

Notes on the ARCHIVE

The archive is often seen to be tied to the documentation of a past event – an event that has receded far into the past so as to be only accessible through documentation housed in the archive. The archive becomes thus situated as a space for the complex and contested production of histories. In Foucault's alternative sense the archive is the site of the spacing out of a history so as to turn history upon itself and uncover the discursive and non-discursive regimes of what is sayable or visible at a given moment. The Foucaultian archive becomes a site of ontological – or perhaps heterological – investigation/production and experimentation. Critical to this form of the archive is that there is a nascent cartographic function to the archive – where it begins to trace out weaknesses, aporias, new paradoxes, and new modes of becoming latent in the mass of housed materials (always in relation to questions of the present). This is what Foucault saw as the shift into genealogical modes of inquiry (and what Deleuze termed the cartographic). Perhaps then it is not all that much of a morphogenetic shift to see the archive as an open experiment in the production of what is in common – where this conceptualization of the “commons” is being posed as a zone of problematization.

Here in the development of a *temporary parallel space* or event of inquiry one finds interesting resonances following the archaic root of the word *archive* -- “Archeia” -- the town hall, a public gathering, the space of civic engagement. “Archive” then as a space for the production of a public. The archive becomes a strategic zone of stopping mid stream to allow the unformedness of ideas, things, events, places, identities, individualizations of any scale and forces to fold in upon each other as an experimental problematization of the given – a pause – a slowing down of acting to allow the givenness of a new situation to reshape one's mode of acting and doing.

Given the global context of action and vastly distributed nature of agency there is a need for this form of situated condensation and slowing down of agents, forces, spaces, and events. A strategic temporary parallel institution -- the archive is at once a collection, a system of collecting, a series of relations (to peoples, groups, regions, terrains, events, things and other beings, etc.) and an unfolding collective space in which to experiment with these (now collective). The archive becomes a way of investigating and experimenting with the present through the collective development of a system of problematization.

A system is needed to move from the space of problematization towards the production of an archive. Here one needs to develop a methodology of tracing out immanent forces at the point of emergence. A score that directly engages outside of the structural subjectivities of scientific, aesthetic and other agendas produces an archive that can move outside of itself, making possible that the archive becomes an active force in its own reshaping. The generation of archival objects through the scores creates an open set, in which any object, image, sound, smell or agent can become an element of the set if collected from the environment using the specified methodology -- thus permitting the

discovery of unanticipated elements and associations. The archive demands an engaged participation that over time must respond to the changing problematic that the archive itself calls forward. The spatio-temporal contingency of the archive and archival process is fundamental and thereby as a process sustains a dynamic continuity, remaining open to intervention, aberration and inflection. So, the etymology of the word archive as an interaction of forces maps onto the praxis of the archive as a collection. It is a repository of motion and speeds; a collection of open agencies, sensible and prone -- the production of a people(s) and a space/spaces still to come.