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Becoming - Archive: Encounter, Temporality, and Decolonial Practices in Palestinian Dabke and DAAR

Rebecca Tognazzi

*University of Venice
Iuav, Italy*

Abstract

According to Derrida the archive is the crisis of command and commencement (Derrida, 1995). This contribution interrogates the Western archival apparatus as a technology of colonial governance that excludes embodied and spatial practices from legitimate knowledge. Drawing on Deleuze's critique of chronological time and his ethics of encounter as transformative events, this paper posits that the archive produces - within the event itself- a linear temporality that serves colonial historiography. In contrast, the decolonial practices of the collective DAAR (Decolonizing Architecture Art Research) and the practice of Palestinian dabke activate a divergent temporality. This is characterised by the actualisation of virtual pasts that have hitherto been unfully expressed, thereby opening up future possibilities that have been previously foreclosed.

The paper emerges from interviews with dabke practitioners and workshops with Sandi Hilal (DAAR) that have transformed my positionality as a researcher. Framing these encounters as ethical events, and in dialogue with Walter Benjamin's notion of history as constellation a revolutionary chance in the struggle for the oppressed past (Benjamin, 1940/1968, Thesis XVII) and Azoulay's conceptualisation of Potential History (2019), this paper shows how dabke and DAAR do not preserve memory but activate it - making present what the colonial archive has rendered absent, and actualizing buried possibilities.

The paper concludes that these practices perform alternative modes of archiving - through the body, space, and collective enunciation- revealing embodied knowledge as a revolutionary force for memory, justice, and the future of the humanities.

Keywords: Archive, Deleuze, Palestinian Dabke, DAAR, Relational Ethics