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**The Writing Circle's Guide to Hijacking Spaces**  
**a queer feminist conspiracy**

The Circle's Conspiracy of Writers

The first thought hijacking brings up is Palestinian people hijacking planes as a way of forcing our/themselves and our/their people into visibility.

Lolita Lebron, hijacking planes to free Puerto Rico, a tiny spot of violence in comparison to the warfare of US colonialism.

*Can you force others to see you?*

CAN YOU FORCE OTHERS TO SEE YOU?

**CAN YOU?**

### **I. The spaces we want to hijack and how**

- I want to hijack purity. I want to tell my uncle who calls me a race shame (*rassenschande*): Yes, I am. Proudly so. I am the parasite to your racism. That my body exists defies your idea of clean and pure spaces and races. Everybody should put the idea of race to shame. And claim and hijack whichever spaces they can. How do I do this? By refusing to shut up; by refusing to die; by taking up space in universities, in classrooms, in writing, in speaking; by forming practical solidarity; by quoting and citing each other; by working through networks of alliances and friendship; by trying to be mutually responsible and accountable; by allowing ourselves and each other to be soft.
- Colonial institutions (universities and museums) and use the “prestige” they have for undertaking expressly decolonial work. Challenging them on their practice as well as using the “privilege” they represent to further the work of QTPOC.
- Spaces of power and the institutionalisation of that power. Remaking that space by insidiously using its resources to challenge its hegemony. Turning the institution against itself.
- Being suspicious of neoliberal colonial academic institutions but using their money to support our conferences and collectives on how to dismantle those institutions (for those of us who are precarious and within the academy).
- Hijacking colonial academic spaces, hijacking citizen-led feminist organisations that exclude everyone else in a country where the majority are non-citizens; hijacking mainstream citizen-nationalist-state-feminist discourses; hijacking the spaces we find global north academic limitations imposed on knowledge production, circulation and dissemination.

- Mainstream feminist and queer spaces like IFJP, ISA, MESA and other spaces (which should not be named) that have benefitted from us but have historically cornered us. Reclaiming these spaces (or maybe thinking beyond them) and utilising their resources to build collectives by us, for us, of us.

Streets

Civil society

BORDERS

Public assembly spaces

Academia, publishing houses

Media

Savarna/upper caste spaces

Prisons, the police, the prison industrial complex, the cop in the head

Public spaces, liminal spaces, spaces where people are not supposed to stay but pass through

But also, private spaces/the intimate spheres, often deeply violent

We want to take back public universities; we want to take back public institutions; we want to take back the classroom, the libraries, the books, the articles and the journals

Our own spaces which are hijacked by white “experts” instead of our own voices

Germany’s next chancellor office

Modi’s genocidal central vista and fucking statues

Gebran Bassil’s villa and real estate

## HOW?

- Writing in other languages; refusing and not caring for it to be legible to hegemonic audiences
- Refusing tokenisation, rejecting on-paper (and guilt-freeing for them of course) inclusion of us (of us!) in elite spaces

- Resisting nationalisation and regionalisation — we are transnational queer anticolonial feminists; building bridges, sharing conceptual knowledges, citing each other
- Creating spaces for deep listening, being, and reparation; more listening ears/feminist ears willing to listen also work
- Building our own. Divesting from whiteness and what they tell us we are worthy of. Creating our own alternate worlds in the present
- Co-authoring and co-writing of knowledge; collective thinking and writing; resisting neoliberal “ownership”
- Taking our work from the page to the streets
- Subtweeting (reclaiming online spaces) liberal and white feminist thinking (big conferences in posh locations and countries with exclusionary visa regimes wherein a lot of feminists think they have come up with ideas recently when others have been talking about it for long)
- Democratising knowledges: creating smaller study circles for political knowing and thinking, taking knowledge beyond the classroom — a space many still cannot afford
- Engaging accomplices with proximity to power, privilege, and the resources within these institutions but wondering how to engage/include them and trusting their investment without it being guilt-driven, self-serving, or actions that are simply performative
- Resisting divisions: of academia-activism, centre-margin, theory-evidence. Resisting legibility through hegemonic concepts: “I don’t want to be your token! I don’t want to be your evidence of inclusion! I don’t want to cradle your guilt! Decentre yourself!”
- Refusing the NGO-isation of movements
- Collectivising towards building networks of solidarity and mutual aid; insisting on existing in, navigating, and resisting those spaces together as we work towards radically transforming those very spaces (and necessarily abolishing those that need to be abolished)
- Creating spaces within ourselves for our own perspectives/perspectives of people like us from the Global South, queer and feminist communities
- Complete overhaul of existing systems; insurrection

FINALLY, we want to hijack our own space. Be present in that space with responsibility and affirmation while allowing others to come into this space within limits. Therefore, we join our own ideas the way Venn diagrams overlap sometimes but without overshadowing any of us. This translates into different forms and in different realms of our lives; it starts at the personal and transcends to the collective. An example is hijacking the academic space/field that addresses our respective environments, which would in turn enable the birth of intellectuals out of our movements and ideas and vice versa. Supporting or creating more journals that use our mother tongue is another important element to allow for creation and recreation of felt/lived knowledge and an archive of our representations of ourselves, by ourselves. We would like to hijack curricula in universities as a means to achieving this. If curricula in universities are using work by the South in the South rather than relying on externals, then there might be a glimpse of hope. After doing so, the capitalist machine of western academia would be pressured to rethink its strategy and inclusion of scholars from the South.

## II. More on which spaces do we find ourselves in and are cornered into, and how to hijack them

Funders' spaces

White queer spaces, killing joy

University departments that are dominated by cismen, talking about the phenomenology of periods in my all-male philosophy classroom

“Diversity and inclusion” spaces

Spaces “for and by BIPOC” still having to use white (supremacist) funding sources to create our work resulting in vetting success through their lens/filters STILL

Some diaspora spaces, having often been trained in the Anglophone way of thinking and being, rehearse similar forms of radicality and critique. There is a reason most of us cite scholars of colour trained and based in the West

Spaces where the celebrity BIPOC scholars take over quite frequently

Virtual spaces of colonial institutions

Publishing spaces

In dreams and iterations — often half spoken, half made, unmade, broken — of the utopian “safe space.” Hijacking it would be to constantly rethink it lest they end up appropriating oppressive structures

Colonial spaces

## International, white-dominated spaces

## Private (ly owned) spaces

Universities that corner and place “you as a woman, you as a queer person, you as an Arab, you as a non-white person...” I don’t want to embody your fantasy for you

Spaces where people in authority positions are not held accountable for their words and actions

*(Not entirely sure if some of these spaces can/should be hijacked; they need to be destroyed, and we need to make our own counter-spaces such as the one we are in right now to carry on the work of anticolonial transformation)*

**More on HOW?**

- This question could be addressed in two ways. First, in highlighting which spaces to hijack. Second are the spaces that we should abandon or let go of collectively or individually. We should hijack university curricula (our own in the South) and abandon the spaces where we seldom feel appreciated – these same spaces where one misogynist racist white professor could condemn your whole career because you responded to his disrespect with an official email to stand up for yourself. Thus, we should create a home for our ideas and thinking.
- The silencing narrative of European/Western history; rewriting school curricula!
- Making everyone super uncomfortable by embodying what they fear you will embody, i.e.:
  - As diversity tokens in otherwise white, upper class, upper caste, heteronormative spaces
  - On the effing global media — white expert/vs POC data — we must not do this labour for free. Refuse efforts (even in replying to requests) unless they come with clarification about usage and remuneration
- When we find ourselves in spaces where we are always seen in relation to the hegemonic ear that does not listen, when we find ourselves in a situation where we are being addressed in ways we don’t agree to/being positioned as the other/having to bear the burden of doing “translation” work (translating worlds, meanings, concepts, always in relation to a “centre” in question), we should embody a multiplicity of refusals: epistemic, political, embodied refusal. We must embrace discomfort and let this affect circulate.

**III. Which spaces do we want to create?**

Yes! I do not want to occupy “white” spaces. I want to find a beautiful field for me, break a hole in the ground, sit in it, and keep easing myself into it until it moulds around me perfectly. Then I will get out of there and go break another hole

Transnational spaces outside the centre/margin

Global South press

A summer school where rich white people pay (and get separate unlearning classes)

Circulating knowledge in networks that we create and that resist global and “national” power structures

A university; a pluriversity?

Safe inclusive accessible non-heteronormative spaces. Spaces to grow, not spaces to fight and defend constantly. Transformative spaces, collective spaces, spaces to share, to flourish to learn to support each other and share the burden of life

Spaces where knowledge is remembered, shared, brought to fruition, not produced, more iterative creative spaces

A space where we grow: our foods, our children, our relations, our solidarity, our activism — where the hand, the mouth, and the mind’s labour are no longer separate (they never have been)

A space to remember what I have not known, a space to heal. To quote Fred Moten: “Consent not to be a single being”

This virtual space, in the flesh

Circles, collectives, and transnational spaces. Nationalism is a toxic legacy of the nineteenth century that we need to undo through collaborative work of transnational organising. How do we see beyond borders, beyond area studies; how do we listen to different languages to decolonise the hegemony of colonial epistemologies that continue to haunt our dreams (or should we say nightmares)?

How do we create spaces that are centred on foregrounding decolonial practices?

Circles begetting other circles

Spaces of knowledge creation that are not limited to the academic form and thus not exclusive of many cultures and voices who do not fit that mould. Collective spaces to share knowledge and experience in the

form of narratives, storytelling, art, and where this “methodology” is taken seriously. A space that not only is inclusive but that has also done the deconstructive work: unlearning and relearning are necessary to be welcoming to all folks. And a space that takes into consideration different abilities and disabilities and allows all to participate

A space where we think, write, feel, and imagine beyond the constraints of powers that are imposed upon us. A space where we bring ourselves in relation to each other with different modes of manifestations; through rituals, storytelling, art, poetry, photography, objects, plants... speaking to one another through different mediums. A space to feel “held” collectively, disrupting unequal distribution of labour/emotion/being

A space where everybody is seen: some maybe for the first time, some again and again but not acknowledged enough, some seen but never spoken to and all that jazz. In material terms, this would mean forging a space that creates conditions that are conducive to speaking and listening differently, with all the silences, discomforts, sighs, and awkward pauses. All of it. Creating a counter to being “proper,” even in academia, especially in academia

An underground collective with no name that takes over spaces (conferences, events) at institutions without any prior announcements and stirs shit up. Banksy style!

Communal spaces, centring those who have been traditionally and historically marginalised, both physical and virtual. These spaces should ensure each other’s safety, and hold those within them accountable when they mess up. They should make those within them feel comfortable, safe, intellectually and/or creatively motivated, energised, loved, and supported. These spaces, I believe, should function in direct resistance to capitalism, individualism, racism/whiteness, and the cisheteropatriarchy

Safe spaces/spaces of healing and mutual support. Spaces where our collective humanity is acknowledged and celebrated

Spaces where personal narratives are taken as seriously as “expert” interventions

A space where body hair is normal ffs

A space where the researched, the anonymous, the cited are in the room, actively involved and not just written about, longed for, or an afterthought

A safe and loving space where we enjoy respect and gratitude, and heal together

Onwards and onwards;

as we Educate, Agitate, Organise (thanks Babasaheb Ambedkar for your wisdom)!