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The archival turn in dance/studies : reflections on (corporeal) archives and documents : (reprint)

[host]

The Archival Turn in Dance/Studies.

Reflections on (Corporeal) Archives and Documents[1] (Reprint[2])

Susanne Foellmer

The topic of dance in/and the archive has been intensely debated and reflected upon for several years in both the academic and artistic fields. It follows dancers' and choreographers' interests in revisiting dance history beyond what is provided by academic discourse as well as asking about how to conceive of modes of preserving artistic works – also in terms of both a sustainable artistic career as well as the public and institutional enhancement of dance as an art form. Thus, the question arises whether we are encountering an 'archival turn'[3] in the performing arts and, if we are, then what kind of consequences we have to deal with in terms of its ontological, artistic, and political/institutional aspects.

Whereas the archive has been most recently discursively and practically challenged with regard to disrupting the idea of it being an eternal container of immobile knowledge towards other more open conceptions,[4] the common denominator still seems to be based on the assumption that something can be, and has to be, *preserved*. But what if gaps in embodied knowledge almost prevent the 'capturing'[5] of dance? What kind of challenges do Dance Studies have to deal with when thinking about 'appropriate' archives for dance? What do we need archives for, other than to use them for

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1   This text was originally published in Ann R. David, Michael Huxley, and Sarah Whatley (eds.), *Dance Fields. Staking a Claim for Dance Studies in the Twenty-First Century* (Dance Books, 2020) (DAVID et al. 2020: 249–271). I am grateful to the editors for the kind permission to reprint the chapter.

2   The chapter is reprinted with minimal changes in the language and formatting in line with *Theatralia* standard.

3   Ann Laura Stoler already diagnoses an 'archival turn' around the 1980s; she observes a 'move from archive-as-source to archive-as-subject' (STOLER 2002: 92–93). Dealing with the fragility of photographs in the archive, Cooke and Reichelt-Brushett follow up on her idea by stating a 'situated[ness] [of] knowledge' and a turn towards 'provisional narrative[s]' (COOKE and REICHELT-BRUSHETT 2015: 12).

4   From the numerous publications in the field that will be partly discussed later in this chapter, I want to pick out Bexte, Bührer, and Lauke (2016). Another idea of the archive especially among choreographers deals with the archive as the repertoire (cf. TAYLOR 2003), for example in the case of Rosemary Butcher, retrospectively '"working through" the archive' of her own work (cf. SACHSENMAIER 2017: 170–171). A collection of the work of choreographer Siobhan Davies is presented as an online archive (cf. https://www.siobhandaviesreplay.com [accessed on 6.12.2018]).

5   See, for example, the symposium *Capturing Dance*, which dealt with the interrelation of artistic processes and documentation. Berlin, Uferstudios, 16–17 October 2015, in the context of Tanzfonds Erbe [Dance Funds Heritage].

historiographic investigations? And how are the physical institutions of the archive particularly challenged when it comes to embedding corporeal and moving knowledge?

In this chapter, I will particularly trigger ontological questions that arise from these considerations and conceive of the *archive as a temporal situation* that also scrutinises the modalities of the document. I will further reflect on restaging as an archival practice (cf. LEPECKI 2010) that opposes both the discourse on dance as being an ephemeral art form as well as the document as a persistent entity. The position of the archive is thus increasingly shifting into the centre of critical debates, especially as a phenomenon, concept, institution, and situation. The chapter will follow these aspects with respect to the vicissitude of the archive and its conceptions; they will be tested, challenged, or even reformulated in a confrontation with so-called 'fleeting objects'. Based on aesthetic fragilities and incompatibilities of the 'to-be-kept', the (dance) archive is qualified by a phenomenality that gives cause for scrutinising its institutional and hegemonic features. With artists reformulating the archive from being an institutional apparatus to suggesting that the body is a 'carrier medium' of memory, and the respective related scholarly discussions (cf. NACHBAR 2010; BRINKMANN 2012; as well as TAYLOR 2003; WEHREN 2016), the archive shifts from being a mere hermetic container of knowledge to having modes of archival agency (following Michel Foucault's suggestion). Conceived of as a situation, so my hypothesis, the archive then confuses the relations of origin – process – artefact and trace while prompting Dance Studies to question the nature of its 'documents'. After some brief reflections on dance and its artefacts I will reconsider the archive as an institution (already a fragile one), including a short theoretical contextualisation with reference to philosophers Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, and Media and Cultural Studies scholar Wolfgang Ernst. Subsequently, I will propose the notion of the archive as a (temporary) *situation*, posing fundamental questions with regard to the aspects of materials/materiality and document(s) by elaborating these on the basis of some examples of contemporary choreographers reconstructing bygone dance events, and by using the provisional notion of *temporary archives*.

Performance and its remainders

The notion and conceptions of the archive have gained an increasing permeability and extension in recent years. Possible media of transmitting dance such as writing, photography and film or costume and stage design, and obviously the body and its (choreographed) movements, bring conventional ideas of the archive to its limits, especially as dance was usually aligned to the momentum of the non-durational, the ephemeral. Without being able to extensively delineate the ontological debate about dance in the realm of the performing arts, I would like to adopt a critical perspective on this supposed ephemerality, following theatre scholar Rebecca Schneider's concept of 'performing remains' (see SCHNEIDER 2011) and dance scholar Mark Franko's notion of a 'post-ephemeral era', taking into account the increasing engage-

ment of dance in the field of reenactment (FRANKO 2017). However, considering the etymological constellation of the archive,[6] always already accompanied by the gesture of 'superior' knowledge including processes of selection and closing, dance questions the *modi operandi* of the archive with regard to its 'collectability' again because of its rather precarious nature as an artefact – though it is not to be reduced to its alleged fleetingness.

Dance scholar Franz Anton Cramer proposes to disentangle the dualism of fleeting dance versus durable objects. He suggests a three-fold model of 'experience', 'description', and 'connection' that acknowledges the intrinsic relation of dance and its recordings (CRAMER 2014). According to these three levels, he differentiates between dance as an instant of motion, movement as artefact, that is, the performance, and the documentation of movement (CRAMER 2014). Especially the idea of 'connection' is of importance here, as Cramer suggests that the performance, if regarded as the artefact, never shows the 'full image' of the work as such, similar to the alleged deficiencies that dance documents are often assumed to have. The so-called 'whole of the *oeuvre*' (*Werkganze*) always already consists of a combination of that which is present on stage and its respective documents, which try to partly recover what has been done (CRAMER 2014). But what exactly are these documents?

Regarding the archive and its 'contents', a difference in both media and content between archival documents such as files and the above-mentioned 'leftovers' of dance cannot be neglected. Hence the question arises: what kind of archives is dance creating, or more specifically, in what respect does collecting and preserving bygone dance transform the (institutional) fabric and formation of the archive itself? Before taking a closer look at the very nature of documents, I first would like to briefly rethink the archive as an institution.

The archive as an institution[7]

Foucault considers the archive as being a *process*-related arrangement, conceived of as *practices* and not a 'container' situated far away from historical contexts or contemporary knowledge.

> The archive is not that which, despite its immediate escape, safeguards the event of the statement, and preserves, for future memories, its status as an escape; it is that which, at the very root of the statement-event, and in that which embodies it, defines at the outset the *system of its enunciability*. Nor is the archive that which collects the dust of statements that have become inert once more, and which may make possible the miracle of their resurrection; it is that

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6   The etymological origin of archive is the Greek *arkheia*, meaning 'public records', and *arkhē*, denoting 'government', thus indicating *modi* of (state) power related to the archive. Cf. *Oxford Dictionary*: https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/archive [accessed on 30.5.2018].

7   The following text is a slightly reworked version of a previously published chapter entitled 'Das Archiv als situative Anordnung' (BEXTE et al. 2016: 93–110).

Susanne Foellmer

The Archival Turn in Dance/Studies. Reflections on (Corporeal) Archives and Documents

which defines the mode of occurrence of the statement-thing; it is the *system of its functioning*. (FOUCAULT 1989: 146)

Following this logic, the archive does not adhere to the idea of a collecting and preserving institution (any more), in which documents and artefacts often remain unused. Rather, the archive in Foucault's sense is defined by its very use, the 'practice' (FOUCAULT 1989: 146). This necessarily prompts further questions about that which has been said and will be accounted for in the future.

In following Foucault's perspective, Ernst conceives of the archive as a 'system that regulates the appearance as well as the additional current functionality of statements' (ERNST 2002: 16). I would like to highlight two attributes of this short conclusion: the focus on the topical; and the idea of the archive having a leading role, in terms of the collection of the discursive elements that the archive inhabits. The latter hints at the mode of archival governance, that is, the possession, distribution as well as retention of knowledge. Initially understood as a locus for collection of documents such as files and legal texts, the archive originally had an almost authoritative function: preserving the materials that were supposed to be essential in order to maintain a functioning state as well as selecting that which should belong to these essentials. Derrida regards such an archive as an instrument of determining and consolidating power that he already detects in its very etymology: '*Arkhe* [...] recall, names at once the *commencement* and the *commandment* [...], but also the principle according to the law, *there* where men and gods *command*, *there* where authority, social order are exercised, *in this place* from which *order* is given – [the] nomological principle' (DERRIDA 1995: 9). Even though such a '*topo-nomology*' (DERRIDA 1995: 10) is a visible, physically located authoritative instance and a repository of law-giving documents, this first determination of the archive is already focused on usage, in this case the consultation of legal texts, rather than merely conserving them.

Ernst adopts this dynamic perspective when highlighting the 'current functionality of statements'. His idea of the archive extends Derrida's concept, which was initially developed along its classical notion: 'we consider the archive then from the act and acts of the register, behind which the *arché* of the institution lies' (ERNST 2002: 17). From this perspective, the archive is a location that actually enables the capability of acting by using the law. However, Ernst's conclusion reveals a distinction of use and a topologically fixed preservation in an archive, articulated through the above notion of standing 'behind'. Yet, this gap is already traversed through the very function of the archive, so my argument, as the archive as a law-preserving institution can only gain its legitimacy through its very use, and thus the implementation of the laws it has in store. Hence, location and implementation are closely interrelated, in terms of the discursive orders Foucault established: They also materialise and are constantly realised in and around the archive, and thus are being permanently reordered and rearranged. Consequently, the focus is rather on the discursive order of the archive and less on the material(s) itself (themselves). Ernst, again, concludes that the archive today is mainly to be conceived of as a classification system of memory. In this respect, it is 'locked into remem-

Susanne Foellmer

The Archival Turn in Dance/Studies. Reflections on (Corporeal) Archives and Documents

brance. The archive begins with the institutional suspension of memory' (ERNST 2009: 182). This conception of the archive thus shows a clear distinction between the archive as an act and as a container.

So, what is the material that is being collected if it is no longer legal texts and if that which is preserved is only to be understood through its functioning as a system of statements? I would like to come back to Foucault's articulations about the conditions of the archive: its materiality and historicity. Foucault pleads for 'a *historical a priori*', 'an *a priori* that is not a condition of validity for judgements, but a condition of reality for statements' (FOUCAULT 1989: 143). Thus, statements always have to be interpreted against the backdrop of the particular historical (and social, political, cultural) context, and are not to be understood as having eternal relevance beyond time. It is now interesting that Foucault's idea of statements does not 'float' in an undefined discursive space. Rather, albeit indirectly, he connects statements to their material carrier. Talking about the archival statement as being 'embodied' (even event-like) (FOUCAULT 1981: 146), he hints at the materiality in which the statement is arising or articulated in the first place, apparently also referring to archivalia as such: written, pictorial, or film documents and artefacts that one usually finds when consulting an archive these days.

But then, what does this mean in the realm of dance? How can its discourses or even its specific ways of utterance become materialised, archived, or filed, given that dance has quite various and particular ways of aesthetic expression? Recent debates discuss the 'body as archive'. But how exactly do we conceive of such an archive? How could we use it? And what precisely defines such an institution? Coming back to this question later, I would first like to briefly think about a recent project that deals with dance from the past and, by installation of a website, also acts as a kind of repository for contemporary dance dealing with history. But is it an archive?

Collections, repositories: archives?

In 2012, the Kulturstiftung des Bundes [German Federal Cultural Foundation] initiated a funding scheme in order to enhance the visibility of (mostly) modern dance in Germany.[8] Choreographers could apply for funding on a project basis, usually dealing with the reconstruction of a certain 'work', in terms of a piece, or the creation of a particular artist. Some other projects looked into the overall methods of transmission of past embodied dance knowledge such as *undo, redo and repeat* by Christina Ciupke and Anna Till (2014) or Jochen Roller's *The Source Code* (2014). A jury consisting of three experts decided which of the projects would receive financial support, and thus which kind of knowledge about bygone dance events would be recovered and (re)presented.[9]

Following Derrida's conception, the archive needs the archons residing in its very location, preserving the documents, on the one hand, and regulating access to them, on

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8   See http://tanzfonds.de/en/about-us/ [accessed on 22.5.2018]. The funding scheme ended in 2017.

9   See http://tanzfonds.de/en/funding/jury/ [accessed on 22.5.2018].

the other hand. Moreover, the archons had the privilege of interpreting the documents, which was, in effect, law (DERRIDA 1995: 10). Trying to find the archive in dance, one could ask in a first attempt whether Derrida's archival criteria hold true for Tanzfonds Erbe. Even if the very physical location of collection is missing in this case,[10] the project concentrates a certain agency, the power to decide which dance shall stand the test of time, and which pieces and choreographers are 'worth' being kept in (collective) memory. Even though the funders and the jury members did not create the respective projects themselves, but outsourced them, in a sense, to the artistic practitioners, they still held the authority over what was to be developed into a project by acting as a preceding instance for selection and interpretation of the chosen historic dance events. Many proposals dealt with Mary Wigman's legacy, for example, and so it was up to the jury to decide which one of the suggested concepts, and thus which kind of contemporary artistic style and orientation was presumed to be the most promising.

Thus, is Tanzfonds Erbe a selecting, collecting, and – in as much as this would be possible through performances and some websites connected to it – a preserving institution?[11] Or are the loci of preservation to be found in the respective dance productions, within the bodies of the dancers, or the materials and documents of the choreographers applying for money? Derrida highlights the transfer of that which is worth being collected and preserved 'from the private to the public' – but that nevertheless only allows restricted access when it comes to the archive itself (DERRIDA 1995: 10–11). Both would apply to the projects funded by Tanzfonds Erbe: they convey knowledge that would otherwise (mostly) remain furtive. At the same time, access to this knowledge is restricted: Usually these projects only consist of a few performances, and what remains, for the most part, is the information on Tanzfonds Erbe's website. That said, could we then conceive of the funding body and artists sponsored by it as carriers or 'containers' of rather temporary archives? And if so, how would they be constituted and shaped?

Moreover, Derrida claims that the archive and its objects are always already falling prey to oblivion – contrary to the postulate (and phantasma) of preservation. The archive, he remarks, always bears a tendency towards 'destruction'; it 'always works, and *a priori*, against itself' (DERRIDA 1995: 14). This *aporia* of the archive renders the concept of the artefact – usually epitomised through documents and other 'durable' objects – problematic. Also, the question is whether dance could be positioned within the regime of the archive at all.

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10   The project lists the funded projects and venues on their website, labelling this service as documentation. It seems unclear whether this could serve as an archive, as the access to material is rather contingent. Some projects provide photos only, some offer video clips with interviews of the artists involved in the project or even show the footage of a whole performance. See http://tanzfonds.de/en/projects/ [accessed on 22.5.2018].

11   Referring to the omnipresence of dance video on the internet, especially on YouTube or Facebook, Harmony Bench conceives of these 'repositories' as archives (BENCH 2017: 156). In this case, one could even say that these archives are functioning on a rather democratic level as there is no panel or jury selecting what is to be published (copyright issues notwithstanding).

Susanne Foellmer

The Archival Turn in Dance/Studies. Reflections on (Corporeal) Archives and Documents

[host]

Situations I: materialities

In a lecture, Rebecca Schneider refers to a handprint that she examined when doing research in the French prehistoric Grotte du Pech Merle (see SCHNEIDER 2014).[12] She focuses on the specific characteristics of imprint, as they are only visible in the negative: the imprint bespeaks of a hand that is no longer there. Accordingly, Schneider asks what precisely would be 'first hand' and what would be 'second hand' in this case, that is, in what respect we could conceive of the imprint as an original in the sense of an initial act and thus an initial appearance (SCHNEIDER 2014). This conflict-ridden scenario, however, already aims at the problem that the idea of the original as a figure of 'nativeness', of a certain primordiality is a rather precarious one, even more so when it comes to the performing arts. Also, one could ask what precisely would be the material of the imprint? Is it the trace of something past still schlepping the leftovers of a corporeal event with it? Would the handprint, then, even figure a kind of document that accounts for former events? Is it, thus, an artefact in the literal sense of the word, an archival remainder *avant la lettre*?

According to Ernst, archival material is characterised by being 'conformable to a register' (ERNST 2009: 192). But what exactly could be registered in and from a handprint? The print itself is fixed to the wall of the cave and should not be removed from it and stored elsewhere. What can be registered, hence, is rather the perception of the print as well as its transmission into other media such as description, drawing, or photography. The negative of the handprint, thus, is solely materialised within other media, assuming one wants to 'save' it and make it accessible for further beholders beyond its excavation site. And yet, a certain physicality adheres to this imprint, carrying traces of an event gone by: Without the (initial) hand, without pressure, warmth and movement there would have been no print. Without the manual working material there would be no bequest.

Transferred to the subject of this section, one could now ask about the materiality of dance. What is its material: the bodies, the movements – or all the documents surrounding it and interfering with it, as Cramer suggests? But then, where would one place the original? The current understanding of the fragile status of the original in (stage) dance appears to remain unsolved, and cannot be clarified sufficiently in the context of this investigation.[13] In this context, I thus want to focus on considerations regarding the corpo-material disposition of dance that also includes aspects of durability.

In his piece *50 Years of Dance* (2010), French choreographer Boris Charmatz takes the photo book *Merce Cunningham. Fifty Years* (1997, edited by Melissa Harris and with a comment by David Vaughan) as the basis of a reconstruction attempt. In texts and images, the book documents Merce Cunnigham's (1919–2009) dance career as well as his

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12   Now published in (JUCAN et al. 2019).

13   One could ask what the original would be conceived of? An initial idea? The material garnered in the first rehearsals? The premiere? On such problems of determining the original in dance see, for example, Kruschkova (2010) and Jeschke (2010).

choreographic work from 1944 until 1994. Charmatz uses the book as a kind of score that serves to structure his piece. Placed on a mount resembling a music stand at the front left of the stage, a person turns the pages of the book during the performance, thus initiating the respective scenes on stage. In the first version of the piece,[14] the protagonists consist of dancers of different ages, such as Valda Setterfield and Gus Solomons Jr., who were members of the company in the 1960s, or Foofwa d'Imobilité, who danced in the group in the 1990s. The dancers take the book's photographs as an orientation and adopt and carry on the movements depicted and frozen in the moment. First, they hold the positions as shown on the photo, similar to a *tableau vivant*, then subsequently become more dynamic and continue what the photo only shows as a cut-out moment of a larger sequence of movements, then dissolving them into the movement phrase that followed the pose of the image – or as it possibly could have followed the pose.

As already mentioned, one of the dancers is Gus Solomons Jr., a contemporary (and corporeal) witness of the company, bringing himself and his aging dance body on stage. He seems to guarantee the movement and corporeal memory as he has danced in many of the choreographies shown in the pictures of the book. But he really has trouble moving, at least in the (easy and fluent) way he had done it decades before. Instead, what we do see are traces of the very exhausting and physically draining dance technique Cunningham is also well known for. Thus, even though his aging and quite stiff body still indicates the specific Cunningham technique, he is unable to show the full range of its facets, being burdened by corporeal deterioration caused by this very demanding dance practice.

Apart from asking in what respect the pictures in the book would already be a kind of monumental memory of Cunningham, attempting to suspend the dance as art work in the image, at this point one has to ask about the shape and concept of the (durable?) document: What is (archivally) to be registered in this part of the performance – if one would conceive of Solomons Jr. as a kind of living document of Cunningham's work in the 1960s? This not to dishonour the important part Solomons Jr. played – and still plays – in Cunningham's legacy. However, what can Solomons Jr. state about, testify to and account for Cunnigham's movement aesthetics if it is rather reduced to its very destructive effects? And when does the dancing movement *material* change into an 'incarnated' flesh-like document, close to self-destruction?

Reversing the primacy of the live nature of performance into a state that conceives of remaining in the first place, Rebecca Schneider also indicates a possible repeal of the dichotomy of documents and their 'fleshy' 'counterparts'. She explains this by way of reenactments in the realm of Living History:

> If a gesture or a 'move' recurs across time, what pulse of multiple time might a pose or a move or gesture contain? Can a trace take the form of a *living* foot – or only the form

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14   In the second version, *Flip Book* (2009), Charmatz worked with professional non-Cunningham dancers, and a third version, *Roman Photo* (2009), involved adolescents not being trained in dance. Version two and three were presented at Tate Modern London (2012 and 2015), the latter within the project *If Tate Modern was Musée de la danse.*

Susanne Foellmer

The Archival Turn in Dance/Studies. Reflections on (Corporeal) Archives and Documents

of a footprint? [...] Might a live act even 'document' a precedent live act, rendering it, in some way, ongoing, even preserved? An action repeated again and again and again, however fractured or partial or incomplete, has a kind of staying power – persists through time – and even, in a sense, serves as a fleshy kind of 'document' of its own recurrence. (SCHNEIDER 2011: 37)

However, it remains questionable what kind of corporeal concept Schneider conceives of and how exactly a bodily gesture is able to transfer something that has been. What does a gesture relay, if it is apparently not about a complete transmission of the past, as Schneider emphasises. And what kind of documentary quality would be affiliated to this flesh? Similarly, the material of paper or digital documents – depending on its state of conservation – is threatened by decay. In this respect, Gus Solomons Jr. acting as documentary material would not differ much from other archivalia. However, and in a different way than Schneider stresses, not *because* he is able to transmit information, but because his transmission shows the similar deficiencies always already inherent in other documents.[15]

Consequently, Schneider dismisses the separation of body and artefact, present in the metaphors of 'flesh' and 'bone' (SCHNEIDER 2011: 100) as a kind of archaeological distinction:

> When we approach performance not as that which disappears (as the archive expects), but as both the *act* of remaining and a means of reappearance and 'reparticipation' (though not a metaphysics of presence) we almost immediately are forced to admit that remains do not have to be isolated to the document, to the object, to bone versus flesh. Here the body [...] becomes a kind of archive. (SCHNEIDER 2011: 101)

Schneider aims at no longer thinking about the body as 'flesh memory' within the dictum of the fleeting and the singular, therefore assigning qualities of repeatable transmission to the body that 'challenges the notion of the archive' (SCHNEIDER 2011: 102–104). Claiming the levelling of media difference in Schneider's argument, one then has to ask what this means for dance in Foucault's sense of the archive: What exactly is a 'dance artefact' able to 'say' and to declare if it is on stage itself, like Gus Solomons Jr.? And what kind of archive are we dealing with in this case?

One can encounter similar situations such as those of incomplete transmission through movement deficits when visiting the archive. Philosopher and art historian Georges Didi-Huberman emphasises the occurring voids and empty spaces, claiming: 'The essential of the archive is its gap, its perforated essence' (DIDI-HUBERMAN 2007: 7). However, it is precisely because of this that one should address these gaps and examine the distance between the statements as Foucault suggests (FOUCAULT 1989: 36),

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15   Certainly, the difference is that Solomons Jr. can be consulted on another media level: that of communication and description. Thus, he could be regarded as a multi-dimensional document as he can act as a witness of (his) dance's past.

who supports such ideas with his proposal to '*list* the various directions that lie open to us'[16] (FOUCAULT 1989: 44; emphasis mine).

Dance scholar Janine Schulze, being the director of the former dance archive in Leipzig,[17] highlights the peculiar constellation of dance and archive. As 'repositories of knowledge in motion', dance archives would only gain meaning in the moment of their very use (SCHULZE 2010b: 11). However, this basically holds true for every kind of archive, and thus she concludes:

> Archives are performative locations where past things rematerialise anew as they are being dealt with. Just like dance and its movements are evaluated as unique and unrepeatable events, every document about dance must be considered to be performative. (SCHULZE 2010a: 150)[18]

Thus, the researching, remembering body that visits the archive shifts into the centre of these processes and fills the gaps (SCHULZE 2010a: 150–152), voids that Didi-Huberman addresses as well. So, seemingly, dance provokes a new understanding of the archive's ontology by bringing the perceptive and receptive body into play in the attempt to confront the archive's aporia. However, as the example of Gus Solomons Jr. has shown, I would argue that the (dancing) body generates further gaps, given that physical knowledge undergoes similar corruptions as other documents. Schulze's move of the function of storage towards a mode of implementation – that Ernst also promotes – productively degrades the archive from being a guarantor of knowledge transmission into a precarious locus of passing on the past.

Situations II: corporeal archives?

In the context of his reconstructions of recent dance history, namely the work of Dore Hoyer, choreographer Martin Nachbar talks about the body as an archive. While Schneider revokes a medial difference in neglecting the dichotomy of 'flesh' and 'bone', Nachbar, on the contrary, postulates that the body itself bears archival qualities in situations of redoing dance. The transfer of past events thus does not take place in media other than dance, such as (written) paper or film, but within another body serving as carrier

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16   The German translation stresses this idea as a methodological concept that should be generated on the basis of discursive formations – an 'inventory of open directions' (*Inventar der offenen Richtungen*) (FOUCAULT 1981: 61).

17   The dance archive in Leipzig does not exist as an autonomous institution anymore. Due to financial cutbacks by the city's government it has been transferred into the inventory of the library of the University of Leipzig. In this respect, the dance archive is not only challenged by the alleged fleetingness of its subject but by the lack of political will to maintain such an institution in a physical, local sense as well.

18   Implicitly, Schulze hints at Michel de Certeau's idea of the status of historic documents that are generated in historiographic analysis in the first place, so his argument, that is, via 'copying, transcription, photographing' (DE CERTEAU 2009: 113).

Susanne Foellmer

The Archival Turn in Dance/Studies. Reflections on (Corporeal) Archives and Documents

medium via dance movements and choreographic arrangements.[19] Nachbar concludes: 'The dance archive competes with the bodies that experience the knowledge of certain dance forms and choreographies and have stored them almost as securely as the media in a dance archive' (NACHBAR 2010: 124).

However, one could ask what a 'secure' storage could mean in this context? As it is, the documents usually stored in archives, such as texts, pictures, or film as well as other artefacts (costumes, dancing shoes) are themselves only capable of relaying a partial impression of a past event. In no way could these objects be supposed to be safely securing and preserving an event. The body, in turn, shifted into the centre as a carrier medium of the past, could also become a 'wretched traitor' as was shown by the example of Gus Solomons Jr., who mostly gives an impression of 'wear and tear' and less of proper dance 'as it were'.

To that extent, projects such as the one by Boris Charmatz in fact highlight the very procedures – and aporias – of repeating, redoing, and archiving as such, so my argument, instead of repeating the bygone through the body as 'exactly the same', or even better than documents could do. Nachbar's statement thus aims both at (problematic) archival attempts and the to-be-reconstructed itself. In this respect, it is instead about the very condition of the archived event and not a precise reconstruction of the past, and hence I would argue that Nachbar is telling us as much about that which is attempted to be reconstructed (the bygone event) as about (problematic) efforts of archiving as such. Bodies like those of Gus Solomons Jr., but Nachbar's as well, would then be archives that 'work[] against [them]sel[ves]' as Derrida emphasises (DERRIDA 1995: 14).

Nachbar addresses these problems in his project *Urheben Aufheben* (2008). The piece, which marks the end of a process ongoing since 1999, deals with the reconstruction of the *Affectos Humanos* (1962), a dance cycle by dancer and choreographer Dore Hoyer (1911–1967). In a lecture performance, Nachbar combines moments of dancing, taking place on the left side of the stage, with reflections about his approach, visualised and explained on a black board on the right: visits to the archive, questions about copyrights and the problems of corporeal transfer in terms of discrepancies such as sex.[20] In a text published after the performance, Nachbar speaks of the 'body as dance/archive' (NACHBAR 2010: 130). His considerations are motivated by the transfer from Hoyer's dance solo to his own younger and differently trained body on the one hand and by the work with his father in the piece *Repeater* (2007) on the other hand. This latter production delineates the archival as a physical genealogy of kinship.

> [It differs] from a dance archive [...] but is also connected to it [...]. It is an archive of imprints, that – in contrast to the term 'body archive' – does not speak of a volume filled with information, but rather of surfaces under the skin that are imprinted and 'printed' on. I would like to call it a 'hypodermatic archive'. (NACHBAR 2010: 132)

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19   One could say that dancer, choreographer, and filmmaker Yvonne Rainer is using a similar method by relaying her piece *Trio A* (1966) to '"certified" *Trio A* transmitter[s]' (WOOKEY 2017: 149).

20   On Nachbar's critical approach towards so-called original dance works and his method of difference instead of assimilation see Willeit (2010) and Foellmer (2014).

André Lepecki, as well, emphasises the possibility of embodied archives by referring to restagings such as Nachbar's in *Urheben Aufheben*. Lepecki explicitly focuses on artistic work, because in these cases the 'will to archive' would always be related to the 'will to re-enact [...] this indicating the body as *the* privileged archival site' (LEPECKI 2010: 34). Lepecki favours the bodies of performers as quasi mobile archives, thus disseminating knowledge. Taking on Foucault's perspective on the archive, Lepecki argues 'that an archive does not store: it acts' (LEPECKI 2010: 38).

However, if we claim that the body is an archive, then what about its accessibility? How and by whom could these archives be 'used'? According to Lepecki, this access is provided through the choreographic, and via redoing and thus always already inventive 'actualisations' of bygone dance projects, it is embodied and carried on by contemporary artists. Thus, it is not merely the past that is copied, but it is (re)generated and renewed (LEPECKI 2010: 38, 45). Yet, one could argue that possibilities of access to these archives are as exclusive as access to traditional, institutional ones. In the latter case, they can be defined by the distance one has to travel in order to get to the location of a physical archive, in restricted potentials of use because of opening hours, or a low provision of viewing booths. In the same sense, the visibility of the choreographically retraced is certainly limited: Often a re-staged work only consists of a few performances at a particular venue; access is regulated through ticket fees, and so on.

In turn, the dissemination of archival content is shifted to another carrier medium: from writing, image, or film to the body. Yet, one could even argue that bodies as 'containers' of knowledge about past dance performances are even less 'graspable' than conventional archives; one cannot consult the artists on a regular basis in order to retrieve the knowledge in store. In her book *Körper als Archiv in Bewegung* [Body as Archive in Motion], dance scholar Julia Wehren argues that the body as an archive is not to be understood as a physical or 'storage location', and, thus, one cannot literally 'set foot in' the body (WEHREN 2016: 165). Her idea rather conceives of the archive in a metaphorical sense, as an 'abstract thought figure' that unfolds itself in the 'relational field of body, choreography, performance and audience' (WEHREN 2016: 165). Thus, she opts for a dynamic notion of the archive that embraces both the modalities of storage and access. The role of the body, then, is to have an 'archival function', but not as a literal site (WEHREN 2016: 165): 'Dance leaves traces in and through bodies, in its performance and reception' (WEHREN 2016: 109).[21] The dancing body, in this model, could then again be regarded as an 'accessible archive' by means of choreographic practices, thus following Lepecki's argument (LEPECKI 2016: 15), and reformulating the idea of historiography by pleading for 'choreographic historiographies' as a method (WEHREN 2010: 241).

But then again, the questions of access in terms of privileges and power relations (who decides what is shown on stage, who decides who gains access into the archive, who can afford which ticket prices and so on) are still an unsolved issue. Moreover, one

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21   Implicitly, Wehren refers to Cramer's idea of the performance as artefact in dance, in terms of a dynamic constellation mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

Susanne Foellmer

The Archival Turn in Dance/Studies. Reflections on (Corporeal) Archives and Documents

could ask if, and if so, which kinds of documents these archives are going to produce, store and distribute? And how precisely are the artefacts of these archives 'composed' when it comes to dance or, more generally, the performing arts?

Situations III: temporal documents?

Even if embedded into a relational network as Wehren suggests, in the end, the body and performance as an archive (or as document) still pose the problem of a lack of medial difference, being a fundamental condition of distinction between an event and its (medial) representation – even if we follow the idea of the performativity of the document (AUSLANDER 2006). If, in the case of Nachbar, one reconstructs a dance of another choreographer (here Hoyer's *Affectos Humanos*), is the other body adapting the dance always already another 'medium' of representation? Or, rather in the argumentation of Janine Schulze: being performatively generated? But then how do we draw a line between the archive and its artefacts as storage and the (corporeal) events on a theatre stage – if we, again, draw a provisional line and exclude, for instance, the audience's memory of a bygone dance event?[22] Without attempting here to refix categories that have already been justly dynamised, I would like to ask about the ontological status of the artefacts and, particularly, documents.

Following the idea of the body as an archive, and returning to the example of Martin Nachbar, my question now is: Does Nachbar's corporeal act of retracing Hoyer create documents? Or is it evidence that could retain or even safeguard traces of the event within an embodied memory, although prone to failure as one could surmise in the case of Solomons Jr.? Thus, does the status of the document change: As a corporeal one and a performatively generated one in a (literal) double sense?

Etymologically, the Latin *documentum* denotes 'lesson', coming from *docere* 'teach', as well as 'proof'. In medieval Latin, it then also translates into 'written instruction, official paper' (*Oxford Dictionary*). This would mean that, initially, the document is not strictly bound to a material entity, but that the *act of documenting* is in the foreground. Nachbar now explicitly demonstrates this act of documentation: archival research, taking-a-record-of and the reconstructively embodied process of appropriation are especially pinpointed. Subsequently, he engenders *temporary documents* that are re- (and newly) created every evening, lasting for the length of the performance, but then again entering another media of rendition: Reviews, discussions as well as (artistic and academic) discourses. Nachbar himself participates in these kinds of transfers: In texts about his projects and by passing on his artistic research, he pursues his idea of a mutual exchange of corporeal, printed, and verbal knowledge. In the project *undo, redo and repeat,* choreographers Christina Ciupke and Anna Till asked artists such as Reinhild

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22   However, methods like oral history certainly have means to retrieve an audience's memories. See e.g., Wehren on the work *histoire(s)* by Olga de Soto (2016: 29–35), or the production *undo, redo and repeat* (2014) by Christina Ciupke and Anna Till, using spectators' recollections of Pina Bausch's work for their reconstructive attempts.

Susanne Foellmer

The Archival Turn in Dance/Studies. Reflections on (Corporeal) Archives and Documents

Hoffmann and Martin Nachbar or former students and dancers of companies (such as Irene Sieben about Mary Wigman and Thomas MacManus on William Forsythe) to share and hand over a part of their work.[23] Nachbar thus functioned as a bearer of knowledge about Dore Hoyer and was in fact 'used' by Ciupke and Till as a kind of 'living archive' by handing over a part of his reconstructive work to the two artists who then again showed another version within their performance.

Alongside this, I want to briefly refer to a mode of transfer that is usually missing when visiting a conventional archive: The aspects of language and of oral transmission in the sense of Oral History.[24] Nachbar can be interrogated and he can give direct feedback with regard to movement details or when something was misunderstood when working with Ciupke and Till. In the archive, however, this mode of inquiry takes place on another level: archivists providing support when searching for specific information or a particular detail when the material reviewed so far does not supply satisfying conclusions about the past. Moreover, language plays an important role as a complementary medium for reconstruction and re-enacting dance. Most of the projects take the chance to articulate and explain the bygone not only corporeally but verbally as well. If one conceives of the body as an archive, as in Wehren's model of performance and audience, this constellation also embraces the verbal registers of expression. As both are not accessible on a permanent basis, many choreographers do not leave the redone to the performance only but extend and outsource their corporeally compiled archives into other analogue or digital storage sites.[25]

Conclusion: the archive slips

The idea of process-related, open archives and the respective constitution of documents as performative ones is further developed when it comes to dance as an 'object' of interest. Dance fuels discussions about the archive as a dubious 'container of history' and drives it to its limits especially when it comes to the question of what and how to preserve, issues that Dance Studies will have to further engage with. The *archive, as notion and as practice*, moves from being a locus of conservation (and selection) to the idea of *archival acting* that takes place in always currently established *situations*.

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23   The short sequences that were developed during a collaborative working process were then shown in a performance, accompanied by an installation with videos presenting interviews with the collaborators, as well as an exhibition (in Stuttgart) and a website explaining the working process and providing access to further material (such as interviews), thus, functioning as a kind of archive to this effect.

24   See e.g., the research by Jennifer Allen (2005) and Heike Roms and Rebecca Edwards (2011).

25   See, for example, www.undo-redo-repeat.de/ [accessed on 24.5.2018]. British choreographer Siobhan Davies, on the other hand, provides an online archive of her own work, see https://www.siobhandaviesreplay.com [accessed on 24.5.2018]. On the chances and challenges of the digital archive in terms of the 'blur[ring] of the distinction between archive and creative project' in Davies' *RePlay* as well as the calamities of durability in terms of vulnerable digital data, see Whatley (2013: 95–96). On the digital archive as a contingent and regenerative force similar to dance see Bleeker (2017: 201).

Susanne Foellmer

The Archival Turn in Dance/Studies. Reflections on (Corporeal) Archives and Documents

Also, if we release the document from its medial materiality, (usually) different from that of the body, and transfer it into a theatrical situation with its own conditions of presentation – producing documents that are for example given by Martin Nachbar but shared and thus further 'processed' by the audience – Dance Studies subsequently has to scrutinise the other aspect documents are usually connected to: that of a certain duration, if we follow the idea of the document outliving the event. If the archive is an institution devoted to transfer, containing artefacts and documents acting as its media, then what can a reconstruction-performance contribute to the idea of dissemination and transmission of memory, in terms of an ongoing, 'durable' remembrance?

I would thus argue that one should conceive of the archive as a (*temporal*) *situation* and a mode of *taking action* that then also means to constantly negotiate its particular objects and past events. This idea of the archive as a situation then also applies to conventional (institutional) as well as temporal ones with open margins. Didi-Huberman emphasises that the archive and especially its artefacts are not able to function as guarantors of knowledge: They are rather surrounded by 'an endless knowledge: the endless approach to the event, not its grasping in a revealed certainty' (DIDI-HUBERMAN 2002: 12). Knowledge about the past cannot be entirely fixed and determined just as the event can never be recovered 'as such': It can only be experienced in hindsight, in the distance of archival *acts*. As one is always already confronted with incomplete documents, according to Didi-Huberman, knowledge needs 'imagination', thus subverting belief into factual knowledge (DIDI-HUBERMAN 2002: 12).[26]

Hence, I would argue that each visit to an archive is always a *situative act*: a doing that seeks for documents and artefacts, that selects, collects, arranges and constantly rearranges the findings, detects some things, forgets others, and places the findings only within a respective situation that a research question creates, in this momentary way and no other – and never again in the same way, but rather in an entirely different approach the next time.

Such a potential openness of the archival is made explicit in choreographers' approach to dance of the past when putting their findings online – for example, Jochen Roller in his attempt to reconstruct the piece *Errand Into the Maze* by choreographer Gertrud Bodenwieser (1954) who had to emigrate from Austria via Colombia to Australia in 1938. In the absence of 'reliable' materials such as film footage, photographs or oral reports, Roller finally decided to forego the planned restaging and to create a website instead that provides disparate material such as interviews and rehearsal attempts.[27] The website does not follow any hierarchical construction, but rather invites users to search their own pathway through the provided contents.[28] At the end of each research, one can download the chosen path, store it in a pdf document, and restart anew, on another day, in another situation, and maybe another context.

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26   Didi-Huberman develops these thoughts by the example of leftovers of partly damaged pictorial and filmic documents from national-socialist concentration camps.

27   See www.thesourcecode.de [accessed on 24.5.2018].

28   Admittedly, Roller's online archive basically does not differ from the partly exuberant, partly meagre collections of materials in 'classical' archives, but access is less complicated.

Susanne Foellmer

The Archival Turn in Dance/Studies. Reflections on (Corporeal) Archives and Documents

The idea of an open processual archive that Foucault's considerations imply, and the very disposition of documents related to it – and present in their patchiness as well – is being perpetuated in dance as an archival 'object'. At the same time, this is not about the opposition of ephemeral (stage) dance versus indelible artefact any more. Following Foucault's propositional logic, the archival unfolds in the discourses created through statements, and their respective documents. These can change and loosen their material ligations as shown by the example of Gus Solomons Jr., or even abandon them at all if one depicts Martin Nachbar's redoings as a generation of temporary documents.

Archivalia, especially those in and from dance, are thus to be detected in a constantly situative status: As (insecure) images, films, texts, bodies or remembered movements and choreographies. Just like (repeated) dance movements, such archivalia are not to be understood as ephemeral, but are 'registered' in a similar way that dance is, are being carried away and transformed through the memories, discourses and (artistic) transmissions that they have generated in the first place. To talk about the body as an archive thus does not so much extend the notion of the archive proper. Instead, the archive and its accessibility as a 'safe custody' of knowledge is scrutinised once again.

Consequently, the archivalia of dance and its respective documents – removed from their conventional carriers – unfold their potential in the network of their statements, which means in the choreographic addresses and expressions of a bygone moment in dance. In these statements, however – and this is demonstrated explicitly in the search for dance itself – something negative enters as well: the unspeakable, invisible, irreproducible, and non-representable[29], that further challenges the search for such gaps.

Especially in dance, the archive as a concept and as a practice migrates from institutional ideas into *modi* of archival acting that recreates itself anew in each actualised constellation. The *archive as a situation* then appears both in the negotiations of the respective subjects of past events and in archival projects exceeding institutional boundaries, whose bodily movements, websites, or performances allow for temporary insights into its artefacts.

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29   In this context, Giorgio Agamben devotes himself to the question of what can be said as an im/possibility of what can be witnessed in the face of the human catastrophe of Auschwitz. The archive is here 'the mass of the non-semantic [...] the unsaid or sayable inscribed in everything said by virtue of being enunciated' (AGAMBEN 2002: 144). Agamben is following Foucault's idea of the archive as a 'general system of statements' (AGAMBEN 2002: 143).

Susanne Foellmer

The Archival Turn in Dance/Studies. Reflections on (Corporeal) Archives and Documents

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Susanne Foellmer

The Archival Turn in Dance/Studies. Reflections on (Corporeal) Archives and Documents

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