

Chapter 4 of Waste Studies book

Present: Aesaen (Asia), Cc, Fieke, Janna, Jenna Ruddock (she/they), Maxigas, Yan

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Logistics

Notes in https://docs.google.com/document/d/1o_9jqN-xMXvFTleVXbWoib5D7HTSA1cHmBd0IIvG8NE/edit

Concepts

Difference:

1. *Defamilirisation.*
2. *Decentering.*
3. *Depurification.*

→ “Practices of reflexivity.”

Spivak: *strategic essentialism.*

Discussion

Initial points

Asia: “No such thing as we.” – was a good point that is also connected to my work and life.

Fieke: The positionality is really well defined and that happens also in other books by Max L.

Some philosophers and concepts to approach and define difference:

- Gadamer: prejudice
- Derrida: differance
- Deleuze: repetition

Plus i guess Bergson must have wrote something important about this.

Maxigas: “Difference” should be

Janna: Claim of difference can also be problematic, especially if there is really no difference.

Janna: I found “specificity” as a more useful concept here. In contrast, “difference” was not really helpful because it is unclear.

Asia: Defending the author. Technique and difference are not defined, it is true. There is a lot of theory on both. They introduce these concepts and explain them properly though, it is just that they want to stay accessible so they use commonsense words. This is a book about epistemology.

Janna: This is a methods book so in theory it is not seeking to be strong or original.

Fieke: The question I am left with after reading the book: What is the appropriate scale to address these issues? Does the book really give us tools [and methods] to approach these questions?

Asia: Reading this was like “this is what i was like talking about since years!” Old transport, old clothes are transported from Germany to Ukraine. This book is like a companion.

Jana: Yes, this is why specificity made so much sense! It means understanding the land, the context, the locality. Environmental racism.

Yan: The chapter bridges material culture and cultural studies using the concept of “difference”.

Asia: The most striking part of the chapter (which I can relate to from personal experience) is that this “difference” makes it seem like people’s problem is other people’s problem.

Fieke: Both this and the Colonialism book is a **critique of knowledge production!** We were struggling with such questions at the Data Justice Lab.

Maxigas: [Class composition, articulation of the public interest. How do resistances from local contexts scale up to the appropriate scale of the problem?]

Someone reminded that the example in the book was that ocean plastic pollution is a global problem so that local bans cannot solve it because the plastic moves around and mostly comes from the marine industry.

Jenna: In my capacity as an organiser Max’s work speaks to me, because people have to go back to specific communities, context and localities. Berta Cáceres addresses this scaling of local resistance to a global scale, and we have been discussing a paper on it by her previously in this same reading group.

Fieke: Next week is Chapter 5 of this book and this paper:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/20539517231221778>