

Discussion

Erica Charters: Thank you very much, that's very helpful. First, just to respond to the kind of specific, short question: this question of why the French royal bounty was withdrawn, resulting in these terrible conditions. What's interesting about it is there's nothing in any of the French sources that says anything about the withdrawal of the French bounty. So actually, again, to me thinking about—what interests me about prisoners of war is partly trying to uncover the level of the rhetoric about what's going on as well as the difference between rhetoric and the financial and administrative detail. So French scholars have never known that there was any issue with a French bounty being withdrawn. And hence the focus is always about “there are poor conditions”: not who is responsible for those poor conditions, but “this is a terrible thing because there are poor conditions.” So it is true that it was most likely withdrawn because the French government simply ran out of money. But this again is not acknowledged anywhere explicitly and instead the only place we find any evidence of this is in British reporting suggesting this is the reason. So I think there is also this suspicion of the French never say “we run out of money, that's why it's gone”; we just have British reports saying “the French have run out of money and that's why it is gone.” So I think, again, there is this broader question of what—who—is responsible and what exactly is going on?

So for me my interest—and maybe to come back to this broader question about caring for the sources... In some ways what's interesting about it is I think the reading about humanitarianism and this broader movement of thinking about the rhetoric involved in newspaper reports... I would say I'm actually trying to not be cynical because, if anything, I think care is not pure. I think that's our assumption—that care is pure—whereas actually I think it's much more real to the eighteenth-century context to say that these people know that humanitarianism and care and charity have both material, this-worldly benefits (immediate benefits, strategic benefits) as well as otherworldly, more idealistic things. To me, actually, it's not a criticism of their care or even a cynical reading of their care; I suppose it's trying to capture their way of seeing their actions, which is “this is very much part of a strategy and hence of patriotism”. I'm not trying to be cynical of the sources; if anything, I'm trying to think about how the readers of these sources... Especially for newspaper reports and rumors, I think these readers were actually much more adept at thinking about different levels of rhetoric than sometimes we might assume. So that would be my...

Laura M. Stevens: Thank you very much; you've given me a lot to think about. I want to open by saying that I really like your framing of these three levels of care, partly because when I read the topic for this seminar, one thing I was wondering about was whether the unspoken, other level of care that this seminar was addressing is that in this moment of our cultural, widespread, American suspicion of intellectual endeavor and the humanities, in particular, whether one of the questions we would be talking about is, “who cares about our labor?” So I do think that's a question to bring to (maybe) all of our projects: why are we doing this, what is the implication, what is at stake? Not that I have a great answer at the moment, but I'll just frame that question. Thank you for your question about how the title has changed. The “Recipe to Convert an Indian,” I originally had that as my title partly because in one of my chapters I talk about a poem by a little-known, late-Restoration, early-eighteenth-century poet named Elkanah Settle; he's best known as a dramatist. But near the end of his life, in 1711, he wrote a Pindaric poem, “On the Propagation of the Gospel in Four Parts,” which is as bad as it sounds. [Group laughter] So it's a

really interesting poem; it's this long, ponderous, bloated, Pindaric epic dedicated to this missionary society and partly to commemorate this visit of the so-called "Four Indian Kings" to London in the age of Queen Anne. And I've been beating my head against this poem since grad school and I had this part of my dissertation on it. What I just can't get my head around is that it's a really bad poem, and I have struggled a lot with what to do with this text. And at some point I was reading or teaching Benjamin Franklin's little essay on a recipe to write a funeral elegy, which is brilliant, and I began to think about cliché in poetry and sort of stock—you know, when you have a stock narrative or figure—and the fact that a lot of the texts I'm working with in this book of mine are just not really very good. So I partly was thinking about whether there's this kind of imperative to a kind of bad aesthetics, a stale aesthetics, to talk about propaganda. And so what I was initially thinking about in the book was a kind of aesthetic framing of these missionary fantasies in which there were these vignettes of the conversion of the savage to Christianity that are all very set and canned and kind of repeat each other over and over. So that was sort of my initial framing of this, hence that title.

But then as I got more into the project and really started to do the close reading, that conceit started to not work for me, partly because I began to realize that these texts were not really as similar as I had initially thought. A lot of them do share a kind of badness, but they're all unique in that. [laughter] So then I began to... I always had thought about this project as united by this concept of fantasy, but I hadn't really unpacked that term and for a while I had been in doubt about whether that was really what I wanted to work with. But then as I was writing this introduction and really started to just think hard about what it means to think about these texts as fantasy, then this is what came out. So, that's the answer to the question about the title.

I do think... I'm really grateful that you focused on this question of... I think there still may be a bit of slippage in this introduction about how I'm treating fantasy, and what I'm coming back to—what I'm having a hard time with—is the aesthetics and this question of why these texts are written in the way they're written, why they look the way they look. And one thing I'm trying to get at in the end is whether there is a Protestant aesthetics tacitly informing these texts and especially this paradox of this kind of emptying out of ornamentation and visual apparatus. A lot of these texts are very conflicted about how beautiful and fancy and substantively rich to make these depictions of conversion look. And so that's kind of what I'm trying to work with at the end. I mean, Defoe is probably the text that everybody would know, which is why I talk a lot about it in the introduction. But this sense of this kind of intense worthiness, and this plainness, and this kind of talking Friday to death; I mean, it takes four years for the conversion to be marked as complete, so it's this long, long, boring process. So that's part of what I'm trying to get at here, that there is this kind of... It's almost like a *via negativa* in these Protestant visions of Christian conversion as entertainment. So that's still what I'm kind of grappling with. I would love any suggestions from the group about especially that part of the paper. And I think I'll just stop there.

Bjørnstad: Jesse.

Jesse Molesworth: Yeah, let me actually go straight to Crusoe. There are aspects of that conversion that are undoubtedly a fantasy: Crusoe talks about how his nose is shaped differently and more like a European; how his skin is lighter than most Africans; and so forth. But at moments there are strong challenges, I think, to that fantasy, in particular that scene where Friday begins to question the grounds for Crusoe's theology... and does so very strongly: why doesn't God destroy the devil if He is omnipotent? and so forth. So in scenes like that there are actually two fan-

fantasies under attack: the first obviously is Friday as this willing convert; and the second is the fantasy that underlies *Robinson Crusoe*, that there is this Protestant God watching over and protecting Crusoe and so forth. So I guess my sense is... What is the purpose of a scene like that? Does that sustain the fantasy—strengthen the fantasy—that Crusoe is able to overcome that? And is that exemplary of other conversion narratives?

Stevens: You mean the dialogue section?

Molesworth: Well, the strong release from fantasy...

Stevens: Yeah, I mean, that's a really interesting passage. Paul Hunter: I think one of his first publications was a reading of that passage and arguing that a source for it was some of John Eliot's letters from New England about conversations with the Wampanoag and Massachusett peoples and the hard questions they were asking. So I think one level is that... And those letters were circulated of course among the Dissenting community in London, so it's entirely likely Defoe would have run across them. One element there is that there may just be a textual influence that we're tracing there. But more broadly, my sense is that... I have a chapter that's about Indian dialogues in general and Catechisms that imagine Indian Catechists...? Catechumens... I think there's a way in which that is kind of the Protestant fantasy, and that is what distinguishes from and elevates Protestant conversion visions over Catholic ones: that the hard questions show that the Indian is engaged in the process and is thinking about it and is really present in a way that, to an eighteenth-century Protestant mindset, marks that scene as substantive and more real than a Catholic scene, where the caricature is of sprinkling water over a crowd and declaring them Christian. So I think that's one of the things I'm trying to get at: this vision of the fantasy of the authentic. Does that...?

Molesworth: Yeah, that's great. I love that seeming oxymoron, "fantasy of the authentic."

Stevens: Yeah.

Bjørnstad: So we have already six people... I have six people on my list and two hooks before that, so....

Oscar Kenshur: I just want to make a small observation since Hall began by saying that he was an interloper from the French seventeenth century. It strikes me, in the light of everything we've said since then, that this interloper brought with him La Rochefoucauld, and that to a certain extent [inaudible]... And it wasn't just your intrusion of La Rochefoucauld, but it certainly seems to fit the paper because it has to do with the demystification of care. You know, that next level is basically taking eighteenth-century purported humanitarian ideas and looking at them with the keen eye of La Rochefoucauld.

John Han: Just to refer to Jesse's comment... In *Robinson Crusoe*, there is a little bit of pushback from Friday, but remember he still has his own religion, right; he had Benamuckee. If you're thinking about it in terms of a conversion, there's always a turn there. What Laura is demonstrating, there's always some fiction that overlaps, and you're just uncovering the Western aspect of it, right? It was Benamuckee first... That seems to be his grounds of pushing back:

Benamuckee did this; why does your god do that. So it's more three-dimensional, I would say. I'm not sure that helps, but...

Bjørnstad: Before we continue, I'll just read the list, so the people at the end don't think I've forgotten them. Because it will probably take a half hour to get to them... [laughter] So it's: Brendan, Sarah, Robin, Richard, Rebecca, Michael. Brendan.

Brendan Gillis: Sure. Laura, first off, I completely buy your reading of the fantasy as a particular subgenre of writing about Indians in this period. But I wanted to know more about how this messy reality (that these kind of things are unmoored from) shapes your study, and the sort of regional and chronological approach shapes the ways in which you're framing it. Because in some sense I thought the fact that you started with New England made a lot of sense in terms of the historical context because it's one of the few places where this fantasy seems briefly like it might be a reality—before it's dashed. And you gesture towards the Carolinas and the Yamasee War, and there's this thriving Indian slave trade which often involves enslaving Native Americans who are taken from Spanish mission communities. So there's a different type of fantasy going on here, that they're taking heathens and enslaving them.

Stevens: That's a great point.

Gillis: So how regionally specific is this fantasy? Because obviously you point to Defoe as well, which is a little bit more unmoored from this particular place and time. And I also wondered how this particular fantasy fits into some of the other fantasies that are used to justify and structure empire? I mean, a lot of the South Pacific encounters are also fantastic in their own way.

Stevens: Yeah. Thank you for that. So one question I'm still working with is... The way in which I'm framing the book is that it's sort of a traditional five-chapter literature book where you have, you know, the close readings and so forth. But "in between," I'm having these little response interludes that are more about the realities, but focused on native response. Like the first one is about this letter I found in the New England Company archives and it's a letter from a group of Indians at the Natick Praying Indian town in 1684 and it's addressed to John Elliot asking him to advocate for them with the New England authorities basically to get their missionary a raise. So it's this really interesting intervention of Christian Indians trying to use some of the devices that have been used on them to basically leverage the situation so that their missionary is better taken care of and also better positioned to be an advocate for them. My sense is that the fantasies... What makes them fantasies is that they're kind of lifted out of context; they're sort of denying all of this regional specificity, whereas the response texts are all about context and what is going on in that moment. I do think—and part of the reason the recipe formula wasn't working—is that there are very different dynamics at play in say a Puritan-oriented text like *Robinson Crusoe*, or another novel I'm writing on is this really weird novel of 1748 called *The New Pilgrim's Progress* and it's all about Charleston, South Carolina, and it's basically... I'm reading it as this defense of the Church of England's legitimacy—moral legitimacy—when, during the Great Awakening, they're being criticized for not doing enough to convert Indians and slaves to Christianity. So it's all this fantasy about converting Africans and slaves and going inland... All of this is to say that I don't think I have a great answer to your question, except that that is part of

the tension of the project, is this sort of cycling between these texts that are denying the relevance of regional specificity and difference and texts that are entirely mired in it.

Bjørnstad: Sarah.

Sarah Knott: Oh, okay. Great, that wasn't a half-hour at all...

Michael Meranze: He was talking to me.

Knott: Hah, looking at you directly... I had one question that in some ways follows on from Brendan's, for both of you, which is less about messy realities and more about visibility. Because it seems both of you are preoccupied with moments in which objects of care and caregivers become visible in some sense, and that seems one of the issues that you share. But I want to ask actually a broader question for all of us, which is to help me, or maybe all of us, understand where we get this fantasy of "care as pure" from? Because that's not actually what I walked in with. And it seems to me that that notion of "care as pure" is smuggling in an association of care as having an affective charge of fondness or attachment, right? And there's certainly a long history to that meaning, and it's a history that predates our eighteenth century, so it seems appropriate to bring it forward. But there's a separate history of care as attention, which I think is much closer to that very contextualist reading that you offer us, Erica, right: where you say "there is care here, but these eighteenth-century writers and readers are acutely aware of the context in which this care is being meted out," which is an intensely hierarchical and patriarchal society. I wonder if we can parse a little our own fantasies that care ought to be affectively warm and ought to be implicitly democratic and recognizable to us, I guess, affectively. Because when I look back at this eighteenth century, that's not the caregiving that I think I see. And I would just hazard one offering on this... Which is that I think one of the objects of analysis that we don't have here now, but we might have had ten years ago, would have been that longstanding story about sentimental maternity, right, and the maternal-child figure—the figure on the front of the reader, right—that ideology we all know too well. I wonder if that's not part of the shared heritage here, both for the eighteenth century and certainly for our own time... The sort of *ur*-sentimentalized figure of caregiving that we see on the reader and that circulates in the culture that we inhabit now.

Charters: I agree and I think, to me, one of the interesting things thinking about this question of pure care vs. unpure, mixed, complicated care To me, one of the things which highlights it most clearly, at least in the eighteenth-century context, is thinking about this notion of—and this is where I thought Laura's paper and my paper had things in common—thinking about the difference between Catholic care and Protestant care. Because it's such a clear, even if not always explicitly articulated, in the period... All of the forms of British, Protestant care are implicitly criticisms of what would be another kind of care, which is often seen to be an indiscriminate, totalizing—and therefore ineffective and not-rational—care. So when I think about care, I think that there's this interesting way in which every argument about whether or not you can count it or whether or not you can do it is arguing this kind of care is better than another type of care. And so I thought this notion of the Protestant conversion—the authentic, Protestant conversion—versus the Catholic, inauthentic conversion comes out in terms of thinking about what is authentic forms of charity and inauthentic forms of charity. And so again I think this issue of visibility

in some ways overlaps, because to me this is why people need to explain what it is that they're doing and have a very clear philosophy of the care. So it strikes me that actually these eighteenth-century practitioners have a very complex theory of what is proper care, and what is improper care that masquerades as care (but actually, of course, is in fact the complete opposite: that is, ineffective and just for your own selfish reasons). Part of it I think also may have something to do with sentimental attachments of care because it always does strike me that teaching undergraduates about eighteenth-century notions of charity is difficult because I think somewhere in the later eighteenth century there is the idea a more pure, emotional version of care that is the same one that we share now, and that's where the disjuncture comes.

[laughter at Johannes Türk]

Johannes Türk: It's very small. I think that actually this idea of a natural, pure care is exactly what is born in the eighteenth century, especially in Rousseau. And I wonder if it's not, in a certain way, offered as a solution to a certain problem that emerges, then... So of course for Rousseau it's a double thing: first, in the natural state, it's what precedes institutions, what is immediate because those are the passages on pity in the *Discours sur l'inégalité*; and then he says this is transformed, and institutions deal with it differently. So that it doubles and becomes more problematic, but a historical account mediates between the two exactly. So I would say it's actually an invention of the eighteenth century, that there is this pure care that is natural... Yeah.

Stevens: I think I agree that there is a Protestant-Catholic dynamic. I hadn't thought about Rousseau and nature; that's interesting. But what I was mostly going to say is that... I think... My sense is that the core of this has to do with religion. For example, care would look very different in a Confucian model, right, where it has to do with one's place in hierarchy and so forth? What your question made me think of is a book I haven't read in a while, Judith Shklar's *Ordinary Vices*, and about this pivot point in the middle of the eighteenth century from this vision of sin as anchored in appetite and control of appetites and sin as what causes suffering. So my sense is that one thing we might be seeing over the course of the early modern period is this shift from a model in which care is part of this Catholic vision of the good works that are required to earn salvation. And just thinking—painting with a very broad brush—what you get with the Protestant Reformation, especially in its most extreme forms, is an eschewal of that. And if you're elevating faith over works (if works are suspect), care becomes less of a ticket into heaven and becomes more like a sign that you have the interior qualities that have already earned your place in heaven. So it might just—thinking out loud—it might be about Calvinism [laughter] ultimately. Those darn Puritans...

Rachel Seiler-Smith: I was just going to say, sort of double-down... Feminists double-down when we talk about care, but not the term the "ethics of care," which is what 1980s feminism was all about in a lot of ways. So Nel Noddings, who is an education theorist, a pedagogical theorist, and her whole point was that feminism can develop an ethics of care that's an alternative to a masculinized justice, right. So Brendan's paper is really interesting as a combatant to something like that... But she was entirely embracing this criticism of separate-spheres ideology in which the more feminized version of care that she frames through mothering and pedagogy fosters not a universalizing form of justice that therefore can't happen, but one that occurs as a form not of reciprocity—which is what the ethics of justice does—but relationality: something about

the encounter, the relation. And I think that's something—I agree with Johannes—that she's buying totally out of this project that we haven't entirely shed and that 1980s feminism doubled-down on and we're taking up in certain ways.

Bjørnstad: I have a little hook myself, continuing the seventeenth-century references to the split between the Catholic and Protestant care. It's interesting to think this along with another seventeenth-century moralist, Pascal and Pascal's wager. In Althusser's reading, it's a philosophy of practice: "kneel and you will believe," so in a way the Catholic care would be "care and you will believe," while from the Protestant point of view that logic doesn't hold.

Stevens: Yeah.

Bjørnstad: Robin...

Robin Bates: Sure... Thinking about these fantasies, you have this really striking formulation on 125 where you say that these fantasies of missionary conversion, "invite their readers to imagine a reality in which Christian missionary wishes had been accomplished. Their fundamental communication to their readers is 'let's pretend'." So to what extent, then, do the readers know this? How much are they in on it? If this is an invitation, how is it being put to them? I mean, do they know that they're consuming fantasies, or do they credulously believe they're getting reportage from far-flung places, and is it some uneasy mix of the two?

Stevens: I think it's an uneasy mix of the two. And it depends a lot on which text you're talking about and what genres...

Bates: Sure, what about the King Phillip text that you start with?

Stevens: Oh, in that text... Elliot, who is the author, in the beginning has a preface where he says "this is a mix of fact and fiction."

Bates: Huh.

Stevens: So he's quite disclosive about that, but he's not entirely clear about where the fiction and where the fact is.

Bates: Yeah.

Stevens: And that's really... I don't know; I don't like questions about reader response... They're so hard. No, they're important, but they're just the hardest because you just don't know how people are actually responding.

Bates: Yeah.

Stevens: I think that... Most of these texts, I'm just going to go out on a limb and say were probably digested as fiction, but pleasing fiction.

Bates: I guess I didn't quite mean to put you on the spot about reader response, which I know is impossible sometimes to gauge. More to say, you know, if you go into a store now and want to buy a book called "Fantasy," there's a section and it's called "Fantasy" and you know when you pick it up that it's a fiction. And if these are communicating to their readers, "let's pretend," they're clearly not communicating it in so many words; you italicized that yourself, of course, it's your distillation. So how is that invitation going to be put to the reader in a book in this genre of missionary fantasy? Because it's not going to be put quite that way.

Stevens: Right, okay...

Bates: Do you see what I'm trying to...?

Stevens: I think I am, yeah. So this book is sort of a complement to my first book, *The Poor Indians*. Part of why I'm writing this second book is because the first book was about these texts that are authored by missionaries or their supporters and are really about trying to elicit active responses from their readers to support missionary projects: give us money; pray for us; care for us. In my research, I just ran across an assortment of weird texts that are just kind of about the subject of mission, but they're not asking anything from their readers. And they're clearly fictional; whether they're readers would understand them all as fictional is a different question. But I do think these texts ask their readers to find pleasing the idea of these scenes of conversion. They certainly present themselves as realistic in all basic senses of the term—that's why at one point I say no one's flying through the air, animals aren't speaking—so they're adhering to these basic norms of realism. I don't know, I'm floundering...

Bates: But of course maybe it's just that there's no profound epistemological divide between the fact and the fiction in a text like that, so it doesn't have to be flagged.

Stevens: There is a blurring here and I think that probably... What I'm trying to get at is what a lot of these texts are trying to do for the reader is to imagine, even if they're staying in England, "how would I convert an Indian? You know, "what would I do?" And some of these texts are actually presenting a kind of rehearsal, a scene of rehearsal for what you would do.

Bates: So it's not so much "let's pretend" that's the invitation, as "let's project"...

Stevens: Oh my gosh, yeah, that's interesting.

Bates: Like this is a structure on to which you can take your own feelings and your own sense of yourself as being a Christian and your duty to others, and you're not actually asked to do any particular actions, because what you're asked to do actually is to insert yourself, like a "choose your own adventure" kind of book.

Stevens: And some of them actually do that...

Bates: Wow.

Stevens: ... Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man, he wrote this *Essay towards Conversion of the Indians*, which is a Catechism basically. But he prefaces it by saying, “Gee, maybe some of our colonists will read this, and if they’re talking to an Indian, can pick up some of these dialogues.”

Bjørnstad: We have four hooks, starting with Nick.

Nick Bujak: So my question I think is a follow-up, or maybe repetition in different words of the question that was just asked, and it has to do with your use of the term “fantasy.” I think it’s very clear how fantasy functions as a psychological term in your account; what’s less clear is how fantasy functions as a genre term. So rather than... We were just talking about “how do readers experience these texts?” Well, that’s an empirical question, we can’t ever really know for sure. But there is a way in which we can ask the question about the text itself, and that is, how does the text construct itself such that it presents itself as true or as not true? For example, the realist novel presents itself as fiction, despite the fact that there’s no sword and sorcery, no elves and dragons, or whatever; it presents itself as being different than something that is actually true or actually happened. And to read a realist novel as if it was actually true is like, “you’ve made a mistake.” So I wonder how much you want to own the term fantasy as a genre term in your account of these texts, and if you do want to really want to own fantasy as a genre as opposed to “these are writings,” or I don’t know whatever you want to call them... If you do want to own fantasy as a genre, if you could talk about how these texts construct themselves as being fictional.

Stevens: Right, and I think part of the struggle here is that, addressing questions of genre, the texts I’m looking at span genre in our traditional understanding of it: I’m looking at poems, dialogues, memoir-writing (purported memoir-writing), and novels; so there’s a whole mix. I would say certainly they’re not fantasy in the category of our twentieth-century understanding of fantasy; they don’t present a kind of fantastic departure from the world as it is, in our ordinary sense of it. But—and maybe you could tell me if this makes sense to you—they are at the same time inviting their readers to fantasize about the world being better, more desirable, in certain ways than it actually is. And that operation unfolds very differently in, say, a Pindaric ode than in a novel.

Bujak: But do you think—granting that you’re working across very different kinds of texts—do you think that they share a common sense of, like, a reflexive self-awareness that they are fictional?

Stevens: I would say eighty percent of them do.

Bujak: Okay.

Stevens: Yeah, there are a couple of little fragments of writings I found in archives that have never been published, and they are making a sort of higher degree of truth claim.

Bujak: Okay, I think that’s a very cool feature, then, and in the final version I think it would be worth emphasizing that, because I think that’s very interesting.

Stevens: Thank you.

Bjørnstad: So I have four more hooks coming and a couple of the people I have twice on the list: first with a hook, and then with a major comment. So Rebecca, you will get the chance to demonstrate what an exemplary short hook is. [laughter]

Rebecca Spang: Laura, because you've already cited Žižek in your paper, why do you say the gesture is "let's pretend" instead of what Žižek would call "fetishistic disavowal"? "I know this isn't true, but, *blah blah blah*..."

Bjørnstad: Exemplary. [laughter]

Stevens: That's very nice, thank you.

Tracey Hutchings-Goetz: My hook is right into that, which is this is what stock fiction does, right? I think bringing stock fiction back in would be really helpful for thinking about "let's project" or the "fetishistic disavowal". Because with stock fiction, or elements of stock fiction, you know that it's fake because you've seen it before, right? and you have to kind of have to disavow it as you go in. In some ways, that's the appeal, that kind of repetition. So for me, that makes a lot of sense.

Stevens: Okay, thank you.

Bjørnstad: Johannes, still a hook?

Türk: Yeah, I wonder how the genres—I mean it's different genres you describe—fit into the tradition of religious manuals: so Loyola to [inaudible]

Stevens: Yeah.

Türk:... and there's a certain way in which it's no longer an inner exercise, it's become external; and you have a lot of vision of the fantastic, in the sense of making appear fantastic elements in that. I feel it's different, but...

Stevens: Yeah, I talk briefly about Loyola in my chapter on the catechisms and also I draw on Steven Schaffer... Is it Shapiro?... *The Leviathan and the Air-Pump*...

Rob Schneider: Shapin and Schaffer.

Stevens: Thank you, yeah, sorry.

Meranze: It's Simon Schaffer and Steven Shapin, yeah, right.

Stevens: So one concept I'm toying with is that the Catechisms at least sort of invite their readers to enact a virtual witnessing. So I don't know if that resonates with what you're saying, but

that's where I'm trying to go with that material; but I think you're right, thinking about the religious manuals is actually where I'm hoping to head with part of this. Thank you.

Bjørnstad: So now we have seven names...

Meranze: I had a hook.

Bjørnstad: And three hooks before that..

Meranze: Okay.

Bjørnstad: ...so even the major comments will start to condense, and you should start asking yourself whether it's a necessary comment. [laughter] So, Michael, this is your hook.

Meranze: This is my hook, yeah, and it's a hook following up on both Nick and Rebecca. You know, I was struck by your Žižek thing, because you're talking in these things about sort of individual imaginings, whereas in Žižek, fantasy is what makes reality as a whole possible. It's where you learn to actually desire. It's not singular in the way... I don't think you have the same sort of plural that you do in your fantasy. I mean, there is fantasy, and it's sort of what divides—what separates out from the real and makes the symbolic possible and all of this stuff... So it's always perspective, and I wonder if in fact Žižek is actually all that useful for you, unless you do want to go to the fetish rather than the fantasy... Unless you want to change your thing to fetishes of missionary activity. Because I don't know if fantasy in a Žižekian way is specific enough for you.

Stevens: Okay, thank you. I'll have to... I suppose I want to have it both ways—speaking of fantasies that... I think part of what I'd like to argue is that these texts are helping to make possible this particular manifestation of the imperial imagining. At the same time, a lot of these texts are voicing these scenes of conversion that are highly individualistic and sometimes competing with each other.

Meranze: Right, but insofar as they're mourning at the same time, you might want to go to Klein...

Stevens: Oh, okay.

Meranze: ... if you want to stick with a psychoanalytic register.

Stevens: Thanks.

Bjørnstad: Yet another hook. From Fritz.

Fritz Breithaupt: Okay, I'll make it a very brief one, trying to be exemplary. I just want to emphasize one passage that we have not really talked about, Laura, that I liked a lot, where you talk about the three characters that emerge in these conversion fantasies, which ultimately you pin down as the three figures that come up again: the “noble savage,” the “heathen convert,” and the

“ignoble savage.” Why I like that is it brings out a different dualism, not of pure and impure but about movable and immovable, because suddenly the “noble savage” is immovable; he’s not interesting. But the narrative one is the one who can change, who can be converted. So I won’t make that a question, I just wanted to emphasize that I found that very convincing, that that is basically the strategy. How can you even talk about it, because it is something that is immovable? I just wanted to highlight that.

Stevens: Thank you.

Bjørnstad: And?...

Sean Silver: Yeah, Sean Silver. I just want to make the point that the distinction that we feel between fact and fiction, I think, is to a certain extent throwing us on the wrong track. You already provide two terms that seem to me to be more workable and useful in light of this as devotional literature or a devotional genre: it’s “historical” and “instructional”. Instructional doesn’t necessarily witness the difference between fact and fiction. It’s trying to imagine creating the possibility for something happening; when we’re in the classroom, you know, we’re quite comfortable moving between statement of historical fact and statement of scenarios that aren’t, you know, historical in the same way. So that’s my hook.

Bjørnstad: Comment?

Stevens: No, I think...

Bjørnstad: Okay, so then, Richard.

Richard Nash: Okay, I have a comment for Laura that’s probably “unnecessary” in Hall’s terms, certainly inadvertent because originally it was pure care—I was trying to indicate that Rebecca had a question. [laughter] In the meantime, it’s developed into a comment. So I want to focus on a line on 127 (which I think is one of the most wonderful things in your paper) and think about it in terms of your taxonomy of “bad works” and “good works” and your writing about a lot of “bad works.” Because my favorite “bad work” from the period is *Robinson Crusoe*. And you write: “Fantasy is what grows in the hard ground of disappointment. One does not fantasize when one has what one wants.” And it seems to me that that’s got wonderful opportunities for Crusoe himself. In which he’s begun with agricultural care—with husbandry that’s failed—and he’s been delivered because of a providential care when his crop grows in that hard ground, right? There’s a sort of reversal of that. And yet in the narrative itself... It seems to me very much the way fantasy enters in—along with Friday—is after the sort of realistic, imaginative realm/fantasy of “how does one survive alone on a desert island” gets to the point that Crusoe begins to feel “now I have what I want, now I have what I need.” Then it’s at that point that Friday enters in, and the novel goes to shit, or whatever it is. [laughter] It’s the craziest end in all of literature, right? Where you’re crossing the Pyrenees, attacked by wolves; people from islands are showing you how to kill bears in places where no bears exist! [laughter] It’s a bizarro fantasy narrative in the last part. So you’ve got a narrative that, in its own sense, is sort of broken up between what we’re used to thinking of as various fictional modes. But I think we’ve built a critical heritage around it, so we don’t look at it as “bad” in the way that these other works that you’re

looking at... You know, what do you do with Elkanah Settle? Well, *that's* a struggle. But I'm wondering if there might be a way of thinking about this hard ground of fantasy as something that's disruptive even in *Crusoe*, right; so that you can use this exemplary work as exemplary not because of its literary merit, but in many ways because of the ways it's fractured. And in this sense I'm thinking of fantasy less as a genre than as having modal qualities. So one of the markers of fantasy is not "this is strange and unreal," but "this is true and authentic" (or in the case of Fox News, "fair and balanced"); either way, it's a mark that what you're getting is a kind of fantasy—there's that sort of counter narrative. Rather than trying to think of fantasy as a genre, it seems to me to think of it as the modal qualities within these works that may be inconsistent and not well-contained.

Stevens: Yeah, I think that's great. Thank you. I'll have to chew on that, but I think that might be very helpful to me because that is still one the areas where I'm struggling: reconciling the aesthetics, or lack thereof, with the content of what I'm discussing.

Charters: So I actually had a comment/question, partly because I was struggling to think about the similarities between our papers and I suppose, coming at this from a historian, I'm somewhat bewildered in terms of thinking about literary approaches. So as an honest question, I was trying to decide what is the difference between these fantasies that you're talking about and, say, the newspaper reports that I'm talking about. Because, in some ways, other than the difference of length, it struck me that readers see these in very similar terms, in the sense that everybody knows that reporting about how "the war is going very well, it's just taking longer than we supposed"—readers know that's a kind of fantasy stemming from a kind of disappointment. My other sense, of course, imperial projects bring out this fantastical projecting practice even more so, and also thinking about how many readers would have access to... The way that many people are reading texts of fiction is actually through newspapers, in which the reporting on overseas campaigns—which are always in the form of a letter from so-and-so, so you already have the sense that it could be or could not be true—is interspersed with excerpts from what are clearly works of fiction, and yet used to think about how we might shape our world. So I don't know if I'm just being too much of a historian, where I don't understand the genre? But to me it seems like I couldn't quite decide how these aren't all fantasies according to this kind of definition and thinking about projecting, especially in terms of thinking about imperial ambitions, which are so often clearly fantastical in this period, whether it be through administrative reports which try to make a whole other continent somehow legible and yet we know of course it's not; I mean those reports and number reports strike me also as being kind of fantastical in that sense, and that both sides know that this is a kind of fantasy. But I don't know if I'm misreading as a historian...

Stevens: No, I don't think you are. I would say, to the degree that one focuses on fantasy along an axis of truth-claim, that may well be the case. I think your paper and your comment now also made me think about how our current discussion about Guantanamo, for example, or just incarceration in general; and how we talk about prisoners, or don't talk about them; how they're rendered visible or invisible. And how not just reportage about, say Abu Ghraib or Guantanamo, can explode how we fantasize about American influence abroad; but also how fictional shows like *Orange is the New Black* change how we think about incarceration and prison. So I think it is all this kind of mishmash of fact and fiction and this sort of constellating of our imaginations. I suppose one thing I would say is that this is partly why I was thinking about the fantasy texts as ask-

ing different things of their readers. I don't know if that would be a useful question to bring back to this cluster of writings you mentioned, journalistic and not, and the way in which they invite their readers to think about empire. When is it that they invite their readers to a kind of complacency and just pleasure in witnessing what's being reported to them? And when is it that they ask something of their readers: to have an active response, to give something, to do something? You know, donate clothes to the French prisoners; if that's a different kind of text than one that's just saying "everything is great."

Bjørnstad: Hook from Kirk.

Kirk Wetters: Yeah, I mean, something I already thought of in Hall's summary of the papers too: something about a possibility of disingenuousness of care; or care as pretense; care as social performance; care as subject to manipulation, or mixed and unclear motivations in different ways. So politicization (as well) as another factor. And in that way it seems to me that you're already somehow beyond the fact/fiction difference at a certain point, if one looks at it in those ways. Another way I was thinking about that too: in the category of, let's say, care as social performance would be the importance in terms of many forms of cohesion that we're still familiar with—also in the, let's say, Guantanamo versions and I thought about the Veterans Administration hospital scandals and things like that too—of the importance of seeming to care; and the relative difficulty of getting beyond that moment of politicization to actually make institutions reform themselves; or something like that.

Stevens: Yeah, that's great.

Bjørnstad: Yeah, okay...

Fabienne Moore: I was thinking that maybe one of the differences is not so much between fact and fiction, but the poetic and the prosaic. [to Erica Charters] I think what you're referring to are really prosaic accounts, even though they might be full of, you know, sort of projection. [to Laura Stevens] But your corpus, which is a very hybrid corpus, is sort of united by the fact that it's poetic, even though it might be in prose or it might be in verse. But it's about using figures—figures of speech, for instance—and I think it would be interesting because of this issue of the supposedly "bad aesthetic" to sort of have that catalogue of poetic devices that are being used by those authors in order to convey the narratives that might make that distinction, and might sort of unite them in a way that is perhaps sort of beyond the question of genre, but just within the texts themselves. It might explain... You know, you use the adjective "weird," and I'm very interested in sort of the "weirdness" of what you're describing; like what exactly is "weird"? And I think that [you could get at it] by perhaps listing those features that are really sort of stylistic features or rhetorical mannerisms...like what is it that's happening that is not the prosaic kind of accounts one would find in the newspapers, for instance?

Stevens: That's a really interesting idea, thank you.

Charters: I would just add that eighteenth-century newspapers I always think are so fascinating because they are not newspapers like we would think of them, and the news is not news as we would think of them. Which I think is why I kind of question this distinction that we're making:

because it strikes me that these are full of poetry; these are full of kind of random things to make you meditate on mortality; intermixed with foreign affairs. And there's no kind of ordering or hierarchy to the types of knowledge and how it's presented, or even who it's coming from. So I suppose that's what makes me think that these eighteenth-century readers are quite aware of the range of how reporting on foreign affairs is just as fantastical as what we might think of as being fantastical reporting.

Stevens: And part of the project of these newspapers and periodicals is the cultivation of a kind of taste of inhabiting the world.

Charters: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Bjørnstad: Rachel, did you have a hook, or...

Seiler-Smith: It was a hand, sorry.

Bjørnstad: Sorry?

Seiler-Smith: It was a hand. [laughter]

Bjørnstad: So, Rachel and Richard, I will add you to the list, but there are eight names on the list and eleven minutes, so... [laughter] Rebecca.

Spang: I want to try to link Hall's exposition of three levels of care; Laura's observation that our rubric invites consideration of why and how we care about the eighteenth century and the texts it produced, and the bigger question "should we do so?"; with the question of temporality that was so important in the first panel yesterday. And I am brought to do this by four sentences on page 124 of the reader: "Most of all, these texts stand out from missionary writings in what they ask—or do not ask—of their readers. They do not propose to change the world they describe or call their readers to action. They do not ask their readers to care. Rather, they tell stories or present vignettes in which successful missionary encounters *already have taken place*." So the fantasies are all histories; you haven't called them that...

Stevens: That's true.

Spang: ... but you just said, "this is in the past, it already happened." And we've sort of been going around and around the question of, "what are these texts asking of their readers?" So if we think about these texts as histories, it could be, as Rob Schneider said yesterday (about truth and reconciliation), the point of telling the past is to reveal truths that have been hidden—but this doesn't seem really a good way of reading *these* texts. Is it, and this seems to be what you're saying, that we talk about the past with the intention of changing readers in the present; and if we want to change them in the present, is it with the hope of doing something different in the future? So I think all of the texts both the papers address—insofar as the newspaper accounts usually describe the present, but it's yesterday's present—could lead us to think about the fantasy of history, and why these authors are invested in it and why we're invested in it.

Charters: You can go first. [laughter]

Stevens: Can you use the question of temporality to mark a divide between the English and the French coverage? Does that make any sense?

Charters: So in terms of...?

Stevens: I just wasn't sure if the English texts are more like, "here's what's going on; here's what we need for the prisoners; here's how hard we're working to take care of them," and the French texts are not?

Charters: I suppose the one part of temporality—but tying into this notion of fantasy as a projection of disappointments—is of course the French reporting of the return of the prisoners after peace had been concluded and the French know they've lost the war, which is a very different relationship with the prisoners before, when there were still texts reporting "the war's ongoing, it's just taking a long time." So that's a kind of temporality, that's a kind of projection of now "what will we do and how do we report on the situation that's been happening for the past seven years." It's not quite the same thing as temporality. I mean, I think there is always... I don't know if it works entirely, but this is why I think of these reports as a kind of a projection about "this is the type of world we live in, this is the type of nation that we are." Because this is clearly a kind of plea to make the French nation feel that this isn't a complete loss, that actually we were quite good in this war, even if some people wouldn't call it a victory. That's a looking forward, but I don't really know...I will have to think about that.

Bjørnstad: Maybe a hook from Robin...

Bates: Well I was thinking about this, that there is a kind of fantastical temporality in some of the English accounts, where they talk about themselves as having broken through to a new era of universal humankind that the French can't access; and that we've gone beyond nationalism and that's what makes our nation great. Which is really a fantasy and which is a kind of temporality, right?

Charters: Yeah, I mean...I guess I'm trying to think how it ties to temporality. But I think that the point to me is that all of the reporting is a kind of projection (even though you might be saying that this is something that happened yesterday). And of course empires just make that projection much more clear because you do have the distance of "this is what happened six months ago in a place far far away, but we're told by this letter that this is indeed what happened." I mean, to me, I always get the sense with the projection of wars... Part of the issue is we know that there's another war coming and that there's going to be another completely different view of prisoners. It's hard for the historian not to see the temporality as something that's stretching forward to when it's going to be shown to be completely false.

Bjørnstad: We can...

Stevens: Yeah, we can...

Bjørnstad: Yeah, Michael.

Meranze: Yeah, I wanted to follow up on something that Hall and then Sarah raised because of Laura's response about Confucianism—about the sort of notion of pure care—and I wonder if part of what may be happening in the construction of some idea of pure care is what happens when care gets separated from duty. Insofar as you're fulfilling your duty, you're caring about whatever the task is, right; but people don't—unless they're Kant—think about duty necessarily as pleasurable. [laughter] So there's some way in which we've separated the impulse to care from the duty of caring for an office or person or whatever. I don't know when that happens—it may in fact be an eighteenth-century split—but there's something about the sort of separation of care and duty that may be what helps constitute this notion of “care only counts if it's pure.”

Knott: But you also just hooked care to pleasure; can you explain that?

Meranze: That was just a Kant joke. [laughter]

Knott: Okay.

Meranze: Actually it was superego, pleasure... But all I'm saying is that... You know, somebody said yesterday that there's no way the *Critique of Practical Reason* can lead to your death, but that's actually not true, right? I mean, if you are following the moral imperative, it can lead to your death, and you're supposed to enjoy it in a sort of Žižekian way. So that was just a Kant joke... There was pleasure there, but it was mostly just a Kant joke...

Seiler-Smith: I was just going to reply to that in a very literal way. Actually in a lot of the texts I've been looking at that talk about the obligations of office—whether you are in justice or a medical practitioner, or etc.—they say “take care” all of the time. One of the major bylines is “take care”; that's not only a caution, but also a holding in check. And so the duties of office are always already about a certain form of care that isn't about pleasure, but it's about a caution and a fulfillment... So not fulfillment of pleasure, but about fulfilling the duty of that office that stays in care's terms.

Meranze: Yeah.

Bjørnstad: Brendan.

Gillis: I don't want to give up on pleasure so easily. [laughter] Because one of the things that I got in reading Erica's paper especially is that all of these newspaper reports... Especially the moment where you have the citizens of Edinburgh responding to the poor, disheveled French soldiers marching into their midst—I mean this gets at the issue of visibility that Sarah was asking about earlier... There's something kind of pornographic about the fact that they see the results of war paraded before them and decide to demonstrate their mastery over these people who are in their midst by giving them the necessities of life.

Charters: No, I agree. I mean, I think, and maybe this is where trying to figure out what pure care is; I mean I have a sense of maybe it's this assumption that it has to be something entirely selfless—that was in some of the rhetoric yesterday—where it strikes me there's nothing at odds

between being selfish and being caring, and so therefore, I think (at least for the eighteenth-century mind) that's how it would make sense. But I agree about the visibility and hence this dramatic retelling of the tale, the stress on the poor, naked Frenchman—which just kind of highlights how much this is about British strength and not just about care. I mean, it also might have to deal with this issue of suffering and where is the root of suffering and how we deal with it, because I think that might be the other side of the care equation in this period: Whether you can eradicate poverty, as people now may think, or whether it might have been different in early modern...

Meranze: But it's also supposed to be a choice, isn't it? There's something about choice involved in this as well...

Bjørnstad: Sarah.

Knott: It seems like terms like “kindness” and “pity” might be useful to bring forward now, especially in an eighteenth-century register in which pity is understood as pleasurable as well.

Bjørnstad: The time is running out and the hooks are popping up. [laughter]

Silver: For a brief minute... One of the things that was striking to me that we haven't really talked about in terms of caring states is a formulation of care that can't be pinned down to a person. It's not something that a person does, right; there are no *caregivers* in your paper [to Charters]. It's hard to point at anybody who cares in a positive way, except maybe to give money and they're not really giving care, they're giving something else. It strikes me that we've arrived at a place at least in the discussion of your paper where we're ready to see care not as something that an individual does or even receives, but as... I don't know, call it the state of the system, the network, the village, or the tribe.

Bjørnstad: Johannes.

Türk: Just the literal quote in Rousseau is “sans reflexion,” right? So in the state of nature you just run to help someone without even thinking. Plus narcissism and all the later forms of self-love are a later product... So I just see the repetition of the Rousseauian imprint...

Bjørnstad: I think there's only time for one more question and it should have been Rob, but he's out, so...

Ellen Malenas Ledoux: Oh, wow, I was just writing down my question to pass to Erica. Okay, so Erica, I want to ask you about the idea of cost-benefit analysis that I think your paper seems to invoke. That is, by taking care of POWs, the British or the French could legitimize their empire, or bolster their national identity, etc. Yet in times of scarcity (which certainly the late eighteenth century is for the majority), the cost seems too high to justify this abstract, ideological benefit. So my question is, is there any pushback by the poor that seem like, “I as a British citizen don't have food and clothes, so why should I feed and clothe a Frenchman who is my enemy?” etc. etc.

Charters: There definitely is. I think it's hard to get a sense, of course, whether it's coming from the poor. But there's definitely a very vibrant debate about the nature of this charity in the news-

papers and these kinds of debates over whether this should indeed be a charity that the British public is focused upon, aren't there other philanthropic efforts? I think that again to me underlines how complex care is seen to be, and charity... I mean, the discourse on charity goes back so long and thinking about who are valid objects of charity and then of course what form that charity should take. So I agree entirely that there's a clear debate, and of course also a debate over, "What about our own British troops, some of them are missing shoes and whatnot; why are we giving shoes to French soldiers as opposed to the British soldiers?" So I think this is where you have this emphasis on the rhetoric of explaining why it's so important for the British nation to do this. But I think people are very aware that, hence there is no such thing as... You have to reflect on all forms of care, because to not reflect and just to act, according to this rhetoric, is to act very irresponsibly with all sorts of dangerous implications. So I don't think everyone's agreed. This is a very popular charity, but also a very problematic charity.

Ledoux: But I was also thinking not in terms of charity, which is bottom-down, but top-up: are there poor demanding... So if you read Wordsworth or if you read Dorothy Wordsworth's journals, it's full of veterans and poor people who are exclaiming against the scarcity under which they live. I mean there are subaltern voices that are demanding that they be given some sort of share of the pot. So maybe in literary sources more than newspapers, there might be something where there's an expressed voice...

Charters: Well one of the things that's actually celebrated, and I wonder if part of this has to do with being mid-eighteenth century rather than late-eighteenth century... Britain it's quite clear is in a better agricultural and economic position than France in the same period, and so this is a point of pride that even the poorest British people are giving two pence because even the poorest in Britain have enough to give to the French, which again is an indication of how powerful and rich Britain is...

Ledoux: That's a fantasy, sorry... [laughter]

Charters: Well the whole thing is a fantasy, right? That's the sense, these are all projections. But any kind of charity is going to involve these kinds of decisions because you're never going to be able to solve all social problems, so the question is which ones are you going to solve. But I suppose people acknowledge that there is poverty, suffering, and distress both within the British troops, but also at home in Britain; but the way that it is translated is an argument about why this one might be superior versus other ones.

Stevens: I'll just toss out very quickly.... This discussion made me think of John McCain's comment on torture: "It's not about who they are, it's about who we are." I think that's what I see in your paper: it is about the objects of the charity, but it's also about this declaration of identity, "this is who the British people are."

Bjørnstad: So there are four people who have not been able to ask their question, so if you want to say two phrases to throw it in for our digestion over coffee? Anybody? Or hold until later? Okay. So I think Erica summed up the panel well with the phrase, "the whole thing is a fantasy." [laughter, applause]