

“What is ‘global’ as a theory?”

We asked does Global really need to be a theory? In a sense, our answer was that as a theory, the global would be a description of a methodological approach rather than an ontological theory of what the global is. What contrasts the global with “world history” is thus methodological. World is based on the fragmentation of expertise into parts that make up a whole. Global history, in contrast, is about constructing narratives and connectivity’s across boundaries—not making easily divisible puzzle pieces that assemble to complete a whole. But this brought up the question of if we are to avoid fragmentation, how do we unify without resorting to grand narratives? We suggested that the historian is the point of unification—it is the individual act of constructing connectivity’s that is what unifies. The historian thus has enormous ethical responsibility in the act of assembly (collaging together a syllabus of GAHTC lectures is an ethical act). This suggests the global is theoretically and methodologically composed of solutions rather than being a solution. Finally, we suggested that a way to continue to interrogate this question was to catalogue methods for building narrative threads. We need theories of ways to chop up and re-assemble time and space.