and nannies was meaningful to the image of the orphanage and was an occurrence that could be examined and documented. Preliminary research conducted in July 2019 and March-April 2020 provided me with the opportunity to observe and participate with a non-governmental organization, Haiti Mama, who works with the Haitian Social Welfare Department, Institut du Bien Etre Social et des Recherches (IBESR) reuniting children in orphanages with their families or extended kin. These observations documented how orphans, volunteers, and orphanage staff behave differently based on an unequal hierarchy of power relations and interactions orchestrated by the orphanage.

My dissertation research was conducted from March of 2022 to December of 2022 in the southern department of Les Cayes, using a mixed methodology approach of qualitative and quantitative data collection. I admit, conducting research during the level of insecurity in the capital of Port-au-Prince at this time, seemed almost impossible, yet stepping outside of the capital felt like stepping back into the Haiti I had known for so many years. I spent a lot of my time during fieldwork, telling friends, family, and loved ones stateside that Haiti is not just Port-au-Prince. Haiti is also Les Cayes, Jacmel, Cap-Haitien, and many other beautiful cities and

towns that were not plagued by the same violence as the capital. Being someone with over a decade of experience in Haiti, being fluent in Haitian Kreyol, having an organized evacuation and security plan, and having the option to conduct work outside of Port-au-Prince are some of the main factors for how I was able to do this research. More importantly, the people here both Haitians and fellow ex-pats (ex-patriots nickname for all foreigners living in Haiti) opened their homes, their organizations, and their lives to me; giving me a foundation from which to work from their advice and constant help throughout this research.

I conducted research with the approval and collaboration of the organization, Little Footprints Big Steps (LFBS), which provides child protection services, like a transition home and post-reunification support for families, in the southern departments. I had the opportunity to work with a child mentor, Eluxon Tassy, from LFBS who connected me with adults and children formerly living in orphanages and who had been reunited with their families. I also had the opportunity to continue my work with IBESR in Les Cayes (See Figure 1.2) and was authorized by the director, Bertrand Meridien, to collect data and visit orphanages weekly accompanied by a child protection agent from LFBS.

I visited a total of 18 orphanages in over 10 different zones surrounding Les Cayes, where I used participant observation and open-ended interviews to collect data. There were a total of 488 children in just 18 orphanages, 212 boys and 276 girls. I divided my participants into 3 categories: children and adults who formerly lived in an orphanage, nannies, and staff working at an orphanage, and participants between the ages of 7 and 24 who currently reside in an orphanage. I interviewed a total of 61 children/young adults who lived in one of the 18 orphanages visited.

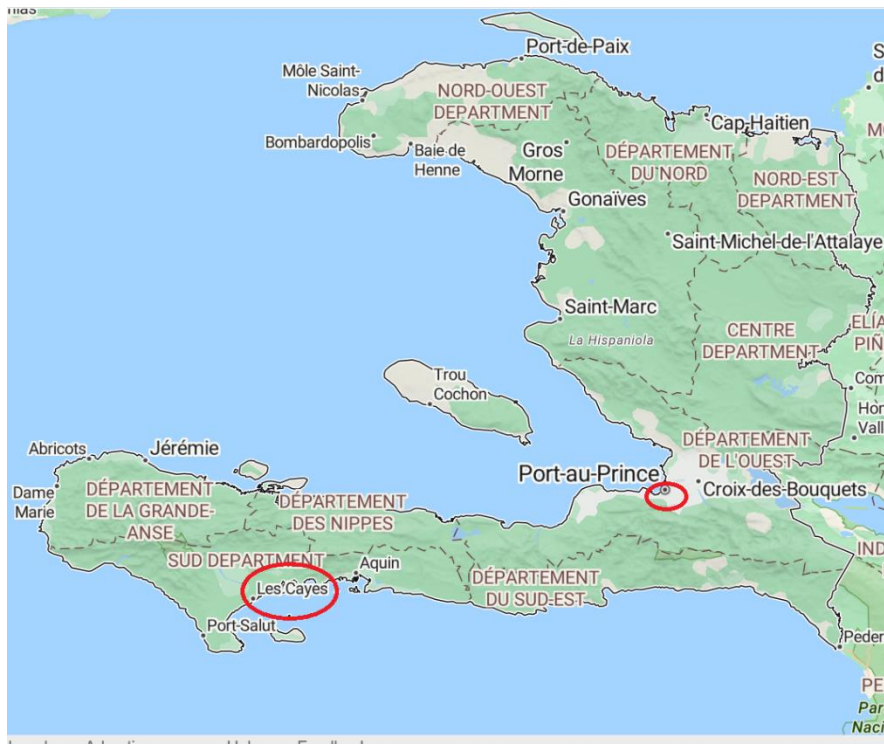


Figure 1.2 Map of Haiti showing locations of PaP and Les Cayes.

During visits to the orphanage, I also interviewed a total of 25 employees, working as nannies, including 15 directors of 15 separate orphanages who were present when I visited their centers and oversaw daily management inside the orphanages. All interview questions for children who currently lived in an orphanage aside from name, age, and location of birth were open-ended, consisting of 21 questions in total. Interview questions were focused on the participants' experience in the orphanage and their interactions with staff and foreign volunteers. For example, I asked them to describe what it was like and how they felt when volunteers visited and sought detailed descriptions of specific activities, like playing games during these visits. Interviews with Nannies and other employees consisted of 17 open-ended questions that related to the work they did in the orphanage, the interactions they had with the children and foreign volunteers, and how the work they did in the orphanage related to the work they did in their homes. I interviewed a total of 28 participants classified as aged out or reunited (A&R), between the ages of 12 and 31, who formerly lived in an orphanage and were reunited with family and/or were kicked out once they hit the legal age of 18. I conducted these home visits accompanied by Eluxon Tassy who had a personal and professional relationship with the participants and families which allowed me access to conduct research with them. Interviews were made up of 20 open-ended questions and focused on life before, during, and after living in the orphanage with an emphasis on emotional management and behavior. During these home visits, I was able to informally speak with parents about their decisions to place their child in an orphanage and the experience they had being separated from their child(ren). All formal interviews were recorded with verbal consent and a consent form was given to each participant. I hosted 6 focus group discussions with 4 to 5 five participants who had formerly lived in an orphanage. Topics for the FGDs included: understanding family and kinship ties, definitions of orphanhood, and reflecting

on experiences from when volunteers visited. The FGD participants coming from the same orphanage had both benefits and drawbacks. A benefit was that they shared many of the same experiences and felt more comfortable talking with each other about a certain memory or experience that they all witnessed. It also provided accountability and credibility when more than one person could verify details of an experience or describe similar reactions to situations, like how it felt to be separated from their families. Some setbacks that I encountered were that participants sometimes felt they could not speak as freely about each other, meaning they were unsure how to criticize or open up about how they felt toward each other while they were living together in the orphanage. One solution I tried was to allow people to respond to certain group discussion questions via WhatsApp, privately with me, to allow them to share what they wanted, including criticism or opinions about the others in the group, without worrying about conflict amongst the group. The WhatsApp option turned out to be a success and I was able to gain valuable insights about shared experiences from the perspective of each participant both in a way where they could relate with one another in a group and also share their private thoughts in the WhatsApp chats set up for each participant. None of the FDGs were recorded and only observation and note-taking were done to respect the privacy of the participants and to maintain a safe space for opening up to one another. I was also able to interview 3 child protection agents working in the southern departments and the director of IBESR in Les Cayes. All interviews with child protection agents were semi-formally structured and not voice recorded. The names of each participant for this research have been changed unless otherwise specified to protect the identities of each person and their families.

When conducting research, challenges arise frequently. When conducting research in Haiti, challenges become a daily part of your routine. So much so that a common phrase “*Deye*

mon gen mon” in one context speaks to having one struggle after another, literally a “mountain beyond another mountain” that must be climbed and overcome. I have had my fair share of challenges over the years of living and conducting research in Haiti, but this year proved to be one of the most challenging mountains I had to overcome.

In just a year, from 2021 to 2022, Haiti saw an inflation increase of 48%. In a country already struggling from financial insecurity, the majority of the population was feeling the impacts of the inflated cost of living. For example, prices of rice went from around twenty dollars a bag to almost sixty in some places. The worst repercussion of inflation was on the price of gas. Haiti is a country that operates on gas and diesel to not only fuel vehicles, but to cook with, provide electricity from generators or solar panel systems, and also to bring livelihood to *taptap* and *moto-taxis* who depend on fuel to keep a job, and many other basic household necessities which require the stable availability of affordable fuel. At the start of September 2022, the infamous gang, G-9 led by a man Jimmy “BBQ” Cherizer, took control over the Varreux port in Port-au-Prince which held over 70% of the country's oil reserves. With inflation at a historical high and the gas being held hostage by the most notorious gang in Haiti, the price of gas went from around six dollars per gallon to steadily increase over the next month to almost seventy-five dollars in Les Cayes where I lived. Almost immediately, the country went into “*Peye Lok*” meaning country-wide lockdown, as protesters took to the streets to demand the defacto president Ariel resign or do something to change the increasing instability and inflation. Two and half months would go by in lockdown, as the rest of Haiti stayed inside, holding their breath, waiting for what would come next. Protesters carried signs and graffitied “*aba lavi che*,” a rough translation meaning no more expensive living, all over the cities. *Aba Lavi Che* taken into context means more than just raising awareness about the cost of living and inflation in

Haiti, but points to the extenuating circumstances of structural violence, continuous foreign interventions, the lack of internal government support, calling out neoliberal policies which crippled the political and economic systems, the dismantling of social welfare programs, and the destruction of community networks that has led to extreme humanitarian crisis Haiti is facing today. *Aba lavi che* would become the movement's motto, a way to greet each other while showing understanding and sharing hardship amongst each other. It became common to excuse disappointing circumstances by simply saying "*aba lavi che*" and was often used as a way to shut down negotiations as both street *machanns* (an informal economy of street vendors) and customers were strapped for cash. The protests made clear that the price of gas had to go down, or they would continue until it did. Now, I am no stranger to *peye lok* (See Figures 1.3-1.4), but this was the longest period I had endured so far and to make matters worse personally, it completely halted all research that required in-person visits. Before the lockdown, gas was already significantly overpriced, and much of the time could only be found on the black market, as many gas stations closed due to not being able to buy gas they could distribute. I was paying over one hundred dollars weekly for secure transportation to and from home visits and orphanage sites.

With the rise in insecurity and inflation, Les Cayes became a focal point for children coming from the capital and being placed in orphanages to escape violence and higher costs of living. This provided an opportunity to help IBESR assess how many children being placed in orphanages throughout the southern departments were being placed in these institutions as a result of insecurity and inflation.



Figure 1.3 Photo of graffiti taken during the 2022 protests in Les Cayes



Figure 1.4 Photo of graffiti taken during the 2022 protests in Les Cayes

This was also important in light of the 2018 mandate making it illegal for orphanages to accept children who are not directly placed in their care by IBESR. What I discovered was that out of the 18 orphanages visited, all but 3 had taken in more children. Many of them had children under the age of 3, proving they had accepted children since 2018. When I asked why they had received children since the mandate went into effect, only one stated they took in children brought by IBESR, while the remainder noted that parents or family had simply shown up with the children and that they chose to accept them, reporting it to IBESR after the fact. IBESR operates on a color scale designed originally in the 1967 Child Rights Decree of Haiti, updated in 1971, which sets the standard of childcare the orphanage is required to provide: green meaning most if not all standards of care are being followed, yellow indicating there is a need for improvement, or red requiring intervention and immediate closure by IBESR. Out of the 18 orphanages visited, none has successfully met the green level standard of care and more than half fell into the red category. One complication that IBESR faces is the lack of funding and resources they require to regulate, visit, and shut down orphanages that have reached a critical red status. In many cases, the orphanages may receive more money in monthly donations than IBESR employees make in yearly salary. With millions of dollars funneled into Haitian orphanages annually, IBESR and other child protection agencies working in Haiti have little control over how orphanages operate.

Another obstacle I faced while conducting research in orphanages was accessing participants to ensure a representative sample. In the first two orphanages I visited along with the IBESR representative, the staff at the orphanage tried to determine which children I would speak to, rather than allowing me to initiate conversation and explain myself to the group of children. To remedy this, I explained that I would need to see all children between the ages of 7

and 18 together in a single file line. I would then choose every third child in line and begin explaining the project to the selected individuals to ask for consent for their participation. Children under the age of 18 residing in a registered orphanage are legally wards of the state of Haiti and IBESR is authorized to provide guardian consent. To be respectful to the staff, I also asked for permission from each orphanage director. My position as a foreigner coming to conduct research in orphanages was sometimes met with apprehension and seen more as an investigation. I knew my position as a white woman coming to visit an orphanage could cause some difficulty when getting people to open up, even more so when I was accompanied by an IBESR child protection agent, but what my position also allowed was to witness how staff and children responded to me when I entered their gates, often reflecting my own analytical propositions regarding perceptions of white American volunteers. For example, the moment I stepped out of the car, there would be a buzzing around of staff as they gathered children to come and greet me, many times singing and saying thank you for visiting me, other times children would run to me and take my hand or walk with me as I spoke with the staff and directors to set up the interview spaces. The children would ask if I brought them something and the staff would comment on how happy they were to host me. In the back of my mind, I couldn't help but wonder how much of this, if not all, was a part of the larger show put on for when foreigners like me came to visit. Especially since volunteers and foreigners have very rarely visited orphanages since the COVID-19 pandemic and now, due to rising insecurity.

When speaking with the children in the orphanages, I did not mention the term emotional labor, in order to avoid biases, and with the first interviews with the A&R participants, I again, did not mention the concept of emotional labor, but instead listened as they described the term in full with examples, reenactments, and remembrance, all without ever using terms, like emotional

labor and affect. When I finally did speak with the group about these terms and how I wanted to apply them to the experiences they shared with me, they discussed how having a way to define how they felt, what they lived, and what they learned in ways of emotional management both internally and outwardly, was cathartic. Socially and academically, to define something gives it meaning, draws attention to it, and provides a way to share experiences by revealing them for what they are, how they make us feel, calling attention to the impact they can have, how others perceive it, and how people share it or relive it. By applying terms like emotional labor and affect to the experience of children living in orphanages, the play production set up by the orphanage can now be viewed as a contrived attempt to be authentic as plays draw upon fantasy, pretense, and even illusion. Using the term emotional labor allows for an examination of a capitalist-driven system relying on the exploitation of unpaid labor by children who understand that by managing their emotions and supplying affective behavior, they solidify income to the institution that cares for them and in turn, create a free labor workforce for revenue. By viewing the orphanage through these concepts, we get a better sense of how it carefully nurtures its image as a good and successful initiative to help the needy by mobilizing and exploiting emotional labor.

Order of this Dissertation

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I introduce the orphanage system, setting it up like a play production in terms of how we can view each key player within the orphanage and their role in the larger application of emotional labor on behalf of the orphanage's income-driven agenda. I tie this analogy to the business format of how to prioritize profit and strategically put in practices to maintain revenue. I will draw on observations and interviews conducted with

orphanage directors, staff, and the local welfare department to describe the image the orphanage portrays versus the reality behind closed doors. I will use examples from testimonials collected during this research, academic literature, and news sources to describe the harmful characteristics and risks that can and have happened within the orphanage system in Haiti and globally. This chapter will provide the foundation for the remaining chapters to examine the practices within an orphanage that tap into the faith-based market as a donor source and what it means to intertwine the religious benevolence of charity and the politics of care with the incentives of a neoliberal market.

In the second chapter, I delve into the perspectives of the children and young adults who live inside the orphanage, as well as those who have aged out or been reunited with their families. This chapter will open the door to discussing how children view their roles as emotional laborers in the orphanage and how they not only learn to navigate the ‘business’ practices of the orphanage in order to produce emotional labor but also how they resist it. Furthermore, how their experience with the orphanage system shapes the way they see themselves, their identity so to speak, and how they situate themselves within the fictive kinship the orphanage creates for them. I will introduce and share the stories of four individuals who have aged out of the orphanage system and have since been reunited with their families. This chapter argues that one of the most important aspects of the orphanage system which has received little attention thus far is the emotional labor of children, who in essence are working in a service industry, the orphanage. Their stories give insight into the lengths that orphanages will go to in order to produce the perfect orphan subject through inculcated practices, with strict rules about how to interact with visitors, and sometimes even resorting to collective punishment in order to enforce compliance among the orphans. This chapter acts as the spotlight for a sustained analysis of the orphanage

system, as the children are the central point to every other aspect, component, and actor of the orphanage system. Without the children and young adults placed in orphanages, there would *be no orphanages*, as they are the principal humanitarian subjects at the heart of the orphanage system.

The third chapter uncovers the life of the women who work, and sometimes live, inside orphanages. We learn about three such women as well as from others who work as nannies in various orphanages throughout the southern departments of Haiti. Their experiences shed light on how women who work as caregivers understand their labor as caught between the reproductive and productive domains of the politics of care operative within the orphanage. Furthermore, their testimonies will provide insights into how the politics of care is framed by the intersectional dynamics of class, race, and gender to inform dominant understandings and expectations of both, proper humanitarian subjects and their caregivers. Their voices lift up the women around them and, in their communities, in solidarity with one another, they share the stories that only women like them can relate to, empathize with, and empower each other through that collective experience.

The last chapter is more of an epilogue, an afterthought to be further investigated in future research. I will discuss the family unit and post-reunification efforts that are often hampered by the lingering effects of engaging in emotional labor, ‘faked’ affective behavior, and separation from family, community, and self-identity. This chapter shows what previous research has often failed to recognize, how families and communities see and understand the purpose of an orphanage, and how it impacts families long after a child is reunited. It provides a platform for families, mothers, and fathers to express their feelings towards the orphanage, and

how they view the orphanage's responsibility and function as a temporary space made to care for children. Furthermore, how parents navigate being labeled by orphanage propaganda as incapable of caring for their children due to their impoverished circumstances in which the negative image of parents the orphanage portrays is simplified to parents living in poverty are essentially 'bad parents' for which the orphanage can intervene and 'better care for' the children through a Eurocentric lens. This imagery is also reinforced through channels of power dynamics between the global south and north where aspects of race, gender, faith and religious beliefs, and economics come into play as setting standards for childcare reinforced by a system set up by predominately white, evangelicals from the global North establishing orphanages in the global South.

This chapter may be the end of this dissertation but it is the beginning of a new narrative for families who have experience with the orphanage system, and deserves further investigation. Families are the starting point of the orphanage cycle. They are the target for the orphanages to persuade, manipulate, and exploit for profit. By highlighting the importance of families, we can begin to address the gap between communities' understandings of what orphanages are supposed to be, and what they are in reality, especially based on what individual families learn when their children are placed in one. Lastly, this chapter will provide an analysis of the long-lasting impacts emotional labor has on children when they are reunited with family, how the family dynamics are reshaped by separation, and how both the children and their families exhibit emotional labor amongst themselves. The families in this chapter share their experiences, as painful as they are for many of them, so that they can raise awareness to prevent the same atrocities from happening to other families. To educate their neighbors on the risks and harm that can come to children placed in an orphanage. To open their hearts to their community and the

global community at large to share their feelings and pain from being separated from their children. To make sure that when orphanages send their scouts out to come knock on their neighbors' doors, neighbors will know the truth about orphanages and shut the door in their faces. Prevention is key, and families are the first step in this process.

Chapter One: “One Big Happy Family”

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you”. - John 14:18

“When the blan come to visit, they love to see our kids. They always tell us we are not an orphanage, but more like one big happy family. And I laugh and tell them we are”- Directrice of an orphanage in La Savane, Haiti

“The orphanage was Hell. We lived in Hell”- McGregory, a participant who formerly lived in an orphanage.

In October of 2021, I received an email from a reporter working for BuzzFeed News wanting to write a story about my research in Haiti and the orphanage system¹. We agreed on meeting in Haiti in December a few weeks before Christmas and started the process of planning. By December, I had already been in Les Cayes, Haiti for almost a month and returned to Port-au-Prince to be a part of this project. I was excited to be back in the capital but also nervous about how it would feel to retell my story and share my experience so publicly. As we sat huddled together around a table at our hotel, night after night going through the day's events, I would open up about my history in Haiti and begin to explore the vulnerable parts of my experiences working in orphanages and the years that came after. On the last stop of the fourth day, I was walking towards the edge of the compound of an orphanage I had visited several times over the last 14 years. The last time I visited the orphanage was in 2016, with the first team that I had ever conducted research with for my M.A. Degree. I remember how on that trip, the group planted the

1 <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/karlazabludovsky/missionaries-orphanages-haiti>

very trees that now grew along the side of the compound, overflowing onto the tops of the barbed wire strung around the wall outlining the property. I felt like I had been transported back in time to 2016, remembering the exact feelings I had as I watched that mission team of teenagers plant those trees, and thinking I was "*better of a blan*" than them because I was the anthropologist researching the negative impacts short term teams have on local communities they aim to impact. In reality, I was no better and not much different than they were at the time, as I myself, still had so much learning to do. It was when I studied Arlie Hochschild's (1983) description of emotional labor, that it became clear to me how I might better understand the emotion-laden interactions that children and nannies in orphanages must routinely engage in. Hochschild's work frames two sides of emotional management using the term *affect*, or the physical, visible, behavior expressed, which she refers to as surface acting (1983:10). In relation to the orphanage, surface acting is the outward behavior desired by volunteers, like smiling or being greeted by singing. Whereas emotional labor is the hidden, unobservable sense of feeling that requires changing or regulating one's internal thoughts during an interaction, or deep acting. With deep acting, children and nannies in the orphanage alter their personal feelings to either hide their true emotions or assimilate them into the interaction at hand. What I am interested in, is how institutions, like the orphanage, exploit emotional labor to generate income.

In her book, *The Good Project*, Monika Krause (2014) provides an interesting perspective on looking at the humanitarian project as a capitalist structured for-profit institution. Drawing on a Marxian perspective, she argues that beneficiaries are both the product of the humanitarian project as well as the *means* by which the project is implemented. For Krause, relief aid is not a one-way transaction of resources and services, but rather an exchange under conditions of competition and inequality to produce the best 'project' with beneficiaries who can

be accounted for as the final product (2014: 57). Looking at how this can be applied to the emotional labor of children in orphanages helps pinpoint the sites of exploitation within the process of emotional labor. In my own research, all orphanages I have encountered were funded by private donations, churches, or INGOs like Food For the Poor, therefore categorizing themselves as non-profit organizations. The conundrum here is, that although typically orphanages are defined as non-profits, designed to rely upon private donations or government aid (even though no orphanage in Haiti receives any monetary support from the government), they still require income to operate and are set up in a way that provides services for donors that mimics a marketplace strategy of supply and demand, and are in competition with one another to supply enough orphan subject to meet the demands of donors. Therefore, when I speak in terms of profit or ‘for-profit,’ I am not dismissing that orphanages are charitable projects that rely upon benevolent donations, but rather am drawing attention to the fact that even if orphanages may not receive a surplus of income that would categorize them as a for-profit venture, they are still functioning under the same capitalist system which turns their services of caring for children - the “good project” - into a commodity to be sold, bought, and recreated.

Combining the usage of emotional labor with the framework of relief aid as an activity shaped by the capitalist logic of commodification and exchange, I argue that orphanages are sites of exploitation and commodification. The humanitarian project of the orphanage is *care*, the product is *the orphan*. In this sense, we can begin to untangle where exploitation occurs and under what conditions. To start with, the children being placed in orphanages are done so with the intention of being cared for, in terms of basic needs that are not being met in their household, mainly due to financial instability. Their lack of control in the matter is already an imbalance of power that places children in a position where they must be *compliant* with the orphanage, its

agenda, and its narrative, to continue receiving the care the orphanage provides. From a Marxist perspective, care in the case of the orphanage is like the payment to the employees/labor, the children, who are providing the emotional labor necessary for the 'good project' that is then consumed by donors. The children become accounted for as x number of kids being cared for annually, x number of children being fed by donations and y number of children attending school as a result of charitable giving. The children produce the 'product' (project) being 'consumed' by donors. Krause (2014) highlights how beneficiaries are essentially a source of surplus labor, and that at any given time, NGOs can find vulnerable populations to whom they can provide humanitarian intervention (41,57). As a result, this breeds competition among beneficiaries and in turn, makes them more accepting of the NGO's demands and agenda so that beneficiaries secure their position for receiving aid. Regarding the orphanage, dependency ensures compliance from the children. The context of relying upon the orphanage for care is what develops an environment for the process of exploitation to occur.

Looking around the orphanage that day, I could remember physically sitting there on the green veranda with children in my arms and all around me smiling at a photo I was taking with them, and I thought to myself, I don't even remember their names. What's worse, I do not believe I even asked for them, and I reflected on how this all fits into the larger show put on by the orphanages who expect volunteers like this group to come to their facility and consume the emotional labor being produced by the children there, and how things like taking pictures without permission or asking a child's name are strategically carried out in that specific way to allow volunteers close enough to feel they have experienced something real while still being detached from the reality of what happens after we, volunteers, leave. Stepping onto the compound 7 years later, remembering how different I was now from when I first came to Haiti,

how different I was from the 23-year-old me that last visited this orphanage in 2016, how different Haiti was and has changed since my first trip in 2009, how much has changed in the welfare system here in Haiti in general; I decided I had to finally forgive myself. Forgive the young 16-year-old whose first trip made her think she'd open an orphanage and live with a house full of children, the naive and cocky 23-year-old in 2016 who thought she had it all figured out about short-term missions and aid in Haiti, and the 30-year-old me now for holding onto that guilt for so long. I have spent the remainder of my time here in Haiti trying to rectify my previous behavior, while also learning to forgive myself in the process. I learned to advocate for the rights of children and families using my own personal experience and educate other foreigners on the problems, complexities, and contradictions of orphanage tourism and institutionalized care.

When talking with the team from BuzzFeed, I began considering what it was that first compelled me to join a mission trip and volunteer in orphanages. I was forced to reflect back on my own past as a volunteer and to reflect upon what I once desired and expected when visiting an orphanage, and how it shaped the ways in which orphanages function. Andrea Friedus and Caro Lennon (2012) frame orphanages as spaces of “artificial life” where concepts of “social imagery” are projected to portray the inside of orphanages as Westernized care-giving spaces for children through acts of emotional labor. I want to combine Friedus and Lennon’s (2012) perspective of orphanages with Arlie Hochschild’s (1983) example of using a theater setting to describe how individuals exhibit the difference between surface acting and deep acting, and for the purposes of this chapter, I ask that you consider viewing the orphanage as the stage in which the plot of emotional labor is acted out, setting up the stage and props for all the actors to come together to perform their roles. The children as the lead actors, taking center stage as the main

performance for the audience, volunteers, who pay to see and *feel* the performance, while the nannies and staff switch between stage directors and performers themselves. With this image in mind, I aim to untangle the nuances of emotions and feeling management that occur when the “play” is continuous, when the audience believes the play is *real*, when the performance does not end, and when the actors are caught between playing a part for the orphanage’s show and how they truly feel in those moments of acting. To investigate this phenomenon, I developed two hypotheses: 1) orphans’ work involves a substantial proportion of emotional labor required to meet orphanages’ agenda and 2) the FBO requires a steady supply of emotional labor from nannies, orphans, and staff through a variety of structured practices. However, in order to understand the present context of the orphanage system in Haiti as it relates to these assumptions, we must first look at the history of institutionalized care and how it relates to Haiti’s humanitarian landscape.

A History of Institutionalized Care

Various forms of institutionalized childcare have existed for thousands of years. The social mandate to take care of vulnerable children has taken different approaches since the first creation of institutions like orphanages, where not only parentless children but children who suffered an illness or had physical or mental disabilities also were placed in the care of institutions (See Figure 2.1). One of the first documentations of these facilities in the United States began with the Protestant movement in the late 18th century which called on men and women to fulfill their spiritual duties to the most marginalized of



Figure 2.1 Photo of me during fieldwork pointing at two orphanages across the street from each other

communities both at home and abroad (Ramey 2012: 17). Orphanages became spaces in which the act of caring for others was directly linked to social, personal, and communal obligations. Yet, something important to address is that orphanages in the United States began not only as homes for parentless children but also as temporary care facilities for children with working parents or parents with meager financial means (Ramey 2012:69). In Haiti, the concept of an orphanage did not really exist until the 20th century, as it was more common for childcare practices to be communal or to be met by extended kinship ties, where families engage in reciprocal relationships which help ensure children are taken care of (Vernald 2017: 15). Another common practice is the system of *restavek*, meaning “to stay with”, where families would send one or more children to wealthier families or relatives to care for them like foster children. However, this system often involves exploiting children’s labor in exchange for providing them basic needs, such as education and food, which still are not always provided by the hosting families. At the turn of the 20th century, as Haiti became a prime destination for missionaries and the opening of orphanages became an attractive option for childcare, although it remained not as common until after the 2010 earthquake. However, the domain of childcare stretched beyond parentless children and was extended to also include children whose parents could not financially provide for them.

Prior to the late 1980s, Haiti consisted of only a handful of orphanages, predominantly run by Haitian women who sought support from local churches and international missionary services and would receive short-term teams that helped draw in support. Many of the orphanages were formed in response to the growing number of children left without one or both parents during the health epidemic of HIV/AIDS and funding from international non-

governmental organizations (INGO) and religious organizations increased to facilities that took in children with the virus.

During my time in Haiti over the past 15 years, I have encountered several orphanages that were created by missionaries in the 1980s whose main focus was children with HIV. The young man from the story in the introduction, Augustine, was one of the children placed into such facilities where he lived from the age of 2 until he was 17 years old, kicked out, and left to live on the streets. The orphanage where he grew up was tucked away on a side road, overlooking the mountains off Rue Kenscoff; giant USAID tarps lined the outside of a tent set up for cooking. When visiting on several occasions, the founder of the orphanage, a middle-aged French-Canadian woman, recounted to me how she received support amounting to hundreds of thousands of US dollars from USAID over the years. The first time I visited was with Augustine in 2018, he showed me around the whole facility, even sneaking us into an office where he knew candy was hidden by one of the staff. The walls were littered with a mixture of photos of the children who had lived there over the past 3 decades, the mission trip teams that came to visit, and Christian wall art, like a painting of Haitian children holding hands in a circle around a blonde-haired, blue-eyed Jesus with the words “Jesus loves me!” written underneath. During our visit, we wanted to collect documents for Augustine, like his birth certificate, but he was denied any access to these documents, and learned that when the orphanage had taken him at 2 years old, they had given him the last name Augustine simply because he entered their facility during the month of August. He had not known this information before and thought his family name was in fact, Augustine. As Augustine sat with his head hanging down, holding back tears, the house mother recounted to us that the orphanage had offered him everything; an education, a life with clothes and food daily, a space where he could sleep, his name and a *family*, ignoring the

fact the orphanage had stripped him of his identity, preventing him any chance of reunification with relatives while refusing to provide him with documents which stated he even existed legally. Getting up to leave, I asked Augustine if he was okay, he replied no; he was left without a family to rely on, a name that could link him to his real family, an identity, nor any information that could provide him answers to why he was placed in an orphanage. Walking away, as we reached the gates of the compound, the house mother called out to him, saying she would pray for him.

With an estimated 750 orphanages operating in Haiti at any given time 90% are faith-based institutions and 92% of the funds come directly from the United States (Vernalde 2016,2017). In my own experience of 15 years working in child protection services in Haiti, I have yet to encounter an orphanage that is not affiliated with a religious organization or church. Since IBESR lacks financial resources and infrastructural capacity, they do not operate their own facilities or transition centers and are forced to rely on orphanages they have identified as operating within a yellow or green standard of care; taking into consideration that less than 10 orphanages in Haiti operate at a full level green standard of meeting all requirements for a childcare facility. When I asked about this connection between orphanages and church sponsorship, the child protection agent I worked with in Les Cayes once replied, “When you do something in the name of God, people give you money.” For me, this sentiment seemed to be spot on. The majority of private organizations that created projects, like orphanages, were, in fact, faith-based institutions with links to larger religious NGOs or international churches, racking in over \$20 million annually (Schwartz 2010: 137) to orphanages throughout Haiti.

Out of the estimated 750 plus orphanages throughout Haiti, only 15% are registered and operate legally in Haiti, and house approximately 30,000 children annually (Vernalde 2016,2017). As a response to the increase of illegally operating orphanages, the Haitian government passed a mandate in 2018 that made creating new orphanages illegal and required all orphanages operating in Haiti to register by June of 2019 or face being closed by the Haitian Social Welfare Department (IBESR). However, as I observed during visits to Haiti between 2018 and 2020, many orphanages did not comply with the new mandate and continue to operate illegally in Haiti or are in the process of being shut down. Fieldwork for this dissertation in 2022 would come to prove that over a decade after the earthquake, orphanages still have more power to operate and function than the Haitian government does in regulating them because the funds they receive from donors allow them financial privilege.

Orphanages are defined as either a *creche*, Haitian Kreyol for an orphanage that houses only younger children, or *òfelina*, also Kreyol for the orphanage but derived from French and usually represents an orphanage with children of all ages, including older kids. In this dissertation, when I use the term orphanage in English, I am referring to the Kreyol word, *òfelina*, as most of my research took place in orphanages that house children of all ages. In Haiti, more than half the children placed in orphanages come from urban areas considered “ghettos” or “slums.” Many of the children specific to my research are predominantly from the largest “slums” in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti, known as Cité Soleil, Martissant, and Bel Air. A cycle of political and economic exploitation and oppression in these areas has produced a large population of vulnerable families and children that are often targeted by missionaries who urge parents to place their children inside their orphanages to keep them ‘safe’, provide them an education, and access to basic needs that parents are financially unable to provide (Archer 2018).

In recent years since 2018, with the increasing amount of gang violence in the capital, children are being placed in orphanages in the *andeyo*, or countryside, whereas in places like Les Cayes, orphanages can traffic children with little to no documentation, making reunification for families seeking their children later on virtually impossible. Out of the 18 orphanages I visited for this research, only 2 of them had not received children since 2018, with most citing the violence in the capital as a reason for taking in more children and only 2 of the 15 reported taking in a child to IBESR within the required time.

This led me to question how children were brought to the orphanage, to which many of the directors replied that parents or relatives of the children would come to the gates of the orphanages, asking that they take in the child(ren) temporarily. In line with work that explores the relationship between religion, charity, and the culturally specific functions of orphanages and orphanhood, Erica Bornstein's book, *Disquieting Gifts*, orphanages have never been truly for the parentless. As she points out, placing a child in an orphanage has more to do with financial constraints than with abandonment. Echoing her analysis, I have come to learn that families in Haiti view orphanages similar to a boarding home system, in which the child they place inside will receive the basic needs they as parents cannot provide at the moment, allowing parents the opportunity to draw what little financial resources they have available to use towards caring for their other children inside the home. To put it simply, orphanages are considered a temporary survival strategy. When I spoke with parents who have placed a child into an orphanage, one of the most common responses I received is that they heard about the orphanage at church or were approached by a member of a faith-based organization that presents orphanages as an alternative childcare option until they reach the age of 18 and can return home. In Haiti, church and religious belief are tied directly to personal identity and oftentimes the social status of an

individual (Louis 2014: 30). For many parents, the fact that orphanages are created by individuals affiliated with a church and faith-based organizations provides them a form of spiritual accountability where the parents place trust in the orphanages to care for their children based on religious morality. What is interesting to explore is how religion is used as a central theme in the plot of the orphanage's play.

“To Care for the Widows and Orphans”

Haiti is more commonly classified as a Christian nation, with the majority of its population identifying as either Catholic, or alternatively, some form of evangelicalism; predominantly Protestantism and the Baptist denomination, which has seen significant growth over the past few decades, with estimates by NGOs, like Good Samaritans, suggesting that around one-fourth to one-third of the population now identifies as evangelical. A report written in 2022 by the U.S. State Department reporting on religious freedoms globally states: “Christians who self-identified as either Protestant, Episcopalian, Methodist, Seventh-day Adventist, or Jehovah’s Witness together comprise 52 percent of the population, Catholics 35 percent, and Vodouists 2 percent.”

Elizabeth McAlister’s (2012) research focusing on Afro-Caribbean faiths, including Vodou, and the role of religion in Haitian society touches on the interplay between different religious practices and the influence of foreign religious movements, including evangelicalism, in Haiti. McAlister argues that global religious dynamics influence local cultures and political environments, like in the case of Haiti, which has historically been portrayed by Christian, colonizing nations as a country whose independence was gained by making a deal with demonic,

pagan spirits colonizers associated with traditional Afro-Caribbean religions (2012: 189). For example, she points to the tensions between traditional Haitian religious practices, particularly Vodou, and the doctrines of evangelical Christianity, which typically views Vodou as paganism or witchcraft (2012: 195-196). According to this logic, McAlister (2012) highlights how many religious Christians view Haiti's economic problems, insecurity, and political instability as a direct result of this so-called "pact with the devil" that gained their freedom (190). Furthermore, her work is critical for analyzing what can be understood as the neocolonial aspects of evangelical missionary work. This critique addresses how such missions can sometimes impose Western values and religious practices on Haitian society, often without a deep understanding or respect for local cultures and religions. McAlister discusses how evangelical Christianity, often exported from the United States and other Western countries, has gained a foothold in Haiti, particularly after the 2010 earthquake (2012:193) During this period, numerous evangelical groups from abroad engaged in active missionary work, providing aid, including opening orphanages, while not addressing the root problems and structural violence that led to Haiti depending on humanitarian aid. She states this lack of acknowledgment of Haiti's history while imposing evangelical influences has led to cultural erosion and conflict within communities and families, as new evangelical beliefs challenge long-standing traditions and community structures (2012: 201), a point also noted by other scholars like Diane Hoffman (2023) in her research on Evangelical influences on family dynamics in Haiti. Also important to highlight is the role evangelicalism has played in neoliberal foreign policy and how evangelicalism in Haiti is not just a religious movement but also a social and political force (2012: 200). Evangelical groups can influence local politics by establishing schools, churches, and charities, and by broadcasting via radio stations. Their capacity to mobilize people and resources gives them significant sway in

local and national matters, as seen in the current political landscape with the 7-member Presidential Council, where one member is drawn from the faith-based sector and has the right to vote on matters of governance. In addition, McAlister's research provides a nuanced insight into how evangelicalism interacts with local religious traditions in Haiti, highlighting both the complex dynamics of religious conversion and the broader socio-economic and cultural implications of these interactions.

To reiterate, churches often serve as important community hubs, providing not only spiritual guidance but also social services such as education, social networking, healthcare, and disaster relief, and play a vital role in addressing social issues and providing support to the disadvantaged both nationally and internationally within the diaspora community (Louis 2014: 22). While evangelicalism in Haiti is primarily associated with spirituality, it also has political implications. Some evangelical leaders and other denominations, like Catholicism, have actively engaged in politics, endorsing or opposing candidates and influencing political discourse on issues such as morality, family values, and social justice. For example, after the resignation of the current President Ariel Henry in March of 2024, the 7-member presidential council was formed with a seat that was to include a religious spokesman, Pastor Frinel Joseph, a Protestant pastor who has socio-political ties to influencing Haitian policy. Religion, specifically Christianity, has contributed to shaping Haitian culture, influencing music, literature, art, and other forms of expression. Gospel music, for example, has gained popularity in Haiti, blending traditional Haitian rhythms with Christian lyrics, and can be heard in almost every household being played over the radio as families go about their daily routines. Research into humanitarian practice is particularly challenging when trying to make sense of religious motivations for humanitarian action. Humanitarian projects have increasingly tapped into a market of emotions and religious

benevolence creating market-driven charities, like orphanages. In this sense, market-driven can be taken literally from a Marxist perspective where business operates based on the desire to acquire profit. For orphanages, the market is very profitable. More than 1.6 million Americans travel on short-term and missionary-based trips annually and it is estimated that 41.9% of churches in the United States participate in short-term mission programs aimed at orphanage tourism, with the intention of sharing meaningful connections with the communities they interact with (Howell 2009: 16, Vernalde 2016:9). Even more striking is the amount of money funneled into Haitian orphanages from predominately evangelical churches in the United States, an estimated 70 million annually (Vernalde 2017: 7), which creates one of the most consequential forms of foreign development assistance to Haiti. Out of the 18 orphanages I visited during fieldwork, 17 of them would be affiliated with an evangelical denomination while one was run by a local Catholic church. So, how do orphanages bring in 70 million dollars' worth of support based on the promise of providing emotionally charged interactions meant to leave a person feeling like the spiritual relationships they created and encounters they shared were *real*? One way to facilitate this kind of expected relationship building is in a controlled setting, like touring orphanages, where church groups can make appointments, book times, and literally tour an orphanage during their trip as they would for any other tourist attraction while on vacation. Scholars such as Andrea Friedus (2010,2013), Tess Guiney and Mary Mustafanzhed (2014), and Kristen Cheney (2011, 2015) have already warned of the facade under which orphanages operate, creating what resembles reality but in truth is artificial and for many children living in an orphanage whom I spoke with for this research, it is like acting or playing pretend. One participant stated,

“When volunteers ask for our photos, we cannot refuse them! I would be so embarrassed because when they took our photos, the orphanage gets something for that and we were encouraged to take pictures with them...sometimes if we did not or said no, we were beaten, so I tried to hide my face or look down so that you cannot see my face when they would take a group picture.”

Another participant mentioned,

“I would see the other children, laughing and taking photos and I did not want to be left out. They seemed to be happy, and I wanted to be happy too, but I never felt comfortable with having my picture taken or playing with the *blan* that came to visit us.....For us it was normal, you were sick, you did not feel good, or just did not want to greet the *blan* that day, it did not matter, we had to pretend...I did not know any better”

Orphanages would have you believe that they are one big, happy family mimicking the nuclearized version of a Christian-based family unit where God is at the center of the orphanage’s care-work. Providing fictive kinship in place of children’s “lost” families and parents who have abandoned their children. In reality, the orphanage functions like a business whose main objective is to maintain financial stability through a steady stream of donor funds that makes it possible to take care of children in their facilities. One narrative that helps support the agenda of orphanages is that they are doing their Christian duties to “rescue” children from deprived and desolate situations, like poverty, and construct a story that placing a child into an orphanage is a miraculous opportunity in which the orphanage care of the children is

synonymous with acts of faith. One directrice, a 67-year-old Haitian woman who has run an orphanage in Torbeck, Haiti since 2001, told me,

“I love these children.” motioning around with her hand to the kids playing outside near where we were sitting. “God called me to take care of them, they call me mother and I have created a good life for them.”

In what Brian Howell (2009) calls “religious tourism,” teams of faith-based volunteers flock to orphanages as a form of religious pilgrimage and almost like a rite of passage on their journey of faith to visit the children who have been saved by these acts of faith. In cases like this, religion acts as the bridge in which volunteers find common ground to interact with the children in the orphanage. Religion in these cases supersedes any cultural, language, geographical, class, race, and social difference, blurring the lines between the orphanage’s show and the experience being had by volunteers. When speaking with children living in orphanages I would ask them if they felt any spiritual connection to visitors who seek to teach the children about God. One participant, a bold 16-year-old girl, replied to this question, “I do not sing for the whites, I sing for God.” What is interesting about her statement is that she uses religion as a means of defiance to the narrative created by many white evangelicals who view themselves as the benevolent vessels for God to whom the children sing in appreciation of their visit and support, like an extension to God and therefore praise is given to them in the name of God, rather than to God himself. Her statement would seem to highlight something intriguing, that for her, and many other children living in the orphanage, there was an understanding that God did not need the same consistent praise as visitors do.

As mentioned previously, religion in Haiti plays a large role in the identity of and interactions between people, including inside the orphanage landscape. Although there is no research yet on the number of faith-based run orphanages nor the specificity of denomination, in my personal experience, I have yet to enter an orphanage that did not have some religious affiliation or church sponsorship directly tied to how the orphanage functions and basing core values in Christianity, predominantly evangelical sects (Protestants, Baptist, etc.) or also Catholicism. For example, when speaking with the children about their daily routine, every single child interviewed stated they participated in both morning prayers before breakfast and night-time prayers before bedtime. The participants would note how they would sing Kreyol hymns during the day when doing chores and how they were asked to sing hymns to visitors, as noted by the participant quoted above. Religion is the basis of core values for many orphanages but is also strategically used to maintain order and control over the children who are taught to view God as their savior who rescued them by placing them in the orphanage's care and by extension the visitors coming to the orphanage are working as the 'hands and feet' of Christ showing the children God's love for them by bringing toys, playing games, and donating their money to the orphanage. Some scholars, like Diane Hoffman (2023), address issues with religious components of faith-based institutions like orphanages where themes of neo-liberalized ideology about the "nuclearized family unit" are prevalent to how foreign visitors view the family dynamics in Haitian society as 'backward' or lacking the 'proper' religious-based structure that portrays the child as the emotional focal point for the family unit with both parents living in the household taking care of the child (582). Faith-based orphanages and visitors then will use this narrative to justify separating children from their families when one or both parents may be alive, but do not live together, or cannot provide the 'nuclear' family setting they have

been taught to believe is the truest form of a modern Christian family. Hoffman (2023) criticized this influence by highlighting how this narrative ignores the social structures put in place in the form of extended or fictive kinship where the responsibility of childcare is not solely designated to the parents but is also the role of familial and communal practices where a child may be cared for or stay with several people in various households at any given moment (590).

It is also notable and obvious that there is a vast difference between the people coming to visit orphanages and the children and staff inside them. For one, the act of going on a trip to visit orphanages is one of privilege, visitors are often traveling from the global north to places like Haiti, in the global south; where children and staff in these orphanages very rarely leave the compound unless visitors take them on outings. There is also the racialized image of a missionary, typically white, surrounded by children of color. This image reinforces a misperception of countries like Haiti which are predominantly black, that people are in need of help from predominantly white countries like the US and Canada without the acknowledgment of the history of structural violence perpetrated by the very countries sending teams to visit orphanages. Nor do the visitors of these orphanages recognize that without the history of their nations' interference politically, economically, and socially, essentially opening a space in which orphanages can fill with their childcare, there would not even be a need for so many of these institutions to exist. Consequently, orphanages are increasingly starting to make claims on behalf of the child to tap into the available market of religious movements to aid vulnerable children while profiting from recreating orphan subjects through activities, like orphanage tourism. Drawing on scholars like Kristen Cheney (2012), Didier Fassin (2008), Vincanne Adams (2013), and Monika Krause (2014), humanitarian projects require not only humanitarian

subjects but *thankful* humanitarian subjects, whose acts of gratitude become the measurement of the success of the project.

In her book, *Markets of Sorrow Labors of Faith*, Vincanne Adams (2013) examines humanitarianism in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. Specifically, Adams draws attention to the ways in which affect is mobilized within the context of market-driven aid, sparking what she describes as a private sector-led affect economy. In this economy described by Adams, affect is the emotional response aroused by the initial event or disaster that compels people to act with compassion by donating or volunteering, generating what she calls “affective surplus” in post-disaster settings often connected to churches and charity (2013: 149). What Adams is observing is how charitable entities, like churches and NGOs, are able to make a profit from donors, and in some cases, the government, all while depending upon the free labor provided by volunteers who are motivated by their spiritual beliefs. It is in this process of producing unpaid labor that charity becomes a site of exploitation as well as sets up a specific humanitarian apparatus built upon structural relations of inequality (149). These structural inequalities present themselves through channels of inclusivity in the capitalist market and circumstances of needs in a post-disaster setting. For example, Adams points out how in the wake of a disaster, it is those who are already tied to the market economy who prosper from the recovery, like insurance companies and NGOs, rather than the citizens impacted by the initial tragedy (2013: 123). As a result, people and communities become dependent upon volunteers and donations that replace or ‘fill in the gaps’ of what should be the recovery efforts of the state and government. Simply put, the affect economy creates a new market of profiting from disaster by providing solutions to the problem of need through humanitarian relief efforts which helps sustain the overall humanitarian project. Her work highlights how the humanitarian network

benefits from the affective surplus which utilizes compassion as a response mechanism for disaster. In turn, relying on the affective surplus of free labor from volunteers helps disguise the exploitative relationships between those who receive aid, those who provide aid, and those who gain from an aid economy. In other words, by privatizing welfare services and recovery responses, the humanitarian apparatus further excludes people and communities who historically are left out of the market economy, making relief efforts less about what the affected community wants, and more about how the response efforts can turn a profit for the responding aid agencies. When churches and faith-based organizations respond to suffering, they are doing so from a vantage point that dictates that charity should be received with thanks rather than critique, leaving beneficiaries with little to no say in their own recovery effort. It also positions these beneficiaries at the forefront of responding to their own humanitarian needs with communal reciprocity and the notion that they must rely on each other rather than proper forms of recovery and relief responses, like those that may be provided by the government. Thus, creating a surplus of affective responses where it is difficult to map accountability in the context of volunteering, donating, and disaster relief that is responding to the immediate suffering of others. Affective surplus further exacerbates issues of labor exploitation in the context of religious organizations, like churches, who will rely upon their congregation to donate money and volunteer their time in response to disasters while linking it to their spiritual beliefs and obligations to serve others in need.

So how can this be useful in thinking about the orphanage system in Haiti? For one, Adams' research on the concept of affective surplus provides grounds to dissect how orphanages operate in Haiti as privatized organizations meant to respond to the need to care for children. The orphanage, as a stakeholder in the affective economy, relies upon affective surplus, primarily

pulled from the faith-based communities to maintain the status quo of steady revenue. However, unlike Adams' perspective of applying affective surplus to volunteer work, I propose we extend her analysis to include the way in which children and nannies perform their emotional labor as it relates to the affective desires of volunteers visiting the orphanages, and donors. Those doing the work here are orphans and nannies, and not the volunteers who visit. Affective surplus becomes useful in terms of thinking about how children's behavior of smiling, posing for a photo, and playing with volunteers is essentially an infinite well of emotional labor in the orphanage that can then be utilized in attracting more donor support. Under these conditions, the children and nannies providing emotional labor create an affective response that volunteers and donors expect as a means to ensure the orphanage is meeting its standard of care and that the overall project of caring for children is a success. Just as Adams notes in New Orleans, affective surplus becomes a limitless resource as more children are placed in the care of an orphanage, thus meeting the demand of the affect economy to create more orphan subjects who are deemed worthy of receiving humanitarian intervention. Furthermore, the affective surplus becomes guaranteed as children and nannies understand their position in the orphanage context and their responsibility to keep donors happy in order for the children to keep receiving care and nannies to ensure their status as employees. This cycle replicates structures of inequality by using nannies and children from vulnerable and poor families who cannot dispute or challenge the orphanage's agenda and who have little to no say in the way the orphanage cares for the children. Similarly, Tess Guiney's research in Cambodian orphanages explores how humanitarianism is embedded in neoliberal policies which market moral consumption to donors, including but not limited to visitors to an orphanage and volunteers who expect a specific amount of gratitude and thankfulness shown by beneficiaries, like children in an orphanage. Guiney (2017) defines these

interactions as “affective experiences” that humanitarian projects use to promote their project and draw in volunteers and donors (126).

Drawing from both Guiney (2017) and Adams (2013), I want to describe the orphanage as a business that sells affective experiences, drawn from the affective surplus produced by children and nannies’ emotional labor, and implemented within the affective economy. Here, affect is the currency that is required of children and nannies to continue being cared for or employed by the orphanage as well as similarly acting like the insurance plan for the product of care the orphanage provides by reinforcing the need and response of caring for children. Looking back to our analogy of the orphanage as a play, the success of the orphanage’s agenda relies on constructing a show put on by the staff and children who are performing in real life with volunteers and donors, using their affective surplus to connect with the audience or volunteers in this case, with the children in the orphanage through the production of emotional labor. The emotional labor provided by the children and staff is what reinforces the display of affect by the children who sing and smile, making it *feel real* to the audience who are prompted to ‘see the show again’ by returning, donating, and touring other orphanages looking to consume the same affective surplus and connection made by emotional labor. These affective experiences fueled by affective surplus are what portray the project, as a success when children are smiling and seemingly happy to welcome visitors, as well as the visitors who leave feeling they have made a positive contribution towards caring for children. As stated previously, this cycle requires the reproduction of new orphan subjects to continue tapping into the humanitarian market and compete with other humanitarian projects by bringing in new children as older children age out and often are left to live on the streets.

I want to draw attention to the impact this continuous play production has on the children and caregivers whose lives become intertwined in the plot of the orphanage's agenda to create more orphan subjects and maintain the business' success. To understand the impact this has, we must first take a look at examples from the orphanage's play to help us weave together the nuances of affective surplus and the affective market that creates charitable businesses, like orphanages, and pay attention to how these have sometimes led to harmful practices, exploitation, and illegal activity in orphanages in order to maintain the affective and emotional status quo desired by donors and volunteers.

Business as Usual in an Affective Market

I remember the first few years I spent coming to Haiti on short-term missions and volunteering in various orphanages. Our days were scheduled from sun-up to sun-down, down including visits to one or two orphanages each day (see Figures 3.2-3.3). Our 'mission' was to "love on the children," give them toys, and play games related to bible school teachings. Upon entering each facility, I can recall how the children would form a circle or group in front of us, clapping their hands and singing songs in a mix of Kreyol and French. Some of the smaller children would often run towards us, grabbing our hands and walking beside us, being pulled in every direction by a child wanting our attention. At first, I thought how deprived of love and affection these children must be, starved for attention, and in part, some of that still holds true since the orphanage rarely has enough caregivers per child, and children are often left unattended to care for themselves as nannies give focus to younger kids; but the reality is much more complicated than what we see on the surface, in the affective space, that displays only a neglect of emotional needs.

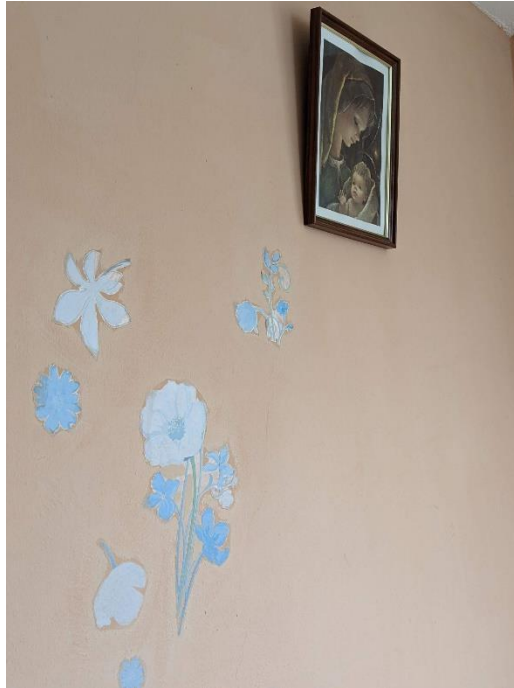


Figure 2.2; Photo of inside a faith-based orphanage during a visit with of inside a faith-based orphanage during a visit with IBESR



IBESR Figure 2.3 Photo of inside a faith-based orphanage during a visit with of inside a faith-based orphanage during a visit with IBESR

One way that orphanages set up the stage for their audience is through websites and social media pages. When churches and people wanting to volunteer are deciding where they want to visit and spend their time serving, websites and social media are one way that orphanages can promote their agenda while drawing in donors' interests. We have all seen the commercials or Instagram stories shared by people participating on volunteer trips with their churches, surrounded by smiling children playing games, with a bible verse and captions telling their followers about their 'amazing, life-changing experience' volunteering in an orphanage. Similarly, orphanages use these photos to promote the success of their programs to not only 'care for children,' but also guarantee that volunteers will have the experience of a lifetime while serving in their facility. What is not shown in the photos and videos, behind the smiles, is a revolving door of strangers to whom children are routinely exposed, increasing their risk of sexual and physical abuse; nor the preparation orphanages take in order to ensure the stage is set properly for the children and nannies' performances.

The reality is not so picture-perfect. Children who grow up in an orphanage are more susceptible to committing suicide, face a higher risk of teen pregnancy, and experience delays in mental and physical development whereas 2 months spent in an orphanage is equivalent to losing one month of development (Vernalde 2017: 11). In my own research and experience with volunteering in orphanages, I have witnessed a range of both short and long term impacts institutionalized care has on children, from a variety of attachment disorders, malnutrition, temporary skin infections that become chronic when left untreated, to knowing children who lacked the ability to walk at almost 3 years old simply because they did not receive enough one on one care to learn to walk. Furthermore, 1 out of every 3 children who 'age out' of an

orphanage will end up on the streets homeless, like in the case of Augustine, and one in five will end up with criminal records (Van Doore 2022: 45).

What is not documented often is the number of strangers a child in an orphanage is exposed to on a regular basis. For example, while conducting research in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, I met a former orphanage volunteer at one of the largest orphanages operating in the area. I had visited the orphanage on several other occasions & knew of the high volume of volunteers they received. The former volunteer explained that during a few months of her stay, she saw well over 35 people a month coming into the orphanage on short-term missions. An orphanage hosting 35 people a month each month, over a year, exposes children to an estimated 420 strangers annually. The average time spent in an orphanage by a child range from 3 to 7 years. This means that if a child is in an orphanage for only two years, they would be exposed to 840 strangers and 2,940 if they stayed more than half of their childhood (7 years or more). If we apply this to the 17 orphanages I visited in the southern departments of Haiti, housing a total of 488 children, the majority of them living in the orphanage for more than 3 years of their lives have already been exposed to an estimated 1,260 people who come to tour the orphanage. What is even more alarming, is that the majority of orphanages do not require or even care to do simple safeguard methods, like requesting background checks of participants, and often allow teams to stay on the same compound as the orphanage. Consequently, the risk of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse increases as children are easily accessible with minimum security measures in place.

In 2011, two years after my first trip to Haiti and three trips later, I was introduced to a man named Danny Pye and his wife, who came to speak at our church in Kingsport, TN. They were missionaries who had run an orphanage in Jacmel, Haiti since 2005, and came to speak to

our church about their work and the incident involving Danny that landed him in a Haitian prison for 5 months. As they sat on a sofa placed in the center of the stage, all eyes were focused on them as they recounted the story of Danny's arrest over a land dispute, dismissing the incident as corrupt police work and bribery, and using it as a means to promote their mission work in the orphanage. They captivated the church audience with their work in the orphanage, telling us how they 'saved children' to be in a place of worship, and even rescued a young teenage girl from being locked in a box by an alleged vodou priest because the young girl was albino. The stories they told pulled on one's heartstrings, so to speak, and they knew with every story they told, the more support they would receive when the donation basket was passed around. However, the reality of life in their orphanage would not be exposed until almost 5 years later, when a story came out in the Miami Herald about a missionary from the United States who was arrested for sexual abuse of minors living in the orphanage he ran. Immediately, the churches that sponsored their mission rallied behind the Pye's, arguing the charges were fabricated and the young girls were paid for their testimonies. In November of 2017, Danny Pye was convicted of 3 charges of child sex tourism as both a facilitator and participant in these crimes.

“According to court records and the evidence presented at trial, Pye was a missionary who operated an orphanage in Jacmel, Haiti, from the years of 2006 through 2012. The orphanage provided shelter, clothing, food, and school tuition to children without families and to children whose families could not afford to feed or otherwise support their children. Pye obtained financial support for the orphanage through his connections with numerous religious organizations and other nonprofit groups in the United States. During his time operating the orphanage, Pye would regularly sexually abuse the female residents of his orphanage, including girls as young as six years old. As described by the Haitian victims during the trial, Pye

routinely sexually abused his victims both at the orphanage and while at the beach” (USA State Department Press Release 2018)

The story of Danny Pye is unfortunately not the first nor will it be the last as touring orphanages and institutionalized care of minors in orphanages continues to go unregulated in so many countries, like Haiti. During preliminary research and work between 2018 and 2020, with the organization Haiti Mama, I helped to collect data about child abuse occurring inside orphanages by both foreigners and locals. During this time, four separate cases of sexual abuse were brought to light, all perpetrated by white, male missionaries, who built and ran orphanages alongside their wives and families. I was invited to come along for an assessment of an orphanage for one of the cases, where the founder, an American missionary named Jeremy Whatley, who ran the orphanage Child Hope International with his Haitian wife, had fled Haiti to the United States after being accused of sexual abuse by several young girls in his orphanage. The testimonies collected during the investigation described how Whatley would take these girls to hotel rooms and drug them before sexually abusing them (See Figure 2.4), as well as enact severe punishments, like denying them food or locking them in a room for long periods, if the girls tried to resist. In the summer of 2022, while conducting fieldwork in Ti Buron (Ti Biwon in Kreyol), Haiti, I had the opportunity to reconnect with some of the children who survived living in Child Hope International, and who were reunited with their families once the orphanage was officially closed in late 2018. After the interviews, we sat around together on the front porch of one of the families as I listened to them describe what life was like after reunification with their families, getting to see how proud they were to introduce me to their families,



Figure 2.4 Photo outside Sister Dona Orphanage showing the amount of time she was convicted for sex trafficking. Taken in 2021

smiling and talking together, sharing tears together as they spoke about the atrocities they survived in the orphanage. With tears in her eyes, one of the mothers who had put her daughter in the orphanage as a baby stated,

“I put her in the orphanage to *help her*, but I missed her so much and now, I am happy she lives with me again..... The directrice of the orphanage sent someone here (Ti Biwon) to ask families for their children. They told us they would take care of them for us.”

Her daughter spoke up recalling,

“I didn't even recognize my mother when I came home. I barely knew my family.”

Their shared statements point to several important things: one, that families are told the orphanage is a resource meant to *help* families and *care* for children. The narrative the orphanage sells on the affective market begins with the parents and families of these children, using this tactic to reinforce their motive to fill their orphanage with children for profit. By having the parents involved in the plot of the story, the orphanages' claims of legitimacy and needs are strengthened and increase the scope of revenue as the credibility given to the orphanages attracts donors into thinking they are contributing to a successful form of childcare. The second point raised is that orphanages send scouts to recruit children on behalf of the orphanage. Scouts known as *koutye yo*, are sent by orphanages all over Haiti, oftentimes to rural areas like Tibiwon, to convenience parents and families to hand over one or more children (Zabludovosky 2022). Referring back to Monika Krause's work, she highlights how NGOs, like businesses, make assessments in the community to analyze the feasibility of a successful project (2014:52). This includes determining the most profitable project in the most profitable area, targeting the

populations with the most likelihood of attracting funding. The brokers for the orphanage assess vulnerable communities in order to determine what families in what areas are the most likely in need and then use that as an advantage to increase the surplus of children for the orphanage to choose from. Furthermore, it secures the ability of exploitation when orphanages can use the impoverished conditions of a family as a way to coerce them into placing their children in the care of the orphanage. The practice has been banned by IBESR and made illegal yet is still one of the most common ways for an orphanage to gain access to children. It is also common for the *koutye yo* to trick parents into signing over their parental rights and lie to parents about the location or contact details of the orphanage to make it impossible for parents to find their children. I have witnessed several attempts of mothers and fathers to access their children inside an orphanage, only to be left banging on the front gate and told they no longer had the authority to see their child(ren) as they mistakenly signed over their rights. On other accounts, I have spoken with families who were lied to about where the orphanage was, leaving them no way to contact or reconnect with their children until years later, and sometimes never again. In even worse situations, a child will suffer from an ill-fated event or medical condition only to never have their death recorded or their families notified. Some of the participants during the focus group opened up about these hidden tragedies that had happened to them while living in an orphanage.

“I know of two boys who died in my presence when I lived there. They had been very sick and the directrice told them to eat food and drink water, that they would be fine, but they passed out and never woke up again. The parents of these children were told they had been sent to study abroad, and they were told the kids were traveling. I told the parents the truth later when I left the orphanage, but waited until the directrice passed away before I told them. They did not

want to believe me..... but the children were buried on the property of the orphanage. You know when you are a child and you are in the orphanage together, you sing together, play together, live together with the other children, and when one of the children passes away, it is very sad. We cried so much, and each time we thought about our friend who we ate with or lived in the same room with, but are now dead, we cried so much and were very quiet. They did not even get a funeral!” - Eluxon

“I remember watching a young girl playing on the wall of the compound that was broken during the earthquake. She jumped and missed the wall, falling and hitting her hip and it was split open, like her pelvic bone broke. We all just froze.” Angie looked up and over to Marie Rose for reassurance they took each other’s hands and Marie Rose finished for her, “ We all stood there at first, she did not move, oh it is hard to talk about but I think about her, her life, how she has a right to have what happened told! The directrice waited days before she took her to the hospital and then one day when we asked where she was, if she was coming back, the directrice just shrugged and said she died. Her body is buried in an unmarked grave on the property. Her family was never told, the directrice said their daughter was taken to the United States to go to school. I think they found out about it after the orphanage was closed, but I am not sure.” - Marie Rose

“Most of the children adopted out had parents and the parents would come to visit their child and their child would not be there and they would ask what happened and then were told their kids were going to school abroad.”- Marie Rose

Other incidents reported include massive suffering and exposure of diseases and illness, many preventable and treatable, and malnutrition. When speaking to one directrice during an orphanage visit with IBESR, I asked if they experienced any issues with food security to which she replied,

“Oh yes, we have had hard times. Especially after COVID-19, no visitors came, no one supported us. It is a struggle, but we survive and finally, we receive support from Food for the Poor.”

During one focus group Marie Rose mentioned,

“The worst thing I experienced in the orphanage was in the mornings I would have to get the kids ready for school and send them off then go to school myself, oftentimes we did not eat in the morning and I would be in class so hungry. I wouldn't eat but one time each day. I remember feeling that hunger and trying to act normal in class. I had a problem with one of the Haitian volunteer staff because they were always calling me names and calling me dog shit. I felt so ashamed and cried often. Because of that though, today I have strength.”

Supply and Demand of Emotional Labor

So, what happens when there is an endless supply of affective surplus the children can provide, but funds and donor attention are limited? Many of the directors and orphanage nannies would tell me that since early 2020, they have seen a decrease in volunteers and financial support. This correlation (between visitors and donor support) shows how the support given to orphanages depends on regular in-person interactions of visiting volunteers with the children and

staff at orphanages which helps foreigners validate their feelings about donating. Without that in-person interaction, many orphanages I visited were desperately seeking funds to secure monthly food and the costs of operations. One analytical proposition I proposed was that orphans' work involves a substantial proportion of emotional labor required to meet orphanages' agenda and faith-based organizations require a steady supply of emotional labor from nannies, orphans, and staff through a variety of structured practices. In this case, a structured practice refers to the consistent flow of short-term mission teams and volunteers who can come to these orphanages, bond with children, and oftentimes donate or sponsor children from whom they receive the most affection, attention, and ultimately emotional labor that solidifies donors' response to give money when they are moved by emotions and relationships they form with the children and staff. For example, donors who visit orphanages will describe their visits as 'life-changing,' typically speaking about one or two children with whom they 'really connected with,' or the child that 'followed them around the whole orphanage holding their hand,' that makes visitors believe they have made a deep and meaningful connection and thus will assume some sort of financial responsibility for the child by donating or sponsoring the child they feel attached to.

After conducting interviews in the first few orphanages, my hypothesis was proving to be accurate. Children understood the more emotion they exhibited around foreigners, the more likely it was that they would receive something in return, be it candy, money, clothes, or toys. However, more than half of the children interviewed would also report that they had no real understanding of how donations or funding worked and assumed that the foreigners taking photos would use those pictures to help the children in them without any idea of where or to whom their photo would be shown. When speaking to the women who worked as nannies in these orphanages, it would become clear that they also understood the role they needed to play

when foreigners came to visit and how as one woman put it “letting them *feel* helpful” as they volunteered their time to play with the kids and hold activities to keep their attention, all the while, the nannies would be in the kitchens preparing food, making the beds, bathing the children, and fulfilling their roles as paid caregivers for the children. Hidden in the background of the orphanage’s daily operation, the women who care for the children make the functionality of the orphanage possible. When interviewing these women, 21 out of 25, specifically stated they treated the children as their own, many of them adopting a surrogate mother mindset towards the children who, in many cases, they had raised since early childhood right alongside their own biological children. We will dive more into this observation in the next 2 chapters as we discuss the perspective of the ‘orphans’ and the women who care for them.

Breaking Through the Facade

The orphanage would have you believe they are rescuing children from poverty when in fact, they are oftentimes keeping children in impoverished conditions to capitalize on their vulnerability. Orphanages purposefully target poor families, who are predominately illiterate and left powerless to fight for their children when they lack resources for legal aid and their pleas fall on deaf ears of the local authorities and government because of their social status. This strategy by the orphanages makes it more difficult for parents, families, and children to challenge the way the orphanage comes into the guardianship of the children, much less the treatment and way in which the orphanage operates against parents’ rights to the benefit of exploiting children in their facility. As a result, the separation of children and their families has long-lasting consequences as parents become strangers to their child(ren), creating a gaping chasm of grief, guilt, blame, forgiveness, and more, which both parties must cross in order to find each other again. The

longer the child stays in the orphanage, the deeper they become entangled in the affective experience orphanages sell under the guise of care, being taught to tell visitors they have been abandoned or that both parents have died to make their situation look more authentic and desperate, with the orphanage as a safe haven.

Since the update of the 2018 mandate for child welfare based on the assessment conducted by LUMOS (2016-2017) in 576 orphanages, which flagged 307 orphanages at a level red with both sexual and physical abuse cases and documented trafficking, over a dozen orphanages have been shut down by IBESR with the help of partner organizations, like Haiti Mama and Little Footprints Big Steps, who support the family reunification process. However, the affective market is still booming with many orphanages continuing to operate unregulated as welfare services are increasingly shifting the responsibilities of the state to private organizations and companies, including humanitarian projects, like orphanages, that benefit from donor support. As a result, children in orphanages take center stage as the main attraction visitors pay to see and pay to support, putting them in a continuous cycle of producing emotional labor, while increasing their chances of exposure to emotional, physical, and mental harm. So how do orphanages continue to ensure the experience will be *authentic* for visitors and the play they put on is guaranteed to make one feel as though being a part of it was *real*? By creating the perfect set with actors who can pull on the heart of the audience and stage managers who can control the setting and actors. In this next chapter, I look into the lives of the children, the actors, who live in orphanages, and the adults who have aged out of them, to get a better understanding of what measures the orphanage puts in place to create the ideal orphan subject.

Chapter Two: “Smile, Play, Obey”

“Everything I thought I knew or was told about the orphanage was a lie, to have a better life was not possible”- Mark. 22, A&R participant from Ti Bouron

“I smile because it makes the blan happy” - participant under the age of 18, currently living in an orphanage

In the summer of 2018 when I was conducting preliminary research in Haiti, I visited an orphanage with the NGO Haiti Mama, where it was involved in conducting family reunification cases. The orphanage had reached out in need of food for the 20-plus children residing in their facility. When we entered through the gates with bags of rice in hand, nannies were asked to stop what they were doing so that they could answer any questions we may have had. I was given permission to take photos and observe this as a place for my research on orphans as discursive figures of humanitarianism and chose to document the living conditions as the nannies answered questions. I walked into a room lined with bunk beds and makeshift dressers where 6 boys were playing. As I walked in, the boys glanced at me and immediately jumped to their feet and stood in a group, smiling as they pointed to my phone to indicate they were ready for a photo. Taken by surprise, I held up my phone and explained to them I did not need to take their photo. Confused, they said that it was okay and continued posing for me until I took their photos. When I told the orphanage manager that I had photos of the children and asked if it was okay, she replied “They are used to it,” dismissing it as habitual interactions that children and staff in their orphanage are used to *acting* upon. On the drive back to Haiti Mama, I sat in silence thinking about that interaction with the boys, and how orphans, or children defined as orphans, see

themselves in relation to those who come to their orphanage and what displays of emotions orphans perform as a response to that relationship. Furthermore, what roles do the volunteer and orphanage staff play in reinforcing or maintaining emotional responses as simple as children automatically assuming they need to pose and smile every time a person pulls a camera out in front of them? This led me to develop two hypotheses to investigate while researching emotional labor within orphanages: 1) nannies' care work produces a particular type of orphan subject deemed productive to the orphanage, and 2) orphans learn to become humanitarian subjects through the inculcation of specific behaviors and emotional states.

Orphans are part of a larger vulnerable population of children oppressed by structural violence and poverty that can lead them to be placed in an orphanage in Haiti. Children's agency is limited and often relies upon the advocacy of adults. When children are placed in an orphanage, their status as orphans positions them as laborers for the orphanage whose performance validates the orphanage's intervention to care for children and make claims on their behalf. The orphan subject is able to perform what is effectively a commodity consisting of affect behaviors the orphanage alone cannot, like smiling and hugging a volunteer as a way to show thanks for bringing donations.

The term orphan has both pejorative and inclusive meanings (Freidus 2010; Cheney 2017). Kristen Cheney's work in Ugandan orphanages documented kinship ties, children's rights, and how the term orphan is based on a fluid identity that is used to gain resources while also being a stigmatized identity (2017). For Cheney (2017), the concept of a fluid identity for orphans recognizes the value or stigma placed on orphanhood as defined by the person interacting with the orphan, not necessarily the orphan themselves. Similarly, Andrea Friedus'

work in Malawi orphanages also highlights how the role of the orphan is not only stigmatized and excluded but can also be coveted (2010: 307). The identity of the orphan can be coveted because the orphan is a humanitarian subject and has access to the resources an orphanage provides but an orphan also can be simultaneously excluded or stigmatized by other members of their community who are not afforded the same access to resources. What is not given more attention is that children often identify themselves and their position in the large social context based on the interactions they have with others, and for a child living in an orphanage, their identity becomes tied to not only how the orphanage portrays them but how they see themselves in relation to the orphanage, the visitors, the nannies, and the other children.

Scholars focused on childhood development under capitalism have increasingly drawn attention to children's agency and under what conditions children understand their authority in interacting with others. Susan Ferguson's (2018) work examines how children's social reproduction shapes the way in which children relate to their environment and how their social reproduction helps to mold them into capitalist subjects. For Ferguson, children come to understand the spaces they occupy using physical and imaginative displays of affect (2018: 117). In this case, affect displayed by children can be produced as beneficial towards reproducing a capitalist subject, like doing chores, or resistance to work, like playtime. However, in the case of the orphanage, playtime itself can be considered a form of work as it can require emotional labor and affective display of the children who are urged to play with visitors to show they are grateful to have them visiting, donating toys and other playtime materials. Jenny Huberman's (2012) research on children's emotional labor in Banaras, India examines interactions between tourists and local children and the use of emotional labor during these interactions to produce affective responses. Huberman argues children use emotional labor to produce affective displays, like

hugging a tourist who just gave them money, which is meant to fulfill a fantasy the tourists have based on emotionally charged desires, such as self-gratification for helping a child in need (2012: 98). Looking back to our example of the orphanage as a play production, the children living in the orphanages become the main characters of this interactive style play through emotional labor which in turn, produces the desired response the audience is expecting to see. From my own personal experiences, and observations during research, playtime with volunteers in orphanages becomes beneficial towards reproducing a capitalist subject, the orphan, as playtime becomes a marketable form of affect, and is transformed into affective surplus as children repeat the cycle each time visitors come. Even more interesting, is the use of videos, pictures, and social media to have virtual interactions with the children in orphanages which helps facilitate a form of cyber-emotional labor that makes children in orphanages believe their photos on the internet will secure funds for their education, help reunite them with their families, or to be ‘chosen’ for adoption that they hope will bring them more opportunities. What is happening here in these moments is what Monika Krause defines as “symbolic credit,” where humanitarian interventions take the form of an exchange and create an unequal relationship between donors and beneficiaries that sets up an expectation for recipients to owe donors something in return for their services (2014: 58). For children in orphanages, what becomes expected as symbolic credit to donors, is the source of emotional labor to produce the affective surplus. What I am proposing is that the display of affect by children in orphanages goes beyond just changing one's physical appearance, but rather is a cycle between both affective behaviors shown and the emotional labor required that is often in contention with how the child truly feels and that this cycle of being trapped in an interactive play, has lasting impacts on children and families’ emotional, physical, and mental development. What is to consider here, is the exchange of symbolic credit as a way to exploit the

emotional, mental, and even physical capacities of the children living in orphanages. In this chapter, you will meet four young individuals who formerly lived in the same orphanage, as well as hear testimonies from children living in the orphanages I visited during my research. The experiences they shared with me shed light on the place in between the affective demands and emotional labor, exposing the raw emotions of how they feel in their own hearts and minds, what they have been *taught to feel*, and how to *act out* what they have been taught to feel and how these factors when considered together, create the perfect orphan subject ready to be consumed by visitors, donors, and volunteers. Furthermore, their stories describe the reality of life in an orphanage, from their own perspectives, allowing them to control how their lives are portrayed in this book while advocating for and educating others by sharing their stories. It has been an honor to get to know each and every one of the participants in this book and a privilege to be trusted with sharing their experiences. When I asked Eluxon, whom you will be introduced to later on in this chapter, what he wanted to accomplish from doing this research with me he stated,

“I want people to know the truth, to be educated about what happens to children when they live in orphanages, separated from their families. With my work, I want to take care of children the way I should have been taken care of and give them everything I wished I had in my life. I did not have affection and love, so I want to be able to offer that to my kids one day.”

It is the importance of sharing the truth that has motivated the development of this research. The truth surrounding the ‘orphan problem’ is one created, defined, and addressed by foreigners, the *blan*, who visit Haiti, not necessarily by the Haitian community. Consequentially, the answer to poor families lacking the capacity to provide food, housing, education, and other basic needs is to separate them from their children and place them into the care of the orphanage.

By sharing my experiences, I recognize how I was a part of the problem, and how truth-telling is the responsibility of not only other foreigners like me but more importantly of the children and families who are directly impacted by the orphanage (See Figures 4.1-4.2). By reclaiming the narrative, the children who live or have lived in orphanages take control over how the ‘orphan problem’ is defined, understood, replicated, and explained to donors. This way, the victims of the orphanage system’s exploitation (families, children, communities) are empowered to speak up, educate, and advocate in a new way that lets them take the lead in how foreigners coming to help communities will respond to poverty, and in turn, how they view childcare in the context of poor families. It is through truth-telling initiatives, like this research, that we can begin to see the orphanage system as a last resort rather than the best option.

Background

Located in the western department of Cabaret, Haiti was a large orphanage created in the early 2000s by two Haitian pastors and a woman of their congregation, housing over 200 children during its prime in 2012, closing shortly after in 2013 due to severe abuse allegations and neglect of children in their care. The majority of aged-out and reunited participants grew up in this orphanage, called Mission of Hope, and shared their experiences of their time there with me. The next four individuals being introduced are adults now, who grew up in Mission of Hope together, and whom I met with monthly for focus groups to discuss topics related to the orphanage system and their experience before, during, and after life in the orphanage.

Over time, I got to know them, called them friends, and had the privilege of meeting other young adults who had lived in the orphanage with them and would agree to participate in

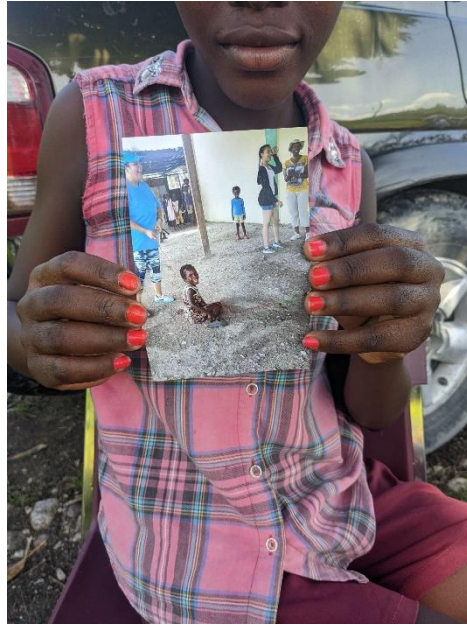


Figure 3.1; Photo taken during an orphanage visit of a participant holding a photo taken of her by foreign visitors while on a mission trip years ago



Figure 3.2, Photo of a young man who aged out of the orphanage holds the only photo of himself as a child in the orphanage alongside a visitor who came on a mission trip

my research. In this chapter, I will weave their experiences together as the core four groups alongside the testimonies of the other participants whom they grew up with in Mission of Hope and the children whom I interviewed during my field visits to various orphanages. Thinking back to the example of the orphanage as a play production, the children and young adults in this chapter will explain their comprehension of what it means to essentially be the main actors of this play, ready to perform for the audience whose payment contributes to the continuity of the orphanage's ability to reproduce the play over and over.

Gregory

I met Gregory during my first week in Les Cayes. He was working as a guard and gateman for LFBS, and I had seen him playing soccer with some of the boys at the safe house. It was not until a few months later, in February after I had spoken with Eluxon that I found out Greg was also from the same orphanage that he was in, and that they had grown up together. Eluxon suggested I ask Greg to participate in the focus groups I was putting together with other participants who had grown up in the same orphanage. Greg had a contagious smile and was always laughing and joking with other staff at the office. When I asked him if he would be interested in joining the focus group and to be interviewed, he immediately agreed. Greg would end up bringing comic relief to many of the focus groups, especially when our discussion focused on a difficult subject related to their experiences in the orphanage together. Greg was the youngest of the focus group participants, at 23 years old, but stood a whole foot taller than the rest of the group. Born in a small town 30 minutes outside of Les Cayes, called Camp Perrin, he traveled back home to see his family most weekends. He was brought to the orphanage at 10 years old, spending five years of his life inside the institution, leaving at 15, only when the

orphanage was shut down by IBESR. During his interview he opened up about life before the orphanage,

“My parents put me in the orphanage. I went because one of my mother’s friends told my parents about how the orphanage could take care of me and would still let me go to school, and I could attend church regularly. She told my mom that the orphanage helps take care of people’s children whose parents can’t care for them. My parents did not have enough time to take care of me, but we lived a comfortable life. It was not because my parents could not take care of me, it was because they did not have time.”

Growing up the first ten years of life with his family, Greg has three other siblings, two brothers and a sister. His parents decided the three youngest, one of his brothers and his sister, would go to the orphanage and return when they were eighteen.

“I lived well before the orphanage. I was comfortable at home, I went to school, I played, I slept well. I was happy.”

I asked how he felt the week he went to the orphanage,

“Every day I was sick. I felt horrible. You have to understand that in the orphanage you are not free. You cannot eat when you want, sleep when you want, or play with other kids. I cried a lot. I was not allowed to go to school....”

His parents visited him but only once or twice each year as the orphanage was located over 3 hours away from his hometown of Camp Perrin, making the journey to visit not only an overnight trip but one that was costly for his parents to do. He remembered them visiting,

“They would visit, and I finally felt comfortable again. I was happy to see them but I was never able to explain to them what was happening because a lot of the time the director would be in the same room as us, or someone would be around and they would tell if I told my parents the truth.”

Marie Rose

Marie Rose stood a whole foot and some inches taller than me. Towering over me, not too much shorter than Gregory, she always wraps her arms around me, bringing me into her embrace, calling me “sista;” laughing as we would share meals together sitting in the office of LFBS. I met Marie Rose as a student in my English class, where I had begun volunteer work with LFBS to help several young adults improve their English to get sponsored for work in the United States. When Marie Rose learned about my research, she opened up to me about having lived in an orphanage and how she wanted to participate in my research along with her sister who had also lived with her in the same orphanage. Marie Rose would become a pillar in our focus groups to ease the others with a joke or remind the group of their strength from what they endured together while living in the orphanage, encouraging the group to open up and making it a shared, safe space. During one of our FGDs when I made a comment about how she was able to comfort a whole room with her words, she laughed and told me,

“They used to call me *tati* (auntie in Kreyol), in the orphanage. All the children came to me with their problems, and I took care of them.”

When we conducted our first interview together, she arrived at my small studio apartment dressed in her best Sunday church clothes. Sitting in the plastic yard chairs on my balcony, sipping water, I could tell she was nervous. I asked her if she was comfortable still doing the interview and assured her it was okay if she was not. She quickly looked up and replied, “ Oh no! I am ready, but it is hard thinking back on that time. I know it is important to share it but even as I think about it, I *feel* what it was like to be there again, and it hurts my heart, but more so it gives me strength to know what I survived.”

Moving from the balcony outside and into the shade, our interview began, me sitting cross-legged on my mattress which sat directly on the floor, her on the edge of it as her feet hung over, smiling she took my hand and began,

“I was 15 years old when I came to the orphanage and left when I was 20, I am 28 years old now and live in Les Cayes. I was there for five years and stayed longer helping take care of the younger kids. My parents didn't have the capacity to help me and my sister so they gave me to the orphanage because they thought the orphanage would help us. My sister is younger than me, but we are the two oldest of the four. My family, *mesi jezi* (thank you, Jesus)! Oh, my family has 4 four children, I am the eldest of them. My father is still alive and so is my mother. They did not have a lot of opportunities growing up and raising us, but they survived. My mother is a *Machann*, she sells all kinds of things, and my father is a farmer, they live in Camp Perrin, where

I am from. I live with 2 of my sisters now in Les Cayes and my youngest sister is still with my parents when I visit them often.”

She continued,

“The director came to my town in Camp Perrin and recruited us children to come live in the orphanage. She asked some parents to give her their children to take care of and she told my parents she would help us go to school and university when we got older and that we could travel the world, I do not know if she told them we would travel to but many children were adopted and left with families in the States and Canada and parents did not know and she would tell them they were traveling abroad for school. Many of those parents in my town gave their kids to her, several of them have not seen their children again.”

When it was time to end the interview, I asked her if she wanted to add anything else. Her next words are something that has stuck in my mind ever since,

“In life, you have to work for your happiness. Before I went to the orphanage, I did not have maturity, I learned in the orphanage not to waste my life, but also how to act and keep my feelings inside.... I learned to keep my courage and how to act like I liked other people, which can be useful. You learn to manage yourself in an orphanage.”

Kristella

Kristella was the first participant I conducted a home visit with during my research. I remember the first time we met, seeing a short, thin young woman waving at us on the street as

we approached. We followed her down a small hallway of rooms, considered apartments, to a stairway that led us to her small room on the top of the building, almost like it was built as an afterthought to the rest of the house (and probably was!), with the roof as her only outdoor space and no toilet or kitchen inside. It was a standard apartment, but she had made it cozy with light blue curtains over the doorway and window, pictures hanging on the wall, and a tiny desk with a fake flowerpot arranged beside several books written in French. Due to the heat, we decided to set up plastic folding chairs in a small circle in her studio apartment with the door open as the wind blew the blue curtain in the doorway, like a wave crashing into the small room with each gust of wind, sending the end of the curtains over the top of Kristella's head and face. Laughing at this unpredictable and constant interruption of the curtain but deciding that it was better than a smothering hot room, we began introductions. Shy at first, Kristella spoke in a low, soft voice recounting her childhood before the orphanage,

“I am 26 years old and grew up in the countryside with both my parents, 3 sisters, and 2 brothers. One day a woman came to our neighborhood and asked families to give their children to her to live in the orphanage. My parents agreed because they did not have much money to send me and my siblings to school and they thought I would be taken care of with them.”

Kristella gave off a sisterly energy, like someone who would sit you down and braid your hair or ask if you had eaten that day and fed you if you said you hadn't (See Figure 3.3). Her family did not live close by, so she spent a lot of her time with the other young adults in the focus group whom she had grown up with in the orphanage, her fictive kin that she, like all the others created while living together in the orphanage. Like Eluxon, whom you will be introduced to next, she was placed in the orphanage at a young age.



Figure 3.3 Photo of Kristella, taken during our interview in her home

“I was put in at a young age and grew up not remembering my own mother’s face. In the orphanage, I felt obligated to live a life of stress, because I did not know any other life, you see. In the orphanage, I felt like an empty person and when my family came to see me, I became full.”

Kristella would spend more than half of her childhood in an orphanage, seeing her family a total of 4 times because they lived so far away and had no money to spare for a visit. During her time in the orphanage, she would be forced to care for other children younger than her due to a lack of staff and over-crowding of children. Making a classic oh oh! sound familiar to Haitians when expressing something with enthusiasm she said,

“Oh oh! It was hard, I woke up earlier because I had to take care of 2 younger kids. All the older kids were assigned to younger children, 2 each. I was like 12,13, 14 years old looking after 2,3,4-year-olds daily like I was their mom! I braided their hair, cooked for them, cleaned up after them, and it was normal. I had no problem taking care of someone else.”

Eluxon

When working with child protection services in Haiti or anywhere else, it is important to work with local social workers, child mentors, and most importantly people who share the same experiences. When I first found out I would be conducting research in Les Cayes with Little Footprints Big Steps, I reached out to Morgan, the founder, to ask for suggestions for a research assistant who I could work and collaborate with. She suggested I speak with the child mentor for LFBS, Eluxon, who also had lived in an orphanage for the majority of his childhood and early adult life. Morgan went on to relay the work I was going to be doing with LFBS and asked

Eluxon if it was alright for me to reach out and speak with him about my research. After two weeks of anxiously awaiting a response, I received a text from Morgan with his number so that I could message him via WhatsApp. The first time I spoke with Eluxon he expressed excitement about participating, having shared some of his story at child rights conferences in Canada with LFBS, he was willing to share more of his experiences. In one of the last texts he sent that day, he said to me “I have many things to tell you.” That would be an understatement. Working with Eluxon, I not only learned about his experience living in the orphanage and his life after leaving it, but was fortunate that he also became a teacher, a friend, and someone I could confide in when I needed to reflect on my position as a researcher. He helped me understand the emotional component of what it is like to live in an orphanage and how to talk about that with participants. I came to deeply respect Eluxon and the work he does at LFBS, his passion for changing the orphanage system in Haiti, and his mentorship to many of the children in the transition home he worked with. Without him and his guidance, this research would not have been possible, and to simplify his work by stating he did in fact tell me so much, would not do him justice. Eluxon once told me,

“The children of today are the adults of tomorrow, how we teach them and love them matters.”

Over the next ten months of research, I would have the privilege of witnessing how Eluxon used his experience in the orphanage to connect with others; sharing his testimony that brought others to open up about their stories. Eluxon was able to do what I could not, relate to the participants with whom we spoke. From my position as a researcher, I had experience working as a volunteer in orphanages, ignorantly reinforcing the same patterns of forced

emotional production on the children whom I interacted with. This provides me a perspective to talk and relate to foreigners who come to Haiti to visit orphanages. To better communicate with them, knowing how they feel and what their intentions are, while also being able to educate them about the reality of orphanages because of that same experience. For Eluxon, his position as a former “orphan” allowed him to connect with people by knowing what it was like to live that reality. To understand what it means to communicate your feelings about this experience, and how it impacts a person growing up in an institution. For example, a young 13-year-old boy broke down one time in an interview after discussing how he was not allowed to bathe regularly in the orphanage, causing many of the foreigners to avoid him when they visited the children. Eluxon was able to open up about similar experiences of his own, not being allowed to do basic things, like shower or eat when he wanted. Eluxon could transcend his position as an assistant researcher to relate with participants, while also providing an important perspective on how life can change for someone who was once living in an orphanage. Eluxon showed many participants it was possible to use what had happened to them in the orphanage as a means to empower, educate, and advocate for better alternatives for child and family care. His story is one of survival, as are all the stories compiled in this research, one of strength and endurance, but most of all courage. During my time getting to know Eluxon, he revealed a lot about his life sharing with me his early childhood,

“I was born in Cap-Haitian to my mother and father, I knew they loved me. I entered the orphanage at 4 years old and did not leave until I was 22 years old, in 2011. I do not remember my life with my parents because I was so young when I went into the orphanage. My mother passed away when I was just 4 years old. I do not even remember her face, but I am told my sister looks a lot like her, and I try to picture our mother when I look at her. But when my mother

passed away, a pastor came to our neighborhood and spoke to my father about the orphanage and how they could take care of us (children). My father agreed and we left with the pastor shortly after. I have 6 brothers and 1 sister. My younger brother came to the orphanage with me. Out of 7 children, I am the second youngest. My father let me, and my younger brother go with the pastor, and we did not see him again for almost a decade. My father never visited us in the orphanage, but we were far away in Port-au-Prince, and he never was told where the orphanage was, so he did not know how to find us. We never had any contact with our father or other siblings the whole time we lived there.”

The Politics of Care

The stories shared here open the door to a discussion of who exactly orphanages are caring for, how the orphanages are presented to the communities from which the children in their facility come, and how children growing up in an orphanage interpret their situation between life before and life in the orphanage. The children and young adults I interviewed in the orphanages I visited, recounted similar experiences,

“A lot of us (children) came from the neighborhood close by, and we live here but our parents come to visit, and we get to go to school for free.”

“My father died when I was younger, and my mother placed me in the orphanage because she could not afford to take care of me herself.”

“The director of the orphanage came and told my mom they would send me to school, so she let me live here.”

“There was a woman the orphanage sent to our zone, she told the community that if the children had parents, she would only take one child, but if the child was missing one or both parents she would take more. So, my parents chose to let me go with her.”

When speaking to participants living in an orphanage, it became clear that many of them, especially the older children, understood the difference between their life with their families, compared to the orphanage. To be specific, 58 out of 61 children interviewed had parents, meaning that 95% of participants had one or both parents alive. To reiterate previous data mentioned in earlier chapters, out of the 18 orphanages I visited which housed a total of 488 children (212 boys, 276 girls), statistically 391 of those children have one or both living parents, and the remainder have relatives and extended kin. More than half of the participants in orphanages and all of the aged out and reunited (A&R) group recognize why they had been placed in an orphanage, as a result of their families’ lack of financial security, not the lack of love for their children as orphanage would often lead them to believe. Simply put, orphanages prey on poor families to recruit children for their financial gain. Furthermore, many participants spoke about their experiences in the process of *learning* how to act like proper ‘orphans.’ For example, 49 out of 61 participants living in the orphanage reported they felt obligated to perform emotional labor when foreigners visited the orphanage, roughly 80% and 54 of the 61, approximately 89%, reported learning to perform emotional labor through observation of other children and being told by staff what to do. For example, learning to sing songs when volunteers came was often expected, and children were taught to react with songs when visitors came to the orphanage; while all 28 of the participants in the A&R gave examples of how they not only felt obligated to act a specific way when visitors came, but also with staff at the orphanage. They described feeling exploited and admitted they did not feel comfortable with having to use

emotional labor, to prepare themselves for having pictures taken of them with visitors or for donors. One participant, a young man who lived with his grandmother and mom, recounted during a visit to his home,

“When you are living it, you know something is wrong, but you do not know what else could be...I remember my first experience with foreigners coming to visit us. The directrice, Mama we had to call her, came to my room and explained to me that I had to sing when they (the foreigners) entered the compound and that I had to do whatever they told me after that, or I would be in trouble. I learned that doing what they wanted, making them happy, kept me safe because then I would not get hit and I got sad when the foreigners would leave because if they were around, we would not get beaten, but I learned too that they never brought us change, the never checked on me after that, never called me.” Shaking his head he stood up and said, “We knew what consent was, well sort of, but we knew we did not have that power, we just had to smile and obey.”

It is important to note that 47 out of 61 children I interviewed in orphanages and all 28 A&R participants reported that through repetitive inculcation, they learned how to rely on emotional labor strategically for them to navigate life in an orphanage. For example,

“I remember my first week in the orphanage. I was overwhelmed, I saw so many children there and I felt stressed. I needed my mother and father’s affection, and I did not find any love at the orphanage. I would think about my family all the time, especially when I was hungry. I learned to be comfortable at the orphanage. I watched what the other kids were doing and did everything they did, even if I did not want to. I did it to survive.” - Marie Rose

“I did it because they (the foreigners) asked me to and the other kids did, so I learned to behave like that, happy all the time.” - Lambre, 13-year-old girl currently living in an orphanage in Torbeck, Haiti.

Like a business, the orphanage operates within a set of rules and practices that ensure the overall functionality and performance of the project. Part of these practices is training the children, much like a business would train an employee, to provide the best possible experience for the visitors, who are essentially customers of the orphanage. As Arlie Hochschild’s research in 1983, about airline stewardesses brought attention to both the subtle and non-subtle practices to train an employee to provide the best customer service experience possible (129). For example, through subtle tactics like collective punishment, a group can be made compliant by simply relying on other employees to police them. In the case of the orphanage, many children would often police each other to ensure that everyone remained in the good graces of the orphanage. Drawing again from Monika Krause’s (2014) research on humanitarian aid as it relates to how humanitarian organizations compete for beneficiaries whose suffering is mobilized towards the success of the humanitarian project, which is the ‘product’ being sold to donors, I argue that practices like training and the enforcement of rules help inculcate standardized behavior among children in orphanages and creates a specific type of ‘product’ the orphanage can sell to visitors and donors (68).

Central to creating and maintaining the orphanage’s project as a success is the children’s affective behavior which adds value to the overall care project and is what initially attracts donors and volunteers. Looking back at the work done by Susan Ferguson (2018), she argues that children are inherently extensions of the reproductive labor of others, and actively

participate in the processes and institutions of social reproduction (113). Within the setting of the orphanage, children are socialized into existing social norms and structures that help reinforce the larger capitalist structures. As a result of this process, the use of emotional labor by children to *do* certain expected forms of behavior, like smiling or playing, perpetuates value in the form of interactions and relationships formed between volunteers and the children. The project of care being delivered by the orphanage is not operating in some economic vacuum but rather is a system of social reproductive labor in which the children in orphanages are receiving the benefits of said care work, and thus their presence in the orphanage as happy, well-cared for children gives the orphanage as a project value to present itself within the global economy to compete for donations. I want to clarify, that although the affective behavior being shown by the children does not have direct monetary value, it is still very much what gives value to the project itself and how orphanages can market themselves.

In humanitarianism, the business of aid demands that the beneficiary respond accordingly in what could be seen as a customer service framework, where the act of charity is viewed as something that requires recipients to feel obligated to respond with a grateful attitude. What this means when applied to the orphanage system, is that the space itself becomes associated with acts of *care, religious benevolence, and charity*; but what else defines the orphanage system is the ecologies of *race, gender, global south vs global north, and class* where the majority of orphanage systems operate in underdeveloped countries, primarily housing children of color from the global South supported by predominantly white, financially stable people from countries in the global North. Orphanages operate within a business framework that is produced, advertised, and consumed within these same ecologies that portray children of color and their impoverished families as desperate, hopeless, and without many options; leaving the orphanage

with the power to create rules and regulations over the children that enhance their chances of making a profit as a result of exaggerating and playing into classist, racialized, and gendered stereotypes about children who live in orphanages.

Other business practices to standardize customer service experiences and control workers are through setting rules to regulate daily performance and behavior which creates a hierarchy of who can control their emotional state better and provide the best customer service experience. As a result, employees learn to regulate not only themselves but also each other through correcting each other, telling on each other to management, and sharing a collective fear of clearly defined consequences when these standards of the business are not met or rules are disobeyed, consequences that impact the collective rather than just the individual. As it relates to the orphanage, children are recruited and made to be the face of the workforce, learning to be proper, and more importantly, marketable orphan subjects ready for ‘work’ through repetitive practices, like rules with severe consequences when they are not followed, rewards when rules are obeyed, and a hierarchical system of management between the children and staff who are meant to keep themselves and each other in line. Participants recounted several tactics they experience(d) while living in the orphanage:

“The staff would beat me when I refused to take photos...we felt pressured to make the visitors happy”- Daniel 15, A&R participant

“We sing for them (the visitors), we play with them because they come to help us, we should make them feel happy and comfortable. If we do not, they could get mad and think we do

not respect them. -Rayah, a 16-year-old participant currently living in an orphanage in Torbeck, Haiti

“I was assigned two younger girls to take care of, we each were given younger kids to look after. When they needed something, it was up to me to go ask the directrice for what they needed and make sure they were taken care of, protected, and obeyed the rules. At that time, I was barely 15 years old and looked after my sister and another little girl who was 3 years old...but, if they didn't obey, it was me who got beaten” - Marie- Rose during an FGD

“If we said no to the *blan* sometimes they would try and tickle us or touch us, it made me feel uncomfortable, but I could not say no, how would they have reacted? What would have happened to me in the orphanage once they left?” - Vital, 19 years old, A&R Participant

“I felt safer when the *blan* came because we were treated better in front of them, and if we made them happy, we got more, and the staff was happy with us.” - Dalvins, 13 years old, A&R participant.

During one focus group discussion, Gregory drew attention to another tactic. Like employees of the month, children who provided more emotional labor on behalf of the orphanage or who had families sending supplies that could be used by the orphanage or staff would be treated better. He began by saying,

“I remember it was a Wednesday, and my parents picked me up from school and then dropped me off at the person's house who took me to the orphanage. The first week I was free because my mom left us with a lot of food and drinks so the staff liked us.....The staff treated me

badly, sure, they hit the children a lot. When a kid asked a question or was playing without asking permission, they could get hit. Sometimes they even threw things. But it was not easy for the staff to punish me though because when my parents came, they would bring gifts and money to donate, and they brought the staff stuff. So, they let me get away with more.” At this point Eluxon interrupted to explain that he was treated differently because his family never came to visit and he instead was beaten often and violently, “They beat me once so badly I couldn’t see for several days! I thought I was blind, and I cried so much, but who could I tell? Who would have come to get me? She (the directrice) got so mad once because I never listened, that she sent me to some friends of hers an hour or so away from Port-au-Prince, as a *Restavek* (child slave), I ran away and came back and begged her to take me back and she said only if I behaved.”

One of the more alarming revelations of this story is the nature of the punishment meted out to Eluxon: physical expulsion, and subjection to conditions of child slavery, punishments that cannot be justified under any circumstances. At the same time, the above stories highlighted how children with parents who had the ability to send items or visit more frequently were viewed as assets, like more valuable employees, for the orphanage to benefit from, or even fear since parents who came to visit meant that they could uncover the truth more easily about the reality of abuses, neglect, and mistreatment the children suffered. Eluxon’s remark of “who would have come to get me” led me to ask how often parents checked in with their children, or if they demanded to know the standard of care their children were living in. What is interesting, is that out of all the children interviewed for this research, more than half of the children I spoke with stated their parents tried to visit annually, for those with families closer it was more frequent, and that they would often call and speak to their families (See Figure 3.4). The issue, as many of them stated, was



Figure 3.4 Photo of a child living in an orphanage I took during assistance to an article on orphanages with Buzz Feed News 2021

they are often monitored by staff and even other children, to be sure they are not telling their families ‘Too much’ about what is really happening in the orphanage.

The orphanage sets up the work environment for success, which includes creating the perfect setting to play up and exaggerate the vulnerability of the children in their facility. As a result, the manipulation of children in these facilities is inevitable. In her 2013 study of the commodification of children in Cambodian orphanages, Jane Reas mentions how the idea of a child being abandoned and neglected “becomes synonymous with sympathy, compassion and sentimentality” that requires foreign intervention based on a discourse of tragedy and the response rooted in protecting children (124). This discourse of tragedy enables the politics of care that are created, defined, and implemented by orphanages' desire to profit from the donors' and volunteers' preconceived narratives that they are helping poor, desperate children. Therefore, part of the elaborate story that supports the orphanage's work is that children are abandoned and unloved by their families, which as I have shown, is often not the case and is overly exaggerated.

As discussed in the first chapter, the example of the orphanage setting up a play not only includes providing a script for the actors, and the children but also designing a controlled environment which will help to guarantee the success of the play to run smoothly with minimal issues. Part of setting up a stage is not just the costumes or props, but also setting a specific *mindset* that reflects the environment and desired outcome of being unloved and abandoned. We have all seen actors or performers rehearse, and practice over and over again not only to remember their lines but to *feel* them and learn how to best *convey* those feelings to the audience. What makes for good acting is not just reciting the script, but making the audience feel like the experience is *real*, and even more so, for the actors to *feel it is real*. It is not enough for children

in orphanages to be dressed in dirty clothes that are either too large or too small, with half of them or all without shoes, so that the organization can portray them in their most vulnerable state. They must also ‘get into the character’s mindset’ so to speak, that taps into their ability to produce emotional labor and ultimately ‘act’ on behalf of the orphanage play in a way that makes the audience believe their performance. Furthermore, to be truly believed, they must practice *feeling* the way a parentless, abandoned, helpless orphan would and then use that emotion to channel the proper physical display of these emotions. For children who do not cooperate and obey the script the orphanage provides them, they are often then manipulated or lied to by the orphanage staff who use these antics to place children in a mindset of abandonment and are often told the only one left to care for them is the orphanage. For example, when I spoke to participants about resisting and tactics used to disobey the orphanage’s demands, many recounted stories of being lied to strategically for the purpose of making them feel alone, isolated, and dependent upon the orphanage. During one focus group, Eluxon recounted,

“When I asked for my father at the orphanage, to talk with him, they told me he had died. I thought he was dead for a long time and became very upset to learn that he was alive when I left the orphanage and that they had lied to me. They told me he had died when I was 8 years old because they were tired of me asking to see him. He did die in 2018, 5 years ago, and before he died, I was able to forgive him. When I left the orphanage, I went to Cap-Haitien to see him and I told him about what all happened to me, and how hard it was to stay in the orphanage, and I asked him why he never called or visited. We spent a long time talking about that, with the whole family too. I was so upset no one came to see me, to rescue me but I was so happy to see them again and know my father was really alive and we talked and talked for a long time about it all. My father told me he asked the pastor who took us to the orphanage about us. My father tried

to find me but he said the pastor always told him he did not have time to take him to the orphanage, then he disappeared and my father could not find him again. Many of the other children would receive gifts or food from their parents who sent it to the orphanage, but I never got anything. When I asked my father why he never sent me and my brother something, he told me that he never had anything to send, and no money to send it with.”

He continued his story, highlighting how he felt guilty for not knowing his father was in fact alive all that time,

“When the volunteers (both local and foreign) came we tried to get them to adopt us. You have to understand, we did not know our father was still alive! Yet, I was afraid of foreigners adopting us because the older children would tell us that if we were adopted by the *blan* they would eat us. I know now that they were talking about having our organs taken from us and selling them. A lot of our neighbors would tell us that too to scare us, but it also does happen! The people in the orphanage wanted us to be adopted by the foreigners because they got paid a lot of money, but we were afraid. When there was a *blan* that came that liked one of the kids, the staff would tell the foreigner that the child did not have parents and was available for adoption and told the child that they would get to travel and go to school if they said they did not have parents. I did not want to be adopted though; I was afraid of white people because of what I had been told.”

Other participants also stated similar experiences,

“The children who were there before told me the director was nice at first to make you feel safe and like her, then after a while, you will come to know hell. They told me my parents

did not want to speak to me anymore and my mom gave me to them. I thought I had no family but my brother who was living with me in the orphanage. I felt like I had to protect him, to *teach* him.... I hid one day and was able to call my mother's number to try and contact family, but when she answered she said she had had no word from us since we came here and missed us! Can you imagine! I told her what was happening, and she said to be patient, that she would come for us, and she did!" Michael 23 years old A&R participant

"The staff would remind us not to mention our parents, and that when asked we had to say they were dead or did not know, or that they left us. That we had no contact with them, no family." - Geraldine, 19 years old A&R participant.

"I do not get to speak to my family much, they are not allowed to visit without asking and it costs a lot of money for them to come here. So, I don't really have contact with them." 14-year-old participant currently living in an orphanage in La Creole, Sud, Haiti

The above testimonies echo techniques used by the orphanage to control and manage the children's behavior and can be traced to similar methods, although not always as violent and abusive, used by businesses to manage employees. To elaborate further, I draw on the work of Amy Wharton (2009) who defines "feeling rules" to explain components of social norms that are also inherently used to dictate employees' behavior during work. Wharton elaborates on the work of Arlie Hochschild's emotional labor to describe how labor is socially constructed under dynamics of power, status, gender, and race that are initially taught to us as children and then are applied to aspects of daily life, like labor (2009: 147). These "feeling rules" become shared practices by businesses based on a hierarchal system of management and employees, and are

used as means to control, intimidate, and alter the mindset of employees while at work. For example, feeling rules can be observed in the workspace as what businesses deem professional behavior, like tolerating irate customers without yelling, following the company rules to avoid being punished, and even employees managing each other's behavior so as to not suffer collective punishment. In this sense, feeling rules help strategically manipulate what is seen as appropriate workplace behavior but do so in a context where employees lack the power to challenge or refuse workplace rules for fear of losing employment. As a result, employees then exhibit emotional labor in order to comply with feeling rules expected at work. What is problematic here is when employees push back or argue against their employer's demands, they risk losing their jobs and income. Furthermore, when a person is dismissed from their work, either through termination or by their own choice, it is the feeling rules that step in and protect businesses, placing the blame on the employee for acting out and rejecting said feeling rules. Feeling rules also provide a context of illusion, like in the case of companies calling themselves 'one big happy family,' the picture painted is one designed by the business, not the employees.

So how does this relate to children in orphanages? As described in the previous testimonies, children in orphanages are given certain feeling rules they must abide by in order to be deemed a proper orphan subject worthy of being cared for by the orphanage. In Haiti, like in many societies globally, children are often taught to be seen rather than heard, to follow the instructions of adults around them, and to not argue when rules or commands are given, they may disagree with. Children are often left with minimal autonomy or say so in the most basic parts of their lives, like what they eat, what they wear, and who they are allowed to interact with. These are all things typically controlled by adults, their parents or guardians. Children learn to navigate this social context from an early age when they do something that is either praised or

punished. As a result, children understand that certain behaviors will elicit certain responses from the adults around them. The orphanage setting is no different, but when applied to how we view the emotional labor of children in orphanages, we can begin to trace a particular set of feeling rules that mimic that of workspaces and the illusions set forth by orphanages to reinforce children's cooperation. For example, when the participant earlier named Geraldine, mentions that staff would tell them not to mention having parents who were alive, this becomes a feeling rule set by the orphanage where children must learn to hold their tongue to visitors and lie, or face consequences. The orphanages then take this further by lying to children about their own parents being dead in order to protect the narrative they are selling. In the case of Eluxon, he describes the repercussions of not following these rules and asking for his father repeatedly until he was told his father was dead. He describes being tattled on by other children in the orphanage for his rebellious behavior that would ultimately protect the child who ratted him out while placing Eluxon in a position of being labeled "the bad kid," not worthy of being cared for by the orphanage and thus facing extreme and horrendous consequences in the form of physical and emotional abuse. Like employees who risk being fired, children like Eluxon learn to 'get in line' with the orphanages' rules or face being denied care by the orphanage.

In the midst of so much pain, there also is a shared sense of collective suffering and perseverance, as Marie Rose pointed out:

"We live together, sleep together, eat together, live together, we all shared the same beatings even when it wasn't us getting beaten, we were family, we had to be that in order to survive that kind of life...we shared everything."

To summarize, as the orphanage puts in place “feeling rules,” it also tries to alter the environment and mindsets of the children through lying and manipulation. It also promotes a sense of unity and harmony amongst the children who learn to work together, thereby increasing the orphanage’s revenue by drawing in donors and keeping visitors happy. However, not all the tactics used are harsh and rigidly enforced rules, but rather subtle “positive reinforcements” meant to lift morale and the work ethic favorably, like reward systems, incentives, or even work parties. In the case of the orphanage, children who perform their emotional labor without resistance are often provided more freedom and access to resources.

Both the rewards and punishments of work are woven together within their daily life and personal space. For example,

“Even though she (the directrice) treated us badly, she was all we had most of the time. We all called her mama. She liked it when we called her Mama.... She knew I liked TomTom (a traditional Haitian dish) and she loved it too, so whenever she made any, she would call to me, Tati!!!!!! Yelling out through the whole house, and I would come down the stairs to the kitchen and she would share her TomTom with me. We would eat and laugh together, and she was never mean in those moments.” Marie Rose explained during a focus group when I asked how they felt towards the staff who were supposed to care for them.

“We are treated well, they (the nannies) cook for us and take care of us, we call many of them mama.” 14-year-old female participant currently living in an orphanage.

What also helps to solidify these rules and make it possible to carry out is the fact that for the children, and even nannies, the space in which they are ‘working’ is also the space in which

they are ‘living.’ The boundaries between work requirements and the private space of homely comforts are blurred, distorted, and often mixed together as emotional labor produced within the private sphere of children’s homes is consumed by the public, the visitors, who are getting front-row seats to the children transmitting their private feelings into public transactions with value.

“I don’t like that the *blan* can come into my room and see when I have not cleaned it or see my personal space because they are being shown the house.” 17-year-old male participant currently living in an orphanage.

Each one of these experiences brings attention to this juxtaposition of being caught in between their living and workspace. Although they call the orphanage home, the children are distinctly aware that the orphanage is not truly a *home*, but rather a space that they are inhabiting for a set period of time, and during that time will be sharing their personal space with the public regularly and for revenue. In one sense, the children are forming private, intimate relationships with their caretakers, the visitors, and the management staff in a space defined as a home for them, while in another sense, the home in which they live is their workspace and those relationships formed come with strings attached to financial support that ensures they remain living in what is essentially a ‘workplace’ If we look back to the analogy of the orphanage as a stage and the interactions between visitors and the children as the play experience, the children in the orphanages are basically living on the stage full-time, performing continuously for the magnanimous visitors whose satisfaction with the play drives them to give which keeps the play alive and on stage.

What is crucial to point out is that children in orphanages have little to no say in the play's production or the scripts they are given. Instead, their vulnerability as humanitarian subjects, specifically orphan subjects, makes it hard for them to say no to the aid being given or to challenge the way in which aid is given. Simply put, as a child in an orphanage you are told you cannot bite the hand that feeds you, brings you toys, pays for your schooling, and donates your clothes. What this research and the participants' stories show is that the children in orphanages understand this notion of a generous hand that gives and grow up believing it, while also being aware that in order to accept and live under these conditions, they must consistently provide emotional labor to produce the affect they are required to display, which shows them to be grateful to the 'hand that feeds them.' Part of reinforcing their acceptance comes from the controlled setting which the orphanage maintains and protects through practices like making and enforcing rules and consequences and manipulating children physically and emotionally through fear as well as rewards.

My prior experiences with the orphanage system in Haiti provided me with a guideline by which I observed these practices in real life for my research but what I learned was that the very people in the orphanage meant to execute these practices are also constrained by them. The women who work in the orphanage as caregivers, nannies, and house mamas, not only help the orphanage regulate and ensure the use of emotional labor and affect the children under their care but are also required to exert their own emotional labor during interactions between the children, the managerial staff, and the visitors. This next chapter will look at the lives of 3 women who live and work in 2 separate orphanages, exploring how they understand their various roles as fictive mothers, dutiful employees, and responsible caregivers, and how they navigate between these roles using emotional labor.

Chapter Three: “The Labor of Love”

A Day in the Life of a Nuncey

Nuncey is the first to wake up in her home. It is still dark outside when she rises. The silent, early morning greets her as she rises from her bed, stretching her arms above her head as she listens to the rooster crowing in her yard. Sleepy-eyed, she begins the long process of heating coals over a fire pit to prepare the coffee and breakfast. Smoke fills her eyes as she pokes the charcoal in place, making sure it will not burn out. Making breakfast takes time. It requires patience, and she pounds the leafy herbs and garlic in a mortar with a pestle, as the rhythmic sound fills the morning air. An hour into preparing the food, the sun begins to rise. Coffee ready and food is almost done, she makes the rounds of waking her children up for school. Gently shaking them awake she sends them to the backyard where she has prepared buckets of water for them to bathe. As they bathe, she uses a metal iron, heated by the coals, to iron her children's uniforms. Not having a properly ironed uniform could be grounds for being sent home, and she does not want to take any chances. Once bathed, the children circle around the small plastic table as she hands out plates full of spaghetti, a common and inexpensive breakfast. She helps the children dress and gets herself ready as the kids brush their teeth and comb their hair. She takes a quick 10 minutes to make a beautiful braid in her daughter's hair before they leave the house in a hurry for school. Kissing each of her children goodbye, Nuncey drops them off at school and starts her daily walk to her work, the orphanage. It normally takes 30 minutes on a regular day and an hour in the rain. She steps over puddles of mud that line the road. A road that has not been cared for in years with massive holes scattered along the way. She sticks to the side, avoiding cars and taxi *motos*, holding a small kerchief to her mouth to avoid inhaling the dust

and car pollution. The kerchief also helps with the smells of sewage, trash, and animal droppings that fill the air, making her want to choke more than the actual dust. Today it only takes a half hour to get to work and once she arrives, she heads to an outdoor bucket of water to wash off her sandals and face from the outside world. She is greeted by a night shift nanny whose tired eyes show it was a rough night. One of the children was up all-night sick with a fever. It would be her responsibility to help nurse the child today, but first, she has to tend to the others. Walking up the stairs, she enters their rooms lined with bunk beds. One at a time she makes sure all the children are awake and begins helping the younger children get ready for school while silently saying thanks that her own children are old enough now to get themselves ready for school in the mornings. As each child finishes getting ready, she sends them to the kitchen where one of the night shift nannies is finishing breakfast before she leaves. She helps set the table and usher the children around it, hurrying them to eat so they can walk to school on time. With the last child done eating, she grabs their backpacks, and the children head out the door as the other day shift nanny arrives. She greets her, annoyed that she is late once again when she arrives on time. She explains to the other day shift nanny that one of the children is homesick and offers to watch the child while the other woman begins washing the laundry. She climbs the stairs to check on the sick child in his bed. The fever is still bad, and he refuses to eat. She decides to make soup just for him as she carries him downstairs to the couch to keep an eye on him as she goes about her chores. Nuncey starts the water for the soup and focuses on sweeping and mopping the house as the water boils and the other woman works outside doing the laundry. After the ingredients are mixed in she goes about cleaning each room, making all the beds. She has a routine now and the work that used to take her an hour to do now takes half that time as she makes the beds and tidies the room full of toys and discarded pajamas left over from the chaos of the morning. It is now

midday and the small pot of soup she made is ready. She sits on the couch, taking the sick child in her lap to help him eat. When he finishes, she and the other nanny share the leftovers of the soup and she cleans the dishes so that she can then begin preparing the dinner for the children once they get back from school. As the dinner is cooking, Nuncey cleans the kitchen and goes outside to help the other day-shift nannies do laundry. They sit gossiping about the latest news and complaining over the increase in prices of eggs, rice, and cooking oil. She wonders to herself if she could trade some of the soap bars she made for cooking oil to help last until the prices level out. She knows it is up to her to *degaje*, to figure it out by any means. She knows this concept well, to figure it out on your own and through the help of her network of other women in the same situation. It is afternoon now and the children arrive from school around 2 pm. The dinner is not yet ready, so she lays out snacks while the children gather in the courtyard to work on homework. They are constantly interrupting her cooking to ask for help with homework and she has to stop to help every other minute. The little boy who is sick calls for her, he is crying, and she pokes her head out to tell the other nanny to watch the food cooking so she can put him to bed. She carries him back up the stairs singing lullabies to him as he calms down and begins to drift to sleep. Nuncey quietly leaves the room, not wanting to wake him and risk having to spend more time comforting him when other duties are calling. She hurries back to the food she is preparing and yells for the kids to change out of their school clothes as soon as they finish their homework and put on their casual clothes so they can play and not mess up their pajamas. With the homework finished, the children change clothes and head outside to play and she begins cleaning the house. She sweeps the floor as the other nanny follows behind her with the mop. They learned that it takes less time this way and are able to finish the chores faster if they work together. After the sweeping and mopping are finished, she takes a peek at the food. It will be

another hour before it is already, so she heads outside to help fold the clean laundry and hang up the wet and newly washed load of clothes. As it is now close to 6 pm, the night shift nannies begin to arrive and help her get the children all showered as she scoops piles of rice and bean sauce onto plates as the other day shift nanny is setting the table. She was supposed to be off by 5 pm and start the walk home before night fall came. Now she will be forced to walk in the dark, using the tiny light of her phone. Nuncey knows her phone will be dead by the time she arrives back home and with no way to charge it again until she returns to the orphanage the next day. She goes to leave, but then two children start arguing at the dinner table, she is kept for another 30 minutes to settle the dispute. Finally heading home, she rushes, cautious but brisk, trying to make it home to cook dinner for her family. She arrives home a little before 7 pm and begins making the same dinner she prepared at the orphanage, rice, and bean sauce, luckily her eldest daughter is there to help prepare the food and has already started the cooking. She feels guilty for not making it home on time, leaving this responsibility to her daughter. She begins taking the clothes down from the line that she washed yesterday after work, as the food is cooking. Her youngest children sit at the table asking her questions about their homework as she finishes dinner. By 9 pm, the children have been fed and bathed, ready for bed. Nuncey sings them to sleep, kissing their foreheads before she leaves them to their dreams. She thinks to herself about the sick child in the orphanage and hopes he is still asleep and feeling better. She returns now to the piles of laundry ready for folding and puts the clothes away. She is not done yet though, and sighs as she grabs the broom and mop and begins cleaning her home. If she doesn't do it now, it will never get done. By midnight, the strain in her back had turned into a throbbing pain. She lays out the clothes for the next day, wiping the feeling of exhaustion from her eyes, grabs a bucket, and fills it with water for her shower. Bathing quickly in the cold water Nuncey changes

into her night clothes and tucks herself into bed. As her head hits the pillow her thoughts run wild, going down the list of the chores she has to do tomorrow, what she needs to buy in the market this weekend, if she should get her son a new pair of shoes for school. By 1 am she closes her eyes. Nuncey is the last to fall asleep in her home.

To Be a Poto Mitan

One night I was with a group of friends, a mix of both expatriates and Haitians, chatting over cold Prestige (a local Haitian-made beer) and dinner when the conversation turned to women's role in society and the influence of culture, age, and class. As we sat there talking, I began thinking about my own work and the women I met working in orphanages. How have their lives been shaped by the gender roles laid upon them by society, economic circumstances, and family responsibilities? Later that night, as I arrived home, I began to journal all these thoughts from our discussion, one thought in particular stuck out to me: the polysemous quality of the word labor as it relates to women specifically. Labor, a word that transforms a woman into a mother through the rite of passage of childbirth, is the same word used to confine her in both the private and public spheres that become extensions of her motherhood, and with that, the expectations society places on women to fulfill caregiving roles. In addition, it calls attention to how women's labor for social reproduction has become commodifiable and the work of caring for someone attached to monetary value. Amy Wharton's work also explores how gender roles are shaped by society which then become adopted by business (2009: 149). She points out how 'feeling rules' play a role in the feminization of jobs geared towards customer service and working with the public. Customer service jobs are often highly demanding of emotional labor, and the feminization of emotional labor plays into the stereotypes of women being docile, more

even-tempered, and agreeable. Her work also spotlights issues with how emotional labor is more commonly expected of lower-level employees rather than managers and bosses, which are predominantly male-occupied roles.

Similarly, scholars like Lenore Manderson and Ellen Block 2016; Mark Schuller 2012, Shalini Grover, Thomas Chambers, and Patricia Jefferys 2016, offer critical insights into the discourse surrounding ideas of femininity and motherhood as it relates to the work of women in a wide range of contexts. Schuller (2012) discusses how humanitarian aid is carried out within a white, western context of what it means to provide aid and how, and that this perspective binds the image of Haiti in a vacuum of post-colonial, western stereotypes that reinforce a particular set of gendered and racialized conditions for receiving humanitarian aid. His work looks at the context of Haiti and the gendering of humanitarian aid, which refers to how gender norms and power dynamics shape the delivery and impact of aid interventions. Schuller explores how traditional gender roles and stereotypes influence both the design and implementation of humanitarian programs, as well as the experiences of aid recipients, particularly women and marginalized gender groups. As a result, women in Haiti, who face the brunt of structural violence, become “double victims” under humanitarian practice (2012: 34). First as victims of the initial complexities of structural violence that makes the majority of Haitians victims, but also women being the crucial roles as head of the household, *poto mitans*, and thus carries more of the burden to meet household demands, childcare needs, and maintenance of the family.

Manderson and Block’s (2016) research exploring care work and family dynamics in southern Africa and Grover, Chambers, and Jeffreys’ (2018) focus on ethnographic studies that delve into the experiences of women engaged in paid domestic care work in the context of a

globalizing India, encourages us to dive into the global context of how women working in this field interpret employer demands and socio-spatial dynamics of working inside someone else's home doing predominantly reproductive labor tasks. For Manderson and Block (2016), care work is deeply embedded within cultural norms, values, and practices (207). They explore how ideas about family, gender roles, and community influence who performs care work, how it is valued, and what forms it takes within different societies and communities. Given their focus on Southern Africa and beyond, Manderson and Block provide a global perspective on care work and shed light on similarities and differences in caregiving practices across cultures and regions, as well as the ways in which globalization, migration, and neoliberal economic policies shape patterns of care provision and access to care services. Similarly, Grover, Chambers, and Jeffreys' exploration into the globalization of care work provides insight into the nature of paid domestic care work in India, including the tasks involved, working conditions, remuneration, and the social and economic factors shaping women's engagement in this sector. They also elaborate on the intersections of gender, class, caste, and other social markers in shaping women's roles and experiences as domestic caregivers that is applicable to Haitian women working as nannies for the orphanage.

To unpack these theoretical interventions, we must first also look at how the roles of women and motherhood are created at the intersection of larger systemic, social, political, and economic structures.

Black-feminist scholar, Kimberlee Crenshaw, came up with the theory of intersectionality in 1993, providing a foundation to examine how social identities, like race, gender, and class, are not mutually exclusive phenomena, but rather overlapping social constructs that are defined by

the broader socio-political and economic systems of oppression. Her theory draws analytical attention to how people form their identities based on their social context which is then exploitable under capitalism, such as constructs surrounding women's role in the household as applicable to paid domestic work inside someone else's home.

In comparison, anthropologist Karen Brodtkin-Sacks' (1989) analysis leans towards understanding the complexities of labor that require considering the intersections of class, race, and gender. She suggests that it's not productive to analyze women's experiences solely through the lens of gender, as their identities are inherently interconnected with their racial and class identities (536). This perspective broadly aligns with Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality which is approached from the point of view of legal studies, while Brodtkin-Sacks works within a Marxist feminist perspective. In the context of feminist theory, recognizing the intersectionality of gender, race, and class identities is crucial for understanding the complexities of women's experiences in the workplace and in the home producing reproductive labor. Firstly, Brodtkin-Sacks' work is grounded in an understanding of class, race, and gender oppression as interconnected and integral parts of a unitary system, rather than as separate and distinct systems. She rejects the idea of analyzing capitalism and patriarchy in isolation from one another, recognizing instead how these systems intersect and mutually reinforce each other to produce and perpetuate various forms of oppression and inequality.

In her approach, Brodtkin-Sacks emphasizes the ways in which capitalist economic structures are deeply intertwined with patriarchal social relations, as well as with racial hierarchies. She states that capitalism relies on and reproduces gendered and racialized divisions of labor, exploitation, and power dynamics to maintain its dominance (1989: 535). By

emphasizing the interconnectedness of gender, race, and class identities, Brodtkin-Sacks challenges approaches to feminist theory and activism that prioritize gender as the sole or primary axis of analysis. Instead, she advocates for a convergent approach that takes into account the multiple dimensions of identity and power that shape women's lives. For example, women of different racial and class backgrounds experience gender oppression differently, as their social and economic contexts intersect with gender to produce unique forms of discrimination, marginalization, and privilege. A white woman from a middle-class background, for instance, may experience gender discrimination in the workplace differently than a woman of color from a working-class background, due to the additional layers of racial and class-based inequalities they face. In the stories of the women, you will be introduced to next, we can begin to understand Brodtkin-Sacks' intervention to feminist theory plays out in the lived experiences of women working as nannies in the orphanage. By recognizing the interconnectedness of gender, race, and class identities, Brodtkin-Sacks contributes to a more nuanced understanding of women's experiences and struggles. Her work underscores the importance of addressing multiple forms of oppression simultaneously and developing inclusive feminist analyses and strategies that center on the experiences of women from diverse racial and class backgrounds. Furthermore, Brodtkin-Sacks argues for recognizing the importance of understanding the dynamics of both waged and unwaged work, particularly within the context of women's experiences in the global economy. Women, especially women of color, often play pivotal roles in both spheres of labor and these roles are deeply intertwined with larger economic structures and power dynamics in the global economy. Women of color frequently occupy positions in both formal waged employment sectors, such as manufacturing or service industries, and informal or unwaged sectors, such as domestic work, caregiving, and subsistence farming. Brodtkin Sacks would argue that the

exploitation and undervaluation of women's labor, particularly that of women of color, are foundational to the functioning of global capitalism (1989: 537). Women of color are disproportionately represented in low-paying, precarious jobs with little job security or benefits, both domestically and in global supply chains, while also bearing the brunt of unpaid care work and household responsibilities.

For the purposes of this research, I draw upon both Crenshaw's contribution of intersectionality and Brodtkin-Sacks' consideration of racial and gender identities in relation to waged and unwaged labor to disentangle the nuances shaping the work of Haitian nannies. By addressing how politics of care are framed within power dynamics rooted in the interplay of race, gender, and class inequalities we can shed light on the unequal relations between the women working in the orphanages and the visitors coming to them.

In this chapter, you will be introduced to three women who work in 2 different orphanages, as well as hear from other women working as nannies interviewed during visits with IBESR to the orphanages they work in. As the main providers in most working-class households, Haitian women are often described as the *poto mitan*, Kreyol for center post of the home, meant to signify women as the backbone of the family and the household, and ultimately the center of society as part of both the fabric of social reproduction and production. To be very clear, poor Haitian women are the heart of economic production as well as the key to social reproduction. It is the poor Haitian woman who often wakes up every morning at 4 am to prepare breakfast, gets her children ready, and sends them to school, who then heads to the market with what little produce she has to haggle and negotiate all day with customers and other vendors, bringing home the majority of income for the household, deciding how it will be spent; it is she who earns the

respected title of *poto mitan*. When I asked the women who work in orphanages what it means to be a *poto mitan*, one young woman of 33 years old who had been working there for almost 4 years smiled at me and simply said,

“It means I am the home, the strength, the *family*. These are a woman's responsibility, and it is a heavy one to carry, but as we say, everyone is burdened with their own cross to bear.”

The concept of a *poto mitan* is reflective of how life revolves around women performing productive and reproductive labor in society. Women are the focal point of the home, of family, and of the community. Their labor both formally and informally, socially and reproductively is directly linked to their identities from this social construct of a *poto mitan*, and the meaning of this construct becomes prevalent in the stories the women in this chapter share with how they fulfill that role both publicly and privately in their work in the orphanage.

When discussing the imagery of a *poto mitan*, I draw parallels from the ethnographic research conducted by Michele Ruth Gamburd in 2010 on Sri Lankan women who migrate to areas in wealthier countries to work as nannies and domestic workers. What Gamburd discovers is the agency and resilience of domestic workers, which reshapes the way motherhood is defined and how a mother's role can be linked to financial income and financial independence which shifts family dynamics that center women as the “breadwinners” rather than men (2000:208). Furthermore, how these women view themselves as a part of the larger global economy which affords them income and recognition in their home communities. As it relates to concepts of *poto mitan*, the stories, and experiences shared by the women in this chapter will correlate to how they use their position as ‘center posts of the household, to navigate and resist their

positionality in the orphanage as both marginalized women whose labor are exploited by the orphanage but also how that very labor allows them to be the main source for bringing income in their household. Furthermore, how they use the very roles of the *poto mitan*, to resist and challenge the labor hierarchy of the orphanage system that places them as necessary to the orphanage's care work while restricting their authority and agency.

Meeting “Judeline”

It was already late in the day when Jackson, my personal driver, called me to let me know he had a friend who worked in an orphanage about fifteen minutes away in the zone of Simone and she wanted to meet with me for an interview. I had been in the middle of transcribing previous interviews and was sitting cozily on my bed ready to stay put for the night. Hesitantly, I asked, “Konya?” right now? Looking at the clock it was already getting close to 5 pm. “Wi, li la konya nou ka vini” he responded eagerly: “yes, she was there, and we should go right now.” I quickly gathered my things and put on my shoes to meet him outside. The sun was setting as we drove down the road, turning off on an unpaved, side road we weaved our way behind homes and in small alleys to come out into an open space shared by several houses that faced the opening. I walked up to the door and was greeted by a young man, Charlie, who ushered us in the front door. Upon first walking in, I noticed there were no panes on the windows, only bars, a common scene for homes in Haiti in the process of building, which can take years to collect enough money to finish. Instead, many homes are lived in as they are being built and this house was no different. The floors were just concrete, the walls showing the gray cement blocks all around, and a stairway leading up to the second story that looked inaccessible. A light breeze came in through the windows blowing the neon pink curtains, hung by a string tied to each side,

outward. Although the breeze felt nice, open windows and doors attract all types of insects I thought as I slapped a mosquito away from my leg and was met with a giggle from a woman walking in carrying in a large, metal washtub stacked high dirty clothes. She sat down on the washtub beside another large bucket full of water and motioned for me to sit down in one of the plastic garden chairs she had set up in what was meant to be the living room of an unfinished home. She sat on the bottom step of her stairway, looking up at me she smiled and introduced herself with such confidence, “My name is Judeline, I thank you for coming to talk with me today and welcome you to my home, Jackson told me about your research, and I thought it would be alright for us to talk together.” As it turned out, talking to Judeline was like talking to an old friend; it came easily. I made a mental note to thank Jackson again for convincing me to come to meet Judeline that day. I began by asking her questions about her life, as she carefully cut pieces off a large stick of soap that she would later roll into smaller balls and use to wash the stains out of the laundry.

“I was born in the small town of Les Anglais, do you know of it? Yes, good! Then you know how beautiful it is, it was more beautiful before Hurricane Matthew. Oh! I will never forget Matthew, it was so terrible...That and the earthquake (referring to the August 14th, 2021 earthquake in Les Cayes) ...but growing up in Les Anglais life was normal before. I had both of my parents...I learned to do commerce from my mother. When I was little, I loved to take the money from customers and keep it in the bag for my mother. We would sell whatever we could: fruits like mango, vegetables like yam, onion, and potatoes, and clothes if we could find enough before market day.”

She began cutting up a large stick of soap to roll into small balls for washing out stains as she scrubbed the fabric between her callused hands, dipping the soapy clothes back into the water before ringing them out. Laundry in Haiti is no easy task, often backbreaking as you crouch over a bucket and using your hands, vigorously scrubbing each part of the fabric between your hands and knuckles. For me, doing laundry here has always been one of my least favorite chores, causing my hands to cramp at the scrubbing and wringing out the clothes to hang dry. I offered to help Judeline with the laundry, looking up at me she assessed me, probably deciding whether or not I had done laundry like that before and if it was more of a hassle than a help to her if I tried. She decided on the former, smiling politely and telling me that she was used to the work and that it was no problem for her. I knew she was just being polite, so I asked “Do you ever get tired of doing the same chores each day? Both for work and at home?” she looked thoughtfully for a moment then replied:

“I provide a service, both at work and in my home, you think my boyfriend would do the laundry!? Laughing, she continues... at work, I tell them what my service means, and I get paid, but at home, I am doing this all on my own”

At that moment her son walked in, she beamed with joy, and introduced him to me as he disappeared behind the curtain separating the living room from what I assumed was the main bedroom. She continued, telling me that he was 13 years old, she had him at 21 years old, now at 34, he is her only child, and for her “being a mother means someone is always dependent on you, it means you live for something other than yourself. I make sure my child has both parents, goes to school, and is fed each day; I help him get up and get ready in the mornings and I take care of him. When I am at work late or on the weekends, his father brings him to the orphanage to play

with the other kids so I can spend time with him.” I ask how she manages, she laughs, and I say, “Because you’re a mom?” she slaps her hand on her hip excitedly responding with a “Yes, exactly!” She twists a pair of pants between her hands wringing out the water and soap into the bucket before she responds. Finally, she looks up and very seriously begins to describe what *poto mitan* means to her.

“As a woman, you are the central point to the household, everyone in the house is dependent upon you, if the post falls, if *I* fall, then they would have nothing” I ask if she believes that is why so many orphanages hire women as nannies instead of men. “Oh yes! You think a man will do the work of women?” Showing me with her soapy, water-dripping hands she raises her left hand up stating, “Men think they are superior, and that women (taking her right hand she holds it right above the floor) are down here... only god will change the mentality of men.”

The night soon crept into the house, leaving us in almost total darkness, with me trying to scribble as fast as I could into my notebook without being able to see what I wrote. She called out for her boyfriend asking him to bring a phone with the light on so that we could see. She apologized for not having any light yet in her house but with a wave of her hand I knew she understood that it did not bother me, and I assured her I was used to all kinds of research conditions and a lack of lighting was not a major problem. She laughed again her hearty laugh and commented on how the lack of light made it harder to do her chores once she was home but because she did not leave the orphanage until 5 pm or later, walking daily over 20 minutes to and from the orphanage since moto-taxis are expensive, and stated during the winter seasons it became harder to finish her chores since night falls earlier. Her boyfriend came in quietly as if to not disrupt the gathering of women, he looked at us back and forth and grinned, asking what we

were talking about. Judeline replied (a quick response) that it was about work and what it was like in an orphanage as a nanny. She did not elaborate on the topic of motherhood or the concept of *poto mitan*, and she avoided sharing her opinion about men she offered me, and looking at me she smiled a smile that felt like one that all women can understand. One of unity, one where even if we may not relate economically, racially, socially, or even have much in common for that matter, we do understand what it is like to be a woman and how talking about men is something done freely amongst other women but never, or rarely, in the company of men. We shared a private chat, giggling like young girls about the woes of men and it was ours to keep between the two of us. Her boyfriend shrugged, sensing that his living room had been overtaken by the gossip and chatting of women, turned, and headed back outside to finish his beers with friends who had stopped by. You could hear them talking outside the window a few yards away, sitting in the courtyard as children from the neighboring houses played around them. I looked at the time on my phone and realized we had been talking for almost 2 hours. I asked her if it was alright, we continued the conversation another day, and she happily agreed. Gathering my things together to head home, she stopped me, her hand still damp from the laundry water. She thanked me for listening to her and said that she was looking forward to seeing me again. I couldn't help but hug her goodbye and thank her for her time. Waving as we drove off, I immediately texted her asking what day she was available to meet again.

Judeline's Life History

Born in the small town of Les Anglais, Judeline was the last of 8 children, with 4 brothers and 3 sisters. She recalls:

“I was always the baby of the family, even when my father decided to adopt two children, a brother, and a sister, they were older than me but like new to the family, even though they also treated me like a baby from the very first day. I was so young when they came home with my father. Our church pastor made an announcement that an orphanage in a nearby town needed people to support and adopt the children, you see back then, it was more common for Haitians to adopt or take in kids from the orphanage,” although she had no idea if the adoption was legally based or if her 2 adopted siblings just came to live with them becoming a part of the family over time. “Now, you have so many orphanages and no one to take the kids, that’s why the foreigners come. Haiti is not like it used to be. Growing up, life was normal!” She says with a shrug as if she cannot recollect exactly when Haiti changed so significantly during her lifetime. “I had both parents, went to school, and I love my country ... but it is too hard now! When I was young, I had no plans for my life. I went to school and left for university here in Les Cayes to receive my degree in business administration.” A degree that many young women in Haiti get but never actually benefits them in finding a job. “Now, I wake up just to go to bed later...that is my life now! As a kid, I had everything I needed, we all did (implying her family) but now everything is always uncertain, Haiti is uncertain... I used to do commerce, like my mother and my aunties. I liked doing commerce because I could make my own schedule. I used to bring my son when he was little, like my mother brought me with her. We could eat when we were hungry and sleep behind the pallets of clothes when we got tired. It was so much easier! Now, I wake up at 5 am to leave for work and arrive by 7:30 am and I usually do not get home until after 6 pm, even if I am supposed to leave at 5 pm.”

The orphanage where Judeline works is roughly 20 minutes of walking, rain or sunshine, each day to and from the orphanage, unable to afford the cost of a taxi moto twice a day. She had

originally volunteered a few times at the orphanage and only recently was able to secure a full-time, paid position with the help of her friend who also works at the orphanage.

Judeline's opinion about orphanages

On my second visit with Judeline (See Figure 4.1), we sat on the edge of her bed, more intimately this time as she spoke freely about her work in the orphanage. I asked her what she thought about orphanages in Haiti, and what their purpose was. She sat thinking for a moment, and then replied, "Orphanages have become one of the few opportunities for safety for some kids." I asked what she meant by that, and she elaborated saying,

"The situation in Haiti has worsened, everything is *tet chaje* (*Kreyol phrase where in this context means to indicate a problem without a solution*), we have a lot of children coming from the capital of Port-au-Prince to here and other places in the countryside where it is safer.....here in Joy and Grace Home, we have 17 children in total. Many of them came from the capital and surrounding areas. Parents place their children in an orphanage when they do not have the capacity to take care of them, like give them food, send them to school..." She continues adding that many of the children who are in an orphanage have a better chance of attending school even as the country's security deteriorates because orphanages often host schools on their own campus, allowing children in their institution to go to school frequently even if children in their own neighborhood are forced to stay at home. Schools in Haiti have been inconsistent since 2020 when COVID-19 initially closed schools for almost a year, and then as gang violence increased in the capital, many schools have not opened in over two years.



Figure 4.1 Photo of Judeline taken during an interview at her home

During my fieldwork, schools finally opened at the end of December 2022 in areas of Port-au-Prince after not opening since 2020. Since so many children have been deprived of an education and too many people, like Judeline, orphanages with private schools on their campus give children a chance to receive an education despite the issues that prevent other schools from opening. Her response to the functional role of orphanages represents the challenges parents are facing with the increasing insecurity issues, like gang violence, and inflation, and as a result, more and more parents are unable to send their children to school, keep them fed daily, and guarantee their safety while living at home. As security crumbles so does their ability to keep their children safe, even when they may be able to take care of them.

“The orphanage is ah, oh how can I say this, well where I work is okay, the work is good, it keeps kids off the street. When you see what kids lack on the streets, to parents the orphanage seems like a better place to keep their children...on the street, they have gang violence but when you have security you can go to school, you can eat well” I ask her if she thinks there is a difference between the orphanage she works at and others. She nods, elaborating that “when the objective of an orphanage is negative like they are here for profit or abuse the children...oh, I have even heard about using children for organs!” She points to her stomach looking at me to acknowledge I understand what she means, nodding for her to continue, she then raises her hand up to the ceiling and shakes her head like she’s shooing away the thought of what she just said. “Then the way the orphanage will function is bad,”

I ask Judeline if she sees any negative impacts orphanages have on children’s development and how it may help or hinder to prepare them for adulthood.

“Children who grow up in an orphanage are very immature...oh it drives me crazy! They do not have the mentality to do something for themselves, they expect me to do it for them and then I have to show the older girls how to help me with chores so that they will know what to do in their own homes one day. For example, my son does for himself what I have to do for some of the children in the orphanage but when children grow up with a mama and papa they are taught things and receive the attention they need to learn how to act but in the orphanage without a mama and papa giving them attention, they become very immature because they are desperate for that affection and I am only one person for a lot of children” Pausing she stops to think and then adds, “the children also live a life of solitude, they are alone a lot and it is not the same way as children who grow up with their parents...those kids with parents are never alone because they have a mama and papa who think of them and do for them, but children in orphanages do not interact with other people like that and when they go out into society, you know Haitian society is very strong,” she says looking at me for agreement, which I nod, “*you have to have a family because it is all you have*. When children live in the orphanage, they do not know how to interact with society and they remain in solitude their whole life because they do not know how to speak with others, ask for help...this impacts them badly,” she says sucking on her teeth making a common sound of disapproval as she shakes her head.

The conversation turned to what it is like for her to work there and interact with the children on a daily basis. I asked her about how she viewed the orphanage staff and children as a whole and how she felt it resembled a community or family from her perspective. She replied,

“I love each one of the children like they are my ownwhen a child first comes to the orphanage, they are crying a lot. Their parents are with them but when they go to leave, the kids

become traumatized and won't stop crying. The first few days are the worst for them, and we try to give them attention and support but they cannot find the same kind of affection here as they do with their mama or papa. When they are home, they only have to go to their parents to find love and affection, but here [in the orphanage] you have to search for it, there are many children and only one of me."

I ask her if she believes that strangers can give children the same affection as a child's parent. She draws back and with an exaggerated tone, replies "Oh Wiiii!" Kreyol for yes, then continues, "It is possible, very possible... when I arrive at work, I show the same affection for each child there as I do my own son, every child there is my child too!" I considered her response for a moment before asking, almost too quietly since I was not sure if the question would upset her, if she thought a stranger could care for her child, give her child the same love and affection as she does. She hesitated before answering.

"I am here so he does not have to seek affection elsewhere, but I think that it could be possible...if he was not with me, that someone else could show him the same affection but they would not love him the same."

It was with this I realized what she meant. For her, she can give a child the same affection as their parents could, but it still is not coming from their parents themselves, the act of showing affection to the child is insufficient when the affection they desire is from their parents, not strangers, and not the orphanage nannies with whom they become attached to. Judeline recognized that without elaborating on it in her response although she believed another person

could love her child, she understood that love is not the same as when it comes from her. The same applies to the children in the orphanage. Judeline continued...

“The children where I work have grown more attached to me than their own parents. It becomes a habit for them to live in the orphanage and not with their own families. When some of them go home over Christmas break or for visits with their family, they do not feel as comfortable at home as they do in the orphanage because the orphanage has become normal for them, they spend a lot of their life with us.... I am the one who is there to feed them, wake them up for school, and get them ready. I do everything a parent does and they are comfortable with me. For them, the staff are their mama and papa, and the orphanage is where they want to stay when they leave and go back home as adults, their families are strangers, they do not know them and it is harder for families to accept them.”

Judeline’s comment provides insight into the juxtaposition that children face. Firstly, children taken from their homes, especially at young ages and who have grown up in the orphanage most of their lives, face feeling alienated from their own families once they return home. Due to living years apart from their parents and family, they can feel more comfortable at the orphanage simply because it is their routine, their life, and the people they see on a daily basis create bonds which are the same familia bonds being severed the longer the child remains in the orphanage. However, as participants introduced earlier state and echoed by Judeline’s comments, children not only recognize, but *feel* the difference in what it means to be cared for by a nanny who clocks out at a certain hour, leaving to return to their own family, and the nurturing and love they receive from their parents and family who never is ‘off the clock.’ Simply put, being comfortable does not mean it is fulfilling or sufficient. This means that even though a

child in an orphanage receive attention from a caregiver they have grown attached to, the separation from their families, their parents, and their communities leaves a gap between the affection they desire from family connection with the part-time affection they get from various nannies in the orphanage.

“Normally parents visit only every three to six months because traveling here can be costly for them...mothers are the ones who come more often than fathers to visit their children and they will bring them some food and a little bit of cash or clothes to keep...before the children see their parents, we prepare them, and the parents will wait to see their children. We wash them and put them in nice clothes, fix their hair so they look nice when they see their parents and it makes their parents happy to see them doing wellI did not know any families before I came to work here but I get to know the families when they come to see their children”

I was curious to know if she would put her own son in an orphanage. Immediately, she responded with “Oh no!! I am here for him.” I pushed a little further asking if he was in the same situation many of these parents were in that dropped their children off at an orphanage, would she then consider it? Pausing to think, she almost looked hurt by the question as if she had never considered being in that desperate of a situation. She continues by saying,

“I would not feel good about that at all, because I am here and that is the difference with children in the orphanage, they do not have their parents.” To me, she seemed to disassociate with the fact that the children do have parents but are not physically with them. “If I had no other choice, I would cry.... oh, I would cry all the time. I would be devastated...to be separated from

your child is hard, but if I had no other options and did not have the capacity to take care of him...maybe, maybe I would....” She trails off, thinking about the scenario in her head.

The last question I had about orphanages was if she thought that orphanages were able to prepare children for adulthood knowing the stigma that many children and adults face once they leave the orphanage. She replied,

“It helps to have parents to return to. If a child has parents the parents can help support them, and find them jobs, but it is also hard for the children to accept this when they must do for themselves and are not supported by an organization [meaning the orphanage]. Parents already do not have much, but when the children have parents, they have at least someone to help them as adults.”

How Judeline Describes Her Work

“I began working at the orphanage because a friend of mine I know worked there and she helped me get a job” I ask her why she works at an orphanage and if she ever imagined she would work at one. Shrugging she smacked the back of her hand on her other, a common Haitian hand gesture signifying a kind of a “what can you do” sentiment in response to a situation... she explained to me: “I work for money... the work I do I can feel okay about it because I am good to the children and love them like I love my own child.”

When asked about her relationship with other orphanage staff she described a system of seniority. One in which the longer a person worked there, the more power they had over other staff, as well as more authority over the children. “I have not been there but almost a year

officially, I helped sometimes before but did not become friends with the other women (nannies) until I started working We all do the same chores, taking care of the kids, bathing them, brushing their hair, iron their clothes, but the women who have been there longer are closer to the children. The kids will listen to them better Normally we all share the chores equally. We have jobs we are better at like one lady does most of the cooking, but there is one woman who has been there a long time... she always just sits around and watches us work. She was here when the orphanage was created.”

Judeline points to a process fairly common in workspaces, where the longer you have worked there, the more respect and power you tend to have. Judeline, being the newest staff addition, faced an initiation process both with the kids and the other nannies, “At first the children remembered me from when I had volunteered before, but it took time for them to trust me. They just saw me as an adult. With the other women, it was easier, we are adults and they saw I was there to help and work.” Her words highlight two points: that she had to earn the trust of both the children and other women working in the orphanage, as well as having to *prove herself* to the other women that she would be an asset rather than a burden, like a rite of passage to be accepted in their space. Her comment about the woman who had been there the longest taking on less and less hands-on responsibilities is indicative of how work hierarchies are formed and applied. The woman described by Judeline seemed to take on more of a supervisory role to the other nannies, having been there since the beginning of the orphanage, she was viewed as the ‘boss’ to which the other women obeyed, as well as the children. When I asked if she was ever annoyed the children did not listen to her at first or if she was upset that some of the women did not work as hard as she did, she looked at me like it was obvious, but only said, “What can I do? I am there to work, to care for the children.” Her reply made it clear: she understood that her

position was below the other nannies who had worked there longer, and that this impacted her relationship with the children.

During the first interview at her home, as she continued washing her laundry on the edge of the steps, I asked her how she viewed the work she does for the orphanage in relation to the chores she does at home. She raised her head letting the soapy water on her hand drip into the bucket between her knees. “I work whether I am paid or not, this (looking down at the bucket of laundry) is work I have to do.” I was intrigued as to how she did not differentiate between the work she was paid for at the orphanage with the work she did in the home as obligatory... “I cook, I clean, I have to arrive before the children wake up so I can wake them and prepare them for school which means giving everyone baths, fixing their hair, things like that, then I prepare the food with the help of the other staff.” As she went on to explain, the work at home may be similar to what she does in the orphanage, but the context in which the work is being done is different. Most importantly, she gets paid to care in the orphanage, while at home her work is not.

When I asked if there are men who work at the orphanage, she confirmed there are but the roles they serve are quite different from hers and the other women. “It is not normal to find a man that works in an orphanage, not like the work I doFirst, they do not know how to cook or do not want to cook, they are not always available...and,” looking directly at me she almost whispers, “it is not good to mix older men with young girls or children that are not their own, you know?” Looking at me with eyes that implied what we both already knew to be true in many orphanages, sexual abuse occurs at a higher rate when male staff is present in orphanages that are housing young girls. In fact, as a rule of IBESR, orphanages are supposed to be separated by sex

as well as age and have separate sleeping quarters. Unfortunately, this rarely happens and out of the orphanages I visited, only 3 had totally separate spaces to meet both age and sex regulations. Furthermore, women staff are to attend to the girls and young boys (usually prepubescent), while the male staff are assigned to older boys. In reality, sexual abuse occurs at the hands of both female and male staff, but these tend to be under-reported due to the stigma and misinformation about sexual abuse committed by women on young boys.

A study done in 2019 by a global child protection organization, Better Care Network, reported that children living in institutions were 54% more likely to experience sexual abuse than children residing in the care of their own families. Judeline's acknowledgment of sexual abuse and her awareness of how it is more common in orphanages points to a larger issue of safety and security in response to which orphanages will hire more women to avoid rather than address their failure to properly vet and monitor their staff.

Judeline's story is one that many Haitian women share, her struggles, her work life, her love life, and motherhood are all common bonds that link Haitian women together by commonality, in solidarity, and through nuanced systems of sharing and reciprocity, they depend on each other as their families depend on them. Her story also highlights the roles that women play, both productively and reproductively as wives, mothers, employees, and caregivers. She recognizes that the work she does for the orphanage is the same as she does for her household and that the two are dependent upon each other. The work she does for the orphanages allows her to maintain the work she does in her home. As a mother, Judeline wipes the tears away from her son's eyes, she cooks for her family, plays with her kids, cleans her home, and manages the daily life of her household; as an employee at the orphanage, she does all the same things for the

children who she has created fictive kinship bonds with and who she is not only in charge of caring for but in charge of controlling on behalf of the orphanage, acting simultaneously as a manager. Judeline's story highlights what scholars like Susan Cheever (2002), Cameron Macdonald (2011), and others have addressed in their own research, that the work provided by nannies is both formal productive labor, like preparing food for the children which can be seen, tracked, measurable within the parameters of what a nanny is required to do, at the basic surface level; and unpaid emotional labor, like staying to console a crying child after designated work hours which is not written in the job description officially but is still very much required. For Judeline, emotional labor comes with the responsibilities of the job. She is aware that because she is not a biological parent to these children in her care, her authority over them is different from that of the parental rights she has over her own son. For example, in the comments she made about the children needing to learn to trust her, she points out how that took time for her to earn that trust to build relationships and indirectly, how it required emotional labor on her part to remain patient for her *to learn* how to treat the children at the orphanage in a similar fashion to how she treats her own son. The form of emotional labor utilized by nannies, like Judeline, can be witnessed in acts of tolerance and patience with children when they disobey, staying later because one of the children is upset and asks her to stay with them, or even holding them as they fall asleep singing to them several hours after she was supposed to clock out.

The next two women in this chapter worked at an orphanage they started almost 20 years ago together. Unlike Judeline, these women lived in the orphanage full time with the children and had cared for some of the children for over 15 years, since infancy. Using their story parallel to Judeline's, I will compare how living in the orphanage can impact the relationship between a

caregiver and the children they care for as well as variations in how nannies view their roles in relation to the orphanage.

Meeting Gigi and Magalinde

Driving up to the compound of the orphanage I immediately knew this was a place that receives a good amount of funding. In the compound were two buildings. One was the main area for recreation and eating and the other for housing the children in their care. Westaphanie, a social worker for IBESR who accompanied me to most of my orphanage visits, and I got out of the car and were greeted by two women, Magalinde and Gigi, who kissed us on the cheek as they welcomed us into the recreational center of the orphanage. We were ushered into the living room area filled with shelves of toys, books, and walls lined with pictures of the kids and drawings. In all honesty, it reminded me of a daycare center, and I wondered just how Americanized the orphanage had become. I would find out shortly later just how much each child I began to interview spoke English and attended a private English-speaking school nearby that was run by an American woman who partnered with the orphanage. Magalinde sat in what I assumed was “her chair” as she comfortably plopped down and settled into the familiarity of the recliner. Gigi chose to sit opposite to us on the couch where she motioned for Westaphanie and me to sit on the other one directly in front of her as Magalinde set off to our left, rocking lightly back and forth.

What was interesting was that women chose to speak with me together as if they were two halves of a woman, the entire interview would be both of them finishing up each other's sentences, adding comments or opinions to what the other said, and generally speaking as one person. I learned the orphanage had been around for twenty-seven years and originally was based

in the outskirts of Port-au-Prince where Magalinde originally lived, she chose to move as violence escalated over the years and brought the children into their center with them. I asked how this orphanage had gotten started and was able to remain open for so long. Magalinde answered,

“Almost thirty years ago, I began working with children in my community. Haiti has a lot of problems and as I continued working with kids, it grew into creating an orphanage and helping the parents take care of their children. I love working with kids and Haiti has a lot of rejected kids.”

She also added that over the years, the American-based INGO Food for the Poor was the main sponsor for her orphanage up until the Covid pandemic in 2020 after which they received little to no support.

“Starting out, it was just me, and then Gigi (in Les Cayes) came along to help me and we had volunteers and our families and friends would support us by giving us some food, donating clothes, or a little bit of money. Eventually, we had teams (mainly American missionaries on short-term missions) come and they were the biggest support but after Covid-19, we haven’t had any new teams down.”

Magalinde worked as the director and founder of the orphanage with Gigi as her right-hand woman. Together they ran a tight ship with 26 children in their care and with the help of 4 other staff members. Since we had gotten on the topic of volunteers, I asked them both what they thought of the teams who came down. Gigi replied:

“Oh, we enjoyed it! The teams would come and stay on the property in the guest house, it was nice having people come and see what we are doing and support us” I asked if they helped take care of the children when they were here. Gigi looking up shyly said, “Well, they help...sometimes” Looking as if she was not sure how much she wanted to elaborate, I urged her to continue and asked if sometimes having the teams visit here made her job harder. She smiled at that, deciding I would understand her, and continued “Yes, yes...I am happy they came but it is much harder to do my job when the *blan* visits because the children are so excited they do not want to listen. They do not want to sit still. They do not focus enough to even do their homework! They want to play all the time and know that it is harder for us to say no when the *blan* are here because they came to play with the children.”

When I asked why they thought that parents placed children in an orphanage and what the role of an orphanage was, Magalinde said, “Well I think it’s because parents do not have the time or ability to care for their kids, you have a lot of parents with no money.” Following up quickly, Gigi added, “well that and then you have parents who do not know how to take care of kids, for example, we have several children here in the orphanage whose parents were in our orphanage many years ago. Some of it is immaturity and some of it is because they have no other way to care for their kids. We have had many children before who had one parent living with us, and it’s because they know we can pay for school, feed their child three meals a day, and that they are safe... this happens a lot when one parent dies and the other knows about us and brings their kid here.”

I had heard of this happening before but have never heard it admitted outright so I followed up by asking why they think those kids put their children in the same orphanage and if

they looked at it like extended family because they themselves lived in the orphanage before. Gigi explained as she cocked her head to the side,

“Well, we know it is not a *real* family,” emphasizing the word real, “but we make it like we are one big family...even when the *blan* visited they would tell us, Oh! That is not an orphanage, that is a big home.”

I continued by asking what happens to children once they reach eighteen and are supposed to return to their families. Gigi answered,

“We do not have families come and visit their children often because it may be too long or take too much money to travel here, or maybe they are too busy. When a child turns eighteen, we buy them a phone so that they can call their families whenever they want to, because before they had to use our phone to call them or speak with them. They get two options, they can either return home to their families or stay here and volunteer. Many do not want to return because their families are still not able to give them a better life, more opportunities, go to university, and we can.”

Magalinde added, “We have some children who come to us at one or two months old or as babies and we are all they know. They are comfortable here in the orphanage and with us. We think of each of them as our own kids! I do not have children of my own, but I have these children and I feel like they are mine.”

I ask how this impacts their home life and how to work and dedicate themselves to the children here. I was surprised to learn that both of them work and live on the property, Gigi even

bringing her daughter with her so that she can take care of her more and who grew up alongside the other children.

“Before, I did not have much time to care for her. It is very busy here and there is no one to help us, so I would stay late and get home late. I decided it was best to move in here. Now, I am able to see my child whenever I want while I work.”

Gigi’s story represents blurring the lines between work and home space as she performs the same house chores for both her job, as well as for herself and her daughter. Because she lives in the orphanage, her obligations as a parent and good employee are harder to separate. Even more so, her need to provide emotional labor is continuous, since in the orphanage where she lives, she is both an employee and a mother to her own young daughter, who although grown, lives with them in the orphanage with her mother and Magalinde.

Using this as a gateway to another question I was curious about, what they thought could be done to help parents keep their children. Magalinde responded,

“I do not know how to help parents keep their children and since I have the ability to care for them, I can help them when they put the child in the orphanage with us, and I give their child all the affection I can and save them from a life of something like a *restavek* because that is not a respectful life for a child.”

Gigi added,

“Kids need to know happiness but because of the economy, many parents are too stressed to show their kids attention or true sentiment and often will take their stress out on their kids. If we changed our economy, parents could be parents and kids could be kids together. We know in the orphanage; the children will never receive the same affection as they do from their parents but we try.”

Gigi’s open response to admit she knew there was a difference interested me, as this was not the common narrative of a ‘happy, loving family’ the orphanage sells. Yet I could visibly see there was a type of dissociation at work for both of them. On one hand, both Magalinde and Gigi spoke about the children in their facility like their own, even calling them their children and being called mama by the kids, yet at the end of their conversation they admitted they are aware the children are not theirs and have true, biological families of their own, but felt the responsibility as if they were the real parents while acknowledging they really were not.

The interviews of these three women show similar characteristics to how they view and understand their position in the orphanage, yet also provide some interesting points of discussion in differences. First, let’s take a look at the similarities of how the orphanages frame the work of these women and how they view it.

In each story shared, the women openly discuss how their work as caregivers requires some level of emotional labor and how their productive roles are tied to a part of their reproductive identities as mothers, wives, *poto mitans*. That is what makes pinpointing the specific cracks and faults of labor so difficult because we oftentimes identify with our work like the old saying goes, you “live to work” not only because work is what allows you to live but also

because we view our work as part of what shapes who we are. Scholars like Amy Wharton (2006) and Kathi Weeks (2011) have argued that the dominant capitalist framework equates one's identity and self-worth with one's employment and productivity. In this framework, a person's job often becomes a central aspect of their identity, shaping how they view themselves and how society perceives them. All three women in this chapter see the orphanage as a space of employment but also a space of care tied simultaneously with the practice and politics of care, charity, and morality. Their work as caregivers to orphaned children, whether they are true orphans or not, gives them not only jobs with economic stability and freedom but also jobs that are socially tied to their ethics and morality. Furthermore, in the case of orphanages, their work reflects a religious calling, fulfilling the obligation to attend to the suffering of others. For example, when speaking with other women I interviewed working at orphanages, they would often describe their work in the orphanage as a religious calling to care for vulnerable children while also justifying their work as an extension of motherhood. Cameron MacDonald and David Merrill's (2009) research on the intersectionality of the emotional proletariat (definition forthcoming) in care work contexts provides key insights into how women working as nannies begin to identify with the care work, they do as an extension of their Christian duties and also sheds light on how they use their position in the orphanage to gain social prestige in their communities. Cameron and MacDonald elaborate on how the care work of the nannies becomes rooted in the concept of "community mothers" positioning them as assets to both their employers and their communities. In relation to the orphanage, Gigi and Magalinde's sentiments of being 'called' to care for the children is a reflection of their self-identities as 'good Christian women' and as a result, as beneficial contributors to their communities. What happens under these conditions is a transformative process in which the children separated from their families become

proof of good deeds done by the women caring for them who feel ‘called’ by God to be their fictive mothers and love them, care for them, and treat them as they do their own children. Every one of the 26 women I interviewed who worked as a nanny for an orphanage said they love and care for the children as their own, but few actually acknowledged that they cared for these children on a time clock and were able to clock out at a certain time to go home to their biological children. Over time speaking to these women, I came to see how their identities as mothers were transferred into their workplaces, and witnessed how they related to children in their care because they came from the same socio-economic background. It was both out of love for their own children and empathy for the children they cared for, while being aware of the fact that without the employment of the orphanage, many of them would be in the same situation, having to decide whether to place their own children in orphanages. Furthermore, I saw how these women became links to the community and wider society and culture for the children since they were restricted from leaving the compound, with many having their own school and church on the same compound, meaning the children rarely ever had lives outside the space the orphanage creates. What moved me the most about these relationships was that to the kids inside the orphanage, the women and other staff became everything to them, their family. Looking back at the comment from Magalinde, children who enter the orphanage under the age of 5, rarely see their biological families, the orphanage becomes the only family they know, and the women their only motherly figures.

Kathi Weeks’ (2011) research on labor questions the ideology surrounding what it means to act professionally in the workplace. For Weeks, professionalism is tied to a desired attitude towards one’s work that problematically binds together the work they do with their moral and ethical identity which in turn, is supposed to make employees feel good about the work they do

and thus work harder, work more, and have a sense of pride in the work they do (2011: 14). For women in the orphanage, professionalism requires both paid and unpaid labor, cooking and cleaning but also the subtle acts like the wiping of tears when a child cries or holding children as they fall asleep singing to them. Professionalism for the orphanage means the women are expected to refine their roles within the social reproduction sphere to professionalize it for the sphere of production and ultimately professionalize motherhood. Women are defined by patriarchal social constructs that label them with characteristics like a nurturing demeanor, or submissiveness, characteristics that the orphanage exploits to create an environment where the children are being taken care of in what, to the naked eye, is seemingly a resemblance of a loving, caring, family. In reality, it is a form of forced fictive kinship where the women are employees of the orphanage, and their position as temporary mothers goes hand in hand with them being dutiful employees. The utilization of their presumed roles as mothers is what makes their productive labor possible. This productive labor must be beneficial to themselves, and so they must do the necessary work of also “coaching orphans to emphasize their material deprivation,” (Cheney 2017: 36), thereby benefiting from the economic incentives the orphanage provides them in the form of employment. Orphanage services trickle down to both orphans and nannies as benefits or incentives that require both to produce and manage emotional labor, helping the orphanage to maintain services orphans and nannies use (Cheney 2017: 37). The nannies’ ability to regulate and control the children’s affect and help them use emotional labor, is made possible by their socially reproductive roles as fictive mothers to the children. The bond formed between the nannies and the children they care for is what gives the children structure and routine to perform the emotional labor required of them. The orphanage sells the image of the nanny as selfless women who care for the children like their own, exemplifying their

identities as naturally caring motherly figures, but to the orphanage, they are first and foremost the managers of the children, not just their caregivers. Caregiving is only the vehicle that makes regulating the children easier as well as the foundation to which orphanages can say: “We care for the children like they are our own as one big family” and market that narrative.

Looking back at the orphanage as a play production, the nannies are hired in positions similar to stagehands, where they are responsible for helping set up the stage for the orphanage as well as ensuring the actors, children in this case, are ready to perform and that the show goes on without any mishaps. However, their responsibilities extend past keeping the children ready to perform and utilize emotional labor and include maintaining the ability to constantly provide their own emotional labor and affective behavior when interacting with visitors and managerial staff who are predominantly foreigners.

When first interviewing Gigi and Magalinde they mentioned connections to both American and Canadian donors but did not elaborate on how the connection came to be or who directly they were speaking about. It would be during another informal interview conducted with a former orphanage volunteer that I would discover how the current power dynamics of the orphanage came to play out. As Gigi and Magalinde stated, they were still being supported by a young American woman and when I asked about her position in the orphanage, they simply shrugged it off, as her position was one of financial support, not one with actual direct authority. Interested, I wanted to learn more, but they only followed up by saying she came around sometimes, but not often, and allowed them to essentially run the show. When I met and spoke with the American woman who had originally volunteered and then helped to sponsor and fund this orphanage, she presented a different version of the story. She had serious doubts about Gigi

and Magalinde, and questioned whether they were capable of managing the orphanage and caring for the children. Over the last few years, she felt she was slowly being “pushed out” of the work and relationships she had within the orphanage. Out of respect for all parties involved, I will not provide details given to me as to why the woman felt she was being ousted but can offer some context to the situation as I saw it and understood from both perspectives shared with me. For one, the American woman felt there was a sense of mistrust and fear regarding her position as a white American woman whose access to donors helped maintain the orphanage’s operations and thus could provide her with more power over the children and the agenda that Gigi and Magd had in place. The woman hinted that originally the relationship was great in that she respected Gigi and Magalinde and felt they had respected her, but that it was only when there was a shift in her personal life, one in which she began the adoption process of a child from the very orphanage she sponsored without directly asking for or seeking guidance from Gigi and Magalinde, that she began to see a shift in the way she was treated. For her, Gigi and Magalinde’s loving and accepting attitudes towards her role in the orphanage changed into one of intolerance. Although the children at this orphanage still attend the English-speaking school that the American woman runs, she admitted she has stepped back in the hands-on roles she once played at the orphanage and felt it was best to allow Gigi and Magalinde to continue running the show.

Gigi and Magalinde live and make up the very social fabric of the orphanage, relying upon monthly salaries and funding from donors to not only help care for the children but for themselves, as they share both space and resources with the children they care for, unlike Judeline. Whereas the American woman lives in a nice, gated complex with water and electricity, paid for by the education-based NGO she built through her school. Their lives do not

overlap with hers, nor do their struggles and successes. The fact that Magalinde and Gigi were able to separate themselves from the control of the American woman shows a form of resistance through solidarity where these two women have shared lived experiences and are able to subtly push back through emotional distancing tactics, like not allowing the children to be present when the woman visited, and subversive behavior, like ignoring her calls. The American woman, had over time given them back control by conceding ground. Without stating it outright, the point was made very clear, Magalinde and Gigi had seen this orphanage grow based on their own efforts, and which they maintained long before the support was provided by the American woman when they moved the orphanage to Les Cayes. So, when the American woman crossed the tacitly acknowledged boundaries, Gigi and Magalinde felt it was only right to remind her, and set boundaries on their own terms.

What Women's Work is Worth

Circling back to the idea of the 'emotional proletariat' presented earlier, Amy Wharton (2006) expands on this term originally coined by Cameron Macdonald and Carmen Sirianni in 1996, which argues that emotional labor can be exploitative, as workers are expected to regulate their emotions to meet organizational goals, often at the expense of their well-being. The emotional proletariat, according to Wharton, includes workers who must suppress their true feelings, display certain emotions on command, and manage the emotions of others as part of their jobs. This concept highlights the inequalities and power dynamics inherent in many service-sector jobs, where workers may have little control over their emotional labor and may face consequences for failing to meet emotional display rules. Wharton's work contributes to our understanding of how emotions are managed and commodified in the modern workplace,

shedding light on the experiences of workers in the affective economy. Her work also points out that as a result of the characteristics defined above, service industry employees typically are gender-typed as women who are more commonly seen as quiet, friendly, submissive, and more cooperative. Feminist scholars like Arlie Hochschild and Barbara Ehrenreich (2003) and Susan Cheever (2003) discuss how throughout history, care work, including childcare and domestic work, has been performed predominantly by women. Their work examines the racialized division of labor in the global economy where poorer women of color from the Global South provide care for affluent families in wealthier countries while having to leave their own families behind. Historical legacies of slavery and colonialism have shaped contemporary practices and perceptions of care work and continue to influence the racial dynamics within the care industry. It is only by recognizing the gendered and racial stereotypes of care work, which shape the expectations of employers, that we can begin to address what a significant role these constructs have in shaping perceptions of care work and the individuals who perform it. For example, Hochschild (2003) calls attention to how black and Latina women are often stereotyped as natural caregivers, reinforcing the idea that caregiving is an inherent aspect of their racial identity. These stereotypes can lead to the overrepresentation of women of color in low-wage caregiving jobs, such as the women who nanny in orphanages.

Similarly, Susan Cheever (2003) explores the blurred lines between professional caregiving and familial affection. Cheever considers how these relationships can enrich the lives of the family who employs the nanny, while also raising questions about boundaries and loyalty within families (41). For example, when nannies are expected to work late, do household chores in addition to childcare, or be on-call at all times that goes beyond the scope of work defined in contracts. Like in the case of Judeline, she comments on the time she is supposed to be off work

and follows up with how most days she is late to leave by an hour or more, directly calling out the fact she is doing work that extends past the responsibilities outlined in her contract.

Additionally, Cheever (2003) explores the challenges and dilemmas faced by families when hiring and managing nannies. She discusses the complexities of navigating power dynamics, trust, and communication between employers and employees. For example, when employers make remarks about how the women working as nannies are “like family” and will use those sentiments to further exploit the nannies for unpaid labor. In the case of the women I interviewed in Haiti, the notion of making the orphanage “one big happy family” became a common justification for the orphanage to further exploit and coerce them into doing extra work.

Hochschild, Ehrenreich, Cheevers (2003) and others also address the socioeconomic inequalities inherent in the nanny industry, including issues related to wages, working conditions, and access to benefits. These authors touch upon broader societal debates surrounding caregiving and the division of labor within households. Their work addresses how gender norms and expectations influence the hiring and treatment of nannies, as well as how caregiving responsibilities intersect with issues of race, class, and immigration. When applying these perspectives to Black Haitian nannies working in orphanages under the employment of white foreigners, the work they embody subjects them to the role of a subordinate, racialized emotional proletariat. They are tasked with providing emotional care and support to orphaned children, often in settings where resources are limited, and conditions may be challenging. These nannies invest significant emotional labor in nurturing and bonding with the children under their care, forming deep and meaningful relationships despite the transient and unstable nature of their employment. The white foreigners who employ these nannies often hold positions of power and privilege over them, exerting control over the orphanage's operations and the nannies' working

conditions. The nannies, predominantly from marginalized communities, may face exploitation, inadequate compensation, and lack of agency in their roles. Furthermore, racial inequalities shaping the ordinary interactions between the white foreigners and the local nannies contribute to reinforcing unequal power relations and colonial hierarchies related to care practices. The emotional labor performed by the nannies is undervalued and taken for granted, perpetuating the notion that caring for marginalized children is a natural extension of their identities and societal roles as poor Black women.

When interviewing the women working in orphanages 17 out of 26 women interviewed stated they changed their behavior and mindset when managerial staff and visitors came to the orphanage, pointing out that nannies are also at the mercy of the orphanage for employment. For example, one woman I interviewed during our orphanage visits told me,

“We are expected to dress up when we have visitors. We get the children ready, then ourselves.”

What ‘getting ready’ implies is not just dressing appropriately in nicer clothes or scrubs that many nannies wear like nurses, but preparing oneself in the correct, *professional*, mindset that is ready to present a welcoming demeanor to guests of the orphanage. Like the children, the nannies also had to exhibit emotional labor and affective behavior towards visitors. One thing I began to realize though, was the difference in how women who lived full-time in an orphanage versus those who clocked in and out daily, viewed their work and their relationship with the children. Using the difference between how Magalinde and Judeline spoke about the children they cared for, Magalinde who lived full time in the orphanage viewed the children *as her own*

rather than Judeline who treated the children *like her own*. It was not until further discussions that Magalinde revealed that she knew the family she helped create in the orphanage was not *truly* a family, whereas with Judeline she was attending to her own son, in her own home as she explained her feelings for the children differentiating between her biological family, and the one she is a part of in the orphanage.

Tithi Bhattacharya (2018), who explores the life of domestic workers and caregivers who live both within and outside their workspace, notes that spatial understanding of the social reproduction and production spheres plays a part in how one's position within these spheres is interpreted and understood (9). This means that women, like Judeline, who can leave their space of work and return to their own homes are more likely to consider the differences between the work they do in the productive sphere for the orphanage, including the work they do reproductively within the orphanage, as separate from the labor they provide in their home space of social reproduction; even though the labor itself is visibly the same, it is not felt emotionally the same way as women like Magalinde and Gigi who live full-time in the orphanage, mixing the productive and reproductive spheres with less clear differences.

Although this relationship between nannies and the children can benefit the orphanage, even more so when the women live full-time in the orphanage with the children, it has long-lasting effects on both the women and children once a child is aged out or reunited with their biological family. Speaking with both the nannies and the young men and women who left the orphanage, the fictive kinship ties created by the children in order to survive and by the nannies as an extension of their identity as *poto mitan* and many of them mothers themselves, and the bonds that are formed, are difficult to lose. To be clear, although the orphanage wishes and urges

these bonds to be made, they do not require them to be *real*, only to *appear real*, but what in fact happens often is that the bonds are more than just surface-level, affective behavior but rather true, deep emotions of caring for one another. Now, this is not to say this happens every time and between all the nannies and every child, but very often, because they live and work in these intimate and emotionally charged spaces, these bonds are inevitable. As a result, when the children leave, both parties feel like they are losing something. For children who grew up in the orphanage most of their lives, it can be like saying goodbye to the only family they ever knew, and for the nannies, it is like saying goodbye to a foster child they adopted, loved, and cared for, even if temporarily. Consequently, this bond impacts the reunification process and the ability to reconnect biological, familial bonds. In the epilogue presented next, I will elaborate more on this impact and what it means when thinking about the politics of care from the standpoint of the family.

Chapter Four: Family Means Love

“Family means love. It means you are cared for and feel comfortable, even if you didn’t eat that day.” - Sonson A&R participant 27 years old

One of the best parts about doing this research was getting to meet the families of participants, seeing them reunited, happy, and most importantly, together. Let me begin by stating that out of the hundreds of parents I have spoken with during my 15 years in Haiti, I have never once met a parent who did not want their child, nor viewed placing their child in the orphanage as abandonment, but rather their decision to do so was made *out of love* for their child. To put it clearly for those of us who will never know what this feeling is like, as a mother who is watching your children starve to death because you live in a system that keeps you poor, desperate, and under the weight of structural violence, left with no options, the only option being presented to you is the one you take, even if it means being separated from your child if it gives them the opportunities you cannot provide them. I have sat with countless families, holding the hands of mothers and fathers, wrapping them in my arms as tears were spilling into my lap, listening to them recount what it felt like having to make that choice, and worse, to live with it; separated from a child, often with little to no contact with them or knowledge of their wellbeing. There is not a lack of love here, there is a lack of alternatives, lack of financial security, lack of food security, lack of government support, and lack of humanitarian aid giving families the option to remain together while tackling the roots of socio-economic obstacles. It is out of love that these parents, these families, make the hardest decision of their lives. During one family visit to the remote area of Chambellan one mother, now a grandmother, held her granddaughter in her

lap taking the hand of her daughter whom she had placed so many years ago in an orphanage and was now a mother herself, she looked at me with tears in her eyes saying,

“Orphanages take advantage of the poor. If I had known the truth! Oh!” She shook her head as if to shake the anger away and looked up at her daughter smiling, no longer speaking to me really, she continued, “I feel awful for putting her there. I was so happy when both of my girls came home. I was half a person and them coming home made me whole again. I will never forgive the orphanage, that woman (the directrice) for what they did, for what they *took* from me.”

Her daughter added,

“I grieve for myself and for what happened to me. I do not want others to have to grieve for themselves too, but now I am with my family. I have my mother’s love, my family’s.” -
Surina, age 19 (See Figure 5.1)

Her acknowledgment of her mother’s love is a sentiment of the love that birthed her, put her in the orphanage, fought to rescue her from that orphanage, and welcomed her home. It is the love of a parent that is irreplaceable, but the orphanage damaged that connection, distorted it, twisted it, and tarnished its meaning; making it more difficult to find that connection once reunited, making it feel impossible to heal it, accept it, and express it to one another again.



Figure 5.1 Photo of participants who formerly lived in an orphanage. Taken during a home visit
2022

When starting this research, I hypothesized that emotional labor was not on a spectrum with a starting and finishing point, but rather one that was continuous, simultaneous, and could be reproduced long after leaving the orphanage. In my own experience, I have witnessed countless children and young adults continue to repeat the learned to use emotional labor during interactions with others, like in the case of Augustine from the introduction story who felt obligated to make the woman giving him clothes feel good about her donation. Based on these observations, I suspected that emotional labor and affective behavior would be hard to unlearn when interacting with others, especially foreigners. What I did not expect so much was the fact that children and young adults would feel it necessary at times to channel emotional labor in order to display affective behavior with their own families, even more, so that their own families reciprocated the production themselves when interacting with the individual returning from the orphanage. Reverting back to the comments made by the A&R participants who expressed feeling like strangers in their own homes, barely knowing their families and not remembering how they fit into their own household. As I spoke more with the families I started to realize how much the orphanage actually took from them. It was not enough to separate a family from each other, it destroyed the security found in simply having a family. There are two sayings in Tennessee, where I am from, that I constantly think of when visiting with these families. The first was ‘home is where the heart is,’ and the second was “home is where you make it.”

For families going through the process of reunification, the first saying can be challenging even if there is ‘heart’ there, where both the child(ren) being reunited and the family who welcomes them back have mixed emotions of relief, happiness, and love with anger, guilt, and resentment (See Figure 5.2).



Figure 5.2 Photo of a participant with her grandchild

For the reunited person, having to cope with a sense of abandonment and anger at their families for placing them in an orphanage while also feeling overjoyed at being back with them. For the families, there is a sense of guilt for handing the child over to the orphanage, embarrassment for the circumstances they cannot control, yet feeling heartfelt joy at having their estranged child return. Both parties' emotions are stirred together with the spoon of shyness to interact too much, confusion of not knowing *how* to interact with each other, and rediscovery of the relationship. They have to find security in the familial bond again. The second saying rang true in that home is indeed where you make it, by choice or out of survival. For the children, home in the orphanage is what they make of it, what they piece together in order to live through it. With their families, home for them is, well, *home*, and learning to make it into a family again can be challenging, but often impossible (See Figure 5.3). I witnessed this with these families, making their home again. Making their love for one another grow and reconnections to be made. Every single participant spoke about the awkwardness of being reunited and the difficulties in those first few months, even years, but in the same breath they said how grateful, more fulfilled, more happy they were to be with their families again and how the shyness went away and they were able to open up to each other emotionally and carry that weight of trauma the orphanages caused them together, as a family. Mari Rose's words echoed in the back of my head; family is indeed strength because it comes from a love only family can give.

Erica Bornstein (2012) mentions the liminality of orphanhood where a child prior to being placed in the orphanage is a member of the community but by being placed in the orphanage, they begin a ritual through the process of being made into a humanitarian subject which can call on the aid of others based on their status as an 'orphan' (129).



*Figure 5.3 Photo of participants who lived in an orphanage shut down for sexual abuse
in 2019 photo taken 2022*

However, once in the orphanage they are isolated from their community, defined by the politics of care, and are portrayed separately from their families and communities. When they leave the orphanage, they reintegrate back into society but are still both ostracized for their status as an ‘orphan’ while at the same being given a kind of social prestige for having access to continued post-reunification services offered to them because of their original status as a humanitarian subject. For Bornstein, the orphanage acts as a space of liminality for the child who is taken from their community, transformed into the orphan subject, and then returned to their community once they complete their liminal stage in the orphanage (2012: 94). I wholeheartedly agree with this perspective on the orphanage and think it can be useful in how we analyze post-reunification experiences of both the children and their families. What she fails to look at though is the liminality of the parents, families, and communities whose households are filled with a giant-sized hole in the form of the child(ren) they placed in the orphanage. The life and family dynamics of the household are just as impacted as the child(ren) who must navigate their new lives in the orphanage, even if the experiences are not the same, the families are in their own process of liminality. Life for the families of course does not just come to a halt, nor do the lives of the child(ren) in the orphanage, but the time moves differently, almost like it moves around the spaces in which the children or family is supposed to fill; waiting patiently for the space to be complete. Marie Rose once said in our focus group,

“We had a life of nothing, we didn’t know how to *live*, you see, only knew how to *survive*. Stress was all we knew, and we would sit around together and say how good of a life we had before (the orphanage) and we waited for that life to return.” When I ask her what family means to her as a part of that ‘former life’ she responds,

“My family is the only thing I need. They are my strength because when I am in trouble, they are always ready to help me, to take care of me. I want to be the best for them. When you have parents, you can bring your problems to them. You tell them your needs and feel better than if you did not have them in your life. With family you have strength in your life, your parents are always there for you no matter what, no matter how long you have been a partmy parents would take a bus from Camp Perrin to Les Cayes then another bus that went to Port-au-Prince for six hours or more to go to Cabarre, just to see me. My parents could only visit once a year, it was all they could afford. They visited me a total of 4 times while I was there for 5 years, but they made sure I knew they loved me.”

Her words speak to this gaping hole in both the child's and their families' hearts. Very rarely are children put in an orphanage and never thought of again by their parents and families. The fact that reunification is possible, and that the orphanage is temporary is one of the main reasons parents agree to place children in an institution. However, reunification is not always the case. As Eluxon once explained to me,

“When I first left the orphanage, I had a lot of people who would come up to me and say ‘Oh! You were in the orphanage with my child, did you know them? Do you know where my child is now?’ and I would not know what to tell them so I would just say, oh your child is gone and living abroad. You see, some of the children would be adopted and go to the organization Mission of Hope, which supported our orphanage and would bring volunteers to come and see the children to adopt and would show them the children like me who were very poor, and their families did not visit them in the orphanage. They took those children, and other children passed away and the parents were not told. How can you tell a parent these kinds of things?!”

The reality is that not all families are lucky, not all children are reunited, and not all holes are filled in a family's heart. Furthermore, there are other issues that arise when an orphanage is shut down or faces other urgent problems like finding children to place in the facility. For example, Michael, the young 23-year-old who was one of the A&R participants told me, "After I left the orphanage, the directrice came to my home and tried to tell me to come back, to convince me and I told her no! So fiercely I said it because I was not scared of her anymore, I was in *my home*, not hers, and I was not going to leave with her aliveTo describe the orphanage in one word, criminal and I told her."

For Michael, he was home, in a place that although may present its own challenges post-reunification, still held a sense of safety for him. He trusted that his family would stop her from taking him and had the courage he could not express in the orphanage, under the director's authority, to resist and say no. Having his family with him gave him the strength to not only tell her no but to also critique her work. His definition of the orphanage as criminal speaks to the truth of what happens to many children and by extension their families. They are often victims of a vicious, money-hungry business that preys on poor families for profit. In the experience of Michael, he was right, the orphanage is criminal.

A Future Without Orphanages

In her article, *Holistic Orphan Care: A Call for Change in Caring for Orphans and Vulnerable Children*, Kanthamane Ladaphongphatthana (2021) has contributed to the conversation on how faith-based practices have shaped childcare programs globally, like orphanages. She provides a critical analysis of how religious motivations in running orphanages

and other social services can sometimes lead to prioritizing religious goals over the best interests of children, disregarding safeguard practices (83). Ladaphongphatthana (2021) raises concerns about proselytization, cultural insensitivity, and the alignment of care practices with religious doctrine rather than child welfare science, and how through a new theological perspective, knowledge of childcare can be reshaped to focus on family-sustained solutions (79). Her work draws awareness to the dichotomy taking place within the faith-based community that I have observed over the last several years in Haiti. That is, orphanages should not be considered the first option for addressing impoverished families' needs, specifically in the sense of childcare. In Haiti, as mentioned previously, there has been a shift in the way faith-based organizations originally focused on supporting and creating orphanages, which has since transitioned into exploring alternative family-based solutions where the main goal is to strengthen the community's welfare systems and economy that will in turn, support families economically. For example, in my thesis, I wrote about one of the largest orphanages operating in Haiti, which has now joined the movement since 2023 in transitioning children out of their center and back with families or possible foster homes. This transformation within church practices is what Ladaphongphatthana (2021) calls a "holistic ministry" approach that looks at the role of the church beyond spiritual nurturing and immediate humanitarian services (85). Rather, it also looks at the causes of the suffering in the communities they aim to serve and with careful assessment, determines best practices to move forward that involve taking into consideration forms of structural violence, community input and established networks, and culturally appropriate methods for meeting needs (Ladaphongphatthana 2021: 86). However, it should also be noted that addressing these concerns must also be done through local communities' agency and guidance; rather than again, providing a Eurocentric solution to addressing problems. Referring

back to Diane Hoffman's work, her latest book *A Critical Anthropology of Childhood in Haiti: Emotion, Power, and White Saviors*, offers a firm foundation to help explore how we might move in this direction. Similar to what I have witnessed in my own fieldwork when interviewing families in the post-reunification stage, there are challenges to how a child or young adult adapts back into the family dynamic, as well as what Hoffman points out, creates more burdens on the family dynamic. As stated previously, Hoffman's (2023) work has been critical in how we view reunification processes and critiques how the predominately evangelical and fully Eurocentric perspective has perpetuated another problem, how family structures are viewed; and how it dismantles traditional dynamics that include extended or fictive kinship networks to fill in the gaps that a nuclearized family setting in Haiti may be unable to support totally (116). Her work sheds light on current discussions around alternative childcare options and reunification that are still being implemented under neoliberal, neocolonial, and global flows of Christian ideology while still leaving families out of the conversation (Hoffman 2023: 115, 117). As a result, reunification efforts have struggled since they tend to approach family dynamics from a perspective that views the social fabric of Haiti, and by extension families, as "broken" and in need of "fixing," so that it comes closer to a Westernized, nuclear family structure (Hoffman 2023: 109). Hoffman also challenges the narrative given by organizations focused on reunification, stating that when these organizations discuss what children's needs are, they produce a discourse that depicts reunification with "loving families and "loving homes" and often in terms of two parents (2023:109-110). This narrative also becomes problematic as it draws on ideas that Haitian families are inherently emotionally defective or "lack love," reinforcing the notion of a "broken and unstable" family structure within Haitian society

(Hoffman 2023: 110-111). Therefore, much attention should be given to how reunification is understood and who has control over how it is applied.

In recent years, there has been a shift in the way faith-based organizations view their role in providing childcare. Many former orphanages are realigning their programs to reunification in collaboration with IBESR efforts from the 2018 Mandate. Even more importantly and influentially, many of the former missionaries who supported, founded, or brought teams to orphanages, have begun to redefine their projects, and what it means to *care* for the ‘widows and orphans.’ Both organizations, Haiti Mama and Little Footprints Big Steps, are pioneers in reformed family advocacy. Haiti Mama, starting out, was a program for street children and their families, helping locate parents and reunite them with children. The goal was to prevent them from being placed in orphanages or returning back to life on the street, through job creation with parents. In collaboration with IBESR, Haiti Mama also provided support for reunification efforts being carried out by IBESR in orphanages that were being shut down and exposed for committing sexual and physical abuse. The efforts of Haiti Mama in advocacy for and prevention of children placed in orphanages are what inspired me to investigate this research further. It is because of the people and social workers at Haiti Mama, that I even had the opportunity to work alongside IBESR learning how to make research like this happen in the context of mass insecurity, corruption, and unpredictable circumstances that often challenge and fatigues researchers. Similarly, LFBS started as an orphanage, as previously mentioned, turning to reunification after Morgan discovered the truth that most of the children in the orphanage had in fact parents or families willing to care for them. Morgan reached out to IBESR and helped shut the orphanage down she formerly was volunteering and living in, turning her work from childcare in the orphanage to family advocacy in the community. LFBS’ work helped design a

template for future organizations, like Haiti Mama, to prove that reunification and a Haitian-based foster care system were possible and that orphanages did not have to be the first solution in caring for impoverished families. Both organizations are involved in child rights awareness campaigns throughout the country, host and attend conferences to discuss their work, have been featured in numerous media outlets, and even addressed their governments and the international community about the orphanage phenomenon in Haiti. The work they do is not only groundbreaking but also essential. In turn, more and more organizations have followed suit and joined the initiative for family reunification and prevention of children being placed in orphanages. Other organizations' work includes but is not limited to daycares so parents can work, income-generating projects, post-reunification objectives with both biological and foster families, trade schools for aged out children who are still separated from family, livestock and agriculture projects, community centers, tuition-free schools, therapy and counseling services, and so much more. The new goal is changing the discourse from reaction to prevention and that starts with the community and families.

Conclusion

“What I want people to know, to understand, as parents it is not about the money, it is about the attention you give a child. Parents believe that because they have no money, they do not have the ability to care for their children. It is not about that. It is about affection and love, that is what a child needs from their parents but for me and my sibling, we never cared about the financial situation, we only wanted love and attention, someone to talk to me.” -Eluxon

Research for over five decades has shown us that the orphanage system globally is faulty and proves that growing up in a family setting gives children connections to their community, and cultural identity, and increases their overall development. It also has shown how orphanages have strategically been built in the global South by donors from the global North, giving a perception that the global South is incapable of caring for their most vulnerable children. What it hides is how the global North has criminalized poverty with the punishment of separating children from their families and communities, shaming parents for the economic situation they cannot control, and that the global North helped to perpetuate and keep families, like that in this book, poor and dependent upon services like orphanages. The appeal to build an orphanage is not done for the sake of the children or their families, but for the donors and visitors to contribute something they feel is meaningful, regardless of the studies that have proved orphanages are not the solution to helping impoverished children. This leads us to view orphanages, not as a last resort act of charity, but as a business that relies on orphanages being the first option in the global realm of the politics of care. The stage has been set, the actors put in their places, the stagehands ready to guide the orphanage’s play production, captivating the audience through the

emotional labor of the children; the audience leaving the play feeling they experienced something real, worthwhile, and longing to experience again.

When conducting secondary research for this dissertation, one key component that is mentioned throughout is the discourse related to the politics of care. How we define care and care work, who defines it, and how we use this narrative to design and implement care work in humanitarian aid. Although there is substantial literature on the topics of intersectionality, emotional labor, care work, and humanitarian aid, little attention has yet been given to how we can tie each of these components together to apply it to how we view institutions, like the orphanage system. The discourse must move past simply stating that orphanages are bad and move forward with highlighting how orphanages optimize and capitalize faucets of emotional labor, the affect economy, the exploitation of children living under their care, and the position of nannies as emotional proletariats to redefine the discussions about orphanages, and by extension the children who live in them and the nannies who work for them.

This dissertation contributes to how researchers analyze and interpret care work related to the global orphanage phenomenon. Specifically, in terms of social reproduction of how women working as care workers and children living in orphanages understand the impacts and uses of emotional labor in order to solidify their roles in accordance with the orphanage's agenda. This research highlights the power dynamics of labor as it applies to care work settings, like the orphanage, and how orphanages can be identified as creating what is similar to emotional factory workers in both the orphan subjects and the nannies. In this research, I have broken down two sides of labor, the emotional component used by both the children and nannies as well as the social reproduction and productive labor the nannies produce. For the children living in

orphanages, making use of emotional labor to produce affect and emotionally charged responses is what gives value and validation to the orphanage's project as successful. Although their use of emotional labor has no monetary value, their behavior and the affect they show is a form of what Krause (2014) defines as "symbolic capital," (2014:109) which works to support the monetized structures of the orphanage in the large capitalist economy. On the other spectrum of labor is the waged, valued labor produced by the nannies in the form of cleaning, cooking, and tasks related to childcare. Without the productive and reproductive labor given by the women working as nannies, the orphanage could not exist. Furthermore, the women working as nannies help teach the children and reinforce applying emotional labor toward affective behavior during interactions with volunteers which directly impacts the credibility of the orphanage's care project. The project is then sold as a successful commodity which is supported by the women and further authenticated by the children.

Challenging the Discourse on the Politics of Care

In the first chapter, I lay out the stage setting of the orphanage. I explained how the orphanage operates as a business and as a result, the practices and agenda of the orphanage mimic a business plan. I described how the children are at the forefront of the labor force for the orphanage, acting as customer relations, the nannies in positions of managers are there to enforce the rules and ensure the transactions between the children and visitors run smoothly and efficiently to guarantee the visitors will return. Furthermore, I elaborated on the religious components the orphanages draw from to attract donor support and target a specific faith-based market economy.

Through these harmful practices, the orphanage sets the stage and setting for the perfect product, the orphan, or more specifically, the orphan's emotional labor. Through the examples provided and analysis of the data collected, it is assumable to say that the orphanage relies on a steady supply of emotional labor provided by both the children and caregivers. But what requires more thought is how we can raise awareness about the emotional labor supplied by orphanages to critique and transform policy on care work.

Taken alongside theoretical interventions, the international aid community focused on childcare, largely in the form of faith-based organizations, we can begin to untangle the web of the affective market which gives faith-based organizations both a platform and incitive to provide a particular type of care work that creates the 'orphan subject.' For example, both Adams (2013) and Krause (2014) explore dimensions of the affect economy as it relates to humanitarian aid and provide insight into what it means to produce such an economy. For Adams, she links the centrality of the affect economy to the affective surplus of volunteers, which she defines as affective surplus while Krause details the inner workings of project development she calls 'the good project,' meaning they have made successful interventions with their humanitarian response.

As demonstrated in the testimonies provided in the first chapter, we can start to look at how orphanages strategically position themselves in the affect economy and use their position to attract donors based on emotionally charged propaganda to compel donors and volunteers into action. In turn, the project of care the orphanage gives is viewed as successful. For example, when presenting the orphanage as a family rather than an institution, orphanages are disguising their economic motives by manipulating and falsifying a sense of family dynamics in the

orphanage. As a result, the care provided by the children is not only measurable by the donations it receives but by the number of children they are caring for and the work the nannies are doing to provide said care. What is problematic is how orphanages promote themselves as spaces where children and nannies form familial bonds, they dismiss how we might interpret orphanages within the affective economy framework as sites where emotional connections, both positive and challenging, are central to the provision of care and support for children. Furthermore, how the emotional labor of both children labeled orphans and nannies is central to deploying this type of labor that allows for the orphanage to function in the affect economy as a successful care project. This involves the orphanage's influence and control of the setting where emotions will shape interactions between children and caregivers, influence donor motivations and engagement, and impact broader societal attitudes and policies related to orphan care. Just like consumers make purchasing decisions based on emotions, donors to orphanages are often motivated by emotional factors such as empathy, compassion, and a desire to make a positive impact on children's lives. By understanding these emotional drivers, orphanages can tailor their fundraising and marketing efforts to effectively connect with potential donors. As mentioned previously, one way in which orphanages can find common ground in the affective market is by attracting donors from faith-based settings and using their faith to link donors and volunteers to their projects. For example, when orphanages use phrases like 'saving children's lives,' or present stories of children being rescued from poverty-stricken homes, the image of the orphanage is one of valor, chivalry, and magnanimity. Playing into these themes, orphanages then can present themselves to faith-based donors in a way that shows the orphanage as parallel to the teachings of Christianity that seek to serve and care for others. Religion works as the bridge for linking donors and volunteers with the children and nannies and breaks down socio-

economic, cultural, geopolitical, and language barriers. In reality, religious benevolence is one conduit for attracting donors without having to address issues of accountability, representation, and agency of the children inside the orphanage and the women who work in them. As a result, the authentic experience promised by the orphanage is not simply a façade but rather a complex set of multi-faceted practices embedded in the capitalist regime of the global economy.

In the second chapter, I provided insight into the perspective of the children and young adults who live inside the orphanage, as well as those who have aged out or been reunited with their families. This chapter elaborated on the emotions, feeling management, and understanding of the children who live and live in an orphanage, providing crucial information as to how ‘orphans’ learn to become humanitarian subjects through the inculcation of specific behaviors and emotional states. The participants' stories shared in this chapter gave us examples of how children see these ‘business practices’ to regulate their emotional state and behavior and how the children worked in favor of or resisted these tactics. This shows us that children not only are aware they are a key piece to the orphanage’s agenda and that religion plays a role in their ability to maintain support. Children are also aware of being required to put their emotions aside to maintain donor support by showing they are the perfect orphan in need; whether they understand the term emotional labor or not, they know they are ‘faking it’ for a reason that benefits the orphanage, and by extension, them. Furthermore, these children placed in orphanages understand they must learn to use emotional labor by observing the other children, listening to and practicing with nannies, and obeying what they are told to do. Lastly, this chapter adds to the discussion about the intricacies of intersectionality, and the ecologies of affect that frame how orphans are defined, expected to react to donor support, and how through this lens of intersectionality,

children living in the orphanage find their identity tied to the support they receive from the orphanage and the interactions they have with the visitors.

Reverting back to the theoretical contributions on emotional labor by Arlie Hochschild (1983) and ‘feeling rules’ presented by Amy Wharton (2009), feeling rules and emotional labor can contribute to children's attachment to the orphanage as an institution. Children may internalize the feeling rules and expectations imposed by the orphanage environment, shaping their identity in relation to their role as institutionalized children. We can see through the responses of the participants how children in orphanages develop a sense of belonging or loyalty to the orphanage based on their adherence to these rules and their experiences of emotional connection with caregivers and peers. Alternatively, how children may resist, or challenge feeling rules and engage in forms of emotional labor that disrupt their attachment to the orphanage, particularly if they perceive the institutional environment as restrictive or unsupportive of their emotional needs. My dissertation provides insight into how certain emotions or emotional expressions, i.e. emotional labor and affect, by the children, are valued or commodified based on racialized and gender stereotypes reinforced by the orphanage. This adds to the racialization of emotional capital, which the children in orphanages often lack, and reinforces ideas in the politics of care that target children from specific racial or economic groups who are expected to possess or perform certain emotions in order to fulfill certain expectations or gain social approval within the orphanage and by donors.

The third chapter looks at the lives of three women who are caregivers inside an orphanage. Their life histories and descriptions of ‘work’ in the orphanage provided context to how they saw their reproductive work in the home related to the productive work they did for the

orphanage. It shows how the women distinguish between specific tasks that can be easily identified, and emotional labor, which they saw as an extension of a mother, a *poto mitan*. Their words give acknowledgment to how they consider themselves a part of the orphanage family, to care for and raise children for the orphanage during the day and go home to their families at night, and what impact it has when you cannot separate your work and home space, like for Gigi and Magalinde. This chapter paves a new way for thinking about how the women's care work in the orphanage produces a particular type of orphan subject deemed productive to the orphanage, and more importantly, how these women see that and are impacted by it both positively and negatively. This chapter also adds to the previous literature exposing the reality of the politics of care and care work performed by nannies which is shaped by a gendered and racialized process of work placing nannies in specific, inferior relationships with non-Haitian staff and volunteers.

Tying together key pieces in the literature produced by scholars like Amy Wharton's (2009) contribution to theorizing about the emotional proletariat in service industry jobs and Cameron Macdonald and David Merrill's (2009) research which drew attention to the intersectionality of individuals positioned as emotional proletariats in the workplace, we can start identifying how women working as nannies in orphanages are marginalized and exploited by employers by processes of labor hierarchies tied to race, gender, and class. Similarly, we can draw on authors such as Michele Gamburd (2000), Susan Cheever (2003), and Arlie Hochschild and Barbara Ehrenreich (2003) who explore dynamics of race, class, and gender in relation to the emotional labor, resistance tactics, and identities formed by women working as nannies and domestic workers. By combining their efforts with the research conducted during my fieldwork, my dissertation aims to fill in the gaps to understand the relational dynamics between nannies and their employers at the orphanage, which has largely been excluded from literature focused

on the feminization of reproductive labor, emotional labor as part of care work, and how women of color have become subject to particular types of demands within the politics of care relating to humanitarian projects, like the orphanage. When interpreted together, we can begin to uncover how work performed by nannies in the orphanage is pre-determined by discriminatory practices based on the Western imagination which feminizes and racializes care work, and by association, Haitian women. As a result, Haitian women are seen as a specific figure in care work central to the orphanage's agenda and are key in producing care for children which allows the orphanage to compete for funding under certain conditions in the affective market economy.

I concluded with a final thought focused on families. This epilogue was not originally planned, or mapped out, no questions were hypothesized prior, but through this research, I began to see the importance of letting parents and families speak for themselves. Allowing them a platform to challenge the narrative that their children are placed in an orphanage due to abandonment and lack of love. This provides a unique spin to how we view and conduct research in orphanage settings which has historically left out the narrative of parents and families. It also gives credibility to families impacted by the orphanage system to reclaim and redefine how foreigners coming to build orphanages may perceive poor families. Lastly, it provides recognition and acknowledgment that families view placing children in orphanages as a last resort when all other avenues have been exhausted. By discrediting the narrative provided by orphanages with the reality of families suffering under structural violence, we can allow families to take back control and agency in the decisions made about childcare practices of humanitarian aid in the Global South.

Can We Hold Emotions Accountable?

Sometimes I think about my experience and that if I had not gone to the orphanage, maybe I would not have known the value of a child, protecting them with everything, to taking care of them...my bad experience in the orphanage gave me a chance to work for a better future for kids. - Eluxon

In my master thesis that investigated the impact short-term missions have on communities they serve within with a focus on orphanages in the last chapter, I explored how we could use emotions to mobilize a different type of narrative that surrounds humanitarian aid, and by extension the role orphanages play as spaces of caregiving. Drawing on the work of Erica Bornstein and her book, *Disquieting Gifts: Humanitarianism in New Delhi*, she proposes a new perspective for the way we view empathy and how it is used as a marketing tool to draw in donors in what she defines as “relational empathy” (2012: 146). Relational empathy gives us the lens to view the human response to suffering, recognizing that empathy is what drives a person’s initial urge to act, to want to do something for the greater good, to relieve the pain of others. In my thesis, I stated that it was empathy that truly builds an orphanage, brings in visitors, secures donations, and ultimately writes the rulebook for how to *care* for the children inside those orphanages as well as tells them how they are supposed to react as a response to being *cared for*. Because empathy defines the space of the orphanage, the plot of the play so to speak, giving the orphanage a dimensional look of charity, the counterpart to that provocation to ‘do good’ and be magnanimous is the suffering that recipients must experience for there to be a response of empathy. As a result, empathy becomes the vehicle in which we understand, see, define, and act to the suffering of others. Bornstein’s concept of relational empathy challenges the way in which

we perceive acts of charity, of giving, of serving others, and living generously because it points out the obvious; the person giving is not able to truly *empathize* with the suffering of the beneficiary, nor is likely to experience the same hardships. This places emotions, like empathy and suffering, in a power struggle within the “ecologies of affect,” setting incentives for how and why humanitarian aid is given and conditions for how it is received. Adopting the foundation of Bornstein’s term, in my thesis I defined “accountable empathy,” which engages the culture, social, and economic structures at a deeper level that is in solidarity with the local community (Archer 2019:69). As it applies to orphanages, accountable empathy can be a pragmatic response to the suffering of others which takes into account the ecologies of affect, like class, race, gender, historical nuances, and the socio-economic framework that allows orphanages to operate in a specific way. More importantly, it opens the door for discourse about the experiences of orphanages and how that extends beyond the child placed into the orphanage, but also includes looking at the family unit as the starting place for this phenomenon and how responders in humanitarian aid can take into account the family as a whole rather than addressing only childcare needs. In other words, accountable empathy holds space for looking at how families suffering under structural violence and lack of income as a part of a larger historical issue that must address the socio-economic, political, and intersectional discrimination that puts a family in the position to need humanitarian intervention in the first place and use that as a starting point of prevention to placing children in an orphanage. By taking off the glasses of impulsive, empathetic response to suffering, accountable empathy shows more clearly the facets of emotionally charged interactions between visitors and children living in orphanages and looks at these interactions as not only unhelpful but harmful. As a result, looking at orphanages through the lens of accountable empathy challenges the very need for orphanages to exist when the root

problems derived from the ecologies of effect are exposed and addressed rather than suppressed and hidden under the guise of benevolence and charity. Faith-based organizations that support care work like orphanages, rely on what I will call '*sacred empathy*' that calls on religious persons to respond to the pain and suffering of others as an extension of their faith and religious belief. Consequently, because this form of empathy is based on religious belief, faith acts as a vehicle that cuts down cultural, economic, social, political, and all intersectional barriers that often separate those giving and those who are receiving aid. Sacred empathy has no time to look into the historical nuances, the cultural differences, and the very things that have created a demand for humanitarian intervention, but rather jumps headfirst into 'helping' that becomes an act more meaningful to the participants than the beneficiaries they aim to serve. This is not to say that a faith-based response to humanitarian needs is always bad, but rather it typically fails to address the root causes of the problem because the causes of suffering are seen as something to be fixed through the continued faithfulness of beneficiaries. It speaks from a place of privilege that says 'If only you trusted God more, your life could improve' and creates a response to humanitarian need as something spiritually lacking regardless of the history, intersectional discrimination, and socio-political structural violence that keep people poor and without resources no matter how hard they pray to God.

It is my hope that this research will contribute to the literature on understanding the processes of emotional labor as it is produced in specific environments and interactions within humanitarianism focused on childcare. The research conducted for this study expands on the discourse on the politics of care related to faith-based projects, like orphanages, and provides an analysis of the orphanage system in Haiti. This research will contribute to understanding the issues with how faith-based aid has standardized global humanitarian practices geared towards

childcare. It is through documentation of these realities that we can prepare a better template for alternative childcare programs that go beyond just reuniting children with families but address the long-term impact on children and their families that the orphanage creates. I want this research to show that it is possible to collaborate with local authorities, like the Haitian Social Welfare Department IBESR, and who can be empowered through collaboration and documentation of their efforts towards the establishment of a foster care system in Haiti that replaces white, foreign-run orphanages with local families fostering. I want this research to show that alternative, collaborative, empowering programs can be developed and are more effective and successful than orphanages by highlighting the efforts of NGOS like Haiti Mama and LFBS. I am also grateful that work can contribute to IBESR's national data research on orphanages and can be applied to child protection policies written by the Haitian government that work towards restricting new orphanages from being built and monitoring currently established orphanages. The goal is that through education, advocacy, and prevention, the perception of 'doing good' for children can be shifted from separation and placement into an orphanage to supporting families and communities. There is an old proverb in Haiti that goes, "*Petit se richès malere*" meaning children are the wealth of the poor. Children are the future; they are our riches.

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Vita

Mac Archer is a Doctorate of Philosophy, majoring in Cultural Anthropology. She specializes in research focused on child protection, family advocacy, and crisis analysis within the global humanitarian landscape. Mac first introduced to the humanitarian sector and child protection services in 2009 during a trip to Haiti as a volunteer. For the next three years she volunteered, worked, and lived in various orphanages in Port-au-Prince (and surrounding areas). Those three years provided an experience of the reality of orphanages and child protection services in Haiti and globally. She learned that 80% of children living in an orphanage in Haiti have one or both parents alive, and 70% of children globally live in orphanage institutions. These experiences sparked a passion in her for educating and advocating against humanitarian projects focused on separating children from their parents (and families). Combining her passions for advocacy and education, she pursued a MA degree in Anthropology with a certification in disaster, displacement, and human rights focused on analyzing humanitarian/relief aid. Her research thesis explored the negative impacts of short-term missions, including orphanage tourism. She is based in Port-au-Prince, Haiti where she has worked for over a decade in the humanitarian sector. She is passionate about human rights and child protection services. Her goal is to use her anthropological training in ethnographic methods to work with various humanitarian stakeholders in order to conduct collaborative, informative, and holistic qualitative/quantitative research to advocate for multicultural populations.