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Archive Pleasures or Whose Time Is It?

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Abstract: In this article, I draw on my experience of doing archival research at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, University of Texas at Austin and at the archives of the Rodin Museum in Paris. Reflecting on my experience of reading Dora CARRINGTON's and Gwen JOHN's letters, I address the problem of how a researcher makes specific choices while working in the archive: choosing what to see, what to note and even more what to transcribe. These are questions that relate to wider issues of how the researcher can oscillate between pathos and distance and create a transitional space that can accommodate both her involvement and her need for detachment and reflection. What has further emerged from my work in the archives is what I have theorized as heterotemporalities, space/time blocks where women's past is so forcefully contracted in my perception of the present that it becomes a vital part of my actuality as a feminist researcher. I therefore discuss how my experience of working in the archives has created conditions of possibility for transgressing the constraints of the present and has facilitated leaps into open and radical futures, constituting chronotopes of the feminist imaginary.

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1. Archival Research in Context

This article draws on my research project, entitled "In the Fold Between Life and Art: A Genealogy of Women Artists." The project explored the interface between life and art in auto/biographical narratives of women artists, who lived in the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. What I have argued is that these women artists share in common a passion for artistic creation, which transcending the boundaries of their art motivates them to live an unconventional and beautiful life. I have thus imagined these women following nomadic routes in making their life a work of art, as they attempted to become other of what they had found themselves to be. In this light, this project looked

into the constitution of the female self in art as the effect of interrelated forces of power and desire (see TAMBOUKOU, 2010a). [1]

The project included six women artists, namely, Rosa BONHEUR Anna KLUMPKE, Mary TITCOMB, Sofia LASKARIDOU, Gwen JOHN and Dora CARRINGTON; they cover four generations and come from four different countries: France, the USA, Greece, and the UK. In this article however, I will focus on my archival work on Dora CARRINGTON and Gwen JOHN. [2]

Michel FOUCAULT's genealogical strategies have been identified as a primary theoretical and methodological field for this research project (FOUCAULT, 1986). Indeed, doing genealogy involves searching in the maze of dispersed documents in the margins of history to trace "insignificant details" and non-linear developments in the constitution of the self, in my case the self of the woman artist. Gilles DELEUZE and Felix GUATTARI's theory of nomadology (1988) further contributes to the theoretical underpinnings of this project in interrogating the notion of fixed identities and putting forward the concept of becoming as an incessant process of emerging in difference. In this light, the project draws on archival work of women artists' auto/biographies, memoirs, diaries, letters, and visual narratives, but in this article I focus on my work with letters analyzed from a genealogical perspective. But what is genealogy? This is the first question I want to look at. [3]

1.1 The grey task of genealogy: Locating my data

Genealogy is, put very simply, the art of archival work; the patience to work meticulously with grey dusty documents, looking for insignificant details bringing into light unthought-of contours of various ways, discourses and practices that human beings have used to make sense of themselves and the world. Unlike psychoanalysis, which sets itself the task of reaching the ultimate and hidden truth, genealogy has only archaeological journeys to offer. Working in parallel with archeology it keeps uncovering layers of distortions and it is directed to the future rather than to the past: how has our present been constituted in ways that seem natural and undisputable to us, but are only the effects of certain historical, social, cultural, political and economic configurations. By revealing this contingency we become freer to imagine other ways of being. I am a feminist and therefore my interest has always been in excavating other possible ways of being or rather of becoming a woman. My second move then is to explore interfaces between feminism and the genealogical method. [4]

1.2 Critical feminist approaches to the theorization of epistolary narratives

Various feminist theorists have argued that theoretical debates concerning "the self" become particularly interesting, when examined in relation to lived and/or written lives and have stressed the importance of researching auto/biographical narratives (see TAMBOUKOU, 2003, 2010a) It is therefore in the field of these critical feminist analyses that I have found a background for the genealogical approach of this study, particularly drawing on a currently expanding field of

analyzing epistolary narratives (JOLLY & STANLEY, 2005). But why have letters become so important in my archival research? This is the third question I am now moving to. [5]

1.3 Why letters?

As STANLEY (2004) has instructively shown, there is a great deal of discussion around the use of letters as useful "documents of life" (PLUMMER, 2001) in auto/biographical research. Responding to Ken PLUMMER's suggestion that the overwhelming, fragmentary, unfocused and idiosyncratic nature of letters cannot really provide useful sources for sociological analyses, STANLEY counterpoises the argument that letters and particularly correspondences can create rich fields of auto/biographical insights in sociological research. In this light she has created three analytical planes on which epistolary narratives can be deployed: the dialogical, the perspectival and the emergent (STANLEY, 2004, p.202). Letters are dialogical argues STANLEY, opening up channels of communication and reciprocity not only between the correspondent parts, but also between the writer of the letter and any reader (p.202). Their perspectival feature means "that their structure and content changes according to the particular recipient and the passing of time" (p.203). Finally, in having emergent properties, letters evade "researcher-determined concerns" (p.203) and instead display "their own preoccupations and conventions and indeed their own epistolary ethics" (p.203). [6]

In this light, STANLEY has argued that the narrativity of the letters could only emerge as an effect of the exploration and indeed juxtaposition of wider collection of letters and bodies of correspondences, what she has theorized as "the epistolarium." As STANLEY has configured the concept:

> "The idea of the epistolarium can be thought about in (at least) three related ways, with rather different epistemological complexities and consequentialities: as an epistolary record that remains for *post hoc* scrutiny; as 'a collection' of the entirety of the surviving correspondences that a particular letter writer was involved in; and as the 'ur-letters' produced in transcribing, editing and publishing actual letters (or rather versions of them)" (2004, p.218). [7]

Of course, working with letters as documents of life in narrative research raises a quite complex spectrum of questions around representation, context, truth, power, desire, identity, subjectivity, memory and ethics, questions that are now well identified and richly explored in the field of auto/biographical narratives (SMITH & WATSON, 2001). However, epistolary narratives have their own take on these questions and indeed demand ways of analysis that are particularly oriented to the specificities of their ontological and epistemological nature. It is, I suggest, by working within specific contexts that methodological problems in analyzing epistolary narratives can best be addressed and it is to the specific problems encountered in my work with letters in the archives that I am now turning. [8]

In doing this, I will reflect on my experience of archival work at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, University of Texas at Austin, reading Dora CARRINGTON's[1] letters (June-July 2004) and at the archives of the Rodin Museum in Paris (May-June 2005), reading Gwen JOHN's letters to Auguste RODIN.[2] Although coming from different generations, both Gwen JOHN (1876-1939) and Dora CARRINGTON (1893-1932) were students of the well-known Slade School of Fine Art in London; they were therefore imbued by the imaginary of the "new woman" and were further familiar with the bohemian circles of their times. Nevertheless their career and life paths were very different.[3] Apart from the Slade, one thing they did share was that they were both voluminous letter writers, although they have also written journals and diaries but not to the extent that they wrote letters. What is also striking is that although some of their letters are housed in the UK, the British Library and the Tate Gallery for CARRINGTON and the National Library of Wales and the Tate Gallery again for Gwen JOHN, the bulk of their correspondence is housed abroad, CARRINGTON's at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, University of Texas at Austin, together with the majority of Bloomsbury's papers and JOHN's at the archives of the Rodin Museum in Paris, more understandably so, since she mostly lived, worked and died in France. [9]

In both cases, therefore, my work in the two archives abroad was part of my work in other archives in the process of actually creating an archive of my own. This brings me to the methodological theme of how the researcher prepares her visit to the archive, a crucial phase of doing archival research. Moreover, I am also looking into how the actual experience at the archive (no matter how well prepared) creates its own unique spatio-temporal dynamics that have a profound impact on the process of the research, on the writing of it and of course on the researcher herself. [10]

1 CARRINGTON was born in Hereford in 1893, came from a middle class family and studied art at the Slade School of Fine Arts in London. It was during these years that she got involved in the first amorous relationship with artist Mark GERTLER, who introduced her to the Bloomsbury group and to Lytton STRACHEY, who she loved passionately to the point of committing suicide shortly after his premature death in 1932. In 1917, CARRINGTON moved with STRACHEY in Tidmarsh Mill, a country house in Pangbourne, Berkshire, where they lived together till 1924, when they moved to Ham Spray House near Hungerford in Wiltshire where they both died in 1932. In 1918, she met Ralph PARTRIDGE; they became friends and lovers and PARTRIDGE moved in Tidmarsh Mill sharing his life with STRACHEY and CARRINGTON who he eventually married in 1921. CARRINGTON's relationship with Gerald BRENAN, a writer and critic living mostly in Spain was an important one and her correspondence with him went on till the end of her life. It is her letters to BRENAN that I am mostly reading in this article.

2 JOHN was born and grew up in Wales and her talent for painting was supported by her middle class family. She studied at the Slade School of Fine Arts in London, but lived and worked in Paris and the nearby Meudon from 1904 till the end of her life. She met Auguste RODIN while posing as a model for a monument to WHISTLER and fell passionately in love with him. During the ten years of their affair (1904-1914) and beyond it, till RODIN's death in 1917, she wrote passionate letters twice and sometimes three times a day. As a young artist JOHN lived in a series of studio apartments in the Montparnasse area, which were usually the epistolary places her letters were written from. JOHN's love letters to RODIN are extremely interesting both in content and in form; they offer rich insights in the minutiae of a young woman artist in the urban spaces of modernity.

3 For a detailed discussion of their lives, see TAMBOUKOU (2010a, 2010b, 2010c).

2. Whose Archive?

In July 2004, I visited the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, Austin. This visit was carefully prepared in two ways, as I will further discuss. Preparation is crucial, particularly when the researcher works within a very limited budget of funding and within time limitations, which is usually the case when doing archival research, and even more so when she finds herself far away from home. Austin Texas was indeed a *terra incognita* for me; working there in the middle of summer, giving up my summer holidays, was significantly raising the levels of the archive fever both in Carolyn STEEDMAN's and Jacques DERRIDA's conceptualization (STEEDMAN, 2001). I was definitely deeply aware that this was a rare opportunity and that I should try to make the best out of it. [11]

My first move, therefore, was to get as wider a context as I could of CARRINGTON's life and work and in this light I read every auto/biographical document that my meticulous literature review had located. I was particularly interested in David GARNETT's volume of CARRINGTON's edited letters, since they gave me a very good taste of what I was about to read. This selection of letters, also gave me the opportunity to explore politics of inclusion and/or exclusion in edited volumes of correspondence. As STANLEY has argued: "the selection of some letters entails the deselection of many more" (2004, p.205). This was a good thing to remember when I was making my own selection of what to read, note down, transcribe at length, or ask to be photocopied. [12]

As a preparation then of the Austin visit, in the period between January and July 2004 I was working at the manuscript section of the British Library in London on a weekly basis, reading the ten files of the STRACHEY-CARRINGTON correspondence, as well as CARRINGTON's notebook entitled as "D.C. Partridge, her Book." Apart from the rich data I collected there, the letters at the British Library familiarized me with CARRINGTON's handwriting, her writing style and a very interesting range of themes that I had started coding as part of my data analysis process. What really struck me there, were the artistic drawings on the manuscripts themselves and the way drawings and writing were intermingling artistically in the body of the letters, a theme that became my first criterion, when asking for a letter to be photocopied in Austin. I have now actually created my own archive of the interface of the visual and the textual in CARRINGTON's epistolarium (TAMBOUKOU, 2010c). [13]

Thus, when I went to Austin Texas in July 2004, I was feeling fully prepared to immerse myself in the bulk of CARRINGTON's correspondence, which is kept in 10 files of out-going correspondence between 1915-1931 and 17 files of in-coming correspondence from 1912-1965. What I was also able to read in Austin was the BRENAN-CARRINGTON correspondence, 434 letters to Gerald BRENAN (1919-1932) and 465 letters from BRENAN (1919-1932), which was actually the surprise of my research visit there, since it gave me rich data on the theme of the constitution of the female self as an artist. The point is that I was expecting to find such discussions in CARRINGTON's correspondence with Mark GERTLER, who was also a painter. However, the correspondence with BRENAN

was actually the richest source for this theme, something I had not expected to encounter, since GARNETT's edition in my view has largely ignored or excluded letters between CARRINGTON and BRENAN where these themes were discussed. Finally, in the STRACHEY collection I was able to locate the only letter I have ever read from CARRINGTON to her husband Ralph PARTRIDGE, something I also had not expected to find, since according to GARNETT, "her letters to Ralph Partridge were not preserved" (1975, p.15). This is certainly a big and interesting gap in her correspondence and I really feel very satisfied even with the single letter I was able to detect, which created a new theme in my analytical tropes: the significance of the letter that was lost or destroyed. As STEEDMAN has poetically put it: "You find nothing in the Archive but stories caught half way through: the middle of things: discontinuities" (2001, p.45). In this light, the letter that was kept should always be read with the letter that was lost or destroyed in mind and in the same way that we interpret voices we should perhaps start interpreting silences or, somehow, include them in our archives. I will come back to the thorny issue of how you make choices and inevitably include or exclude what you can find in the archive, after I have given some context about my research in Paris. [14]

In May-June 2005, it was Paris, France, not Paris, Texas that I was visiting and although the Rodin Museum is not exactly as accessible as the British Library for a Londoner, it was definitely not as awesome as Austin. There was however a significant difficulty: JOHN's letters there were understandably written in French. This time it was not so much a *terra incognita* but different languages that I had to deal with. Anyway, the problem of translation was in front of me but I decided to defer it during the period I was working in the archive. This meant that I was reading and transcribing everything in French, leaving the hard work of translation for the time I would be back in London, studying and analyzing the letters. There was an extra difficulty: the museum did not allow photocopying, but there was also a bright side: JOHN's French was basic and her handwriting very readable, since she was writing in a foreign language. In this light there were many levels of complexity, creating conditions of being lost in translation: a British based researcher of Greek origin, reading an English-speaking woman's letters that were written in French. One of the themes that has actually come up from the analysis of JOHN's letters is what I have called "drafting the self," the fact that she was copying and proofreading her letters meticulously, constantly revisiting and revising her epistolary self-representations and expressions. What is interesting here is that a facticity—Gwen JOHN being an English-speaking woman writing in French—has opened up specific analytical and theoretical trends in the analysis of her epistolary narratives. This is something that only the work in the archive could have brought up. [15]

It goes without saying that my visit to Paris was preceded by the two-fold preparation that I had already followed with CARRINGTON's letters. Before going there, I delved into JOHN's auto/biographical and visual archive. Indeed, JOHN's life and work has been narrated, examined and interpreted from a variety of authors, perspectives and disciplinary interests and fields, offering a rich example of how lives are caught up in stories and of how culturally embedded stories

shape perceptions, meanings and understandings, producing the real and the subject herself (ISRAEL, 1999). In preparing my research at the Rodin Museum Archives—I read all these accounts and immersed myself in the pleasure of viewing her paintings by visiting galleries[4] and studying exhibition catalogs (LANGDALE & JENKINS, 1985; JENKINS & STEPHENS, 2004) and other art publications on her work (TAUBMAN, 1985; LANGDALE, 1987; FOSTER 1999). I further read the entirety of her letters to her friend Ursula TYRWHITT, not from their published edition, but from photocopies of the manuscripts. I was therefore able to create a rich archive of stories, paintings, letters and academic essays wherein I mapped my genealogical inquiries. [16]

I have given some examples of how the space/time blocks and material conditions of working in the archive are not mere practicalities or technicalities, but are always interrelated with specific methodological decisions and theoretical paths that the researcher is led to follow. This brings me to the next section of the article: discussing or rather, given the time limitations, opening up the on-going discussion of how a researcher might experience her work in the archive and how her specific experience creates certain conditions of possibility for making specific choices: choosing what to see, what to note and (even more) what to transcribe. These are questions that relate to wider issues of how the researcher can oscillate between pathos and distance, create a transitional space that can accommodate both her involvement and her need for detachment and reflection and ultimately, shatter norms and certainties about what can or should be researched, within real-and-imaginary space/time blocks. [17]

I will try to tackle this problem from my own situated perspective, that of a feminist genealogist. In doing this I draw on the concept of genealogy as "interpretive analytics" (DREYFUS & RABINOW, 1982). According to DREYFUS and RABINOW, the objectives of FOUCAULT's genealogies are insistently pragmatic as indeed are mine. I always start from a problem of the present and following FOUCAULT, I try to write "histories of the present": what is this present of ours as women? How have we become what we are and what are the possibilities of becoming other? However, as Hubert DREYFUS and Paul RABINOW have lucidly put it about FOUCAULT's work: "while the analysis of our present practices is a disciplined, concrete demonstration which could serve as the basis of a research program" (1982, p.xii), the diagnosis that the ethics/aesthetics interrelation is crucial in the constitution of the female self has rather emerged as an interpretation in my project, a hypothesis that needed to be explored and investigated in the archive. As Paul RICOEUR has pithily noted, "the historian comes to the archive with questions [...] the documents do not speak unless someone asks them to verify, that is, to make true, some hypothesis" (2004, p.177). In this line of thought, the research hypothesis constitutes a kind of a lighthouse's rotating searchlight that goes round in the greyness of the archive and illuminates dark corners of this grey seascape. As it has been poetically suggested by Hilde LAUWERS (2007) the lighthouse, or

4 Quite incidentally the Tate Gallery held a retrospective exhibition on Gwen JOHN and Augustus JOHN (September 2004-January 2005), which gave me the opportunity to see a wide range of her paintings.

rather its searchlight, can be a strong metaphor for doing archival research. As researchers in the archive we are sitting at our desks surrounded by grey, dusty documents. Every now and then, our reading (like the lighthouse's rotating searchlight) brings into vision possible meaningful aspects of the document we are reading. However, as we go on, some lines will be illuminated and others will remain grey. Yet, the longer we read, the more focused the rotating searchlight becomes. Nevertheless, we will never be able to see the whole picture. What we choose to read, transcribe or photocopy are "lit-up moments, and the rest is dark" (WINTERSON, 2004, p.134); thus, sometimes we will need to go back to the archive. [18]

Drawing on this analytical framework, the genealogist must accept that the centrality of the problem she has chosen to explore emerges as an interpretation and "can therefore be contested by other interpretations growing out of other concerns" (DREYFUS & RABINOW, 1982, p.xii), while "all of this rests upon a primary assumption of complexity rather than profundity as the object and purpose of research" (JONES & BALL, 1995, p.46). It is in the process of interpretation, however, that the genealogist has to stand back, disengage herself from the turbulence of the problem and indulge in her "pathos for distance." Moreover, this confession of interpretation also goes a long way in preempting the necessity of pretending that our problems are out there, waiting to be located. As it is now more and more widely accepted, to all intents and purposes, our disciplines and procedures produce the problems that they address. FOUCAULT, at one time, described his work as "several fragments of autobiography" derived from his experience of "something cracked, dully jarring or disfunctioning in things I saw in the institutions in which I dealt with my relations with others" (quoted in RAJCHMAN, 1985, p.36). [19]

While however, there is always a direction, a searchlight rotating rhythmically, the researcher in the archive should always leave space for the appearance of new analytical perspectives, for unexpected findings and unforeseen encounters that will interrogate her own way of reasoning: the shattering of norms and certainties about what can or should be researched. I will give two examples of such unexpected encounters, experiences from the outside as it were, that made me think differently about my data, my research, my analytical perspectives and myself. [20]

3. Different Spaces and the Force of Loneliness

STEEDMAN has eloquently written about the historian's loneliness particularly experienced in the archive: "The Archive allowed the imagining of a particular and modern form of loneliness, which was perhaps analogous to the simultaneous conception of the Historian's relationship to the past as one of irretrievable dispossession" (2001, p.72). STEEDMAN has further suggested however, that "the Historian goes to the Archive to be at home as well as to be alone" (p.72). I want to reflect on loneliness and on these strange connections between loneliness, the archive and the feeling of being at home, drawing on my experience in Austin, Texas. [21]

I arrived in Austin on a very hot June afternoon of 2004 and after leaving my luggage in a colonial style bed and breakfast, made my way to the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, which was nearby. Everything seemed strange: summer in Texas but in a city which was so different from the usual stereotypes of what Texas means for Europeans—the motto on almost every merchandise in the souvenir shops was "Keep Texas weird." Moreover, the Research Centre was truly extraordinary, housing the bulk of the Bloomsbury papers: "how on earth have they ever landed there?" I kept wondering ... There was finally a strange combination of ethnicities and places: a British based researcher of Greek origin, funded by a British Institution—The Art and Humanities Research Council—to read the papers of a British painter, which had been sold to an American Institution: this was indeed the perfect combination for disorientation. I was alone in the archive but certainly not feeling at home, or so I thought. As the days started passing by, the initial "out of place feeling" was gradually receding and a home-like routine was being created: I would work in the Archives from 9-5, immersed in the Bloomsbury atmosphere of CARRINGTON's correspondence and when the archives closed, I would take the bus and dive into a nearby natural swimming pool at the banks of the Colorado river in a Mediterranean mode of what summer should be about; then I would dine downtown at some American rock, jazz or blues bar; Austin prides itself for being the world capital of life music and there is life music almost everywhere you go. Back in my colonial style bed and breakfast I would write my field notes for the day. As I was moving in between several real-and-imaginary spaces and places, day after day, my reading of CARRINGTON's letters would focus more and more on the theme of placelessness: an endless striving not just for a studio of her own, but also for a place in the world.

> "... for the last two days I have toiled unceasingly creating ORDER [emphasis in the text]. Really it is magnificent. An upstairs attic adjoining my bedroom studio practically I have transformed in a workshop of the most marvellous system. The shelves are divided into stalls in each stall tubes of different colours lie neatly arranged so at a glance I can find my colours and they can never get confused. This is really an invention, for paint boxes are never large enough to contain all one's paints. I now simply go to my attic put the paints I require on my palate, do all my canvas stretching & messy work in this room, leave it and paint in a clean tip room down-below. Why I never thought of it before ... I have a lock for the door, so I can safely leave my canvasses exposed in this retreat. I discovered as high calamity whilst cleaning this attic, which before was all confusion as I simply used it as a safe depository for my drawings and canvasses. The Rats had eaten their way through the wall and had nibbled off the drawings that projected from my portfolio. The result was that nearly all the drawings were decapitated. My fine buzzard which was full size (a pen and ink drawings I always intended to give you), which I once made from a stuffed bird in Cornwall had lost its head! The floor was a mass of fragments of paper. Hardly a drawing escaped their ravages. I think it's terribly depressing looking at one's past work. I intend to paint out every single canvas and burn all the drawings tomorrow ..." (HRC, Brenan Collection, 10.8, 10/12/1921/). [22]

Seen in the light of the discursive limitations that I have already discussed, the above passage from a letter written to BRENAN in 1921, depicts the unbearable situation of CARRINGTON's lack of a studio of her own, while living in Tidmarsh Mill House. After spending years working tirelessly to transform Tidmarsh Mill House in a quiet place where her life-long friend STRACHEY could retreat and write the books that made him famous, CARRINGTON was to find her work destroyed by the rats in the attic, the only space that she had managed to keep for her drawings and would ultimately use as a storing space for her art material. Indeed, I was quite struck by this epistolary fragment, taking it as a depiction of the Heideggerian workshop wherein CARRINGTON becomes gradually conscious of her existential spatiality in orienting herself in space. In a way, creating *order* in the attic would become a spatial condition of possibility for her subjectivity as an artist to emerge in the threshold of the living space of the house and the rat invaded space of the attic. Her particular reference of the lock for the door and the need to safeguard privacy and her work within the "private" domestic realm— which she was supposed to be dominating—is also an exciting line of her letter. Locking the door while keeping the spirit of work within it, is a spatial theme whose effects can be traced to our own days. [23]

The disaster that the rats had left behind could also be read as a spatial metaphor of CARRINGTON's anxiety about losing her orientation as an artist. Indeed, while loving her houses and working for them, she had ultimately found herself without a studio of her own, a space where she could work without interruption. As she was writing to BRENAN in January 1920, the many visitors coming over to Tidmarsh from London would leave her no time or space for her passion for painting:

> "I've become rather ambitious about my paintings lately. I want frightfully badly to so arrange my life that I can paint a great deal more and also more powerfully. At present I am so uncertain of myself. And have so little confidence in consequence ... Next week Clive Bell and his cohort come here for 4 days. I always grudge visitors. Rather as they involve me leaving my painting and doing fatigue duties which I detest ..." (HRC, Gerald Brenan Collection, 10.4, 20/5/1919). [24]

In this light and despite the many houses that CARRINGTON both inhabited and painted, what emerges in the charting of her spatiality is a *spaceless* female subject. Virginia WOOLF asserts in "Three Guineas" that "as a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world" (1993, p.232). In CARRINGTON's case however there was no world, there was simply no space in which to constitute herself and what I was beginning to trace were signs of being in a spatial void. [25]

A rich body of feminist research has indeed demonstrated that spatial alienation is a constitutive axis in the construction of the female self, while women's sense of estrangement from the everyday spaces of their lives has been shown to be related to fear, the fear that they are always watched and evaluated[5]. As it has

5 For a review of feminist discussions around space, place and gender, see amongst others, Tamboukou (2003).

further been argued, this threat of being the object of the other's gaze is of critical importance in the objectification of the female subject (ROSE, 1993, p.146). Taking the route of the feminist critique of the spatialization of patriarchal power, what I have therefore suggested is that within specific historical, cultural and geographical contexts, the private sphere of home has been constituted as a "non-place" for the female subject.[6] [26]

It is in this light I suggest that the history of traditional "women's locations" is actually the history of women's oppression, a history that has to be overwritten or juxtaposed by a myriad of counter-histories "of spaces and powers" according to FOUCAULT (1980a, p.149). At the same time however, it is from this void of woman's non-representation, the non-place of the actuality of her life, "a spatial elsewhere" as DE LAURETIS (1988) has put it, that counter-narratives of space emerge from. In this light, CARRINGTON's letters are filled with snapshots of interior and exterior spaces that are deployed in a continuous interaction as they chart a new image of thought about the art of living and the art of being.[7] But having considered how the theme of "different spaces" emerged from my archival research with CARRINGTON's letters I am now going to discuss how the theme of multiple temporalities came up in my research with JOHN's letters. [27]

4. Displaced Temporalities or Whose Time Is It?

During the time I spent in Paris, I got totally immersed in the field of affective forces of JOHN's letters and paintings, getting the sense that I was inhabiting multiple temporalities. Dipesh CHAKRABARTY has argued that "an experience of contemporaneity makes historical understanding possible" (cited in DINSHAW, 2007, p.115); in this light, leaping into JOHN's times and places has become a condition of possibility for a genealogical grasping of her ways of being. Indeed, I can argue that "time present and time past collapsed" (DINSHAW, 2007, p.121) while I was working in the archives of the Rodin Museum in Paris. I remember vividly the intensity of the hours I have spent at the attic of the Hôtel Biron, RODIN's Parisian studio, which has now become the famous museum. As I was reading JOHN's agonizing letters I could look down through the window at the entrance of the rue de Varenne, where JOHN would wait for hours to see RODIN coming in or coming out:

> "Are you travelling my Master? [...] I was in the rue de Varenne for two hours, up until twenty to five, I did not enter the court of the house, I was for the most part in front of the door of a house opposite, where I could see the carriages passing and would very much intrigue the people around me, particularly a little washerwoman nextdoors, who would come and look at me but without impoliteness as I was very well dressed [...] I was waiting patiently for you my Master but you must know sometimes from my letters that I suffer" (MGJ/BJ3, undated). [28]

6 As I have noted elsewhere, home has been a contested notion in feminist theorizations of space and it has been theorized as a site of resistance and a shield against racism in black feminist thought (Tamboukou, 2003).

7 For an extended discussion of CARRINGTON's spatiality, see TAMBOUKOU (2011).

I remember standing myself at the opposite side of the gate of the rue de Varenne—which I was entering everyday to go up to the archives—imagining and sometimes feeling the unbearably slow passage of time for a young woman waiting there for hours to see her lover, being humiliated by the concierges and feeling embarrassed by the gaze of the passers-by:

> "I don't dare come to your place anymore. That lady, when she opened the door, last time I was there, told me: 'Is the master expecting you?' And then she said 'He is busy, you have to wait.' She didn't say it in a good manner" (MGJ/BJ3, undated). [29]

I would spend lunchtime in the garden of the museum, sitting on the benches and looking at the house through the French windows of what used to be RODIN's atelier, imagining again how it would be like for a young woman sitting there in the dark: "I was there in the dark for a long time, in front of the door. In the garden sitting on a piece of marble, I wouldn't dare knock on the door" (MGJ/BJ4, November, 1907). [30]

On leaving the museum, I would often walk to the nearby Invalides station, another spot that JOHN would wait for hours to see RODIN coming from his house in Meudon:

> "I was going to the station to wait for you all these mornings and I would stay there for hours, every morning apart from Saturday. I did go on a Saturday afternoon but I was very much afraid that I would meet your American friend there. My disappointment has tired me and I have felt the passion filling my heart this week. You treat me as if I did not exist, my master [...]" (MGJ/BJ3, undated). [31]

On a Saturday, when the archives were closed, I visited the RODIN museum at Meudon, the villa des Brillants. As I was walking along the leafy alley leading to the house I was looking through the iron gates surrounding it, imagining JOHN being stuck there for hours in the anticipation of seeing RODIN in his garden: "My dear Master, I was looking into your garden but I didn't see you! I arrived very late because I was lost first in the Clamart forest and then in the countryside of Meudon and elsewhere [...]" (MGJ/BJ3, undated). [32]

In the evenings when my mind was literally melting down after having read mostly agonizing letters for eight hours, I was recovering my aching body by following JOHN's steps from the various addresses she wrote letters to the Parisian boulevards and the Luxembourg gardens. Locating the Montparnasse addresses in the first place was an excitement. "Will I find them? Do they really exist? Have they been demolished? Have their names been changed?" I found them all: 19 Boulevard Edgar Quinet, has become a hotel and a café, there is a possibility that this was the old building but there was no number on it; 6 Rue de l'Ouest has become a brand new shopping corner—what a disappointment, same as 7 Rue St Placide, next to the *Bon Marche*, the first Parisian department store where JOHN would spend much of her time and money. Finally, what a delightful discovery that 89 Rue de Cherche-midi, the address of JOHN's favorite room which became the theme of many of her celebrated interiors (LANGDALE, 1987,

pp.137-139) was standing there in front of my eyes, undisturbed by time, with the number on it. [33]

While passing through the Parisian boulevards and avenues to reach JOHN's epistolary places I was rehearsing her lines, retracing, materializing them:

> "I have just returned from a small walk that I took after dinner in the avenue du Maine. It is dangerous to walk alone at night but I was so happy my Master, I am feeling I have overcome the fear of dangers, I needed to walk and I walk fast" (MGJ/BJ5, undated). [34]

L'Avenue du Maine did not feel particularly friendly to me either, even in the summer dusk; but entering it, as I had just left the miserably renovated 6 Rue de l'Ouest, I could see why it was indeed a short walk for JOHN. [35]

Like JOHN, I had much more enjoyed walking by the river while dusk was falling and the lights were coming on: "Last evening after leaving Miss O'Donnel I walked to the river bank, there were stars in the sky and I was thinking of you" (MGJ/BJ5, undated) or along le Boulevard Montparnasse, looking at the shop windows around:

> "Last night, I did not write a single word in my journal, I was so tired. I had walked to a shop in le Boulevard Montparnasse near the Observatory where there are Japanese stamps in the shop windows and dolls and other Japanese things. When I walk I always go there to look at the shop windows" (MGJ/BJ4, undated). [36]

The Luxembourg gardens, a rather short walk from all the places JOHN used to live in the area of Montparnasse, were also a frequent destination; as I have written elsewhere (TAMBOUKOU, 2010b), they have emerged as a heterotopic spatial configuration in the matrix of JOHN's relational emplacements. As she was writing to her friend TYRWHITT in July 1904:

> "We have been out for a walk it is quite late, the sky is a deep blue with some great clouds, the Luxembourg gardens looked so beautiful with no soul there so quiet and peaceful & the trees are so beautiful down the streets casually lit up as a lamp. I sometimes sleep in the gardens in a little copse of trees" (NLW MS 21468D, f.14). [37]

Walking myself in the gardens, I was trying to locate "the little copse of trees" that JOHN used to sleep under; finding myself replaying her paths, I was really struck and perplexed by the power of her strange familiarity with *fin-de-siècle* urban spaces. How could a public garden be transformed into an intimate space sheltering a young woman's sleep? Indeed, recreating existential paths within different space/time conjunctions was a strange and exciting experience, intensified by my own lived experience of spending time in Paris on my own, working all day in the archives and retracing JOHN's paths in the evenings and on weekends. Was I becoming a mad woman in the attic as I was indeed working all day in the attic of the house that JOHN had spent hours of intense pleasure

and pain? Was I creating a matrix where her moments of being were making connections with mine? As Carolyn DINSHAW has asked, "what are other ways of experiencing time besides objectifying it, segmenting and claiming it? [...] what are these feelings, when a past rises up in the present and what will allow us to analyze these feelings, these experiences?" (2007, pp.111f.). Reflecting on heterogeneous temporalities, within a medieval context, DINSHAW has suggested "a concept of queer history that reckons in the most expansive way possible with how people exist in time, with what it feels like to be a body in time, or in multiple times, or out of time" (p.109); she has further shown how the project of the Foucauldian genealogy can theoretically account for heterogeneities of time, a way of re-imagining the past as the only way of revisiting it:

> "I am well aware that I have never written anything but fictions. I do not mean to say, however, that truth is therefore absent. It seems to me that the possibility exists for fictions to function in truth, for a fictional discourse to induce effects of truth, and for bringing it about that a true discourse engenders or 'manufactures' something that does not as yet exists, that is, 'fictions' it. One 'fictions' history on the basis of a political reality that makes it true, one 'fictions' a politics not yet in existence on the basis of a historical truth" (FOUCAULT, 1980b, p.193). [38]

Indeed as I felt that JOHN's past "was becoming a part of an absorbing now" (DINSHAW, 2007, p.113) my space/time troubles have been mapped on the dispositif of my genealogical project. If genealogy attempts to become a history of the present, this present of ours, becomes as DINSHAW has suggested "an expanded now" (p.112), inevitably invaded and infused by other times and other spaces whose effects on our present, genealogy is dismantling and interrogating. In this light, my experience of working in the archive, has contracted past moments of women artists' lives and these past moments have become extremely important in my understanding and analysis: they have created an intensive virtual milieu of my actuality as a feminist researcher. [39]

I have written extensively about heterotopic relations in making cartographies of women's spaces (TAMBOUKOU, 2003, 2010b). Indeed, drawing on FOUCAULT's analytics of space, heterotopias have been taken as spaces that are connected to the network of the relational emplacements of modernity, but in such a way that they interrogate discourses and practices of the hegemonic space within which they are localizable; they are "a kind of contestation both mythical and real of the space in which we live" (FOUCAULT, 1998 [1984], p.179). Following this line of thought I have argued that JOHN's spatial practices have opened up heterotopic spaces within urban emplacements, functioning between illusion and reality. [40]

What has emerged in my archival research is what I have perceived as *heterotemporalities*: blocks of time or moments of being where the past—or better women's past for me—has so forcefully been contracted in my perception of the *now* that it has become a vital part of it. Indeed, during my archival research, my actuality was becoming a blurring sensation of past and present images, mine and other women's, whose moments of being I was reading and

writing about. As it has been noted, researchers often develop a kind of "affectionate familiarity" with their historical subjects, "a kind of intimacy"; and not rarely a passionate attachment emerging in the process of living with them (DINSHAW, 2007, p.117). [41]

Henri BERGSON (2002 [1896]) has argued that the past lives in our present in unthought-of configurations, so the past I am imagining and sensing here is not the antiquarian, dead, nostalgic historical past that NIETZSCHE (1997 [1873]) has refuted, but rather the forceful virtual past surrounding and folding our actuality, releasing lines of flight from striated to open and smooth spaces, throwing light to the feminist imaginary of radical futures. As BERGSON has lucidly put it:

> "The duration *wherein we see ourselves acting,* and in which it is useful that we see ourselves, is a duration whose elements are dissociated and juxtaposed. The duration *wherein* we act is a duration wherein our states melt into each other. It is within this that we should try to replace ourselves by thought, in the exceptional and unique case when we speculate on the intimate nature of action, that is to say, when we are discussing human freedom" (2002 [1896], p.186). [42]

What was my time then in Paris, was it JOHN's time or was it the researcher's time and whose time is it now that I am writing about this experience? As James WILLIAMS has noted "each present, each life is connected to all others but to greater and lesser degrees of contraction" (2003, p.97) and in this light DELEUZE has suggested that "one life may replay another at a different level" (cited in WILLIAMS, 2003, p.93). In a Deleuzian image of thought JOHN's paintings and letters have facilitated leaps into women's space/time blocks past, present and future—heterogeneous and yet surprisingly contemporaneous. Reading her letters and looking at her paintings I have sensed the feeling of "simultaneously belonging to one's own time as well as to other times, the balance between contemporaneity and difference, connection and distance" (DINSHAW, 2007, p.119). Sharing JOHN's spatial and temporal experiences made connections with the sense of how it might have felt to be a woman-becoming artist in fin-de-siècle Paris, traumatized by the scars and wounds of unconditional love, uncertain-albeit insistent, sometimes hopeful and others despairing, creating in solitude, imagining the unthought. [43]

It was through the intensity of my affective relation to JOHN's times and places that I was able to overcome resentfulness, the tendency to victimize women, pathologize their lives, censor their passions; it made it possible for me to connect with troubled figures and to work with troubling letters. I remember very well a conversation I had with another researcher sitting on the opposite side of the table of the cramped archive attic space. "What are you looking at?" she asked me and when I told her about JOHN's letters she said with some hesitation: "Oh, yes, I have looked at them, they are indeed very troubling letters," not the letters that a feminist would have liked to read as Lisa TICKNER has put it (2004, p.35). But my perception of these letters has been quite different. Being-in-the-world of the epistolary events, retracing their routes, feeling the vibes of

their passion uprooted my thought from biases and clichés. I have thus read JOHN's letters not as segmented narratives representing a woman's unconditional surrender to patriarchal laws and restrictions; but rather in terms of their vectors, their lines of flight (see GIBSON, 1996). In my image of thought, opened up by my passing through other times and spaces, JOHN's "troubling" letters have momentarily crystallized the intensity of her pain and suffering; but have mostly become planes creating conditions of possibility for explosions to occur, lines of flight that have actually deterritorialized JOHN from the patriarchal figure of the "Woman" and have opened up possibilities for the will to solitude to emerge as a nomadic line of becoming-artist. Confronting the intensity of her pain, when writing that "I am nothing but a small piece of suffering and desire" (MGJ, B.J5, undated), what I have followed from these lines is not just the inscription of pain within an immobile patriarchal and heterosexual segmentarity, a state of "abject servitude" as it has been suggested (FIGES, 1993, p.75), but rather how this expression of pain actually works into creating virtual conditions of possibilities for future becomings. By having access to her bodies of correspondence to RODIN and to her friends in the UK I have a sense of how Marie the model/lover/protégée who writes to RODIN that "I had desired to be a distinguished artist; I wanted my part in the sun [...] But now I am in love, I don't envy being known" (MGJ, B.J4/Spring 1906) is at the same time Gwen JOHN, the artist who keeps painting, exhibiting, selling her pictures and writing to her friend TYRWHITT about her excitement of getting feedback about her work: "I had a letter from ROTHENSTEIN—a letter of praise that took my breath away for some time, so unlimited it was" (NLW MS 21468D, ff.21/5/1908). [44]

In this light, the lived moments of my *now* as a feminist researcher looking at women artists' lives, make sense of these narrated lives as actualized singularities surrounded by a multiplicity of virtualities in a future that is radical and open, effected but not determined by the past, attending to the unforeseeable and new, the yet to come. As Elizabeth GROSZ has wonderfully imagined it:

> "What history gives us is the possibility of becoming untimely, of placing ourselves outside the constraints, the limitations and blinkers of the present. This is precisely what it means to write for a future that the present cannot recognize: to develop to cultivate the untimely, the out-of place and the out-of-step. This access to the out-of-step can come only from the past and a certain uncomfortableness, a dis-ease in the present. The task is to make elements of this past live again, to be reenergized through their untimely or anachronistic recall in the present. The past is what gives us that difference, that tension with the present which can move us to a future in which the present can no longer recognize itself" (2004, p.117). [45]

5. Archival Practices, imagination and histories of the present

In looking back into my archival research with CARRINGTON's and JOHN's epistolary narratives, in this article I have considered interfaces between archival practices, imagination, memory and women's histories of the present, what I have elsewhere theorized as "feminist genealogies" (TAMBOUKOU, 2003). I have

particularly explored relations between material and symbolic forces in what Pierre NORA has influentially theorized as "Realms of Memory" (1998). As RICOEUR has aptly pointed out, while considering the materiality of "places of memory," NORA has interestingly discussed the role of imagination in assuring "the crystallizing of memories and their transmission" (RICOEUR, 2004, p.405). [46]

What I have shown in this article is that the researcher's questions, interpretations and themes are closely interrelated with both material and symbolic forces at work in "places of memory," reconfigured in my analysis as "different spaces" and "multiple temporalities" opened up by archival research. Further following Edward CASEY's (1987) thesis on the worldly character of memory and his illuminating analyses on the multiple relations between spatiality and memory, what I have highlighted in my discussion is the importance of the worldly character of archival practices and their impact on our research strategies, theoretical interpretations and epistemological routes, ultimately on the construction of knowledge.[8] What I finally suggest is that there is a need for further work to be done in this area so that our archival practices can be further theorized, problematized and challenged. [47]

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Appendix: Archival Sources

Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, the University of Texas at Austin: Dora Carrington Collection, Gerald Brenan Papers (HRC)

National Library of Wales, Archives, Gwen John's papers (NLW MS)

Rodin Museum, Marie Gwendolen John's boxes (MR\MGJ)

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8 For an extended discussion of the material and discursive forces of the archive, see TAMBOUKOU (2010c, particularly Chapter 1).

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