

# Archives, criticism and politics: annotations for interpreting silences

*Arquivos, crítica e política: apontamentos para interpretar silêncios*

*Archivos, crítica y política: notas para interpretar los silencios*

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## CRediT

**Authors contribution:** Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal analysis; Funding acquisition; Investigation; Methodology; Writing – original draft; Writing – review & editing: PEIXOTO, P. A.

**Conflicts of interest:** The author certifies that there is no potential conflicts of interest.

**Funding:** Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) – Programa de Apoio a Docente Recém Doutor Antonio Luís Vianna (2020); Université Rennes 2 – Professeure Invitée de la Chaire internationale en humanités et sciences sociales.

**Ethical approval:** The author certifies that, for this type of study, formal consent is not required.

**A.I.:** The author certifies that there was no use of artificial intelligence in the preparation of the work.

**Editors:** Daniel Sant’Ana (Editor-in-Chief); Elane R. Peixoto (Associate Editor); Ana Elisabete Medeiros (Associate Editor); Leandro de S. Cruz (Associate Editor); Carolina Pescatori (Associate Editor); Maria Fernanda Derntl (Associate Editor); Victor Akio de O. Itonaga (Editorial Assistant).

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## Abstract

What is inherited when there is a collective commitment to forgetfulness? This is the question that opens this essay, which deals with the institutionalization (or not) of archives by art critics who dedicated themselves to architecture during the 1950s. The hypothesis explored is that these processes bear the marks of the civil military dictatorship that was installed in Brazil between the 1960s and 1980s, and the amnesty process. Concentrating on the study of the personal collections of Mário Pedrosa, Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito, this text analyzes the different processes that influenced the entry of documentation and books by these three critics into archives, museums and libraries. As an approach, the essay takes an unusual path: it starts from reflections on the work of the philosopher Paul Ricoeur in which the author addresses the relationships between forgetting, amnesty and mourning. However, the development of the text is also based on questions raised by a book of literature – *Antes de Nascer o Mundo* [Before the World was Born] by the Mozambican author Mia Couto –, above all, on what can be inferred from the action of her main character, the “silence tuner”.

**Keywords:** Criticism; Architecture; Archives.

## Resumo

O que se herda quando há um compromisso coletivo com o esquecimento? Esta é a pergunta que abre este ensaio que trata da institucionalização (ou não) de arquivos de críticos de arte que se dedicaram a arquitetura durante a década de 1950. A hipótese explorada é que esses processos trazem as marcas da ditadura civil militar que se instalou no Brasil entre as décadas de 1960 e 1980, e do processo de anistia. Concentrado no estudo das coleções pessoais de Mário Pedrosa, Mário Barata e Quirino Campofiorito, este texto analisa os diferentes processos que incidiram na entrada da documentação e dos livros desses três críticos em arquivos, museus e bibliotecas. Enquanto abordagem, o ensaio toma um caminho pouco usual: parte de reflexões da obra do filósofo Paul Ricoeur em que o autor aborda as relações entre esquecimento, anistia e luto. Em seu desenvolvimento, o texto também se apoia em questões suscitadas por um livro de literatura – “Antes de nascer o mundo”, do autor moçambicano Mia Couto –, sobretudo, no que se pode apreender da ação da sua personagem principal, o “afinador de silêncios”.

**Palavras-chave:** Crítica; Arquitetura; Arquivos.

## Resumen

¿Qué se hereda cuando hay un compromiso colectivo con el olvido? Esta es la pregunta que abre este ensayo, que versa sobre la institucionalización (o no) de los archivos por parte de los críticos de arte que se dedicaron a la arquitectura durante la década de 1950. La hipótesis explorada es que estos procesos llevan las huellas de la dictadura cívico-militar que se instauró en Brasil entre las décadas de 1960 y 1980, y el proceso de amnistía. Concentrándose en el estudio de las colecciones personales de Mário Pedrosa, Mário Barata y Quirino Campofiorito, este texto analiza los diferentes procesos que influyeron en la entrada de documentación y libros de estos tres críticos en archivos, museos y bibliotecas. Como aproximación, el ensayo toma un camino insólito: parte de reflexiones sobre la obra del filósofo Paul Ricoeur en las que el autor aborda las relaciones entre el olvido, la amnistía y el duelo. Sin embargo, el desarrollo del texto se basa también en las cuestiones que plantea un libro de literatura – *Antes de Nascer o Mundo* [Antes de que Naciera el Mundo] del autor mozambiqueño Mia Couto –, sobre todo, en lo que se puede inferir de la acción de su personaje principal, el “afinador de silencios”.

**Palabras Clave:** Crítica; Arquitectura; Archivos.

## 1 Vestiges in amnesty<sup>1</sup>

What is inherited when there is a collective commitment with forgetfulness? This question seems to contain a certain paradox. Is there a memory of forgetfulness? In one of his most well-known books, Paul Ricoeur (2007, p. 509) dispels “the idea of symmetry between memory and forgetfulness in terms of success or achievement [...]”. He addresses the relationship between both of them in a more complex way, traversing and problematizing situations that involved also amnesty processes. In his conclusion, he writes:

[...] Forgetfulness prevents the continuation of action, either through the confusion of roles impossible to be disentangled, or through unsurmountable conflicts in which the dispute is unsolvable, unsurpassable, or still through irreparable damages that usually date back to former times. If pardoning has a role in these increasing tragic situations, it can only be about a type of not-punctual work regarding the way of waiting and accommodating atypical situations: the inextricable, irreconcilable, irreparable. This tacit acceptance deals less with memory than with grievance as lasting disposition. In fact, the three figures evoked here are figures of loss; admitting that there is a permanent loss would be the greatest wisdom, worthy of being considered as the *incognito* of forgiveness in the tragic of action. The patient search for the solution of compromise would be the bargaining chip, but also the accommodation of dissents in the ethics of discussion. Should one go as far as to say “forget the debt”, this figure of loss? Probably yes, insofar as the debt confines, in the absence, and encloses, in the repetition. Nevertheless, it means recognition of the heritage. A subtle work of disconnection and connection should be performed in the very core of the debt: on the one hand, disconnection of the loss, on the other, connection with a forever-insolvent debtor. The debt without the absence. The debt made explicit. In which there is a reencounter of the debt with the ones that are dead and history as grave (Ricoeur, 2007, p. 509, free translation).

This long excerpt by Paul Ricoeur points how there is, in the crossing of asymmetric experiences of memory and loss, a work to be done, that of grieve, in which history has a role to be fulfilled: keeping connected the figure of a debtor forever-insolvent and, at the same time, creating the means so that the survivors’ lives – those who remained – can follow their path.

Paul Ricoeur’s statements, as most texts that address the theme of forgiveness and forgetfulness, may be felt as painful and unfair, especially in case the intention is to cross moments of Brazilian social and political life marked by a systematic and – one could say – pathological appeasement.<sup>2</sup> It is necessary to make clear: initiating this essay with Paul Ricoeur’s words is not related to a defence of indulgence. On the contrary, this choice is guided by the importance that this author gives to the work of grieve, of a conscious reflection on the experience of loss. I seek to enunciate this with some clarity, as to address the issue that, in fact, the paper will approach: a specific case, related to the institutionalisation (or not) of archives of art critics dedicated to architecture during the

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<sup>1</sup> This introduction was written soon after January 2023, probably because at that moment the thematization of amnesty (or claim for a non-amnesty) had crossed several discourses in Brazil. However, the construction of this paper had a longer and slower preparation than its introduction; it dates back to 2020, when I started to debate more systematically issues addressing architectural archives, the writing of their history, and the history of architectural criticism (Peixoto, 2021; 2022).

<sup>2</sup> For example, as those based on the practices of “cordiality” (Holanda, 1995, p. 139-152) and “structural racism” (Almeida, 2019).

1950s. The motivation is the need to dimension the value attributed to art and architectural criticism in the process of turning documental sets into heritage.

Focusing on the study of the private collections of Mário Pedrosa, Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito, this paper analyses the different processes of the entry of documentation and books of these three critics in archives, museums and libraries. The hypothesis is that this process has the marks of the military dictatorship installed in Brazil between the 1960s and 1980s, which also affected the documentation produced before this period.<sup>3</sup> In other words, this paper approaches the institutionalization of these collections as part of an amnesty process that followed the dictatorship.<sup>4</sup> As can be verified along this essay, I will not explore many details of the art critics' documentation, since much of it is inaccessible. The proposal of this paper is to address the absence or the hindrances of access to these sources, hence, to consider this situation as a historiographical problem of architectural criticism in Brazil.

## 2 Meditations on the tuner of silences

However, let us get back to the initial question: what is inherited when there is a collective commitment with forgetfulness? Trying to answer this question does not only imply meditating on the sense of the relationship established between memory, history and forgetfulness. It also brings along the need to build ways to face the work of experiences of forgiving and loss, remembering that these are followed by a commitment established before us, of making actions stop.

As we have seen, Paul Ricoeur leads his reflection on the issue by building parallels with the process of grieve. Nevertheless, the problem that we bring here is of a slightly different nature: in fact, one seeks resources to work on a process of recognition of absences so that one can operate a farewell or forgiveness. However, in the case studied in this essay, it is about grieve to be carried out much later than the actual event of the loss. Or, a process of grieve demanded by bodies that did not live (or could not live) the event of loss, but feel themselves heirs of it. Seeking resources to illustrate the issue, we propose an approach to the literary work by Mozambican writer Mia Couto, *Antes de Nascer o Mundo* ([2009] 2016) [Before the World was Born].

Couto's book tells the story of a father, Silvério Vitalício, whose memories bring so much pain that make him choose sideration, for himself and his sons. He decides to flee from

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<sup>3</sup> It must be alerted that the consequences of the military dictatorship installed in Brazil in the 1960s through 1980s do not seem to have been the only forces to affect the presence or absence of institutional recognition of the works of Mário Pedrosa, Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito (Peixoto, 2021), especially when we address documents of these critics dedicated to architecture. Considering that these opinions were produced by art critics dedicated to the theme in a very specific moment of their intellectual trajectories, it seems that it also reflects disputes in their professional fields. In other words, that of claiming that architectural criticism is a specialised discourse, as clearly exposed in the texts by Hélène Jannière (2019, p. 19-20) and Silvio Vasconcellos ([1957] 2003, p. 287).

<sup>4</sup> Here it is perhaps noteworthy to make a short note to differentiate the way of keeping memory in archives from the memory present in the bodies. One should not forget that without the reminiscences that inhabit our bodies, many of the experiences would have never been transmitted. Part of what I think here comes from several talks, interviews and testimonies of people who came before me and, therefore, recognize the body as a monument. However, specifically choosing to problematize archives – the places of institutionalised memory – is justified by the interest in investigating the mechanisms of construction of value for the practice of architectural criticism. In other words, in this study, I interrogate about the ways and causes for it to have been possible (or not) to monumentalize criticism in Brazil. A criticism that as practice often circulated as writing and exhibitions.

his past and create a land where there was no time, hence, no memory. The story's element of tension is the dispute, between the three characters, over the memory of the wife and mother, Dordalma. Her story remains unknown during almost the entire book: the woman had decided to abandon the family to refund her own life with a new love, but before she could trail her own destiny, in the escape route she was brutally raped. This tragedy led her to suicide.

Throughout the book, the memories that the characters have of Dordalma is the way in which we are, in fact, led to know her. Thus, her memory tilts between three forms. For the father, she is a synonymous of a past that he wishes to forget, her name cannot even be mentioned: *"I have told you four hundred times: your mother has died, she has completely died, pretend she has never been alive"* (Couto, [2009] 2016, p. 32).

For the eldest son, Ntunzi, who kept memories from the world out there, the mother's face is an image to which he can resort. However, little by little, with the days spent in the land without time and the fear of losing the memories of the contours of the mother's face, Ntunzi's actions gravitate between the compulsion for drawings, in which he tries to crystalize them, the cult to these images and the haunting they produce in him. A sort of phantasmagoria that follows and confuses him.

For the younger son, Mwanito, the mother is known from the compulsions, repressions and phantasmagorias of the brother and the father. He was still very young when she died. So, during the time he spent in the land without time, the cult of silence was his form of reconnecting with Dordalma. Silence was his representation of the mother.

Mwanito's appreciation of silence helped the father to keep away from his own demons. In the nights when he could not sleep, Silvério Vitalício asked his youngest son to stay by his side "tuning silences". Then a perverse game was revealed: the peace of this father was built at the expense of Mwanito's life, who cultivated silences because he could never worship his memories, never remember his ancestors, nor himself.

One of the most moving moments in Mia Couto's text is that, after the turning point of the story, when they are all forced to return to town, face the past and know Dordalma's story, it is precisely Mwanito who embraces the present and faces the past and the future; without fear and romanticism, without fear of the respective roughness or crystallising images, not being haunted by phantasmagorias. From almost all characters, he is the only one who embraces time, allowing it to act over the relations established with those around him, updating wishes and projects for the future, and giving space to the father and to the mother's memory, accepting them, in their incompleteness, frailties and absences. He is the only one who seems to be aging. Not by chance, the author makes Mwanito be the narrator of the story. It is for this character that time actually comes into existence and becomes a matter under construction.

The way in which each character relates to the past brings attributes already largely worked upon by theorists of memory. Surely, the feelings of the father and the eldest son seem to perform symptoms of the pathologies linked to memory. However, the figure of Mwanito calls particular attention because it seems to represent the story's attributes; the figure that interprets from the vestiges and the attentive listening. There is something about the "tuner of silences" that makes him be a compassionate listener and a constructor who manages to place into narratives "spaces of experience and horizons of expectation" (Koselleck, [1979] 2006, p. 305-328).

In Mia Couto's literature, the unities explored by Paul Ricoeur – memory, history and forgetfulness – come to light to deal with the process of grieve. With a different tonus from that brought by the philosopher, the story of Mwanito shows us the gaining of awareness of a heritage – fruit of a desire of forgetfulness – and, at the same time, the operation of the reconfiguration of an identity forged in the worship to absences. It shows us that the action of putting into a narrative – mapping, recognising and talking about the loss that cannot be fully lived as experience – is also capable of giving space to the memories of unfair and incomplete situations, whose reparation is impossible.

### 3 Three private collections

The archives that we work upon here, the private collections of Mário Pedrosa, Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito, can be seen, little by little, as the representations of Dordalma in *Antes de Nascer o Mundo* (Couto, [2009] 2016). In the condition in which they are, their main poetics seem to be a thin weave of presences and absences. In some of them, the absences seem to dominate the scene. As paradoxical as it may seem, we can say that in some cases they are archives “tuned by silence”. With the purpose of making explicit the metaphor, it is necessary to present the current situation of the three documental sets.

Mário Pedrosa's private archive is undoubtedly the most organised and accessible of the three critics. It is divided between two Brazilian public institutions: Biblioteca Nacional and Centro de Documentação e Memória of Universidade Estadual Paulista (Unesp). The Biblioteca Nacional makes available for access a website where it presents the dossier arrangement and some information on the documentation's institutionalisation. The Centro de Documentação e Memória of UNESP conducted an archival description; it is available on a digital booklet format, together with the description of other funds of the collection.

Until recently, Mário Barata's private archive had belonged to his family<sup>5</sup> and all that could be known about it was restricted to a blog named “Memorial Mário Barata” (Barata, 2008; 2010).

Quirino Campofiorito's private archive could hardly be recognised as a unity. The heritage of this critic is distributed in various institutions. Part of his paintings is at the museum of the Escola de Belas Artes of the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). The documentation related to his activity as a critic is safeguarded in a private collection belonging to his family. According to Beatriz Pinheiro de Campos, “[...] it has never been published, or even studied, separately. There are over 400 collected criticisms, between the years 1944-1952 and 1957-1960” (Campos, 2014, p. 212). Regarding the books that constituted his former library, I found varied information. It is known that part of the bibliographic collection is owned by another institution in Rio de Janeiro, Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF) (Campos, 2014, p. 213). There have also been donations to

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<sup>5</sup> This text began to be written in 2021 and only in February 2023 it was possible to establish a first contact with Mário Barata's family and access part of the documentation and the critic's library. The archives and books found from this contact didn't have an inventory. Throughout 2023, a part of this collection was sent to safeguarding and research institutions and the identification processes were initiated. However, this processing is still in progress. The reflection covered by this essay, whose writing was completed in early 2023, was established in the moment immediately before these processes were starting.

library of Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Biblioteca Nacional and Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR), all in Rio de Janeiro.

The mapping of these collections reveals different safeguard conditions. In Mário Pedrosa's case, one finds a systematised documental set concentrated in a few and accessible institutions. In Mário Barata's case, one finds that the family wishes (and, perhaps, the critic himself wished) to safeguard the collection, maintaining a certain unity of the documental set, but this contrasts with the possibility of accessing the sources. In the case of Quirino Campofiorito, one observes a documental, iconographic and bibliographic set already dispersed through different institutions. As we have pointed earlier, this essay considers that in these safeguard processes there is the experience of amnesty; they are like Dordalma's representations, something that gravitates between vestiges and absences. From a closer observation of the three collections, arises the question: For what reason there has been, apparently, greater difficulty in institutionalising the documentation of Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito than that of Mário Pedrosa?

To try to answer this question, I will follow two different paths. Firstly, a path that enables the identification of political and social processes that were equally present in the institutionalisation of the three critics' documentation. In the sequence, I will situate the aspects that influenced the constitution of Mário Pedrosa's collections, those that seemingly have systematised locations that ensure a certain cohesion of the documentation.

#### **4 Criticism between two periods of state of exception**

To follow the first path, I bring a book that does not specifically approach the case of Brazilian art critics, but which enables to frame them more generally, as intellectuals. The book is *La Saga des Intellectuels Français (1944-1989)* [The Saga of French Intellectuals (1944-1989)], by François Dosse (2018). Through approaches and contrasts with the French case, reading this book helps to identify some specificities of the Brazilian critics' activities. Through François Dosse's lenses, one can infer possible impacts on the institutionalisation of their private documentation.

Let us see an excerpt of the book's introduction. François Dosse writes that between the end of Second World War and the year that marks the end of the Soviet Union, the French intellectuals (both from left and right wings) seem to have reached the end of that period as "orphans of a project of society", marked by what François Hartog ([2003] 2014) called "presentism". For Dosse, between 1944 and 1989, "[...] the belief in the course of history, meant to bring the advent of a better world [...], [was] shaken" (2018, p. 11 – free translation). Following the development of his argument, Dosse writes:

The trajectory retraced here occurred between two moments: the eruption and later the disappearance of the prophetic intellectual. Having appeared in the immediate post-war, this figure is cultivated by the generation that traversed the tragedy and expects to reenchant history. [...] At the other extreme of the trajectory, in 1989, this figure of the "wise" thinker, capable of giving a point of view about everything, disappears. We are talking about the "grave of intellectuals" (Dosse, 2018, p. 13, free translation).

The history of this “erasure” is what François Dosse seeks to reconstitute in the development of his book.<sup>6</sup> For the study of the Brazilian case, the landmarks proposed by the author – the end of the Second World War and the end of the Soviet Union – demarcate the years that follow and precede two processes of re-democratisation in Brazil: 1945 and 1988. If these are dates when the democratic play returned to the scene, it is a sign that, before one and the other, two periods of state of exception, two periods of dictatorship, were traversed.

Superposing these two chronologies, which possess truly distinct objects, helps to perceive that, in Brazil, the figure of the thinker who could give his opinion about everything and build projects of society, not only took shape after a great war, but also was configured after almost a decade without the possibility to freely transmit ideas. The year 1945 marks the beginning of a democratic period, considering that between 1938 and 1944 the Vargas dictatorship interfered in the public debate using press censorship and political persecution. When pointing 1988 as another landmark, the year of the first direct presidential election after the beginning of the process of political re-opening in Brazil, another state of exception is delimited: the military dictatorship established in 1964, through another coup d'état; a regime that toughened from 1968 onwards, with the Institutional Act no. 5 (AI-5), which instituted the prior censorship of artistic works and the press. In other words, the process that led to problematizing, contesting and, even, the death of that intellectual attitude identified by Dosse (in the French case), perhaps would not have been possible to occur in Brazil. At least, not in the public arena.

In Brazil, the period of existence of this “figure of the ‘wise’ thinker”, capable of giving “a point of view about everything”, seems to have been shorter than that interpreted by Dosse. From 1968 onwards, one can say that it became more difficult (or even impossible) for intellectuals to make public their opinions about projects of future, whether they were expressions of their wishes or their frustrations. Between 1968 and 1978<sup>7</sup>, some of them became silent, others were silenced and others chose to carry on their actives, but had to go away into exile. For example, between 1970 and 1973, Mário Pedrosa needed to seek exile in Chile (Paladino, 2021), and, in 1969, Mário Barata was removed from his position as university professor,<sup>8</sup> which led him to material hardships (Ribeiro, 2009).

Going back to the debate on the collections, and considering this context, what is observed is that the safeguard of the private documentation or even published texts, with the purpose of constituting a memory of criticism, did not receive systematic efforts. After all, precisely the activity that engendered the documentation, *i.e.*, the activity of criticism,

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<sup>6</sup> One cannot say that François Dosse’s statement points to something very different from what authors dedicated to architecture and urbanism had been writing in the 1960s, as in the works of Françoise Choay (1965; 1980; [1992] 2001). In her writings, the criticism of the adoption of models and of the utopian discourse seems to denounce a similar crisis.

<sup>7</sup> The final limit of this process is imprecise; several landmarks can be mentioned here, such as the revocation of institutional acts, in October 1978; the Amnesty Act, passed in 1979; the inauguration of a civil president in 1985. Nevertheless, we took the first date as a temporary landmark.

<sup>8</sup> Mário Barata was compulsorily retired by Institutional Act #5, in 1969. Since 1955, he had been full professor of Art History at the Escola Nacional de Belas Artes, at the time a unity of the former University of Brazil (presently Federal University of Rio de Janeiro – UFRJ). In 1979, with the amnesty process, Mário Barata resumed his activity as professor at the University, but did not return to his original school; he became a faculty member at Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Sociais (Wehling, 2007; Tupy, 2021).



became a practice that was fought against by the Brazilian State during the period immediately after the production of the documentation.

As much as one can state that the process of memory production is not a State monopoly, two questions are raised here: one can imagine the lack of public policies for the reception of documents of this type, and it is possible to verify the political retaliation against the proponents of this sort of private initiatives.

For example, searching on the data base “Memórias reveladas” [Revealed memories], a project dedicated to providing public access to governmental documentation produced during the dictatorship in Brazil, we found a document that lists “names and addresses of individuals and entities recipients of publication and correspondence originating in communist countries, apprehended by the DCT GB in August 1970” (Brasil, 1970).

In this list, one can find Mário Barata’s name, as well as of several libraries, among which the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, where this critic was a professor. I mention this document to evince how difficult it was to maintain a library during the dictatorship period and in the case of public libraries to have the autonomy to organise their collections.<sup>9</sup>

It is worth mentioning here that the three intellectuals whose collections are addressed in this article did not constitute a unity, neither in their perspectives as critics, nor in their political ideologies (Campos, 2014, p. 26; Moraes, 2018, p. 73-74). However, during the dictatorship, it seems that the nuances were not recognised. All of them were seen as opponents to the government.

However, the analysis of the political persecution and retaliation undergone by these critics should not simplify the elements that motivated them, because it is not only about a combat against the ideologies in a strict sense. They seem to have been invested also of other sorts of political disputes, in which seem to have weighed social, cultural and economic capitals.

For a brief illustration of the issue, we can resort to these critics’ involvement with the International Association of Art Critics (AICA)<sup>10</sup> and with mass circulation newspapers. In both cases, Mário Pedrosa, Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito played roles in which they showed the capacity to position themselves publicly, the access to an international circulation, and the easiness to disseminate their ideas in mass media vehicles.

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<sup>9</sup> Although distant from our study object, to exemplify how some intellectuals feared keeping a library, we take Marcos Bagno’s testimony, in which he tells that he accompanied his father during the discard of his private library. He recalls: “When the coup broke out, I was three years old [...], this caused a number of difficulties for my family. We come from Minas Gerais, but my father passed a contest for a job at Banco do Brasil and was allocated in Salvador [Bahia]. When we were living in Salvador, [it was] when the coup broke out and my father had a huge library. His education was in sociology, [he was] a Marxist. He had a broad library on Marxism and political science [...]. Then there was that thing, right? The need to discard those books. So, he threw part of this library in Baía de Todos os Santos. And he took me along. It is an interesting story, because I was very small and did not remember well, but recently he told me all about it. He would take some supermarket paper bags, put the books inside and take me along, because a person with a little child would not look suspicious. [So,] he took the ferryboat to Itaparica and, [...] during the trip he sat with me right at the rear of the boat and threw the books into the sea” (Bagno apud Araújo; Rellstab, 2021).

<sup>10</sup> The International Association of Art Critics (AICA) is a non-governmental organization linked to UNESCO. Mário Pedrosa, Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito were affiliated art critics. During the 1950s, two of them performed prominent roles. In 1957, Mário Barata became Regional Secretary for Latin America and Mário Pedrosa became one of its vice-presidents (Peixoto, 2020, p. 81).

Considering this picture, we can think that the memory of their criticism are also reminiscences of a world of transnational and multilateral relations, in which the social field did not have its differences appeased. Regarding the latter, the role of criticism (and of critics) was precisely of making them publicly explicit and debating them. In other words, a set of values difficult to be supported in a dictatorial regime.

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that the end of the dictatorship did not automatically rehabilitate the practice of criticism and, consequently, during the process of political re-opening, the criticism written in former times was not rapidly recognised as heritage. One could say that, in a way, after the repression and disarticulation of the criticism diffusion means, especially mass media newspapers and public universities, the practice of criticism was distant from having the same strength of the 1950s.

However, what we enunciated in the hypothesis of this essay brings yet another layer to this discussion. When considering the criticism archives as heritage of an amnesty process, we observe the collision of two antithetical movements: the pulsion to remember and the need to forget. In other words, the ongoing amnesty operated a movement that refrained the practise of criticism, stopping it from developing. Differently from the French case that built graves for its intellectuals, in Brazil it was necessary to welcome them back and introduce them to the new generations, because having been amnestied, they returned from exile to the institutions from where they had been expelled.

These considerations about amnesty do not mean that we disregard the efforts of those people who constructed it, nor diminish their contributions to the resumption of democratic life. Amnesty was designed within the conditions of possibilities, in the course of action. However, the elements listed here seek to recognise that this process affected the production of criticism in the quality of social practice, as well as the valorisation of its memory.

In order to address these considerations with some more depth, I will continue to give a closer look into the passage of Mário Pedrosa's documents to be safeguarded at the Centro de Documentação do Movimento Operário (CEMAP), which takes his name, and at the Biblioteca Nacional.

## **5 The specificity of a collection built between two passions (art and politics)**

When accessing the research tools of the two archives, the first finding is already noteworthy: at the CEMAP as well as at the Biblioteca Nacional, the entry of the documents into the archives dates from a period significantly posterior to the moment of the documentation production. Probably 1981 for the first and early 2000s for the second. In other words, the early movements are inscribed in the period of the political re-opening of Brazil.

Furthermore, another aspect calls attention: the process of institutionalisation of the two documental sets did not have as dynamist only the specificity of Mário Pedrosa's activity as critic. To explicit this issue, it is necessary to resort to excerpts of the archival description that presents the Mário Pedrosa Fund at CEMAP:

Mário Pedrosa's collection, comprising documentation produced and gathered by him, was donated to the Documentation Centre of the Workers'

Movement (CEMAP) and in 1994 it was transferred, under custody, together with the other funds and collections of CEMAP, to UNESP/CEDEM. [...]

The Mario Pedrosa Fund [of CEMAP] comprises documents about his political militancy and his activity as art critic, besides correspondence and articles published in various newspapers, especially in the period 1923-1931. The documentation demonstrates the tension of this political period, little known, having among his interlocutors Murilo Mendes, Lygia Clark, Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho, Benjamin Péret, Oscar Niemeyer, Antonio Candido, Pietro Maria Bardi, Tomie Othake and Ferreira Gullar, among others (Moraes, 2018, p. 74).

On the site of Biblioteca Nacional, in the section presenting the project that enabled the donation of Mário Pedrosa's remaining collection, there are also some detailed information. The donation of the documentation resulted from a sponsorship of Petrobrás, the national public oil and gas company, implemented between 2001 and 2003, which had as objective:

[...] Preserve Mário Pedrosa's documents, which had been with his family, with actions that allowed its conservation, organisation and dissemination, ultimately enabling the ample public access to the data that they comprise. The intellectual's family, in return, would donate the treated collection to a public institution in the city of Rio de Janeiro, having the National Library as the one selected (Ferrez, s/d).

In the same way as at CEMAP, in this second collection, Mário Pedrosa's political involvement gains the foreground in the construction of the documentation's patrimonial value. However, differently from the first collection, his activity as critic reaches an equivalent importance. To justify the relevance of this collection in the project that economically enabled the donation, Mário Pedrosa is presented as "an intellectual ahead of his time. Art critic internationally renowned and political militant, he had his life divided between these two passions: art and politics" (Ferrez, s/d).

By making explicit the importance of Mário Pedrosa's political engagement to the institutionalisation of his archive, we can speculate that perhaps by itself his action as art critic would not have triggered a series of processes that enabled the conservation, organisation and accessibility of the documentation. It seems that it was necessary to have other social "impulses" for his oeuvre to be sheltered at a place of memory. The same speculation leads us to denaturalise the election of Mário Pedrosa's collection as a model process, "a promising path for the preservation of private collections of significance for the country's culture and history" (Ferrez, s/d), as pointed on the website of the Biblioteca Nacional.

As one can find on the same website, "one of his [Mário Pedrosa's] greatest prides was to be the PT no. 1" (Doctors, s/d). This sentence is meant to remember that the critic took pride in being the first person affiliated to the, then, recently created Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) [Workers' Party]. This aspect conforms to the archival description of the critic's fund at CEMAP and, in a broader sense, the presentation of CEMAP itself. In the centre's publicity material, one can read:

The constitution of the collection [of the Documentation Centre of the Workers' Movement Mário Pedrosa (CEMAP)] occurred by means of single donations of political militants, intellectuals, CEMAP's sympathisers and founders. In 1994,

this collection, along with the other CEMAP funds, was transferred to UNESP/CEDEM, under custody [...].

The collection comprises documents of the Workers' Party (PT), such as: proposals, resolutions, party meetings, social movements, students movement, metalworkers union, other unions, CUT [Workers' Central Union], documents produced by left-wing movements in the 1930s, about the national conjuncture, and documents referring to the 4th International, produced by various European and Latin-American institutions (Moraes, 2018, p. 70).

In a way, these findings can lead to speculations about the similarities between archives and political parties: the matter of each one of them – the memory for the first and politics for the second – exists in life in an “uninterested” way, it is almost a human faculty, an ontological condition. However, the archives, as the parties, belong to the order of the negotiated and officialised agreements, struggles formally shared, made public, and that from time-to-time demand updating to keep their representation.

The second trajectory followed by this essay demonstrates, therefore, that the effort of “patrimonialisation” of Mário Pedrosa’s documentation occurred mostly due to his political involvement. In other words, in the Brazilian archives, in a time of political re-opening, at the turn of the 1970s to the 1980s, Mário Pedrosa’s documents, in the quality of memory of criticism, had a different value from the documents that were vestiges of his activity as articulator of social and political causes. It is important to stress that this does not mean that this process was not legitimate or that there is no reckoning of Mário Pedrosa’s work as art critic. After all, the books published by Aracy Amaral (Pedrosa, 1981), Otília Arantes (2012), Guilherme Wisnik (2015), Glória Ferreira and Paulo Herkenhoff (2015) demonstrate, precisely, this recognition. However, what we highlight here is another symptom: the necessary capitals to build archives in the country seem different from those for constructing books.

The creation of Mário Pedrosa’s collection at the mentioned institutions was delineated in a significantly later period than the documents’ production and is inscribed in a deliberate action of the critic himself in wishing that the memory of his activity would be linked to a greater sphere of social causes, of a political character. Seen from this angle, Mário Pedrosa’s archives, though having a much different institutional existence from those belonging to the heritage of Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito, do not differ much from these. They all seem to be symptoms of concessions delineated after a process of amnesty that acted in dousing the public debate and, even if not intentionally, seems to have contributed to diminishing the perception of the social value of criticism.

## 6 Grieve, criticism and possible archives

In the beginning of this paper, I have mentioned that the turning point of Mia Couto’s book is precisely when the “tuner of silences”, Mwanito, can know his past and, with this, recognise the effects of time. I resort to this passage of the novel because it helps me to conclude the process followed throughout this essay. Between the dictatorship and the amnesty, art criticism and especially architectural criticism seem not to have not been able to age. Partly, the three critics, whose archives we have studied here, were part of the epistemological “saga” described by François Dosse (2018) in his book. They were among the group of intellectuals who had “a point of view about everything”: they were art critics who wrote about architecture, for example. However, the dictatorship and the amnesty

interrupted the process of criticism that would be performed by the next generations. The “intellectuals’ grave”, in face of which François Doss makes his criticism of the generation of “wise thinkers”, here, in Brazil, seems to have left no gravestone vestige. A grave that, according to Paul Ricoeur, confounds with the process of interpreting the past (history) and, therefore, seems to be indispensable to put in motion the grieve experience (a critical framing of the lived experience, which ponders upon what is to be left, here and now, and what is recognised as heritage).

The intellectuals whose archives we have addressed throughout this essay did not stop thinking or taking a stand during the dictatorship or the years of political opening. However, the reflections that they produced could not become old. They could not be made public and suffer, themselves, the work of judgement and contestation. Without the criticism of criticism, i.e., the criticism outside the current life, and without time acting on it, the very memory of this practice could not be socially elaborated.

I would like to cite another excerpt of Paul Ricoeur’s book, which has not been mentioned yet. A short note in which this author dialogues with a text by Arlette Farge, reminding that it is the archives’ nature to be the representation of a world through fragments (archives are not the facts as such, but rather vestiges of what has happened). Ricoeur, in a dialogue with the author of “The Allure of the Archives”, helps to verify that the historians’ task is to listen to the echoes of this world. “Signs of a minimal disorder that left traces, [...] these facts of intimacy, in which almost nothing is said, although so many things transpire, are places of investigation and research” (Farge *apud* Ricoeur, 2007, p. 192).

As Ricoeur has done by approaching Arlette Farge’s text, and also returning to the figure of the “tuner of silences”, this essay ends with an invitation: in face of the heritage full of absences, perhaps it is worthwhile to seek less conventional paths. Observing more carefully the vestiges that escaped deliberate wishes, even if their existence is conditioned by them. It is about learning to see vestiges that, for some reason, remain alive, even if dormant, in pieces, or by insisting in inhabiting the bodies.

For example, many journals specialized in architecture were accumulated in school libraries or architecture archives in Brazil for their applied character or their artistic value. However, as a construct of people of their own time, they do not keep their pages only for architects’ activities strict sense, they also bring numerous texts by Mário Pedrosa, Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito. Besides these specialised newspaper archives, we can also think of mass circulation newspapers, documents that in general attract great safeguard efforts and digitalisation due to being documents traditionally used in historical researches. It was in these “media” that a considerable amount of the texts by art critics circulated between the 1940s and 1960s. We can also resort to the “fractured libraries”, a heritage of art critics that were divided and distributed through different public institutions or are in the hands of private collectors.

What we wish to call attention is that, in fact, it is necessary to attest the loss, recognise that the received heritage is full of absences. However, this is only the first movement of grieve, of history and of the history of criticism. Next, it is necessary to “tune silences”, as to scrutinise the rest notes, as well as place them in relation to the sound notes. Knowing how to listen to the echoes of this world in fragments and already aged, give them a place, most likely, will not bring the heroic vision of a past already past. Nevertheless, like Mwanito, perhaps they can allow us to recognise our history and update our own present practices.

## Acknowledgments

This paper was revised by Rio Books and translated from Portuguese to English by Annabella Blyth.

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