Introductory Comment (transcribed)

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It's a great pleasure for me to propose a few comments on these two papers, one by Fabienne Moore and the other by Rachel Seiler-Smith. Let me first situate what I am going to say with respect to our conversation so far. It seems to me that one of the really crucial questions to have emerged in the past day and a half is how the topic of care relates to our own work. Hall Bjørnstad developed an interesting typology that leads from objects and subjects of care in a certain place in history to the question of how we care and why we should care about the eighteenth century. In addition, we have raised the question of what methodological implications the introduction of care into our own practice provokes. It seems to me that these two papers point out, in a very poignant way, some of the problems as well as opportunities for reconfiguring "care" in our work.

Let me highlight a few features of these two papers. Rachel Seiler-Smith's text is concerned with one of the major shifts in the history of care, and it's a history that's first rendered in terms of biopolitics. So it is a Foucauldean story that we get. It's a story that points to a transformation in which politics is no longer a politics of death, but a politics of life, a politics that is meant to make life productive. And she claims that in this shift, "care" goes through a transformation… Now hardly any topic lends itself as well to this as inoculation (as Foucault realized). Inoculation is a protective measure that is only effective on a statistical level because, especially with variolization (the insertion of the real matter of a pox pustule), there is still a high mortality rate (estimated to be around 7%). It's an example for Foucault of how negativity is introduced *into* society, instead of thinking in terms of trying to exclude it. And this requires thinking that is strategic and on the level of the population, simply because the individual case has to be irrelevant to whether [inoculation] is beneficial or not. And there's a whole host of debates around this in the eighteenth century, and also statistical innovations that make inoculation plausible but also, on the other hand, it's the first topic in which life is viewed from a purely statistical point of view. So it's one of the best examples for this transformation.

Rachel, however, integrates it with the founding of the Foundling Hospital and, I would say to be more precise, with the *narrative* of the founding of the Hospital. And in this narrative, she discovers a somewhat surprising lacuna, which is that the foundlings themselves—that is, the objects of care—have no voice. They virtually disappear behind the story of Coram, the founder. And so she traces this story, and its iconography, which represents Coram as a beneficial figure, someone who returns from the military—and this makes him a good transitional figure for us, as we go in our seminar from military to more civilian forms of care—and so for Foucault too, I think, he would have been an interesting character, with his military training. And the descriptions of the foundlings, who were left to themselves, and their dead bodies: that this is where care emerges, I think is a primal scene in these accounts. So basically these accounts focus on "Who Cares?" to the disadvantage of those who are *cared for*.

Rachel's project then consists of asking, "Is there an account of these [cared for] lives?" She tries first to look at literary sources. I find this interesting, that she tries to resolve a historical question by looking at literature, at works of the imagination, but especially with Fielding—and then even more in the nineteenth century, of course, with Dick-

ens and others—the orphan and the foundling are really key figures in the novel. And then she finds, with Lisa Zunshine, that the possibility of the foundling home is something that never becomes real. It remains marginal. So then she turns to reading the signs of its suppression in the account of the founding itself. She finds the subjects of care appear only as subjects of future productivity. The foundling is the one who can become: who can become productive, either as a soldier or as a factory worker. For Seiler-Smith this illustrates the Foucauldean story of biopolitics, and then there is a second part that leads us back to the introduction of my brief—well, no longer so brief [laughter]—comments. There, she shows how the orphan, because the orphan is a subject in the care of the state, can also be exposed to [various medical experiments] for the benefit of the population as a whole. They are ideal test subjects.

I think what I would ask Rachel is whether the split between a "care" that does respect the subject (that would allow it to grow, to have a certain autonomy) and that does figure—at least a bit—in the accounts of the Foundling Hospital and, on the other hand, a biopolitical account of "care": does this characterize a transformation in the history of care that happens in the eighteenth century? It's an idea *in* the eighteenth century. We find it best expressed in Rousseau…

Rebecca Spang: Who gave his own children to a foundling hospital.

Türk: Right. right. Rousseau says that in the state of nature—which he explicitly says is fictitious—we have this immediate impulse to help that takes the place of social bonds. But then this catastrophe happens, we lose the state of nature, and then institutions, the law, administrations, the state—they take over, and care is transformed so at a certain point it becomes irrelevant whether the "care" that we see in the state of nature still exists or not. So it's part of the account of the emergence of certain kinds of care, but it's a scene that is from the beginning ideology (or, at best, a fiction). I think you could look at many details in your account that could allow us to think about this transformation further. For instance, the religious iconography of many of the images (especially the Hogarth). We could also point to the coat of arms for the Foundling Hospital. Is this a wolf? Would this lead us back to the state of nature? Because of course the wolf-child is a recurring story, not just with the founding of Rome, but one that becomes very popular with the "wild children" of the late eighteenth century.

Can we actually trust your account? You seem to be criticizing something that Foucault describes, in the name of a "care" that would be more personal, that would respect individual autonomy, that would take particular lives into account. But if we see these [ways of thinking about the person] as something that also emerge in the eighteenth century and as a by-product of this biopolitical form of care, then the picture changes and we no longer have a firm historical ground for a critique. So before the eighteenth century, this idea of natural care, of a relationship that would respect the other as other, that would be "pure" care (like the idealized mother-child relation—which is also a feature in Rousseau)—does it exist? Because if its emergence is coterminous with biopolitics then we need to unravel this discussion and look at it from a different point of view.

The second paper looks at an unusual periodical, the *Bouche de fer*, that was on one hand a newspaper that published letters and communications that it received from its

readers during a brief period in the French Revolution, but what is interesting is that this newspaper is also part of a social project. So there's a club, where people meet and discuss things, which is almost a sort of shadow cabinet. Because many of its members were also prominent figures in contemporary politics. So Fabienne Moore reconstructs this social club, as well as the periodical, as a place where we could find maybe an alternative to the Revolution because it's a place where a more heterogeneous political landscape appears than in the national assemblies. She gives really wonderful examples of how the publication tried to give voice to those who are marginalized such as women, advocates of the emancipation of Blacks, it reaches out to the provinces. But it remains in conversation with two central texts of the Revolution, Rousseau's *Social Contract* and the Declaration of the Rights of Man. In her paper, she suggests that "these voices represent a more active and diverse political participation than voting or being elected, which was more restrictive" (p. 224 in the reader).

So while Rachel's appeal to us is to ask us to understand why *we* care, for the marginalized, for those who have no voice, Fabienne asks us to care for a lost opportunity in which eloquence is something that appears in a brief social moment and is something we ought to care for because—from very early on—it offers an alternative narrative. I found it very interesting that both papers were concerned with voice: with the giving of voice, the finding of voices, their silencing. And so how is giving voice a form of care, and how does this relate to our own work? Is it our job to care for those who have not been cared for? Or do we look at different versions of care that maybe started in the eighteenth century but by which we are still surrounded?