

Dance Archives in Brazil and the Performativity of the Past

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Abstract

This article consists of sharing reflections that have crossed my own training and trajectory as a dance historian who conducts research from a specific location—Brazil—and who has studied the history of dance in connection with local artists, whose conditions to access documents and archived sources is precarious. Consequently, dance archives in Brazil (always plural) show considerably different characteristics and *modus operandi* from one another, making every relation between artists and documents and/or between academic researchers and documents rather peculiar. Although the proposal may seem localised, I think there is a potential for generalising the debates proposed herein, since they acknowledge something that frequently transverses historic texts, opinions from artists and articles on dance studies, both in Brazil and internationally, which consist of handling the archive itself as a referent for a discourse that can aspire truth and provides a material link to the past.

Keywords: archives; dance; performativity; trace; past.

Introducing the issue

Researching the past of dance heritages and traditions¹, as well as any other human activity, requires contact with the records that reach us in the present. If, on the one hand, the production of dance historiographies in our country has shown timid enthusiasm in recent decades, the fuss about archiving has been even more prominent. However, dealing with sources from the past can easily lead to admiration and commotion for the records, which historian Arlette Farge (2009) describes as a kind of seduction that documents can exert on people in the present, convincing people who are not introduced to studies about the past to

¹ Preliminary version of this text was published in the journal *Dance Research* under the title “Dance archives in Brazil: a brief introduction” (2020). In the process of obtaining information about dance archives in Brazil, the contribution of researchers and managers who provided me with indispensable contributions was crucial, making my thanks to Ana Teixeira, Mônica Mion, Arnaldo Alvarenga, Raymundo Costa, Beatriz Cerbino, Elis Costa, Fabiano Carneiro, Vera Torres, Getúlio Lima, Janaína Lobo, Carlinhos Santos, Mônica Fagundes Dantas and Giancarlo Martins.

naively assume the contents of documents as reflections of what happened and neglecting the human actions that bequeathed these same documents to us.

To address these issues and their epistemological implications both for archiving processes and for the handling of the archived material by historians, I will present and characterise different archiving formats identified in Brazil, aligned with the discussions found in dance studies. Once we understand the constituent differences of these formats of archiving or formats of archive, I will try to identify what keeps them grouped in the term “dance archives”, demonstrating that there is something frequently crossing historical texts, artists’ speeches and articles in dance studies both in Brazil and worldwide: treating the archive itself as a basis for acquiring knowledge regarding what has happened in the past, as a referent of the discourse that aspires towards the truth and supply a material linkage to the past, and as a line between the past and the present. As this is the first subject on which I intend to focus, I will try to understand how the undefined aspect about archives vanishes in the historical texts related to dance, thereby seeking answers to questions such as what status do documents and testimonials (along with memory) take in a dance archive when they are analysed from a historical epistemology viewpoint? My hypothesis is that a guiding episteme exists for the handling of documents on dance available in history and philosophy when it comes to those who archive and to the history of dance.

Dance records in Brazil

The word “archive” encompasses a multiplicity of organisational formats and has different conceptual applications. Notably, the understanding of archive used in this text differs from its traditional sense possessed by historians up to the last decades of the last century. Michel Foucault in *L’Archéologie du Savoir* (1969) brought about a turnaround in the studies on this subject in recent decades by introducing a different concept, that is, by defining archive as systems of enunciations; they are not texts stored by a particular culture, but they are systems that establish statements as events, thereby allowing the recognition of archive as an agency regulating the connection between statements, their formation and transformation. Therefore, Foucault’s concept of archive does not include the materiality factor, and hence, archive is understood as the law of what can be said and as that which allows statements to be treated as singular terms; however, archive is always plural in sense and performs displacements by being in constant motion.

On the basis of the abovementioned conception, it can be said that dance archives are not neutral or descriptive of an objective practice; they cease to serve as a report or an acknowledgement, and therefore, they no longer are subjected to the verifiability criterion (i.e. they are neither true nor false). The recognition of the archive’s performative aspect

(Austin, 1962)² has gathered varied possibilities and disputes around its definition, but with the understanding that in addition to informing, archives and files do something. And this thing done by archives changes the way and how information is accessed. In this sense, researchers involved in archival dynamics were faced with a question of order: what constitutes or should constitute the specificities of a dance archive (singular and/or plural)? Archival practices and theories were responsible for undefining, or rather, performing this concept. Moreover, we can group them into three categories: a) “Dance Archive(s)” consists/consist of different curatorial exercises of documentary preservation with institutional support, b) “Dance that archives itself”, encompassing personal collections and archives and archiving projects performed by artists, groups and companies that document themselves, c) “Archives that dance”, that is, when the body is a privileged locus, but not only of testimony inscription and memory sharing. Finally, to better understand these differences, I will present the existing dance archives in Brazil, accompanied by a better explanation of the categorisation proposed here.

Dance Archive(s)

We here talk about dance documents under the tutelage of third parties, relying on the support and organisation of public or private institutions and specialised work. They are characterised by combating the ephemeral aspect of dance, dedicating themselves to the preservation of documents that in different ways “record” dance practices and performances. They also claim to offer liability, as they keep and safeguard testimonies of the past as documents. The registration media was significantly expanded with digital technologies, and today, various textual, imagistic, sound, audiovisual and interactive documents are archived. The Dance Heritage Coalition, for example, defines this activity as a way “to lessen our dependence on the human chain of memory”³. This understanding is also shared by researchers such as Lynn Matluck Brooks and Joellen A. Meglin in the opening text of the dossier “Preserving Dance as a Living Legacy” for *Dance Chronicle Magazine* (2011) when they use the word “fragility” to address this relationship between dance and memory. The archive, in this sense, despite some trepidation, still works as a guardian and updates itself to raise new resources to preserve different and more varied dance “heritages”.

Following this premise and faced with the realisation that there is no public archive dedicated specifically to dance in Brazil, archives of public institutions that hold documents

² The language variations analyzed by John Austin as *performative utterance* in the book *How to do things with words* (1962) include enunciating as an action, providing us with a ballast to understand that archives and their utterance systems are not merely descriptive, inserting them in a complex and tense social network of interaction.

³ See “Beyond Memory: Preserving the Documents of Our Dance Heritage”, accessed December 21, 2022, http://new.danceheritage.org/html_OLD/preservation/beyond.html.

and collections of dance are exclusively related to state dance companies and are still unavailable for online consultation. They are listed as follows.

– The collection of documents relating to the activities of the Balé da Cidade de São Paulo (City Ballet of São Paulo)⁴ since its creation in 1968, which is currently divided into two spaces and with different possibilities of access. Documents between 1968 and 2000 are at Centro de Documentação e Memória da Praça das Artes (Documentation and Memory Centre of Praça das Artes), together with other documents related to the activities of the Teatro Municipal de São Paulo (Municipal Theatre of São Paulo), with limited and conditional access upon prior authorisation from the Fundação Teatro Municipal de São Paulo (Municipal Theatre Foundation of São Paulo). The collection from 2000 to the present day is digitised and available for consultation at the company's headquarters—also located in Praça das Artes—coordinated by Raymundo Costa.

– Documents referring to the Ballet do Teatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro (Ballet of the Municipal Theatre of Rio de Janeiro), the oldest state ballet in Brazil founded in 1936, are at the Centro de Documentação da Fundação Teatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro (Documentation Centre of the Municipal Theatre Foundation of Rio de Janeiro), which selects, organises, catalogues and opens them for public consultation in person.

– For the organisation and maintenance of the collection concerning the Balé do Teatro Guaíra (Ballet of Guaíra Theatre), created in 1969, a commitment agreement is signed with the Departamento de Arquivo Público do Estado do Paraná (Department of Public Archives of the State of Paraná), located in Curitiba, regarding digitisation, preservation and conservation of the collection.

– The documentation and research area of Teatro Castro Alves is responsible for maintaining the collection of the Balé do Teatro Castro Alves (Castro Alves Theatre Ballet) (existing since 1981) in Salvador. Kept with resources from the Fundação Cultural do Estado da Bahia, Funceb, (Cultural Foundation of the State of Bahia), it controls the access to the collection.

– The Corpo de Dança do Amazonas (Amazonas Corps of Dance), created in 1998, is the most recent among stable companies to hold a collection of files and is linked to the Teatro Amazonas (Amazonas Theatre).⁵ It is maintained by the Secretariat of Culture and Creative

⁴ The company was created under the name Corpo de Baile Municipal and was dedicated to accompany the Opera of the Theater and perform with works from the repertoire of classical dance tradition and mostly with romantic aesthetics. After administrative and aesthetic reformulations that took place in the 1970s, the company gained greater autonomy and was renamed in 1981, changing its name to Balé da Cidade de São Paulo.

⁵ Other companies with state support were created in different cities and states of the federation, but the preservation or constitution of a collection did not accompany the development of their activities in an institutional way, leaving the task of archiving at the mercy of the interest and disposition of dancers, choreographers, directors or producers involved, such as the Balé Popular do Tocantins, Balé da Cidade de Teresina, Companhia de Dança do Palácio das Artes, Companhia Municipal de Dança de Caxias do Sul, Companhia de Dança de Minas Gerais and the Grupo Experimental de Dança Contemporânea linked to the Federal University of Bahia.

Economy of the State of Amazonas (Secretaria de Cultura e Economia Criativa do Estado do Amazonas).

Other than cases of public authorities that support dance companies, we have the Centro de Informação e Documentação da Fundação Nacional de Artes, CEDOC Funarte (Information and Documentation Centre of the National Arts Foundation), located at the centre of Rio de Janeiro; it also follows the archival logic of the ones previously listed. It has a wide set of collections of artists and intellectuals of the arts, other than archives of documents that cover extinct federal institutions of culture, providing the basis for studies related to cultural policies established by the Federal Government since the late 1930s. It receives donations from private archives as well and allows face-to-face consultation. The process of digitisation and virtual availability is still backward.⁶ We also have Centro de Memória do Esporte da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (Sports Memory Centre of Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul), which contains books on dance (in Brazil and abroad) and material on dance in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, constituted from the private collection of João Luiz Rolla and donations.

Another archive that has a remarkable specificity in its modus of archiving is the one produced between 1975 and 2007 by the Departamento de Informação e Documentação Artísticas (IDART) (Department of Artistic Information and Documentation), which is available only for face-to-face consultation in the Arquivo Multimeios do Centro Cultural São Paulo (Multimedia Archive of Centro Cultural São Paulo), in São Paulo. IDART did not receive documents for custody, and hence, it is different from the others. The initiative had no precedent in the country, as researchers were hired to produce materials about the different artistic languages in the city. Therefore, the documents were created by teams of IDART's department itself through collection, transcription, writing, recording and filming. Lineu Dias, Cássia Navas and Renata Xavier were researchers who were a part of IDART's dance team at some point.

São Paulo Companhia de Dança is a dance company that emerged in the 21st century, established in 2008, and is a part of the Secretaria de Cultura e Economia Criativa do Governo do Estado de São Paulo (Secretariat of Culture and Creative Economy of the Government of the State of São Paulo). It is managed by the Association Pró-Dança and directed by Inês Bogéa, dancer and dance researcher. Activities called "memory" are a part of its daily routine due to the presence of a researcher since its origins. A broad state financial contribution and the existence of a stable dance company are aspects that contribute to these activities. We highlight that there are seven books published so far and a documentary series *Figuras da*

⁶ Consultation of the archive catalog can be done through the link http://cedoc.funarte.gov.br/sophia_web/ and information about the digital collection of CEDOC/Funarte, see <http://www.funarte.gov.br/colecoes/>.

Dança (Figures of Dance), which constituted mostly of interviews with Brazilian dance personalities. They are available online in an audiovisual format and transcription. So far, there are 35 documentaries available for free online access.⁷

Also, at the beginning of this century, the activities of the Memorial de Dança of the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) began, aimed at safeguarding the trajectory of the UFBA Dance School. The memorial is curated by Maria Sofia VB Guimarães and has archival consultancy from Ivana Severino. It is in the process of being organized, without online access, and is dedicated to safeguarding and making visible the artistic, educational and management productions of the UFBA School of Dance, both locally and nationally, from its creation in 1957 to the present day.⁸

Among the dance archiving processes not conducted by state institutions, but which are guided by the same concept of archiving as the public ones, based on the preservation of memories and the dissemination of legacies, we have the Klaus Vianna Collection. It is directed by Paula Grinover, a dancer and a journalist, and has a digital format⁹; its collection comprises documents about Klaus Vianna, a Brazilian choreographer and somatic researcher, who died in 1992. This collection was formed from the personal archive of Angel Vianna, his wife and also a dance artist, together with documents and interviews with people, organisations and studios in different cities where Klaus had worked (namely, Belo Horizonte, Salvador, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo). For its constitution, the collection procured funding from Petrobrás through the Federal Law of Incentive to Culture (Rouanet Law).

Another initiative of an individual researcher is the Cartography of Dance in Acre Project, developed by researcher Valeska Ribeiro Alvim in line with her doctoral research project. The project is dedicated to archiving and receiving donations of scenic dances in the state of Acre, with online access. It has records that start in 1997, with no aesthetic cut-off, and is closer to the idea of a collection of dance works presented in Acre, mostly of an amateur nature.¹⁰

The predominant archival methodology treats facts as data in all of these listed archives and on their modes of operation. The focus is on documents and their promise to eliminate the memory detours that may occur. The archives are treated as a safeguard stronghold of the past, assuring us that we can have not only traces, but a piece of the past fixed in documents, of the memory captured in time, and of the dance recorded in moments, which let us verify what happened and release our stories from the pitfalls of ephemerality that supposedly weakened dance in historical terms. Therefore, despite curatorial practices of documents, this

⁷ To access the Figuras da Dança documentaries, access the link http://spcd.com.br/figuras_da_danca.php for panoramic access to the company's activities, consult: <http://spcd.com.br/index.php>.

⁸ A brief history of the activities of the Federal University of Bahia Dance Memorial can be accessed at the following link: <https://mapeamentocultural.ufba.br/sistemas-museus-memoriais/memorial-de-danca-da-ufba>.

⁹ See <http://www.klaussvianna.art.br/>.

¹⁰ See: <https://cartografiadadancadoacre.com.br/>.

process is seen as impartial, disregarding the interventions made by those involved whether in the “technique of archiving” available at a certain time and which determine the archivable event demonstrated by Jacques Derrida (1995)¹¹ and the “archivalization” by Eric Ketelaar (1999)¹² that highlights the importance of cultural and social issues that allows something to be registered and exist, and others not to be considered archivable.

Dance that archives itself

Collections of the self/selves and private archives are not the only way of dance archiving itself but are the sharpest specimens of the specificities that characterise these archives. Rosemary Candelario (2018) demonstrated the different facets and issues involved in artist-driven archival projects, promoting significant changes in the formats of what we understand as archives; for the author, these changes occur because artists archive in a way that is similar to their choreography. Through this remark, Candelario (2018) offers us with an important opening to understand that archives are guided by the decisions of the artists, which are always political and artistic, being permeated with relations of authority, positions of power within the field in which they participate and interfere in the production of possible knowledge about themselves.

We can call this process as a curatorial *practice of oneself*, referring not only to the format of the archive but also influencing the content of the record that the artists keep for themselves. Sarah Whatley (2013) wrote about the digital archive of choreographer Siobhan Davies RePlay’s rehearsal process on the Siobhan Davies RePlay platform¹³. She highlighted that after filming the rehearsals, Siobhan Davies and Deborah Saxon (Davis’ former dancer) were part of the decision process on what would be kept, besides the researcher, revealing a self-censorship trace of artists possessing decision-making power “about what to include and what to leave out if the film was unsympathetic, unrepresentative or unsuitable” (Whatley, 2013, p. 147). Initially, for the office of historian, there is no information about the past that can be treated as “unsympathetic, unrepresentative or unsuitable”. This curatorial screening, its motivations and guidelines that promote dismissal(s) brings and highlights questions that the artist intended to erase in the process of self-archiving (Guarato, 2019). For these aspects,

¹¹ For Derrida the life and its relationship with the future changes according to the different “technique of archiving”. To address this theme, the philosopher invented the French term “archivation” (in English it was translated as “archivization” and in the Portuguese translation it is more confused, sometimes it appears as “arquivamento”, sometimes as “arquivoação”). Archivization is used to understand that the techniques and how to “print” the record also change the content and the meaning of what is archived. Therefore, “The archivization produces as much as it records the event.” (Derrida, 1995, p. 17)

¹² Archivalisation is a concept that was coined to designate a finding of practices that were being recognized in the field of archivology and refers to processes that precede archiving. Ketelaar emphasizes that it is not only techniques and forms that alter the content of the recordings, it is important to recognize the interference of social and cultural factors “conscious or unconscious choice to consider something worth archiving” (Ketelaar, 1999, p. 57).

¹³ The platform can be accessed at <https://www.siobhandaviesreplay.com/>.

when people related to dance archive memories of dance, the related documents are assumed to more explicitly present their “trace” characteristic when addressing the past rather than presenting the “reflection” of an era (Ginzburg, 1991).

In a country such as Brazil, the understanding of the making of dance as an art cannot be traced back to more than a century. Moreover, the constitution of collections of public institutions with stable dance working groups is somehow deficient. In addition, the scenic dance presented the characteristics of a artistic field constitution only in the transition from the 1970s to 1980s. Due to these aspects, most of the dance archives in Brazil come from personal archives, collections of themselves that present the aspects described and are organised in a fashion similar to that of autobiographies told through documents. In this way of archiving, representations of self in the present and projections of self for the future (desires, wishes, affections, material interests, concerns, aspirations) possess crucial importance in the process of documental guarding.

It is in this format that we find the archives of artists and professionals that work with dance on a national level and that have not been provided with regular public support over time. The cases of Ballet Stagium, Grupo Cena 11, Quasar Cia. de Dança, Primeiro Ato, Grupo Transforma, Grupo Grial de Dança and private collections of the various artists, critics and researchers, which have been compiled over time, are some distinct examples. There are many documents such as newspaper articles, dance reviews, diaries, notes, costume sketches and set sketches, letters, scripts, drawings, photographs and audiovisual footage carefully selected to endure. The archives of Helena Katz, a researcher and former dance critic, are more organised and are available for public consultation by prior scheduling. Among a variety of documents stored, the volume of dance criticisms written by her stands out, alongside with some criticisms from other authors and programmes of selected dance works. The Gouvêa-Vaneau collection is also one such example of the same with material on the artistic paths of Célia Gouveia and her late husband, Maurice Vaneau; these archives are found in São Paulo in the residencies of their respective owners—Helena Katz and Célia Gouvêa.¹⁴

Organized and curated by dance researcher Maria Sofia VB Guimarães, the Lia Robatto Fund was created with the help of the Pedro Calmon Foundation’s 2014 Call for Proposals for the Restoration and Digitization of Private Archival Collections, based on the Lia Robatto Dance Collection. The Fund brings together documents from the career of artist and teacher Lia Robatto, including choreographic notations for her works, texts, photographs, research records, sketches of musical scores, soundtracks, costumes, sets from the shows she worked

¹⁴ While the Helena Katz archive was organized, separated and cataloged by voluntary work, the researcher Ana Teixeira was at the head of the process, the Gouvêa-Vaneau collection was supported by the XII Programa de Fomento à Dança da Secretaria Municipal de Cultura de São Paulo, presenting structure, access conditions, storage and location of professional-looking documents. Part of both files can be accessed online through the electronic sites <http://www.helenakatz.pro.br/> and <http://www.acervogouvea-vaneau.com.br/>.

on, correspondence, interviews and other document formats. After digitization, all the documentation was donated to the Bahia Memory Centre (CMB), a unit of the Pedro Calmon Foundation/Secretariat of Culture of the State (FPC/SecultBA), but at the time of writing, access to the documentation is exclusively in person.

In the second half of 2019, the MEDIATECA de dança (Dance Media Library)¹⁵, was created as an online platform to access the private archives of three important researchers from the State of Santa Catarina, namely, Jussara Xavier, Sandra Meyer and Vera Torres. The collection has some documents collected by the researchers along their trajectories (interviews, images and audiovisual footage of local group rehearsals) and research material such as documentaries, interviews, books, articles and critic reviews. Furthermore, documents related to the production of some artistic works they worked on are also available on this website.

There is therefore a tight connection between self-archiving and telling a story of oneself/themselves using the documents accumulated over time. This relationship between dance related professionals (choreographers, directors, producers, dancers, critics) and the craft of making dance history is a broad, complex and important relationship to be established. The history of dance and dance traditions fulfilled—and still does—the pedagogical role of passing on artistic knowledge for operationalisation of the artistic dance field. They have to display to current generations the accomplishments and great feats that underlie the practices, debates and theories mobilising this field. A colonizing power is then exercised by a hegemonic History of Dance, a power to select legacies from the present to the future, manufactured by a personalist historiography of artists as heroes of their time who have survived history after their physical deaths. Thus, the History of Dance—with capital H and D—by telling us only about names, dates, people and institutions considered important in their time, teaches us that the artists who mattered are those who survived in history books (Tambutti; Gigena, 2018). This history does not only tell us about the past and how past interacts and interferes with the present, restraining artists of today who aspire to have their names written in stories about dance in the future through their archives (Appadurai, 2003) because their importance in the present will be mediated after their physical death by historical texts. As there is a close association between making history and accessing archives (Certeau, 1978), archiving oneself is an artful procedure of leaving memories for the future stories. In addition to fight against the ephemerality of dance, the archive expands its combat front as it adds a dispute over the memory(s) that will prevail.

Archives that dance

Re-enactment was perhaps the subject that shook the debates about the relations between event, memory, document and archive in the area of dance studies in the first two

¹⁵ See <https://midiatecadedanca.com/>.

decades of the 21st century. The practice of redoing dance works has become the target of dance scholars worldwide. New challenges and contributions in treating the body as a locus of transfigured maintenance of information about the past were presented by Ramsay Burt (2003), Rebecca Schneider (2010), Juan Ignacio Vallejos (2015), Isabelle Launay (2017) and Mark Franko (2017). These studies dedicated the analysis of dance re-enactments and quotations state that when we treat the body as an archive, it becomes impossible to think about memory loss. It is said that dance can no longer be treated as ephemeral (Franco; Nordera 2010), and a fight that mobilised a significant part of the constitution of dance archives has its end declared, thus enabling Mark Franko, American historian, to decree a “post-ephemeral era” condition (Franko, 2017).

A text that often appears as an elementary reference in the process to define this post-ephemeral condition coming from the body as an archive is *The Body as Archive: Will to Re-Enact and the Afterlives of Dances* by André Lepecki (2010). The author theorises that performing arts express a paradoxical relationship with archives through re-enactment and proposes that these actions are motivated by a “will to archive”¹⁶. This “will” refers to the capacity to identify creative potentialities in works of the past. Lepecki (2010) believes that one does not recreate to rebuild to seek a sense of fidelity to an original past but to situate the virtualisation still deposited and existing in the work. In this manner, the body as an archive becomes a fragmented collection of the other. It preserves as well as changes itself, given that the re-enactment fulfils the function of updating the mnemonic material of the past.¹⁷

When Lepecki says that “the body is archive, and archive a body” (2010, p. 31), he redefines what it is to archive when one handles dance, showing that keeping testimonies from the past in relation to dance means to deal with change, and not with the idea of permanence. Therefore, the archives, their formats and contents do dance. There is an invisible dance (because it is virtual) of testimonies and mnemonic material that escapes the objective pretentiousness of fixation on supposedly stable supports. This understanding of archive as impossibility of safeguarding, perishable and fragmentary of the past is currently

¹⁶ In making this proposal, Lepecki (2010) demarcates a distance from his thinking in relation to previous proposals by theorists such as Hal Foster and Ramsay Burt, who assumed that the re-enact were motivated by a need to make up for a supposed ‘fail’ in cultural memory. To this end, the author makes use of the phenomenological assumptions of memory proposed by Henry Bergson in *Matière et mémoire*, through the concepts of actualization and virtualization present in Deleuzian philosophy. In this sense, there is no ‘memory failure’, but an intense and complex flow of mnemonic information (virtualization) from the empiric that is summoned by situations of the present that form our consciousness (actualization) about the past.

¹⁷ As the artist comes into contact with ‘traces’ of the past and incorporates them, the immanence of the relationship between virtualization and actualization that plunders the artist comes into play. In effect, Lepecki (2010) condemns the artist’s relationship with the past of his field of work by formulating a determinism, according to which every will to archive leads to a desire to reenact. In the author’s words: ‘Because of these pressures toward *embodied* actualizations, every will to archive in dance must lead to a will to re-enact dances.’ (Lepecki, 2010, p. 31). This desire to re-enact is the will to archive his own testimony, treated by Lepecki always in the singular, as being a hermeneutic to understand that each testimony is singular, irreducible in what it has to say.

guiding three archives in Brazil that are idealised and executed by researchers interested in the history of dance, namely, the *Acervo RecorDança*, the *Acervo Mariposa* and the project *Olhares para Dança*.

Created in 2003 through the joint effort of Associação Reviva and Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, the *Acervo RecorDança*¹⁸ offers for the public a collection on dance in the State of Pernambuco gathered from personal collections and narratives of artists (Vicente, 2008). Dissemination actions through podcasts, exhibitions, video documentaries and book publishing also occur. Coordination was initially shared between researchers Ana Valéria Vicente, Roberta Ramos Marques and Liana Gesteira Costa; afterwards, Elis Costa, Ailce Moreira, Tainá Veríssimo and Juliana Brainer contributed as well. However, its collection accessibility relies on public funding. Due to the lack of public resources, the institution remained unavailable for access in 2018 and 2019. They plan to resume online for the public in 2020.

The *Acervo Mariposa* was conceived by researcher Nirvana Marinho and had Bruna Antonelli's management and curatorship contribution. Its activities began in 2006 in São Paulo. It sought to constitute a video library: an audiovisual collection with record of dance works, rehearsals, interviews and dance films. It gathers videos by donation and work with collective sharing through Creative Commons (Antonelli, 2013). The collection has an electronic site¹⁹, but its content is not yet entirely available online because its structure does not yet allow that. It is currently focusing on seeking partners to achieve this purpose.

Using Deleuzian cartography approach as a methodology²⁰, the project *Olhares para Dança* conducted in 2017 was interested in bringing together images, narratives and texts about dance in Goiânia between 1970 and 2000. Researchers Luciana Ribeiro and Valéria Figueiredo organised an exhibition (which is available online²¹) guided by the understanding that history is not made of memory (singular and/or plural), but that memory (singular and/or plural) is/are history (singular and/or plural). They wanted "to encourage people to look at dance through various perceptions", and they offer us a collection of different testimonies and open space for many local stories and history.

¹⁸ In its normal operation the *RecorDança* collection can be accessed through the link: <http://www.recordanca.com.br/apresentacao.html/>.

¹⁹ Available at: <http://www.acervomariposa.com.br/>.

²⁰ Coming from studies in psychology in Brazil and based on the view that Gilles Deleuze (1986) had of Michel Foucault's genealogy, the cartographic method believe in the possibility of understand and explain human life through the connecting several points in ramifications that occur in different directions, based on the assumption of free association between texts, images, symbols, bodies, orality, gestures, without the need for them to report to their specific socio-cultural contexts or historical dynamics. The proposal starts from the concept of "rhizome" and "diagramme", developed by Deleuze in the co-authored work with Félix Guattari entitled "Mille plateaux – Capitalisme et schizophrénie" (1980). For more specific information on this method, see the introduction of the book "Cartografias e Devires: a construção do presente" (2003) by Tânia Fonseca and Patrícia Kirst, and the article of Virgínia Kastrup, intitled "O funcionamento da atenção no trabalho do cartógrafo" (2007).

²¹ Available at: <http://olharespradanca.art.br/>.

These three archives, in their respective different constitutions, promote dances of the testimonies related to dance. The proliferation of dances between textual documents, memories, externalisation of memories, audiovisual material and the production of stories reveals that the body as an archive, through the re-enactment, is not the only way to remake the past and retell what happened in a new way. Dance archives also dance and feature a multi-faceted aspect.

In this brief compilation, I summarised the three formats that I was able to detect and described some aspects that constitute them. However, the categorisations presented are not segregated. Therefore, what I want to try and formulate is that every dance archive, to some extent, also dances and that these categories of archives that I have classified are not inert and closed; it is possible to find shared aspects on them, even though every general structure has specificities that separate them. In the same way, they all remain, to some extent, dance archives.

Understanding what makes something be an archives

Although the content of this text may seem local, I believe it is possible to widen the debates proposed here. There is a recognition of something that often crosses historical texts, opinions of artists and articles on dance studies in Brazil and abroad: the notion that to deal with self-archives refers to a discourse that can aspire to truth by providing material linkage with the past. Disregarding the differences among the dance archives presented here, there is still a traceable double historical epistemology that brings them closer. On the one hand, there is a treadmill of thought on what the archive lets exist, with a focus on testimonies and vestiges that provide us with “traces” of the past, which goes back to the concepts of voluntary and involuntary testimony of Marc Bloch (2001), the indicative paradigm of Carlo Ginzburg (1991) and the formulation of “inscription” of the lived event (taking memory to a testimonial status) by Paul Ricœur (2007).

On the other hand, formulations about the constitutive aspect of the archive neglect archival practice in different ways. When defining archives as systems that establish declarations as events, serving archeology to bring that system to a given place and moment, Michel Foucault (1986) provides a conception of archive without materiality. In another way and trying to offer an archive conception to historians, Michel de Certeau (1982) by attributing exclusively to the historian’s work the act of separating, gathering, collecting, copying, photographing, transcribing, turning in “documents” by changing their location and status, ignores archival practice by disregarding the fact that the archives were made by people who were not necessarily historians.²² As well as the interference in the content and meanings of the documents in the

²² This criticism of De Certeau was made in detail by Étienne Anheim (2004).

archiving process to Jacques Derrida (1995) recognized, it is restricted to techniques such as the process of capturing documents and introducing them into a system. These two epistemological lines have guided to a greater or lesser degree, in Brazil and worldwide, a significant part of the debates on dance archive(s). They are, to a great extent, the guiding thread that leads to the suppression of the importance of the archivist in the process.

In the episteme of the trace, there is no agency but that of the historian. One looks at how archives are used and not at the archive itself. Archives are thought from the later uses that will be made of them. They are presented as proof and as requirement of the hermeneutical practice of history. The trace is what enables a person to go to the archive and deal with documents—recipients of testimonies—that can assure the verifiability of the event and the link between memory and history. Therefore, trust lies in the strength of the link between the witness who testifies to what happened and their credibility. The link between the past and the present then becomes a relationship of trust, and this would assure, beyond question, its status as a keeper of our bond with the past. Étienne Anheim (2004) made an important criticism regarding the notion of trace when he states that history had not provided appropriate attention to the witness and their status. Being treated as “the witness” does not usually present specific qualities and serves as a foundation myth. Jane Pritchard (2008) treated the documentation about choreographer Joseph Hansen from this perspective, even though she has been an archivist at the *Rambert Dance Company*, and Diana Taylor (2003) worked on this basis as well to develop her archive conception.

On the other hand, if we give up the notion of “trace”, is what we can call as the “performance as an ontological proof of the past” with a focus on discussions on what constitutes the dance archive(s) or, as Arike Oke (2017, p. 197) called it, “keeping time in dance archives”. The body here takes a special place where information about the past is gathered, as it ontologically assembled the functions of experience, inscription, testimony, document and archive. Given this specificity, the paradigm of traces seems to be inadequate in the face of the recognition of the chaotic and creative aspect of the body that lives and dances. The body as archive is an expression of the presence and absence of the past in the present time, which allows re-enactment and creation processes and also is a repetitive record for the future, thereby ensuring the preservation and perpetuation of what was said/done, by whom it was said/done and where it was said/done through its rereading and re-enunciating. Studies on re-enactments are focusing on this thread of thought and on studies of situations in which artists archive themselves. In these cases, the archive is treated as something performative, but this performativity takes the same status that testimony occupies in the episteme of the trace: the performativity of the archive is only recognised in the final act (in the actions of the historian or artist who re-enact). It is in these terms, for example, that Juan

Ignacio Vallejos (2015)²³, Argentine historian, defines the document as something created exclusively by the historian, as if it did not exist before this contact. Arike Oke (2017) also defines the role of the archivist as impartial, with the responsibility to provide reliable information, and she points to the exclusive role of a “jury” (of which the archivist is not a part) that can alter the archives.

In both the cases, the archive itself acts as a basis for knowledge and as a referent of discourse that may aspire to provide a material linkage with the past. However, for this to happen, an absence of social analysis of documentation needs to occur. There is a general dismissal of the concrete processes of producing the archives. What researchers such as Étienne Anheim (2004) propose is to think of the devices that make something an archive, a process translated into the field of dance studies as the objectification of social practices by other practices, which engage in reconstructions, re-enactment, texts, recreations, conservation and classification of past information that can be treated as documents. In this perspective, archives have a specific historicity, with their own practices and representations, as they “are historical objects as such” (Anheim, 2004, p. 176).²⁴ Therefore, we talk about understanding the practical use of those who built the archives, whose concern is not solely the knowledge of the past for itself, for their procedures deal with social relations of their time and place.

The history of documents exists before the history of dance, and this does not refer just to a descriptive documented history, centred on the almost mythical difficulties that allowed the testimonies to remain. If they are still with us today, it is because people have acted, made decisions, burned, thrown away, catalogued, refused and chosen them. From this perspective, dance studies thought little on what social and cultural relationships made possible that some documents got archived rather than others. It is in this sense that Eric Ketelaar defines archivist work as *régime de pratiques* (2006, p. 68) that oscillates in time and space. This finding allows us to recognise that the archive does not turn the present into a legacy for the future and that the archivalisation process interferes in an archive not only regarding what stays and what goes away, but it also rearranges the testimonial meanings that are put into play.

Considering this process, Sarah Whatley perceives digital archives as media that can produce and “might generate new meanings and new understandings of dance” (2013, p. 146). Therefore, it is a recognition that there is a dance that the archives have, which deals with physical materials available at a given time and place; the methodologies of the archivist’s craft; the theories of the area; the political guidelines of the people or institutions that archive, filling the documents with aspirations related to the archiving process at that specific moment; this aspect shows us that the management of archives is also creative, and that, just as it is

²³ In the original: “El *documento* o la *fuentes*, es ya en su origen una construcción del historiador.” (Vallejos, 2015, p. 156-157).

²⁴ In the original “...elles sont des objets historiques en tant que tels.”

naive in our times to believe that is possible to fixate the dance in an archive, it is also naive to think that an archive is not in motion.

As I conclude, I would like to stress that it is interesting to recognise that globally, in the field of dance studies, there is an inflationary movement dedicated to the studies of re-enactment and to the body as an archive. Moreover, only two possibilities occur: the insistence on treating the moving archive only in the phenomenological stage of the artist's creative process or studies that recognise the moving archive in situations wherein artists participate in the direction of archives. There are difficulties in both approaches regarding the recognition that every archive has always been in motion and that we are the ones who have not learned to see this dance of documents. Discussions about the dances of archives are incipient on dance studies in Brazil. Nevertheless, when we look at the academic field broadly, we see that this debate resonates throughout the country for more than a decade, with the commitment of Fundação Getúlio Vargas and the work of researchers such as sociologist Luciana Heymann and historian Letícia Nedel. The book *Pensar os arquivos: uma antologia* (2018), is an example that offers translation of emblematic contemporary authors²⁵ and brings writings of Brazilian researchers on archive(s) that are understood as practices.

Archival practice shows us that we do not have a link with the past, but with what remains of this past, mediated by a process that constitutes what Mattia Scarpulla described as “hierarchisation of memories” (2016, p. 31). When we understand that archives dance, we invite ourselves to realise how much of our history relies on what we uninvite to remain in our historical memories, what comes to us through records in media other than the memory itself and the leftovers of ourselves and the shards that stayed on the paths of dance in our cities. The fact that they did not remain is important so that other stories could get their prominent places. Artists, archivists, objects, institutions, historians practice selections and abandonments of information about the past. We have access to a chosen set of stories, which is an option for producing a specific history, and it follows the time and space conventions to guide the decisions on what gets discharged.

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²⁵ The book presents in Portuguese translations to the Brazilian public of symptomatic authors of the epistemological turn of contemporary archivology such as Terry Cook, Brien Brothman, Étienne Anhéim, Tom Nesmith, Elisabeth Kaplan e Eric Ketelaar.

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