

How to take place (but only for so long)

take 1

In June 1999, I gave a paper at a conference called 'Alterities: Interdisciplinarity and "Feminine" Practices of Space' in Paris organised by a Romanian architect called Doina Petrescu. The delegates included women from France, the UK and the US, both older and younger generation feminists, as well as theorists and practitioners. Interestingly it was the US and UK feminists who referenced the French feminism of the 1970's in their work, while the French contingent, particularly the older architects, seemed to oppose these writings. They felt, that as women, they had been excluded from the architectural main stream in France and that theory had not helped. While I agreed with their position in some ways, I was not prepared to abandon theory, at least, not yet.

During the short time I had worked for the feminist architectural co-operative Matrix in the early 1990's, we talked a lot about feminism, but there were never any conversations about aesthetics, and certainly no theory. It seemed to be beside the point, Theory was not something which required discussion. A decade later, muf, the all female art-architectural practice who seem to have succeeded Matrix, now stand for all the 'f' words in architecture. Yet muf do not describe themselves as feminists, individually some members might, but collectively they do not. Even their name signifies a fundamental shift in feminist politics, from an earnest modernist heart-on-sleeve approach to a post-modern sexy playfulness. But muf do work through feminism,

through French feminist theory, if not explicitly, through their concern with an aesthetics of process. muf consider the way that they work, the very processes they adopt, to constitute the 'form' of the work, to provide the aesthetic content.¹

At the Paris conference, members of muf and Matrix were placed on the speakers' platform at the same time. For me this was a vital moment: where I could see that a new approach to feminist architecture was required, that Doina had recognised this, in instigating a debate concerning feminist ethics and aesthetics, what she has called 'poetics and politics'. The majority of women in 'taking place' (see take 3) were participants of that conference – a significant event that like *Sexuality and Space* and *Desiring Practices*, I believe has marked out a new stage in feminist architectural practice and theory, one which describes itself in terms of 'feminine'.²

But something else changed for me, during that conference, on a much more personal level. The conference was arranged as a series of papers delivered over two days. In the mornings of the both days, papers were given in 'amphitheatre 1', and in the afternoons there were two parallel sessions, one in 'amphitheatre 1', the other in 'amphitheatre 2'. My paper was placed in an afternoon session in 'amphitheatre 2' with five other speakers, three of whom were my students, each of whom I had been tutoring in

¹ See for example Matrix, *Making Space: Women and the Man-Made Environment*, London: Pluto Press, 1984 and *This is what we do: a muf manual*, London, Ellipsis, 2001.

² Beatriz Colomina (ed.), *Sexuality and Space*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992 and Duncan McCorquodale, Katerina Rüedi and Sarah Wigglesworth (eds.), *Desiring Practices: Architecture, Gender and the Interdisciplinary*, London: Black Dog Publishing 1996.

preparation for the conference. A male colleague from the same institution was asked to chair our session.

I felt for the first time a very real conflict between my theoretical knowledge underpinned by my political aspirations, and my emotional state. Up until that point, although it was not yet the subject of my writing, I believed strongly, from a feminist position, that teaching and writing should be conducted in ways that challenged the vertical power structures favoured by certain forms of patriarchy. Women, by being located on the outside of these structures, were in an excellent position to create alternative horizontal networks, where relations and dynamics of power could be constructed differently. Further, in opposition to the laws of property ownership that capitalism holds dear, I was a strong believer in a feminist economy of gifts, an economy which valued interaction, reciprocity and the free exchange of ideas, and that advocated explicitly the emancipatory power of giving. It suited my theoretical position to deliver a paper alongside my students. Yet it felt difficult to do so, because this meant I ran against the grain of the conference, which in the end underscored certain hierarchical aspects of power that I associate with patriarchal capitalism. The position of the male chair was kept intact, as was the two tier conference structure, the main morning sessions with the more well established speakers and the split afternoon sessions for those whose work was less well known. There were a number of things that struck me about this organisation of speakers and the work they presented, but the one that

remains with me involves the place of the student in the work of the teacher. In the morning sessions, teachers discussed the work of their students in their own papers, whereas in the afternoon sessions, teachers presented work alongside their students.

I had been planning to deliver a version of 'Undoing Architecture' a piece I had written concerning feminine rhetorics, my term of an undoing of architecture.³ The talk I had prepared combined three voices, the male architect, the feminist theorist and the voice of the unruly user. When my paper, along with those of three of my students got accepted, in preparation for the conference my male colleague set up a situation where I found myself 'rehearsing' my piece alongside my students. Interestingly, and perhaps as a result of my response to the structure of the conference, when I arrived at the venue, and experienced the place and my position within it, I decided to change my paper. At the last minute, I had the introduction I had written to a book *Gender, Space, Architecture* I had co-edited with Iain Borden and Barbara Penner faxed from London.⁴ Yet the moment I opened my mouth to speak, I realised my last minute change had been a slightly rash one. My editorial spoke with the voice of authority; it claimed to lay out the territory of feminist architectural theory and practice over the past 30 years. It was a voice that might be described as masculine, it was clear and knowing, and 'placed' the work of many of the women present, including those who had been speaking in the

³ Jane Rendell, 'Doing it, (Un)Doing it, (Over)Doing it Yourself: Rhetorics of Architectural Abuse', Jonathan Hill (ed.), *Occupying Architecture*, London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 229-46.

⁴ Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner and Iain Borden (eds.), *Gender, Space, Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*, (London, Routledge, 1999).

other auditorium, according to my 'world view'. different this was from my initial paper, with its series of complex interactions, composed of multiple voices, spoken very much in a feminine mode.

As I listened to the sound of my voice, I realised that I had responded to what I perceived as an act of marginalisation by setting out my own framework as an oppositional move. Upset, and taken over by emotion, I had not been thoughtful enough about my own place and had ended up playing the same game, using the same language as the master I had originally sought to overturn. I had taken up the 'master's tools', as Audre Lourde would have it. This was a language that placed others, many of the women present, within my own world vision, where in order to restore my own equilibrium, I accorded myself the very position of power and control from which I imagined myself excluded.

To share thoughts, as I do, when they are still burgeoning and when the imprint of publication has not yet placed them as one person's property, produces much confusion over the ownership of ideas and questions of acknowledgement. If I reject the values of patriarchal capitalism that I believe run right through academic research and the institutional power structures that support this culture then it is really no good when feeling marginalised to seek solace inside those structures themselves. But I can no longer accept, at least uncritically, a model of the feminine economy as one of self-less exchange. There are some serious flaws I now realise in the theoretical assertions of the

gift economy in French feminist theory, particularly, but differently, in the work of Cixous and Irigaray. Does the gift economy really critique the asymmetrical power structures of patriarchy? Does they not construct other asymmetries, ones where the giver by putting herself forward as self-less, accords herself, through a perceived altruism, a position of moral superiority? And what about the pressure placed on the receiver to reciprocate? Or the expectation the giver has of receiving a gift in return? And worse still, what is it that happens to both, when no such gift is forthcoming? It is fair to add that Cixous has acknowledged problems with the gift, that what the gift offers is not simply giving, but the possibility of establishing new forms of exchange, ones that do not follow the models of self-same and of accumulation. And then there is Derrida's suggestion, slightly pessimistic I've always felt, that the gift is impossible, that all the gift can give is time.

It is more important to think of models of reciprocity, of two-way exchanges, and patterns and dynamics of equivalence. For me, it is vital to move forward and seek out new ways of working and exchanging ideas that develop mutual respect and responsibility. An exploration of these relationships in terms of ethics and aesthetics is inherently concerned with processes that are spatial, material and temporal as well as social, and potentially most importantly psychological. This is what my research is now concerned with: an investigation of the psychic nature of such encounters, of what happens when one relates to another through giving. I call these writings confessional

constructions.⁵ It is here that theory can help, in re-conceptualising the spatial dynamics of new relational forms in terms of positionality and subjectivity. But it is also here where theory alone produces a state of illusion and expectation, in my experience it is only by acting out these conceptual forms, by practicing them, that processes of transformation and realisation, sometimes difficult, start to occur.

take 2

Just over a year after the Paris conference, in August 2000, I was invited to participate in the International Women's University, an extraordinary event that took place in several German cities over the summer months. I was located for a week in the town of Kassel, giving lectures and seminars on work I had published on the topic of gender, space and architecture. I talked about the relationship between feminist theory and architectural space, in particular about the spatial ways in which we write and the complex interaction between theory and practice, in what I call feminist spatial practices.

During the one hour lecture sessions, held in raked traditional auditoriums with the lights down, it was not clear to me how well I was engaging with the audience. The diversity of the women who attended was incredible, both in terms of geography, where they came from, but also in terms of discipline and practice, what they did. There were women working for NGO's in India, architects from Brazil, sociologists from Nigeria. . . I was an English trained architect and academic. Despite my history, having

⁵ See for example, Jane Rendell, 'Writing in place of speaking', Sharon Kivland (ed.).

lived in many countries, in United Arab Emirates, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Sudan, as a child, and travelled widely, I felt uncomfortable. Who was I to speak to these women? What could these intelligent people with such diverse experiences learn from me? How was I to make a connection?

My way of teaching involves risk taking, it involves admitting 'not-knowing' and refusing to provide answers even if I have them to give. I love questions, to travel to edge of what I know and, to paraphrase bell hooks, 'to meet my students there'. My love of teaching is I think generated through my desire to connect, to encounter other people and get to know what makes them tick. In order to do so this I often tell stories about myself to shift the power dynamic between us, to allow a space to be made where students trust me enough to tell me their difficulties and confusions. In telling them my own stories I show empathy, 'I've been there too', but I also reveal weaknesses, aspects of myself that disempower me. To travel the distance to reach the other, I put myself at risk. My students encounter me in this vulnerable state.

With this in mind, I decided to carry out an experiment for my last lecture session.

During coffee breaks and lunches during my week in Kassel I had got to know several of the women there fairly well, well enough to feel some sense of trust. So I took the paper I had been about to deliver and cut it up into pieces. Again, the lecture I had been intending to give had been entitled 'Undoing Architecture'. This time I had composed

the piece into sets of three: the voice of French feminist critical theory, the voice of architectural practice, and the voice of a story teller – me – describing the taking apart, through unconventional DIY, of a house I had once lived in. Once again, just before the lecture, I decided not to deliver it, I felt uncomfortable with the authorial nature of the composition. So I asked for a pair of scissors and cut the paper up, dividing the three voices. I handed out the voices to all the women in the audience and asked them to take up any position in the raked auditorium they wished. Then I asked them one by one to read aloud the piece of writing they had been given, but in their own mother tongue.

What did I expect - a delirious cacophony, a rich celebration of cultural diversity, an overturning of the lecturer and lectured-at relationship? How wrong I was. I hadn't anticipated how fearful the students would be. Slowly people did start to read, but in English, in quiet and reverend tones, struggling to pronounce the words just right. While it was beautiful to listen to so many female voices, filling the lecture space rather than my own, despite the different tongues and intonations, the words were still mine, I could only hear my own writing being spoken in my ears. I had failed to turn things around, to set western academia on its head, but rather, in some strange way, I had inadvertently reinforced my own position of authority. How could these women speak, when I was silencing them with my own words?

What had been created in that room, that afternoon, was what I have come to call ‘a confessional construction’. My sorry attempt to create a piece of participatory art at least made me aware that stories of the self, confessionals, are not revelations but constructions. The confessional is a form of physic architecture.

take 3

The conference in Paris brought together a number of women, theorists, artists and architects, including myself, who created an informal group. We called ourselves: ‘taking place’. We started out by meeting around tables in various cafés to talk, to eat and drink in numbers, but these were private discussions. Then we decided to go public and to turn ourselves inside out. For our first event at the University of North London in November 2001, I performed a ‘Confessional Construction’, a spoken version of a written text entitled ‘Travelling the Distance’.⁶

prologue: ‘confessional constructions’

site: at the foot of the stairs in the entrance lobby

action: to stand still and speak

words: The confessional is not revelation but a construction of the self. It is a form of physic architecture. ‘Confessional Constructions’ is a walk that takes us through the architecture school of University of North London, exploring the tensions and

⁶ Jane Rendell, ‘Travelling the Distance/Encountering the Other’, David Blamey (ed.), *Here, There and Elsewhere: Dialogues on Location and Mobility*, London: Open Editions, 2002, pp. 43-54.

ambiguities that exist between the personal and the public, the autobiographical and the professional, academic thinking and emotional subjectivity in feminist spatial theory and practice. This walk consists of a series of critical spoken interventions at five specific sites in the building, encounters between subjects and sites that engage the intersection of personal reflection and institutional space. This walk will last one hour, starting now and finishing at noon.

My practice, my writing, is concerned with the ways in which we construct relationships with others without losing ourselves. I call these writings 'confessional constructions'. This one was originally written for David Blamey for his soon to be published book called Here, There, Elsewhere. It was entitled 'Travelling the Distance/Encountering Another'.

The distances we travel are physical and psychic, emotional and mental. The others we meet on route take the form of places, objects or people. They may be our teachers, critics, students, lovers, children, parents or friends. Most often the distant other we encounter in our travels is what we thought to be a familiar part of ourselves.

{...} we are voyagers, discoverers

Of the not-known,

The unrecorded;

We have no map;

Possibly we will reach haven,

*Heaven.*⁷

This quote comes from H.D.'s *Tribute to the Angels: Trilogy*.

intervention 1: feminist academics come with baggage

site: stairs from ground to first floor

action: to struggle up the stairs loading a bag with feminist texts picked up from each step

words:

Gloria Anzaldúa

Frances Bartkowski

Rosi Braidotti

Judith Butler

Helen Cixous

Diane Elam

Elizabeth Grosz

bell hooks

Luce Irigaray

⁷H.D. *Tribute to the Angels: Trilogy*, London: Carcanet Press Ltd., 1997, p. 59.

Caren Kaplan

Julia Kristeva

Doreen Massey

Elsbeth Probyn

Gillian Rose

Janet Wolff

Moving is not strange to me, both physically and emotionally, I am most comfortable in motion. For me, being in motion itself provides a sense of stability, having left but not-yet-being-there. And it seems I am not alone. Postmodern feminism is full of stories of travel.

For those concerned with issues of identity, spatial metaphors constitute powerful political devices and critical tools. Positionality provides us a way of understanding knowledge and essence as contingent and strategic—*where* I am makes a difference to what I can know and who I can be.

Many of these women have not moved, but been moved. Much of their written work speaks of displacement. Movements vary in their political dimension. Not all journeying is to be celebrated.

First in one place then in another, I find it is easier to make connections with another when I am out of place. I like to take my baggage across the frontier into a new land - to unpack among strangers. Only to find all the things I have brought have lost their intended purposes.

This also describes my experience of collaboration and interdisciplinarity. Familiar words but ones which suggest different yet equally complex dynamics about the relationship between two - working between disciplines, working with another. Many female academics I know work between disciplines. They seem to be drawn to the strangeness of new areas of study, to making relationships – connections and distinctions – between things. What travel and interdisciplinary study have in common is their potential for transformation.

To be interdisciplinary you are between two places. The conceptual space of critical theory both sustains and inspires me. It allows me a place to reflect on the past and to imagine new futures.

Only by acknowledging the work of earlier feminists, can we can operate 'behind', adopting ways of working that critique those who have gone before. Only by going forward can we imagine a world as an yet-unrealised female subject. Only in this state of mind, between past and future, can we open ourselves up to encounters with the other. We travel the distance to transform as well as transgress.

intervention 2: the games we never played

site: the pigeon holes on the 1st floor

action: to take cards out of pigeon hole marked 'R'

words:

PO Box 1606, Riqa, Dubai, Trucial States, Arabian Gulf.

PO Box 387, El Fascher, Darfur Province, Western Sudan.

PO Box 1570, Kabul, Afghanistan.

PO Box 86, Mekele, Ethiopia

22 Wells Close, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 3LQ

15 Mayfield Road, Girton, Cambridge, CB3 0PH

22 Collegiate Crescent, Sheffield.

15 Filey St, Sheffield.

3 St Quintins Avenue, London, W10.

12 Mogg St, Bristol.

22 Barony St. Edinburgh.

18 Eyre Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3.

60 Lillieshall Road, London, SW4.

2a French Place, London, E1 3JB

48 Enfield Cloisters, Fanshaw St, London, N1 6ID

I was born in Al Mahktoum hospital, Dubai in the 'middle east'. As a girl I lived in Sudan, Afghanistan and Ethiopia. My movements followed the pattern of my dad's work. Unlike many children in similar situations, I was not put into a boarding school at the age of 11, but came back to live in England with my mum and sister. I say, 'came back'. The phrase implies that I was coming back to somewhere I had already been. But I had never lived in England before. It was my parents' country or origin, but not mine. I never felt at home back (t)here. But I have never felt at home anywhere.

Once the women were back at home; my dad continued to traverse the drier areas of the globe. He is a hydrogeologist. A man who looks for water and brings it to the surface for people to wash and drink. He does this in lands that are not his own, that he was not raised in, that are strange to him.

It's only recently that I have come to acknowledge the difficult relationship I have with my dad. Secretly I have always been rather relieved in confessional conversations around the academic dinner table that my relationship with colonisation is with acts of kindness. My dad was in a position to help, to use his knowledge to provide water. He is a gentle and unassuming man. So why am I uneasy? Because, generated though a sincere motivation to help my dad's particular brand of colonisation was paternal.

I remember nights spent capturing insects on cold stone floors. Our house was not grand, but unlike many other houses we had lived in it had a stone floor, running water

and a tin roof that didn't leak. While my parents were out, a tigreanean man stood at our gate. He was our watchman. I was uncomfortable around this tall black man with his hardened feet and long white robe and stick. My younger sister played with him. But I felt distance from him. He never spoke to me. Nor I to him.

At that time all westerners had guards positioned at their threshold. Was it because a western family had recently been ambushed nearby by tigreanean rebels? Or was it to suggest that we were important enough to protect? I am still embarrassed of the fact that africans looked after us and our house. 'Why?' I ask my parents now. It was the custom they say.

If it is a custom, it's one that shames me. I never played with the watchman. I never travelled that distance. Do the games we never played make me a coloniser too?

intervention 3: prepositions - transformational messengers

site: first year crit space on first floor

action: to lie, sit and stand at different positions in the room

words:

At

Through

In

Between

With

Among

On

Under

A while ago I went with a group of women to hear French psychoanalyst and philosopher, Luce Irigaray, talk at the Architectural Association in London. Irigaray spoke of her early research into language with 8 year old Italian girls and boys; that when given a preposition to use, girls made sentences that linked them to people, whereas boys made sentences that linked them to objects.

There were three questions from the floor to Irigaray. All from men. All angry. The first asked her why she believed in matriarchy. The second, came from a Lacanian, almost in tears, passionate at her stupidity. The third told her that she had a choice - empirical research or speculation. But not both. Not these two things at the same time.

Irigaray suggestion was that women's 'relational' identities provided a good model for making relationships between two different subjects, and for living together. She suggested that the architecture of our homes should provide the two sexes with separate spaces as well as a place to invite the other.

For Irigaray the potential of the insertion of that tiny preposition, the word 'to', into the phrase 'I love you' making 'I love to you' suggests a new social order of relations between two different sexes. Language provides an utopian impulse. Prepositions possess a strong suggestive role. Capable of changing everything around them, they provide a means of making connections between two.

Philosopher Michel Serres describes prepositions as angelic. The angel described by Irigaray is one who moves between, thwarts all repetition and challenges existing boundaries.

Design education encourages us to be specific and definitive: to behave as if architecture is an object separate from us. Rather than a place we can have a relationship with. How would architecture be if we considered it in terms of prepositions, in terms of the transformative role prepositions play in making relationships between people, and between people things and places?

intervention 4: closer

site: toilets on the ground floor

action: to read in candle lit toilet cubicle with the door locked and my voice transmitted via loudspeaker into the other cubicles where the audience were located

words:

8.5.00

New York Earth Room

7000 oaks

31.5.00

Touch

A long coastal walk

Between the devil and the deep blue sea

26.6.00

The Vertical Earth Kilometer

26.8.00

Exit: come on in

9.11.00

It's quicker by rail

Holidays afloat

Rounding the Cape of Good Hope

I've recently got close to an artist. In the days and months as we moved towards each other he sent me a series of postcards. Some were of landscapes, others of land art. All

are reference points of our mutual topography – a mapping of the merging of our emotional, creative, intellectual worlds.

Before this transformation, I wrote about his work, as an independent critic (or so I thought). Recently he told me that he found it hard to recognise his work in my comments. What are the reasons for this lack of recognition? As someone in love with him, he was sceptical about my ability to be objective. But in my opinion the critic can never be objective, there is always something about the self at stake. . .

For me, the critic is a travel writer, always going far from home, invited as a guest into someone else's place. To enter another's space necessitates movement out of one's own territory, it involves trust on both parts. To engage with another is to journey, from what is already known towards what is as yet unknown. To encounter another requires a willingness to connect, but also to let go, to take risks. Some critics travel like tourists, crossing vast territories but remaining unchanged. Others, like me, are constantly pulled out of the familiar toward the strange, impelled by a desire for transformation. This is nothing if not subjective – a total emersion in the other – in order to return anew to the self.

What is criticism? Who can be a critic? Does the distance between the critic and her subject matter make a difference? If the critical viewpoint is meant to be one of 'judgement'. Is this judgement subjective or objective? Being objective seems to imply

that I perceive a distinction between myself and the thing I am critiquing – that I occupy a position of distance and disengagement. To be subjective is get so engaged in the other that one gets close, close enough to get lost, close enough that intimate proximity becomes a problem rather than a delight.

intervention 5: telling it as it is

site: the courtyard

action: to walk around the outside courtyard reading the words that other participants had chalked up on the wall, words which describe the roles the participants identified with

words:

Traveller

Tourist

Migrant

Exile

Refugee

Nomad

Architect

Historian

Teacher

Theorist

Critic

Researcher

Writer

Storyteller

My early childhood made me into a traveller. For years I travelled physically all the time. Recently I've been moving frequently. But I've not been travelling in the same way. My body stays still. Through writing, reading, teaching, researching, I loose myself in other people's heads. Sitting still with students coming through the door in an endless stream I am on the move.

We all like to tell stories. Women like to tell stories, stories about people they know. These stories are called gossip. Men tell stories too. Katerina Ruedi once described them as 'anecdotal teaching', old men taking up time telling irrelevant stories about themselves. How are these stories any different from those that women tell?

Perhaps it is because today the stories women tell are often about journeys. They describe where they have come from, where they are going and what it is like along the way. The feminist adage, 'the personal is political' remains, just now it favours the travelogue or autobiographical journey.

At a talk a few years back, Susan Rubin Sulieman, described the often painful process of re-reading parts of her older work, the way she would cringe at some of the stories she has told, stories that with hindsight she felt did not resonate. Stories that were not a microcosm of a greater whole, not a detail of a larger pattern, just personal outpourings. bell hooks has expressed a worry about our need to confess. Why do we tell stories? Is it to confess?

When I tell stories to my students. I do so to try and shift the power dynamic between us, to make a space of trust. By telling them my stories of difficulty, 'I've been there too', I also reveal weaknesses, aspects of myself that disempower me. To travel this distance I put myself at risk.

For me, teaching is an encounter with another, as such it can only ever be the taking of risks, the refusal of certainties, the acknowledgment of not-knowing. My students want answers and I won't give them. Even if I have them. I love the questions.

epilogue: spinning

site: middle of the courtyard

action: to spin and speak (without falling over)

words:

Irigaray notes that when her mother goes away, the little girl does not do the same things as the little boy. She does not play with a string and a reel that symbolise her

mother. Because she and her mother are of the same sex, her mother cannot have the object status of a reel. Instead the little girl is distressed. She plays with dolls - a different kind of object from the reel. She dances, 'this dance is also a way for the girl to create a territory of her own in relation to her mother'. In her dance she spins around de-stabilising existing connections between herself and her place, making new ones between herself and her (m)other. She creates 'a vital subjective space open to the cosmic maternal world, to the gods, to the present other'.⁸

Irigaray's notion of the daughter spinning to make room between her and her mother, resonates strongly for me. I imagine being five again spinning round and around in the middle of a room. Only stopping when the furniture, walls and floor begin to revolve around me, when everything around me slips out of place. . .

I have found those words of Irigaray so inspirational, for so long, that is hard now to consider them critically. I have come to take for granted that, for me, the state of 'de-stabilization', my slipping of 'out of place', is a positive place to be. Why? Because I have connected letting go with liberation and assumed that my spinning is transformational, that by turning and being turning I can create future possibility, make no place into a new place to be. But for how long? The giddiness and the freedom of letting go that

⁸ Luce Irigaray, *Je, Tu, Nous: towards a culture of difference*, London: Routledge, 1993, p.59.

spinning offers can only last for so long. I, for one, cannot maintain myself in this place that turns me as I turn, that makes me feel so disorientated. As I suggested at the beginning, of this piece, the Paris conference got me thinking, differently, about myself and my work, about my almost uncritical belief in the utopian horizon of French feminist theory. But I know now there are difficulties with giving and with being out of place. Instead I realise that I need to take, to take place, for myself, if only for so long.

Taking place.

How to take place?

Who to take place from?

How to give place back?

How to take place? (but only for so long)?