INTRODUCTION *Bringing Feminist Theory Home*

What do you hear when you hear the word *feminism*? It is a word that fills me with hope, with energy. It brings to mind loud acts of refusal and rebellion as well as the quiet ways we might have of not holding on to things that diminish us. It brings to mind women who have stood up, spoken back, risked lives, homes, relationships in the struggle for more bearable worlds. It brings to mind books written, tattered and worn, books that gave words to something, a feeling, a sense of an injustice, books that, in giving us words, gave us the strength to go on. Feminism: how we pick each other up. So much history in a word; so much it too has picked up.

I write this book as a way of holding on to the promise of that word, to think what it means to live your life by claiming that word as your own: being a feminist, becoming a feminist, speaking as a feminist. Living a feminist life does not mean adopting a set of ideals or norms of conduct, although it might mean asking ethical questions about how to live better in an unjust and unequal world (in a not-feminist and antifeminist world); how to create relationships with others that are more equal; how to find ways to support those who are not supported or are less supported by social systems; how to keep coming up against histories that have become concrete, histories that have become as solid as walls.

It is worth noticing from the outset that the idea that feminism is about how to live, about a way of thinking how to live, has often been understood as part of feminist history, as dated, associated with the moralizing or even polic-

ing stance of what might be called or might have been called, usually dismissively, cultural feminism. I will return to the politics of this dismissal in chapter 9. I am not suggesting here that this version of feminism as moral police, the kind of feminism that might proceed by declaring this or that practice (and thus this or that person) as being unfeminist or not feminist, is simply a fabrication. I have heard that judgment; it has fallen on my own shoulders.[1]

But the figure of the policing feminist is promiscuous for a reason. Feminism can be more easily dismissed when feminism is heard as about dismissal; as being about making people feel bad for their desires and investments. The figure of the feminist policer is exercised because she is useful; hearing feminists as police is a way of not hearing feminism. Many feminist figures are antifeminist tools, although we can always retool these figures for our own purposes. A retooling might take this form: if naming sexism is understood as policing behavior, then we will be feminist police. Note that retooling antifeminist figures does not agree with the judgment (that to question sexism is to police) but rather disagrees with the premise by converting it into a promise (if you think questioning sexism is policing, we are feminist police).

In making feminism a life question, we will be judged as judgmental. In this book I refuse to relegate the question of how to live a feminist life to history. To live a feminist life is to make everything into something that is questionable. The question of how to live a feminist life is alive as a question as well as being a life question.

If we become feminists because of the inequality and injustice in the world, because of what the world is not, then what kind of world are we building? To build feminist dwellings, we need to dismantle what has already been assembled; we need to ask what it is we are against, what it is we are for, knowing full well that this *we* is not a foundation but what we are working toward. By working out what we are for, we are working out that *we*, that hopeful signifier of a feminist collectivity. Where there is hope, there is difficulty. Feminist histories are histories of the difficulty of that *we*, a history of those who have had to fight to be part of a feminist collective, or even had to fight against a feminist collective in order to take up a feminist cause. Hope is not at the expense of struggle but animates a struggle; hope gives us a sense that there is a point to working things out, working things through. Hope does not only or always point toward the future, but carries us through when the terrain is difficult, when the path we follow makes it harder to proceed.[2] Hope is behind us when we have to work for something to be possible.

A FEMINIST MOVEMENT

Feminism is a movement in many senses. We are moved to become feminists. Perhaps we are moved by something: a sense of injustice, that something is wrong, as I explore in chapter 1. A feminist movement is a collective political movement. Many feminisms means many movements. A collective is what does not stand still but creates and is created by movement. I think of feminist action as like ripples in water, a small wave, possibly created by agitation from weather; here, there, each movement making another possible, another ripple, outward, reaching. Feminism: the dynamism of making connections. And yet a movement has to be built. To be part of a movement requires we find places to gather, meeting places. A movement is also a shelter. We convene; we have a convention. A movement comes into existence to transform what is in existence. A movement needs to take place somewhere. A movement is not just or only a movement; there is something that needs to be kept still, given a place, if we are moved to transform what is.

We might say a movement is strong when we can witness a momentum: more people gathering on the streets, more people signing their names to protest against something, more people using a name to identify themselves. I think we have in recent years witnessed the buildup of a momentum around feminism, in global protests against violence against women; in the increasing number of popular books on feminism; in the high visibility of feminist activism on social media; in how the word *feminism* can set the stage on fire for women artists and celebrities such as Beyoncé. And as a teacher, I have witnessed this buildup firsthand: increasing numbers of students who want to identify themselves as feminists, who are demanding that we teach more courses on feminism; and the almost breathtaking popularity of events we organize on feminism, especially queer feminism and trans feminism. Feminism is bringing people into the room.

Not all feminist movement is so easily detected. A feminist movement is not always registered in public. A feminist movement might be happening the moment a woman snaps, that moment when she does not take it anymore (see chapter 8), the violence that saturates her world, a world. A feminist movement might happen in the growing connections between those who recognize something—power relations, gender violence, gender as violence—as being what they are up against, even if they have different words for what that what is. If we think of the second-wave feminist motto "the personal is political," we can think of feminism as happening in the very places that have historically

been bracketed as not political: in domestic arrangements, at home, every room of the house can become a feminist room, in who does what where, as well as on the street, in parliament, at the university. Feminism is wherever feminism needs to be. Feminism needs to be everywhere.

Feminism needs to be everywhere because feminism is not everywhere. Where is feminism? It is a good question. We can ask ourselves: where did we find feminism, or where did feminism find us? I pose this question as a life question in the first part of this book. A story always starts before it can be told. When did *feminism* become a word that not only spoke to you, but spoke you, spoke of your existence, spoke you into existence? When did the sound of the word *feminism* become your sound? What did it mean, what does it do, to hold on to feminism, to fight under its name; to feel in its ups and downs, in its coming and goings, your ups and downs, your comings and goings?

When I think of my feminist life in this book, I ask "from where?" but also "from whom?" From whom did I find feminism? I will always remember a conversation I had as a young woman in the late 1980s. It was a conversation with my auntie Gulzar Bano. I think of her as one of my first feminist teachers. I had given her some of my poems. In one poem I had used *he*. "Why do you use *he*," she asked me gently, "when you could have used *she*?" The question, posed with such warmth and kindness, prompted much heartache, much sadness in the realization that the words as well as worlds I had thought of as open to me were not open at all. *He* does not include *she*. The lesson becomes an instruction. To make an impression, I had to dislodge that *he*. To become *she* is to become part of a feminist movement. A feminist becomes *she* even if she has already been assigned *she*, when she hears in that word a refusal of *he*, a refusal that *he* would promise her inclusion. She takes up that word *she* and makes it her own.

I began to realize what I already knew: that patriarchal reasoning goes all the way down, to the letter, to the bone. I had to find ways not to reproduce its grammar in what I said, in what I wrote; in what I did, in who I was. It is important that I learned this feminist lesson from my auntie in Lahore, Pakistan, a Muslim woman, a Muslim feminist, a brown feminist. It might be assumed that feminism travels from West to East. It might be assumed that feminism is what the West gives to the East. That assumption is a traveling assumption, one that tells a feminist story in a certain way, a story that is much repeated; a history of how feminism acquired utility as an imperial gift. That is not my story. We need to tell other feminist stories. Feminism traveled to me, growing up in the West, from the East. My Pakistani aunties taught me that my mind is

my own (which is to say that my mind is not owned); they taught me to speak up for myself; to speak out against violence and injustice.

Where we find feminism matters; from whom we find feminism matters.

Feminism as a collective movement is made out of how we are moved to become feminists in dialogue with others. A movement requires us to be moved. I explore this requirement by revisiting the question of feminist consciousness in part I of this book. Let's think of why feminist movements are still necessary. I want to take here bell hooks's definition of feminism as "the movement to end sexism, sexual exploitation and sexual oppression" (2000, 33). From this definition, we learn so much. Feminism is necessary because of what has not ended: sexism, sexual exploitation, and sexual oppression. And for hooks, "sexism, sexual exploitation and sexual oppression" cannot be separated from racism, from how the present is shaped by colonial histories including slavery, as central to the exploitation of labor under capitalism. Intersectionality is a starting point, the point from which we must proceed if we are to offer an account of how power works. Feminism will be intersectional "or it will be bullshit," to borrow from the eloquence of Flavia Dzodan.[3] This is the kind of feminism I am referring to throughout this book (unless I indicate otherwise by referring specifically to white feminism).

A significant step for a feminist movement is to recognize what has not ended. And this step is a very hard step. It is a slow and painstaking step. We might think we have made that step only to realize we have to make it again. It might be you are up against a fantasy of equality: that women can now do it, even have it, or that they would have it if they just tried hard enough; that individual women can bring sexism and other barriers (we might describe these barriers as the glass ceiling or the brick wall) to an end through sheer effort or persistence or will. So much ends up being invested in our own bodies. We could call this a postfeminist fantasy: that an individual woman can bring what blocks her movement to an end; or that feminism has brought "sexism, sexual exploitation or sexual oppression" to an end as if feminism has been so successful that it has eliminated its own necessity (Gill 2007; McRobbie 2009); or that such phenomena are themselves a feminist fantasy, an attachment to something that was never or is no longer. We could also think of postrace as a fantasy through which racism operates: as if racism is behind us because we no longer believe in race, or as if racism would be behind us if we no longer believed in race. Those of us who come to embody diversity for organizations are assumed to bring whiteness to an end by virtue of our arrival (see chapter 6).

When you become a feminist, you find out very quickly: what you aim

to bring to an end some do not recognize as existing. This book follows this finding. So much feminist and antiracist work is the work of trying to convince others that sexism and racism have not ended; that sexism and racism are fundamental to the injustices of late capitalism; that they matter. Just to talk about sexism and racism here and now is to refuse displacement; it is to refuse to wrap your speech around postfeminism or postrace, which would require you to use the past tense (back then) or an elsewhere (over there).[4]

Even to describe something as sexist and racist here and now can get you into trouble. You point to structures; they say it is in your head. What you describe as material is dismissed as mental. I think we learn about materiality from such dismissals, as I will try to show in part II, on diversity work. And think also of what is required: the political labor necessary of having to insist that what we are describing is not just what we are feeling or thinking. A feminist movement depends on our ability to keep insisting on something: the ongoing existence of the very things we wish to bring to an end. The labor of that insistence is what I describe in this book. We learn from being feminists.

A feminist movement thus requires that we acquire feminist tendencies, a willingness to keep going despite or even because of what we come up against. We could think of this process as practicing feminism. If we tend toward the world in a feminist way, if we repeat that tending, again and again, we acquire feminist tendencies. Feminist hope is the failure to eliminate the potential for acquisition. And yet once you have become a feminist, it can feel that you were always a feminist. Is it possible to have always been that way? Is it possible to have been a feminist right from the beginning? Perhaps you feel you were always that way inclined. Maybe you tended that way, a feminist way, because you already tended to be a rebellious or even willful girl (see chapter 3), who would not accept the place she had been given. Or maybe feminism is a way of beginning again: so your story did in a certain way begin with feminism.

A feminist movement is built from many moments of beginning again. And this is one of my central concerns: how the acquisition of a feminist tendency to become that sort of girl or woman, the wrong sort, or bad sort, the one who speaks her mind, who writes her name, who raises her arm in protest, is necessary for a feminist movement. Individual struggle does matter; a collective movement depends upon it. But of course being the wrong sort does not make us right. Much injustice can be and has been committed by those who think of themselves as the wrong sort—whether the wrong sort of women or the wrong sort of feminists. There is no guarantee that in struggling for justice we ourselves will be just. We have to hesitate, to temper the strength of our

tendencies with doubt; to waver when we are sure, or even because we are sure. A feminist movement that proceeds with too much confidence has cost us too much already. I explore the necessity of wavering with our convictions in part III. If a feminist tendency is what we work for, that tendency does not give us a stable ground.

HOMEWORK

Feminism is homework. When I use the word *homework*, I think first of being at school; I think of being given an assignment by a teacher to take home. I think of sitting down at the kitchen table and doing that work, before I am allowed to play. Homework is quite simply work you are asked to do when you are at home, usually assigned by those with authority outside the home. When feminism is understood as homework, it is not an assignment you have been given by a teacher, even though you have feminist teachers. If feminism is an assignment, it is a self-assignment. We give ourselves this task. By homework, I am not suggesting we all feel at home in feminism in the sense of feeling safe or secure. Some of us might find a home here; some of us might not. Rather, I am suggesting feminism is homework because we have much to work out from not being at home in a world. In other words, homework is work on as well as at our homes. We do housework. Feminist housework does not simply clean and maintain a house. Feminist housework aims to transform the house, to rebuild the master's residence.

In this book I want to think of feminist theory too as homework, as a way of rethinking how feminist theory originates and where it ends up. What is this thing called feminist theory? We might at first assume that feminist theory is what feminists working within the academy generate. I want to suggest that feminist theory is something we do at home. In the first part of this book, I explore how in becoming feminists we are doing intellectual as well as emotional work; we begin to experience gender as a restriction of possibility, and we learn about worlds as we navigate these restrictions. The experiences of being a feminist, say at the family table, or at a meeting table, gave me life lessons, which were also philosophical lessons. To learn from being a feminist is to learn about the world.

Feminist theory can be what we do together in the classroom; in the conference; reading each other's work. But I think too often we bracket feminist theory as something that marks out a specific kind, or even a higher kind, of feminist work. We have to bring feminist theory home because feminist

theory has been too quickly understood as something that we do when we are away from home (as if feminist theory is what you learn when you go to school). When we are away, we can and do learn new words, new concepts, new angles. We encounter new authors who spark moments of revelation. But feminist theory does not start there. Feminist theory might even be what gets you there.

Within the academy, the word *theory* has a lot of capital. I have always been interested in how the word *theory* itself is distributed; how some materials are understood as theory and not others. This interest can partly be explained by my own trajectory: I went from a PhD in critical theory to being a lecturer in women's studies. As a student of theory, I learned that theory is used to refer to a rather narrow body of work. Some work becomes theory because it refers to other work that is known as theory. A citational chain is created around theory: you become a theorist by citing other theorists that cite other theorists. Some of this work did interest me; but I kept finding that I wanted to challenge the selection of materials as well as how they were read.

I remember one theorist being taught as having two sides, a story of desire and a story of the phallus. We were told, basically, to bracket the second story in order to engage with and be engaged by the first. I began to wonder whether doing theory was about engaging with a body of work by putting questions like phallocentrism or sexism into brackets. In effect, we were being asked to bracket our concerns with the sexism at stake in what was read as theory as well as what we read in theory. I still remember submitting a critical reading of a theory text in which woman was a figure as one of my essays, a reading that was later to form part of the chapter "Woman" in my first book, *Differences That Matter* (Ahmed 1998). I was concerned with how statements made by the teacher, like "This is not about women," were used to bypass any questions about how the figure of woman is exercised within a male intellectual tradition. When the essay was returned to me, the grader had scrawled in very large letters, "This is not theory! This is politics!"

I thought then: if theory is not politics, I am glad I am not doing theory! And it was a relief to leave that space in which theory and politics were organized as different trajectories. When I arrived in women's studies, I noticed how I would sometimes be recruited by the term *feminist theory*, as a different kind of feminist than other kinds of feminists, those assumed, say, to be more empirical, which seemed to be conflated with less theoretical, or less philosophical. I have always experienced this recruitment as a form of violence. I hope always to experience this recruitment as a form of violence. Even though

I am relatively comfortable in critical theory, I do not deposit my hope there, nor do I think this is a particularly difficult place to be: if anything, I think it is easier to do more abstract and general theoretical work. I remember listening to a feminist philosopher who apologized every time she mentioned such-and-such male philosopher because he was so difficult. It made me feel very rebellious. I think that the more difficult questions, the harder questions, are posed by those feminists concerned with explaining violence, inequality, injustice. The empirical work, the world that exists, is for me where the difficulties and thus the challenges reside. Critical theory is like any language; you can learn it, and when you learn it, you begin to move around in it. Of course it can be difficult, when you do not have the orientation tools to navigate your way around a new landscape. But explaining phenomena like racism and sexism—how they are reproduced, how they keep being reproduced—is not something we can do simply by learning a new language. It is not a difficulty that can be resolved by familiarity or repetition; in fact, familiarity and repetition are the source of difficulty; they are what need to be explained. In the face of such phenomena, we are constantly brought home by the inadequacy of our understanding. It is here we encounter and reencounter the limits of thinking. It is here we might feel those limits. We come up against something that we cannot resolve. We can be brought home by the inadequacy of what we know. And we can bring what we know back home.

As I show in part II, my own experience of bringing up racism and sexism within the academy (of refusing to bracket these questions in a more loving digestion of the philosophical canon) replicated some of my earlier experiences of bringing up racism and sexism at the family table. This replication is another form of pedagogy: we learn from how the same things keep coming up. You are assumed to be interrupting a happy occasion with the sensation of your own negation. You are assumed to be doing identity politics as if you speak about racism because you are a person of color or as if you speak about sexism because you are a woman. Nirmal Puwar (2004) has shown how some become "space invaders" when they enter spaces that are not intended for them. We can be space invaders in the academy; we can be space invaders in theory too, just by referring to the wrong texts or by asking the wrong questions.

A question can be out of place: words too.

One response might be to aim to reside as well as we can in the spaces that are not intended for us. We might even identify with the universal of the university by agreeing to put our particulars to one side.[5] There is disruption, even invention, in that, of that I have no doubt. But think of this: those of us who

arrive in an academy that was not shaped by or for us bring knowledges, as well as worlds, that otherwise would not be here. Think of this: how we learn about worlds when they do not accommodate us. Think of the kinds of experiences you have when you are not expected to be here. These experiences are a resource to generate knowledge. To bring feminist theory home is to make feminism work in the places we live, the places we work. When we think of feminist theory as homework, the university too becomes something we work on as well as at. We use our particulars to challenge the universal.

BUILDING FEMINIST WORLDS

I will come out with it: I enjoy and appreciate much of the work that is taught and read as critical theory. There were reasons I went there first, and I explain how this happened in chapter 1. But I still remember in the second year of my PhD reading texts by black feminists and feminists of color including Audre Lorde, bell hooks, and Gloria Anzaldúa. I had not read their work before. This work shook me up. Here was writing in which an embodied experience of power provides the basis of knowledge. Here was writing animated by the everyday: the detail of an encounter, an incident, a happening, flashing like insight. Reading black feminist and feminist of color scholarship was life changing; I began to appreciate that theory can do more the closer it gets to the skin.

I decided then: theoretical work that is in touch with a world is the kind of theoretical work I wanted to do. Even when I have written texts organized around the history of ideas, I have tried to write from my own experiences: the everyday as animation. In writing this book, I wanted to stay even closer to the everyday than I had before. This book is personal. The personal is theoretical. Theory itself is often assumed to be abstract: something is more theoretical the more abstract it is, the more it is abstracted from everyday life. To abstract is to drag away, detach, pull away, or divert. We might then have to drag theory back, to bring theory back to life.

Even though my earlier works did include examples from everyday life, they also involved substantial reference to intellectual traditions. I have no doubt I needed those traditions to make some of the steps in my arguments: in *The Promise of Happiness* (Ahmed 2010), I needed to place the figure of the feminist killjoy in relation to the history of happiness, to make sense of how she appears; in *Willful Subjects* (Ahmed 2014), I needed to place the figure of the willful subject in relation to the history of the will for her too to make sense. But once these figures came up, they gave me a different handle.

They acquired their own life. Or should I say: my writing was able to pick up these figures because of the life they had. These figures quickly became the source of new forms of connection. I began a new blog organized around them (feministkilljoys.com), which I have been writing as I have been working on this book. Since I began that blog, I have received communications from many students including not only undergraduates and postgraduates but also high school students about their own experience of being feminist killjoys and willful subjects. I have learned so much from these communications. In a genuine sense, the book comes out of them. I address this book to feminist students. It is intended for you.

To become a feminist is to stay a student. This is why: the figures of the feminist killjoy and willful subject are studious. It is not surprising that they allowed me to communicate with those who sensed in these figures an explanation of something (a difficulty, a situation, a task). I am still trying to make sense of something (a difficulty, a situation, a task), and this book is the product of that labor. One of my aims in *Living a Feminist Life* is to free these figures from the histories in which they are housed. I am trying to work out and work through what they are saying to us. In a way, then, I am retracing my own intellectual journey in this book. In going through the conditions of their arrival, how they come up for me, how they became preoccupying, I am going back over some old ground. An intellectual journey is like any journey. One step enables the next step. In this book I retake some of these steps.

I hope by retaking the steps to make some of my arguments in a more accessible manner: in staying closer to the everyday, feminist theory becomes more accessible. When I first began working on this book, I thought I was writing a more mainstream feminist text, or even a trade book. I realized the book I was writing was not that kind of book. I wanted to make a slow argument, to go over old ground, and to take my time. And I still wanted to make an intervention within academic feminism. I have been an academic for over twenty years, and I am relatively at home in the academic language of feminist theory. I am aware that not all feminists are at home in the academy, and that the academic language of feminist theory can be alienating. In this book, I do use academic language. I am working at home, so academic language is one of my tools. But I also aim to keep my words as close to the world as I can, by trying to show how feminist theory is what we do when we live our lives in a feminist way.

In retracing some of the steps of a journey, I am not making the same journey. I have found new things along the way because I have stayed closer to the

everyday. I should add here that staying close to the everyday still involves attending to words, and thus concepts, like happiness, like will. I am still listening for resonance. I think of feminism as poetry; we hear histories in words; we reassemble histories by putting them into words. This book still follows words around just as I have done before, turning a word this way and that, like an object that catches a different light every time it is turned; attending to the same words across different contexts, allowing them to create ripples or new patterns like texture on a ground. I make arguments by listening for resonances; the book thus involves repeating words, sometimes over and over again; words like *shatter*, words like *snap*. The repetition is the scene of a feminist instruction.

A feminist instruction: if we start with our experiences of becoming feminists not only might we have another way of generating feminist ideas, but we might generate new ideas about feminism. Feminist ideas are what we come up with to make sense of what persists. We have to persist in or by coming up with feminist ideas. Already in this idea is a different idea about ideas. Ideas would not be something generating through distance, a way of abstracting something from something, but from our involvement in a world that often leaves us, frankly, bewildered. Ideas might be how we work with as well as on our hunches, those senses that something is amiss, not quite right, which are part of ordinary living and a starting point for so much critical work.

By trying to describe something that is difficult, that resists being fully comprehended in the present, we generate what I call "sweaty concepts." I first used this expression when I was trying to describe to students the kind of intellectual labor evident in Audre Lorde's work. I want to acknowledge my debt here. I cannot put into words how much I am indebted to Audre Lorde for the extraordinary archive she left for us. When I first read Audre Lorde's work, I felt like a lifeline was being thrown to me. The words, coming out of her description of her own experience, as a black woman, mother, lesbian, poet, warrior, found me where I was; a different place from her, yet her words found me. Her words gave me the courage to make my own experience into a resource, my experiences as a brown woman, lesbian, daughter; as a writer, to build theory from description of where I was in the world, to build theory from description of not being accommodated by a world. A lifeline: it can be a fragile rope, worn and tattered from the harshness of weather, but it is enough, just enough, to bear your weight, to pull you out, to help you survive a shattering experience.

A sweaty concept: another way of being pulled out from a shattering ex-

perience. By using sweaty concepts for descriptive work, I am trying to say at least two things. First, I was suggesting that too often conceptual work is understood as distinct from describing a situation: and I am thinking here of a situation as something that comes to demand a response. A situation can refer to a combination of circumstances of a given moment but also to a critical, problematic, or striking set of circumstances. Lauren Berlant describes a situation thus: "A state of things in which something that will perhaps matter is unfolding amidst the usual activity of life" (2008, 5). If a situation is how we are thrown by things, then how we make sense of things also unfolds from "the usual activity of life." Concepts tend to be identified as what scholars somehow come up with, often through contemplation and withdrawal, rather like an apple that hits you on the head, sparking revelation from a position of exteriority.

I became more aware of this academic tendency to identify concepts as what they bring to the world when doing an empirical project on diversity, which I discuss in part II. I had this tendency myself, so I could recognize it. In the project I interviewed those employed by the university as diversity officers. It brought home to me how, in working to transform institutions, we generate knowledge about them. Concepts are at work in how we work, whatever it is that we do. We need to work out, sometimes, what these concepts are (what we are thinking when we are doing, or what doing is thinking) because concepts can be murky as background assumptions. But that working out is precisely not bringing a concept in from the outside (or from above): concepts are in the worlds we are in.

By using the idea of sweaty concepts, I am also trying to show how descriptive work is conceptual work. A concept is worldly, but it is also a reorientation to a world, a way of turning things around, a different slant on the same thing. More specifically, a sweaty concept is one that comes out of a description of a body that is not at home in the world. By this I mean description as angle or point of view: a description of how it feels not to be at home in the world, or a description of the world from the point of view of not being at home in it. Sweat is bodily; we might sweat more during more strenuous and muscular activity. A sweaty concept might come out of a bodily experience that is trying. The task is to stay with the difficulty, to keep exploring and exposing this difficulty. We might need not to eliminate the effort or labor from the writing. Not eliminating the effort or labor becomes an academic aim because we have been taught to tidy our texts, not to reveal the struggle we have in getting somewhere. Sweaty concepts are also generated by the practical experience of

coming up against a world, or the practical experience of trying to transform a world.[6]

Even as I have labored in this way, I have noticed (partly because readers have noticed) signs of not quite being able to admit a difficulty: for instance, when I discuss some of my own experiences of sexual violence and harassment, I keep using *you* and not *me*, allowing the second person pronoun to give me some distance. I tried putting in *me* after it was written, but that *me* felt too strained, and I let the *you* stay but with qualification. Feminism: it can be a strain. This strain is evident as tension in this text, sometimes revealed as a confusion of pronouns and persons; a tension between telling my own story of becoming feminist, being a diversity worker, handling what you come up against, and making more general reflections about worlds. I have tried not to eliminate that tension.

Feminism is at stake in how we generate knowledge; in how we write, in who we cite. I think of feminism as a building project: if our texts are worlds, they need to be made out of feminist materials. Feminist theory is world making. This is why we need to resist positioning feminist theory as simply or only a tool, in the sense of something that can be used in theory, only then to be put down or put away. It should not be possible to do feminist theory without being a feminist, which requires an active and ongoing commitment to live one's life in a feminist way. I encountered this problem of how feminist theory can be feminism in theory as a student in critical theory. I met academics who wrote essays on feminist theory but who did not seem to act in feminist ways; who seemed routinely to give more support to male students than female students, or who worked by dividing female students into more and less loyal students. To be a feminist at work is or should be about how we challenge ordinary and everyday sexism, including academic sexism. This is not optional: it is what makes feminism feminist. A feminist project is to find ways in which women can exist in relation to women; how women can be in relation to each other. It is a project because we are not there yet.

We should be asking ourselves the same sorts of questions when we write our texts, when we put things together, as we do in living our lives. How to dismantle the world that is built to accommodate only some bodies? Sexism is one such accommodating system. Feminism requires supporting women in a struggle to exist in this world. What do I mean by *women* here? I am referring to all those who travel under the sign *women*. No feminism worthy of its name would use the sexist idea "women born women" to create the edges of feminist community, to render trans women into "not women," or "not born women,"

or into men.[7] No one is born a woman; it as an assignment (not just a sign, but also a task or an imperative, as I discuss in part I) that can shape us; make us; and break us. Many women who were assigned female at birth, let us remind ourselves, are deemed not women in the right way, or not women at all, perhaps because of how they do or do not express themselves (they are too good at sports, not feminine enough because of their bodily shape, comportment, or conduct, not heterosexual, not mothers, and so on). Part of the difficulty of the category of women is what follows residing in that category, as well as what follows not residing in that category because of the body you acquire, the desires you have, the paths you follow or do not follow. There can be violence at stake in being recognizable as women; there can be violence at stake in not being recognizable as women.

In a world in which *human* is still defined as *man*, we have to fight for women and as women. And to do that we also need to challenge the instrumentalization of feminism. Even though feminism can be used as a tool that can help us make sense of the world by sharpening the edges of our critique, it is not something we can put down. Feminism goes wherever we go. If not, we are not.

We thus enact feminism in how we relate to the academy. When I was doing my PhD, I was told I had to give my love to this or that male theorist, to follow him, not necessarily as an explicit command but through an apparently gentle but increasingly insistent questioning: Are you a Derridean; no, so are you a Lacanian; no, oh, okay, are you a Deleuzian; no, then what? If not, then what? Maybe my answer should have been: if not, then not! I was never willing to agree to this restriction. But not to agree with this restriction required the help of other feminists who came before me. If we can create our paths by not following, we still need others before us. In this book, I adopt a strict citation policy: I do not cite any white men.[8] By *white men* I am referring to an institution, as I explain in chapter 6. Instead, I cite those who have contributed to the intellectual genealogy of feminism and antiracism, including work that has been too quickly (in my view) cast aside or left behind, work that lays out other paths, paths we can call desire lines, created by not following the official paths laid out by disciplines.[9] These paths might have become fainter from not being traveled upon; so we might work harder to find them; we might be willful just to keep them going by not going the way we have been directed.

My citation policy has given me more room to attend to those feminists who came before me. Citation is feminist memory. Citation is how we acknowledge our debt to those who came before; those who helped us find our

way when the way was obscured because we deviated from the paths we were told to follow. In this book, I cite feminists of color who have contributed to the project of naming and dismantling the institutions of patriarchal whiteness. I consider this book primarily as a contribution to feminist of color scholarship and activism; this body of work is where I feel most at home, where I find energy as well as resources.

Citations can be feminist bricks: they are the materials through which, from which, we create our dwellings. My citation policy has affected the kind of house I have built. I realized this not simply through writing the book, through what I found about what came up, but also through giving presentations. As I have already noted, in previous work I have built a philosophical edifice by my engagement with the history of ideas. We cannot conflate the history of ideas with white men, though if doing one leads to the other then we are being taught where ideas are assumed to originate. Seminal: how ideas are assumed to originate from male bodies. I now think of that philosophical edifice as a timber frame around which a house is being built. In this book I have not built a house by using that frame. And I have felt much more exposed. Perhaps citations are feminist straw: lighter materials that, when put together, still create a shelter but a shelter that leaves you more vulnerable. That is how it felt writing this work as well as speaking from it: being in the wind; being blown about, more or less, depending on what I encountered. The words I sent out danced around me; I began to pick up on things I had not noticed before. I began to wonder how much I had in the past built an edifice to create a distance. Sometimes we need distance to follow a thought. Sometimes we need to give up distance to follow that thought.

In the chapters that follow, I refer to different kinds of feminist materials that have been my companions as a feminist and diversity worker, from feminist philosophy to feminist literature and film. A companion text could be thought of as a companion species, to borrow from Donna Haraway's (2003) suggestive formulation. A companion text is a text whose company enabled you to proceed on a path less trodden. Such texts might spark a moment of revelation in the midst of an overwhelming proximity; they might share a feeling or give you resources to make sense of something that had been beyond your grasp; companion texts can prompt you to hesitate or to question the direction in which you are going, or they might give you a sense that in going the way you are going, you are not alone. Some of the texts that appear with me in this book have been with me before: Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, George Eliot's *Mill on the Floss*, Rita Mae Brown's *Rubyfruit Jungle*, and Toni

Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. I could not have proceeded along the path I took without these texts. To live a feminist life is to live in very good company. I have placed these companion texts in my killjoy survival kit. I encourage you as a feminist reader to assemble your own kit. What would you include?

The materials we include in our kits could also be called feminist classics. By feminist classics, I mean feminist books that have been in circulation; that have become worn from being passed around. I do not mean classics in the sense of canonical texts. Of course, some texts become canonical, and we need to question how these histories happen, how selections are made; we need to ask who or what does not survive these selections. But the texts that reach us, that make a connection, are not necessarily the ones that are taught in the academy, or that make it to the official classics edition. Many of the texts that connect with me are the ones assumed to be dated, to belong to a time that we are in no longer.

The idea of feminist classics for me is a way of thinking about how books make communities. I was part of a feminist classics reading group held in women's studies at Lancaster University. This reading group was one of my favorite experiences of feminist intellectual life thus far. I loved the labor of going over materials that might now tend to be passed over, of finding in them some abundant resources, concepts, and words. To attend to feminist classics is to give time: to say that what is behind us is worth going over, worth putting in front of us. It is a way of pausing, not rushing ahead, not being seduced by the buzz of the new, a buzz that can end up being what you hear, blocking the possibility of opening our ears to what came before. What I also really enjoyed too in the reading group was the attention to the books themselves as material objects. Each of us had different copies, some of them tattered and well read, worn, and, as it were, lived in. You can, I think, live in books: some feminists might even begin their feminist lives living in books. Participating in the group with books made me aware of how feminist community is shaped by passing books around; the sociality of their lives is part of the sociality of ours. There are so many ways that feminist books change hands; in passing between us, they change each of us.

There are many ways of describing the materials I bring together in this book: companion texts and feminist classics are just two possible ways. The materials are books, yes, but they are also spaces of encounter; how we are touched by things; how we touch things. I think of feminism as a fragile archive, a body assembled from shattering, from splattering, an archive whose fragility gives us responsibility: to take care.

Living a Feminist Life is structured in three parts. In part I, "Becoming Feminist," I discuss the process of becoming a feminist, and how consciousness of gender is a world consciousness that allows you to revisit the places you have been, to become estranged from gender and heteronorms as to become estranged from the shape of your life. I start with experiences I had growing up, exploring how these individual experiences are ways of (affectively, willfully) being inserted into a collective feminist history. In part II, "Diversity Work," I focus on doing feminist work as a form of diversity work within universities, as the places where I have worked, as well as in everyday life. I show how questions of consciousness and subjectivity raised in the first part of this book, the work required to become conscious of that which tends to recede, can be understood in terms of materiality: walls are the material means by which worlds are not encountered, let alone registered. I explore experiences of being a stranger, of not feeling at home in a world that gives residence to others. In part III, "Living the Consequences," I explore the costs and potential of what we come up against, how we can be shattered by histories that are hard, but also how we become inventive, how we create other ways of being when we have to struggle to be. The history of creativity, of bonds made and forged, of what we move toward as well as away from, is a history that we need to keep in front of us; a feminist history.

It is the practical experience of coming up against a world that allows us to come up with new ideas, ideas that are not dependent on a mind that has withdrawn (because a world has enabled that withdrawal) but a body that has to wiggle about just to create room. And if we put ourselves in the same room, how much knowledge we would have! No wonder feminism causes fear; together, we are dangerous.

CONCLUSION 2 *A Killjoy Manifesto*

A manifesto: a statement of principle, a mission statement. Manifesto: a declaration of the intent of an individual or organization or group. How can one write a manifesto around a figure, the killjoy, or an activity, killing joy?

A manifesto: to make manifest. Moynan King in her discussion of Valerie Solanas's *SCUM Manifesto* addresses this sense of a manifesto as making manifest. She writes, "As a manifesto, SCUM's intention is to make manifest, to render perceptible, a new order of ideas" (King 2013, n.p.). To render a new order of ideas perceptible is simultaneously a disordering of ideas; manifestos often enact what they call for in surprising and shocking ways given how they expose the violence of an order. A feminist manifesto exposes the violence of a patriarchal order, the violence of what I called in chapter 2 "the machinery of gender."

A manifesto not only causes a disturbance, it aims to cause this disturbance. To make something manifest can be enough to cause a disturbance. This intimacy between manifestation and disturbance has implications for how we write a killjoy manifesto. A killjoy manifesto must be grounded in an account of what exists. Why is this important? It is about what we come up against. Some of the worst abuses of power I have encountered in the academy have been when individuals make use of an equality principle, as if to say, boundaries and rules are about hierarchy, so we are "free to do what we want," whereby "free to do what we want" really still means "you doing what I want you to do," given that the *we* is made up of an *I* who has power and a *you* that is subordi-

nate by virtue of their positions within an organization. Note that "doing what we want" not only can be assumed to express an equality principle but can be articulated as a rebellion against institutional norms and authority (they would prevent us from having relationships because they assume boundaries and divisions that we have given up because we are free radicals). A killjoy manifesto cannot be about the freeing of radicals to pursue their own agendas.

A killjoy manifesto thus begins by recognizing inequalities as existing. This recognition is enacted by the figure of the killjoy herself: she kills joy because of what she claims exists. She has to keep making the same claim because she keeps countering the claim that what she says exists does not exist. The killjoy is often assumed to be inventive, to bring about what she claims; or, to use my terms from chapter 6, she is often assumed to be a wall maker. If a killjoy manifesto shows how the denial of inequality under the assumption of equality is a technique of power, then the principles articulated in that manifesto cannot be abstracted from statements about what exists. A killjoy manifesto is thus about making manifest what exists. In the labor of making manifest we make a manifesto.

To struggle for freedom is to struggle against oppression. Angela Davis in *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* showed how the articulation of unfulfilled longings for freedom can also represent freedom "in more immediate and accessible terms" ([1989] 1998, 7). It is from oppression that freedom is given expression. A manifesto is required when a struggle is necessary to give expression to something. This is why the manifesto can be understood as a killjoy genre; we have to say it because of what is not being done. A manifesto makes an appeal by not being appealing: a manifesto is not an attractive piece of writing by existing norms or standards. It cannot be: it has to strain to be said. And yet a manifesto is appealing to those who read it; a manifesto appeals for something by appealing to someone. A killjoy manifesto appeals *to* killjoys.

Manifestos are often disagreeable because they show the violence necessary to sustain an agreement. It is not just that the feminist killjoy has a manifesto. The feminist killjoy is a manifesto. She is assembled around violence; how she comes to matter, to mean, is how she exposes violence. Just remember the *kill* in killjoy. This figure reminds us how feminism is often understood as a form of murder; calling for the end of the system that makes "men" is often understood as killing men. We could indeed compare the figure of the murderous feminist to that of the feminist killjoy. What Valerie Solanas ([1967] 2013) does in her manifesto, very controversially, is to literalize that fantasy of the murderous feminist through imagining a feminist collective, or

a mind-set, that is SCUM (Society for Cutting Up Men). It should not surprise us, because one of her points was to be a cutoff point that the *SCUM Manifesto* was read literally; it was dismissed as literal or dismissed through literalism as intending the elimination of men. The manifesto works because it enacts the literalism that would enable its own dismissal. I have noticed this use of literalism as dismissal when working on my feminist killjoy blog. For example, when I tweeted a link to a blog post "white men," which was retweeted by a white man, another white man called it "genosuicide."[1] Genosuicide: the self-willed killing of a people. Or another time a student at Goldsmiths, Bahar Mustafa, allegedly used the hashtag #killallwhitemen.[2] Valerie Solanas is brought back to life on social media. Snap. But of course if this hashtag literalizes a fantasy, you literally encounter the fantasy. The hashtag is turned back into a command; heard as the planning of genocide.

The figure of the murderous feminist is useful: it allows the survival of men to be predicated on the elimination of feminism. Much feminist creativity has literalized a fantasy that does not originate with us, including the film *A Question of Silence*, discussed in chapters 8 and 9, where the man that is killed in an act of feminist revenge stands in for all men. And in a way of course you are being violent in exposing violence; if you are letting the violence come out of your own pen, to travel through you, you have to let the violence spill, all over the pages. And you are in a certain way calling for the end of white men because you are calling for the end of the institution that makes white men. "White men" is an institution, as I discussed in chapter 6. We do want to bring an end to him. But of course, at another level, it is harder to redeploy the figure of the murderous feminist than the figure of the feminist killjoy. Feminists are not calling for violence. We are calling for an end to the institutions that promote and naturalize violence. Much violence that is promoted by institutions is concealed by the very use of stranger danger, as I have discussed throughout this book: the assumption that violence only ever originates with outsiders. It is because we expose violence that we are heard as violent, as if the violence of which we speak originates with us.

To be a killjoy can also mean being understood as someone who kills life because there is such an intimacy between the life principle and the happiness principle. In being against happiness you are assumed to be against life. And as such there are life risks in being a killjoy. It is not that in being assigned a killjoy (and as I have argued, she always begins as an assignment because the feminist killjoy is announced from a position of exteriority; she already has a life of her own before we are assigned her) we are always willing or able to

receive this assignment. In fact, as I explored in part I, the figure of the feminist killjoy often comes up in situations of intense pain and difficulty: when you are seated at the table, doing the work of family, that happy object, say, you threaten that object. And you threaten the object by pointing out what is already there, in the room; again, you are not being inventive. But what a feeling: when all the negative feeling that is not revealed when the family is working becomes deposited in the one who reveals the family is not working. I will never forget that feeling of wanting to eliminate myself from a situation that I had been assumed to cause.

It is a downer; we are downers.

A killjoy manifesto has company: books that bring things down, books that enact a collective frown. *The Dialectic of Sex* could be read as a killjoy manifesto, a book that has too quickly been dismissed as assuming technology would liberate women from biology, a book that showed that when the sexual division of labor structures everything, nothing will liberate anyone. Sarah Franklin describes how the "bulk of Firestone's manifesto was based on an analysis of what has held a certain gender stratification in place for millennia" (2010, 46). *The Dialectic of Sex* is optimistic because it accounts for how liberation is difficult to achieve. No wonder she has her killjoy moments. Firestone wants to explain why this system that is not working keeps on going, a system that she has no doubt eventually will kill us all. And for explanations, she turns to love, to romance, to the family. These institutions are promises of happiness. An institution can be organized around a promise. And they become ways of organizing living by assuming that proximity to a form will get you there. So, of course, Shulamith Firestone in turning in this direction turns to happiness. As I have already noted, she describes her "dream action" for the women's liberation movement as a smile boycott (Firestone 1970, 90). Perhaps we could call this action, following Lisa Millbank (2013), a smile strike, to emphasize its collective nature. Collectively we would strike by not smiling, a collectivity built out of individual action (not smiling is an action when smiling is a requirement for women and for those understood as serving others through paid or unpaid work) but which requires more than an individual. A smile strike is necessary to announce our disagreement, our unhappiness, with a system.

We must stay unhappy with this world.

The figure of the feminist killjoy makes sense if we place her in the context of feminist critiques of happiness, some of which I discussed in chapter 2 (see also Ahmed 2010). Happiness is used to justify social norms as social goods.

As Simone de Beauvoir described so astutely, "It is always easy to describe as happy a situation in which one wishes to place [others]" ([1949] 1997, 28). Not to agree to stay in the place of this wish might be to refuse the happiness that is wished for. To be involved in political activism is thus to be involved in a struggle against happiness. The struggle over happiness provides the horizon in which political claims are made. We inherit this horizon.

A killjoy becomes a manifesto when we are willing to take up this figure, to assemble a life not as her (I discussed the risks of assuming we are her in chapter 7) but around her, in her company. We are willing to killjoy because the world that assigns this or that person or group of people as the killjoys is not a world we want to be part of. To be willing to killjoy is to transform a judgment into a project. A manifesto: how a judgment becomes a project.

To think of killjoys as manifestos is to say that a politics of transformation, a politics that intends to cause the end of a system, is not a program of action that can be separated from how we are in the worlds we are in. Feminism is praxis. We enact the world we are aiming for; nothing less will do. Lesbian feminism, as I noted in chapter 9, is how we organize our lives in such a way that our relations to each other as women are not mediated through our relations to men. A life becomes an archive of rebellion. This is why a killjoy manifesto will be personal. Each of us killjoys will have our own. My manifesto does not suspend my personal story. It is how that story unfolds into action.

It is from difficult experiences, of being bruised by structures that are not even revealed to others, that we gain the energy to rebel. It is from what we come up against that we gain new angles on what we are against. Our bodies become our tools; our rage becomes sickness. We vomit; we vomit out what we have been asked to take in. Our guts become our feminist friends the more we are sickened. We begin to feel the weight of histories more and more; the more we expose the weight of history, the heavier it becomes.

We snap. We snap under the weight; things break. A manifesto is written out of feminist snap. A manifesto is feminist snap.

And: we witness as feminists the trouble feminism causes. I would hazard a guess: feminist trouble is an extension of gender trouble (Butler 1990). To be more specific: feminist trouble is the trouble with women. When we refuse to be women, in the heteropatriarchal sense as beings for men, we become trouble, we get into trouble. A killjoy is willing to get into trouble. And this I think is what is specific about a killjoy manifesto: that we bring into our statements of intent or purpose the experience of what we come up against. It is this experience that allows us to articulate a *for*, a *for* that carries with it an

experience of what we come up against. A *for* can be how we turn something about. A manifesto is *about* what it aims to bring *about.*

There is no doubt in my mind that a feminist killjoy is for something; although as killjoys we are not necessarily for the same things. But you would only be willing to live with the consequences of being against what you come up against if you are for something. A life can be a manifesto. When I read some of the books in my survival kit, I hear them as manifestos, as calls to action; as calls to arms. They are books that tremble with life because they show how a life can be rewritten; how we can rewrite a life, letter by letter. A manifesto has a life, a life of its own; a manifesto is an outstretched hand. And if a manifesto is a political action, it depends on how it is received by others. And perhaps a hand can do more when it is not simply received by another hand, when a gesture exceeds the firmness of a handshake. Perhaps more than a hand needs to shake. If a killjoy manifesto is a handle, it flies out of hand. A manifesto thus repeats something that has already happened; as we know the killjoy has flown off. Perhaps a killjoy manifesto is unhandy; a feminist flight.

When we refuse to be the master's tool, we expose the violence of rods, the violences that built the master's dwelling, brick by brick. When we make violence manifest, a violence that is reproduced by not being made manifest, we will be assigned as killjoys. It is because of what she reveals that a killjoy becomes a killjoy in the first place. A manifesto is in some sense behind her. This is not to say that writing a killjoy manifesto is not also a commitment; that it is not also an idea of how to move forward. A killjoy has her principles. A killjoy manifesto shows how we create principles from an experience of what we come up against, from how we live a feminist life. When I say principles here, I do not mean rules of conduct that we must agree to in order to proceed in a common direction. I might say that a feminist life is principled but feminism often becomes an announcement at the very moment of the refusal to be bound by principle. When I think of feminist principles, I think of principles in the original sense: principle as a first step, as a commencement, a start of something.

A principle can also be what is elemental to a craft. Feminist killjoys and other willful subjects are crafty; we are becoming crafty. There are principles in what we craft. How we begin does not determine where we end up, but principles do give shape or direction. Feminist principles are articulated in unfeminist worlds. Living a life with feminist principles is thus not living smoothly; we bump into the world that does not live in accordance with the principles we try to live.

For some reason, the principles I articulate here ended up being expressed

as statements of will: of what a killjoy is willing (to do or to be) or not willing (to do or to be). I think we can understand the some of this reason. A killjoy manifesto is a willful subject; she wills wrongly by what she is willing or is not willing to do. No wonder a willful subject has principles; she can be principled. She can share them if you can bear them.

PRINCIPLE 1: I AM NOT WILLING TO MAKE HAPPINESS MY CAUSE.

It is often made into a specific requirement: you are asked to do something in order to make others happy. You are more likely to be asked to do something to make others happy when they know you are not happy with what they are doing. Maybe you are asked to participate in a wedding ceremony by those who know you are against the institution of marriage celebrated by such ceremonies. They appeal to you by appealing to their own happiness. If you refuse that appeal you are judged as being selfish, as putting your own happiness before the happiness of others.

Mean: how could you?

A killjoy manifesto: meaning from the mean.

If you are willing to refuse these appeals, then happiness is not the principle you uphold. You have not found the appeal appealing. And you do not uphold this principle in general because you have come up against this principle before: you have been asked not to say things, to do things, because it would make others unhappy. It does not follow that a killjoy does not care for the happiness of others, or that she might not at times decide to do something because it contributes to the happiness of others. She is just not willing to make causing happiness her political cause.

From this everyday situation of living with the consequences of not making happiness your cause, you learn the unhappiness that happiness can cause. This first principle has been the basis of much feminist knowledge and activism: the identification of how institutions are built as promises of happiness; promises that often hide the violence of these institutions. We are willing to expose this violence: the violence of the elevation of the family, the couple form, reproductivity as the basis of a good life; the violence reproduced by organizations that identify speaking about violence as disloyalty. We will expose the happiness myths of neoliberalism and global capitalism: the fantasy that the system created for a privileged few is really about the happiness of many or the most.

To expose happiness myths is to be willing to be given a killjoy assignment.

PRINCIPLE 2: I AM WILLING TO CAUSE UNHAPPINESS.

Not making happiness your cause can cause unhappiness. A killjoy is willing to cause unhappiness.

A committed killjoy has a lifetime of experience of being the cause of unhappiness. And she knows this too: when you cause unhappiness, by virtue of the desires you have or the worlds you are not willing to take up as your own, unhappiness is assumed as your cause. It is not. Being willing to cause unhappiness does not make unhappiness your cause, although we live with the assumption that unhappiness is our cause. When our desires cause unhappiness, it is often assumed we desire to cause unhappiness. You might be judged as wanting the unhappiness you cause, which is another way you become an unhappiness cause.

A killjoy is willing to live with the consequences of what she is willing. She is thus willing to be the cause of someone else's unhappiness. It does not follow that she will not be made sad by other people being sad about her life (because they think her life is sad); it does not follow, even, that she would not feel sympathy in response to those made unhappy by her life. She will not let that unhappiness redirect her. She is willing to be misdirected.

Whose unhappiness are we willing to cause? Anybody's unhappiness: that can be the only answer to this question. But there is an "if" here. We are willing to cause institutional unhappiness if the institution is unhappy because we speak about sexual harassment. We are willing to cause feminist unhappiness if feminists are unhappy because we speak about racism. This means that: we are unhappy with this if. This means that: we are unhappy with what causes unhappiness. It can cause unhappiness to reveal the causes of unhappiness.

We are willing to cause unhappiness because of what we have learned about unhappiness from what we have been assumed to have caused. An "I" turns up here; she knows what is up from what turns up. When I spoke out publicly about sexual harassment at my college, I was identified by some as a killjoy without any sense of irony (there might have been a sense of irony given I had already professed to be her). What is important for us to note is that some feminists were part of this some. A feminist colleague said that in speaking out I was compromising "the happy and stimulating" environment that "longstanding feminists" had worked to create. I assumed I was not one of the longstanding feminists because of the stand I took. Yes, even speaking out about sexual harassment can cause feminist unhappiness. If so then: I am not willing to make feminist happiness my cause.

We have learned to hear what is at stake in such accusations. Feminism by implication is a bubble within the institution. But a feminist bubble can also operate as a mode of identification. To protect the feminist bubble you might want to protect it from exposure to the violence of the institution, a violence that is happening elsewhere (another center, another department). Protecting the feminist bubble ends up becoming a means of protecting the institution. You do not want the institutional violence exposed to others. You would prefer to resolve the violence "in house," even though the "in house" has failed to dismantle the master's house. Is this why there is such secrecy and silence about institutional violence even among some feminists?

If feminism is a bubble, we need the bubble to burst.

When we turn away from what compromises our happiness we are withdrawing our efforts from work that needs to be done to enable a more just and equal world. But this principle of being willing to cause unhappiness cannot be upheld by being assumed to refer only to the unhappiness of others. It is possible that we do not register some situations because to register those situations would make us unhappy. Maybe that is why the killjoy appears: because we are desperate not to register what she notices. Maybe this is why the killjoy appears to those who profess to be killjoys: our happiness too might depend on what we do not notice. Perhaps we keep our happiness through a willed oblivion. We must refuse this oblivion. If something would make us unhappy, when acknowledged, we need to acknowledge it. We are willing to cause our own unhappiness, which does not make our unhappiness our cause.

PRINCIPLE 3: I AM WILLING TO SUPPORT OTHERS WHO ARE WILLING TO CAUSE UNHAPPINESS.

A killjoy might first recognize herself in that feeling of loneliness: of being cut off from others, from how they assemble around happiness. She knows, because she has been there: to be unseated by the tables of happiness can be to find yourself in that shadowy place, to find yourself alone, on your own. It might be that many pass through the figure of the killjoy and quickly out again because they find her a hard place to be; not to be surrounded by the warmth of others, the quiet murmurs that accompany an agreement. The costs of killing joy are high; this figure is herself a cost (not to agree with someone as killing the joy of something).

How do you persist? As I suggested in my survival kit, we often persist by finding the company of other killjoys; we can take up this name when we

recognize the dynamic she names; and we can recognize that dynamic when others articulate that dynamic for us. We recognize others too because they recognize that dynamic.

Those moments of recognition are precious; and they are precarious. With a moment comes a memory: we often persist by being supported by others. We might also experience the crisis of being unsupported; support matters all the more all the less we feel supported. To make a manifesto out of the killjoy means being willing to give to others the support you received or wish you received. Maybe you are in a conversation, at home or at work, and one person, one person out of many, is speaking out. Don't let her speak on her own. Back her up; speak with her. Stand by her; stand with her. From these public moments of solidarity so much is brought into existence. We are creating a support system around the killjoy; we are finding ways to allow her to do what she does, to be who she is. We do not have to assume her permanence, to turn her figure into personhood, to know that when she comes up, she might need others to hold her up.

Audre Lorde once wrote, "Your silence will not protect you" (1984a, 41). But your silence could protect them. And by them I mean: those who are violent, or those who benefit in some way from silence about violence. The killjoy is testimony. She comes to exist as a figure, a way of containing damage, because she speaks about damage. Over time, the time of being a feminist, we might call this feminist time, I have come to understand, to know and to feel, the costs of speaking out. I have thus come to understand, to know and to feel, why many do not speak out. There is a lot to lose, a lot, a life even. So much injustice is reproduced by silence not because people do not recognize injustice, but because they do recognize it. They also recognize the consequences of identifying injustice, which might not be consequences they can live with. It might be fear of losing your job and knowing you need that job to support those you care for; it might be concern about losing connections that matter; concern that what you say will be taken the wrong way; concern that by saying something you would make something worse. To suggest that the feminist killjoy is a manifesto is not to say that we have an obligation to speak out. We are not all in the same position; we cannot all afford to speak out. Killing joy thus requires a communication system: we have to find other ways for the violence to become manifest. We might need to use guerrilla tactics, and we have a feminist history to draw on here; you can write down names of harassers on books; put graffiti on walls; red ink in the water. There are so many ways to cause a feminist disturbance.

Even if speaking out is not possible, it is necessary. Silence about violence

is violence. But feminist speech can take many forms. We become more inventive with forms the harder it is to get through. Speaking out and speaking with, sheltering those who speak; these acts of spreading the word, are world making. Killing joy is a world-making project. We make a world out of the shattered pieces even when we shatter the pieces or even when we are the shattered pieces.

PRINCIPLE 4: I AM NOT WILLING TO LAUGH AT JOKES DESIGNED TO CAUSE OFFENSE.

This principle might seem very specific: it might seem that it derives from my initial three principles and that it is not worthy of being one all on its own. But I think humor is such a crucial technique for reproducing inequality and injustice. I think the fantasy of the humorless feminist (as part of a more general fantasy of humorlessness of those who question a social as well as political arrangement) does such important work. The fantasy is what makes the figure of the killjoy do her work. It is assumed she says what she does (points out sexism, points out racism) because she is herself deprived of any joy, because she cannot bear the joy of others. Often once someone has been assigned a feminist killjoy, others then will make certain jokes, in order to cause her offense, in order to witness her ill humor. Do not be tempted to laugh. If the situation is humorless, we need not to add humor to it. If the situation is unfunny, we need not to make light of it; we need not to make it fun.

It is often through humor (say through irony or satire) that people can keep making sexist and racist utterances. Humor creates the appearance of distance; by laughing about what they repeat, they repeat what they laugh about. This *about* becomes the butt of the joke. It is no laughing matter. When it is no laughing matter, laughter matters.

But, of course, humor can challenge things by bringing things to the surface; I noticed this in my survival kit. But there are differences that matter in what laughter does. Feminist humor might involve the relief of being able to laugh when familiar patterns that are often obscured are revealed. We might laugh at how white men assemble themselves by reducing whatever we do as "not white men" to identity politics. We might laugh even about being poster children of diversity; and laughing does not mean we do not experience pain and frustration at being called upon by institutions to provide them with smiling colorful faces; to make our faces theirs. But this is not laughter that allows us to repeat what causes offense; it is a reorientation toward that cause. We do not repeat it; we withdraw.

The killjoy exists in close proximity to the figure of the oversensitive subject who is too easily offended. This figure is always evoked whenever social critique is successful: that something has been closed down or removed or lost (a loss that is mourned) because others are offended, where to be offended is to be too easily offended, to be weak, soft, impressionable. "Toughen up" has become a moral imperative, one that is (like most moral imperatives) articulated by those who think they have what they claim others need. Indeed this figure of the oversensitive subject might come up in advance of such a loss, or to avoid such a loss. The moral panic over trigger warnings often evokes this figure, specifically the figure of the oversensitive student who is not attuned to the difficulty and discomfort of learning, as if to say: if we let your sensitivities become law, we lose our freedom. I would argue that freedom has become reduced to the freedom to be offensive, which is also about how those with power protect their right to articulate their own views, no matter what, no matter whom.

If not wanting histories that are violent to be repeated with such violent insistence, or at least if asking questions about the terms that enable that repetition means being deemed oversensitive, we need to be oversensitive. When you are sensitive to what is not over, you are deemed oversensitive. We are sensitive to what is not over. We are sensitive because it is not over.

PRINCIPLE 5: I AM NOT WILLING TO GET OVER HISTORIES THAT ARE NOT OVER.

It is not over. We say that, with insistence, as we watch others declare things over. So many declarations, and they participate in the same thing. The current British prime minister, David Cameron, says that one thing that made Great Britain great was that we "took slavery off the high seas." Great Britain is remembered as the liberator of the slaves, not as perpetrator of slavery; not as a country that has benefited from the mass enslavement of others, from the colonization of others. When colonialism is referred to in the book upon which citizenship tests are based in the United Kingdom, it is described as the system that introduced democracy, law, bringing benefits to others. A violent history of conquest and theft imagined as the gift of modernity. And today, wars are still justified as gifts, as giving freedom, democracy, and equality.

When it is not over, it is not the time to get over it.

A killjoy is willing to bring this history up. A memory can be willful. And so we know what happens when we do this. You are accused as the one who is

getting in the way of reconciliation. You are judged as the one who has yet to do what others have done: get over it; get over yourself; let it go. You become the open wound because you won't let things heal.

We are willing to be the ones who fail the project of reconciliation. We know the success of that project is the failure to address these histories of injustice that manifest not only in the unresolved trauma of those for whom this history is a bodily inheritance, a transgenerational haunting, but also in a grossly unequal distribution of wealth and resources.

How a world is shaped is memory.

And they say: but look what you have been given. Equality, diversity: they all become gifts for which we are supposed to be grateful; they become compensatory. We are not grateful when a system is extended to include us when that system is predicated on inequality and violence.

PRINCIPLE 6: I AM NOT WILLING TO BE INCLUDED IF INCLUSION MEANS BEING INCLUDED IN A SYSTEM THAT IS UNJUST, VIOLENT, AND UNEQUAL.

It is often an invitation: come in, be part, be grateful. Sometimes we have few options: we are workers; we work; we make do. We have to survive or even progress within an institution. But even for those of us who are included, even when we do receive benefits (we might have salaries; we might have pensions), we are not willing that inclusion: we are agreeing that inclusion requires being behind the institution, identifying with it. We are willing to speak out about the violence of the system, to strike, to demonstrate. We are willing to talk about the rods, to risk being identified as the wayward arm.

But there is a difficulty here. Because surely if you are employed by an organization, if you receive the benefit of employment, it could be said that to maintain a killjoy stance is a form of political dishonesty: you get to benefit from the institutions you critique. We need to start with our own complicity: this is why part II began with the compromised nature of diversity work. To be complicit should not become its own reproductive logic: that all we can do is to reproduce the logics of the institutions that employ us. In fact those who benefit from an unjust system need to work even harder to expose that injustice. For those killjoys who are in regular employment—let's call ourselves professional killjoys; some of us might even be professor killjoys—when we profess we kill joy; there is no way of overcoming this difficulty, other than by starting from it. We need to use the benefits we receive to support those who

do not receive these benefits, including those within our own institutions who do not have the same securities that give us the opportunity to expose the insecurities. Within higher education this means we need to enact our solidarity with students who are fighting for education as a right, for adjunct lecturers and faculty who do not have tenure or who are on short-term contracts, with those professional staff who do the work of maintaining the very buildings and facilities in which we do our work: cleaners, security staff, porters. I have tried to show how killing joy and willfulness also relate to the politics of labor: arms matter, which is to say some end up doing the work to reproduce the conditions that enable the existence of others. When our professional existence is enabled by the work of others, we need to use our existence to recognize that work. We need to expose the injustice of how institutions give support to some by not supporting others. And we need to support those who challenge the conditions in which they work unsupported. Willfulness is striking.

And: we must keep exposing the violence within the institutions that have included us, especially when our own inclusion occurs under the sign of diversity and equality, especially when our bodies and the products of our labor are used by institutions as evidence of inclusion. We become wall breakers. So we must talk about walls; we must show how history becomes concrete. We are not willing to allow our inclusion to support a happiness fantasy. We might need to leave, at a certain point, if our inclusion requires giving up too much, though we are not all in a position to leave.

A killjoy manifesto: requires an ongoing and willful refusal to identify our hopes with inclusion within organizations predicated on violence. I am not grateful to be included in an institution that is unequal. I am not grateful to be included in an institution in which talking about sexism and racism is heard as ungrateful. We have a history of ungrateful feminists to pick up from. Ungrateful feminists; grumpy; grump.

Together: grumps are a feminist lump. A lumpen proletariat: in feminist form with a feminist consciousness.

PRINCIPLE 7: I AM WILLING TO LIVE A LIFE THAT IS DEEMED BY OTHERS AS UNHAPPY AND I AM WILLING TO REJECT OR TO WIDEN THE SCRIPTS AVAILABLE FOR WHAT COUNTS AS A GOOD LIFE.

I have already noted how happiness involves the narrowing down of ways of living a life. We can be disloyal by refusing to be narrowed. We live lives deemed by others to be not happy, to be not reaching the right points of cere-

mony. Two women living together, refusing to have a civil partnership, refusing to get married; we are enacting our rejection of heteropatriarchy. To enact a rejection is an action performed with others.

We can come to embody an alternative family line, as I suggested in chapter 8, or an alternative to the family line. I quite like being a lesbian feminist auntie. I know that as a young woman I would have liked to have had lesbian feminist aunties, though I certainly had feminist aunties to whom I owe a great deal. We need to tell our stories to children, to those who are to come; generations need to tell each other our stories, assembled around other lives, those that are faint from under-inscription. We need to tell each other stories of different ways you can live, different ways you can be; predicated not on how close you get to the life you were assumed or expected to have, but on the queer wanderings of a life you live.

I would have liked to have known there were other ways of living, of being. I would have liked to have known that women do not have to be in relation to men. Of course, I struggled for this realization: I became a feminist; I found women's studies; I met women who taught me what I did not have to do; I found women who helped me deviate from an expectation.

Queer: the moment you realize what you did not have to be.

We can become part of a widening when we refused to be narrowed. And each time we reject or widen the happiness script, we become part of an opening. We have to create room if we are to live a feminist life. When we create room, we create room for others.

PRINCIPLE 8: I AM WILLING TO PUT THE HAP BACK INTO HAPPINESS.

I have noted how the word *happiness* derives from the Middle English word *hap*, suggesting chance. One history of happiness is the history of the removal of its hap, such that happiness is defined not in terms of what happens to you but of what you work for. In my book *The Promise of Happiness* I explored how happiness even ends up being redefined against hap, especially in the psychology of flows and positive psychology: as not something that happens (or just happens). The narrow scripts of happiness are precisely about the violence of the elimination of the hap. We need to recognize the elimination of hap before we can restore hap. We cannot simply use the lighter word as if it can get us out of here. We have to recognize the weight of the world, the heaviness of happiness, how we are brought down by the expectation that we are down. We stumble. When we stumble, when we are in line, we might feel ourselves as the

obstacle to our own happiness; we might feel ourselves to be getting in the way of ourselves. Can we let ourselves be in the way? Can we be willing what we seem to be undoing? I stumble; maybe by stumbling I found you, maybe by stumbling I stumbled on happiness, a hap-full happiness; a happiness that is as fragile as the bodies we love and cherish. We value such happiness because it is fragile: it comes and goes, as we do. I am willing to let happiness go; to allow anger, rage, or disappointment be how I am affected by a world. But when happiness happens, I am happy.

A fragile happiness might be attuned to the fragility of things. We can care about the things that break off, the broken things. To care about such things is not to care for their happiness. Caring for happiness can so often translate into caring for others on the condition that they reflect back an idea you have of how a life should be lived. Perhaps we can think of care in relation to hap. We are often assumed to be careless when we break something, as I noted in chapter 7. What would it mean to care for something, whether or not it breaks? Maybe we can reorientate caring from caring for someone's happiness to caring what happens to someone or something: caring about what happens, caring whatever happens. We might call this a hap care rather than a happiness care. A hap care would not be about letting an object go, but holding on to an object by letting oneself go, giving oneself over to something that is not one's own. A hap care would not seek to eliminate anxiety from care; it could even be described as care for the hap. Caring is anxious—to be full of care, to be careful, is to take care of things by becoming anxious about their future, where the future is embodied in the fragility of an object whose persistence matters. Our care would pick up the pieces of a shattered pot. Our care would not turn the thing into a memorial, but value each piece; shattering as the beginning of another story.

But we would not end up with a liberal notion: everything is equally fragile; we must care for everything equally. It is not; I do not. Some things become more fragile than others in time. In time, we attend. To attend to something that has become more easily breakable is to attend to its history, with love, and with care.

PRINCIPLE 9: I AM WILLING TO SNAP ANY BONDS, HOWEVER PRECIOUS, WHEN THOSE BONDS ARE DAMAGING TO MYSELF OR TO OTHERS.

So many times, when a bond has been snapped, I have been told it is sad, as I noted in chapter 8. But bonds can be violent. A bond can be diminishing.

Sometimes we are not ready to recognize that we have been diminished. We are not ready. It can take psychic as well as political work to be ready to snap that bond. When you do, when you snap, it can feel like an unexpected moment that breaks a line that had been unfolding over time, a deviation, a departure. But a moment can be an achievement; it can be what you have been working for.

You might be willing to snap the bond. You might need to be willful to be willing. And you might need to recognize that others too need to work to reach a point when they can let go. Share that work. We have to share the costs of what we give up. But when we give up, we do not just lose something even when we do lose something. We find things. We find out things we did not know before—about ourselves, about worlds. A feminist life is a journey, a reaching for something that might not have been possible without snap, without the snappy encouragement of others. But a feminist life is also a going back, retrieving parts of ourselves we did not even realize we had, that we did not even realize we had put on hold.

We can hold each other by not putting ourselves on hold.

PRINCIPLE 10: I AM WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN A KILLJOY MOVEMENT.

Whether or not you are being difficult, you are heard as making things difficult for yourself as well as others. So much difficulty, you would think feminist killjoys would give up. And yet, when I first began presenting and talking about the feminist killjoy, when I first began working with her as well as on her, picking her up, I noticed how energetic the room would be. Sometimes speaking of her, letting her into the room to do her thing, felt like an electric shock. And she finds herself quickly in a company of killjoys: transfeminist killjoys (Cowan 2014), ethnic killjoys (Khorana 2013), crip killjoys (Mullow 2013), indigenous feminist killjoys (Barker 2015). There will be more of that I am sure.

Why? Because the figure of the killjoy comes up whenever there are difficult histories to bring up. The killjoy is appealing not despite what she brings up but because of what she brings up. She acquires vitality or energy from a scene of difficulty. To be willing to be a killjoy, to be willing to get in the way of happiness, grasps hold of a judgment and takes it on.

We even transform the judgment into a rebellious command.

Killjoy?

Just watch me.

Bring it on.

It can be quite a pickup when we pick her up. There can be joy in finding killjoys; there can be joy in killing joy. Our eyes meet when we tell each other about rolling eyes.

You too; you too.

A fragile movement.

Snappy.

So many moments are abbreviated in our equation "rolling eyes = feminist pedagogy." We are willing those moments. Moments can become movement. Moments can build a movement, a movement assembled from lighter materials. This is not a secure dwelling. We are shattered, too often; but see how the walls move.

We are willing to participate in a killjoy movement.

We are that movement.

Watch us roll.