6 / BRICK WALLS

Thus far I have considered diversity work in two senses: the work we do when we aim to transform the norms of an institution, and the work we do when we do not quite inhabit those norms. These two senses often meet in a body: those who do not quite inhabit the norms of the institution are often those given the task of transforming these norms.

A meeting point is often a laboring point. If you are not white, not male, not straight, not cis, not able-bodied, you are more likely to end up on diversity and equality committees. The more nots you are, the more committees you might end up on. Not being not can mean being less likely to end up doing this kind of work. Given that diversity work is typically less valued by organizations, then not being not can mean having more time to do more-valued work. And I think this is really important: so much of what we have to do, because of what or who we are not, is not recognized. When we are diversity workers in both senses this both tends to be obscured as if doing diversity is just about being diversity, or as if being is all we have to do. In fact, as I showed in chapter 5, for diversity workers being is never "just being." There is so much you have to do to be.

In chapter 2, I referred to one practitioner's description of diversity work as a "banging your head against a brick wall job." Walls often come up when we are doing diversity work. Practitioners regularly use wall expressions to describe their work. In this chapter, I want to reflect on walls, brick walls, institutional walls; those hardenings of histories into barriers in the present:

barriers that we experience as physical; barriers that are physical. We often use wall expressions to talk about the obstacles that prevent us from realizing a desire or completing an action (an obvious example would be the expression used by marathon runners: "hitting a wall"). Throughout this chapter I will be showing how taking walls seriously, as a metaphor, but also as more than a metaphor, is a way we can offer a materialism that shows how history becomes concrete. Walls allow us to think about how obstacles can be physical, in the world, and yet how these obstacles are only obstacles for some bodies. If the two senses of diversity work meet in our bodies, they also meet here: at the wall.

HARD HISTORIES

I want to start by working closely with the description of diversity work as a "banging your head against a brick wall job." What are brick walls doing in this saying? When we use this expression, we are not saying there is an actual wall in front of us. There is no spectacle, no towering thing; nothing that we can point to and say "there it is." We can start with what is implied by what we are not addressing: the brick wall is a metaphor. The expression suggests that doing diversity is like banging your head against a brick wall. The metaphor seems to be pointing to a quality of feeling: this is what diversity work feels like.

But still we can ask: what does this metaphor mean? When I wrote *On Being Included*, the copyeditor suggested I take *tangible* out of my discussion of walls because the walls I was referring to were metaphorical walls, not literal or actual walls. The wall, in being used as a metaphor, is not real in the sense of a tangible thing, what is perceptible through touch. But the metaphor (something is like something) of the wall seems to matter to convey how these institutional processes become something that can be touched. A wall is what you come up against. It is a physical contact; a visceral encounter. When I write this, I might not at first be talking of literal walls. A wall is an effect of coming up against.

The likeness is the effect.

Now we are talking.

I want to return to one of the examples discussed in chapter 4 as an example of coming up against a brick wall. In this case, a new policy is adopted by an organization that requires all academics on interview panels to have diversity training. The practitioner spoke of the different ways the policy was almost

stopped from being implemented. A policy also has to get through an organization: it has to be written as a proposal, discussed in committees, recorded in the minutes as agreed, and passed on to a higher committee before it can become policy. In this case, eventually, after considerable work from multiple actors, a policy is agreed to by a higher committee, the one that can authorize the decisions made by other committees. And still nothing happens. It is as if no one has even heard of the policy. In this example, a lot of things could have stopped something from happening. It could have been the removal of the policy from the minutes; it could have been that no one from the diversity committee that agreed to the policy was on the higher committee; it could have been that no one on the higher committee noticed this removal; but it was none of these things. It was simply this: those employed by the institution acted as if this policy had not been agreed upon even though it had.

We need to understand these mechanisms. We need to make the impasse or blockage the occasion for more thought. From this example, we learn that the passing of something, an agreement, can be how something is stopped. Doing diversity work has taught me that agreeing to something is one of the best ways of stopping something from happening. Agreeing to something is an efficient technique for stopping something because organizations can avoid the costs of disagreement.

A brick wall refers not only to what is stopped but to how something is stopped. A wall is a defense system: if a blockage is unblocked here, it can reappear elsewhere. Being an institutional plumber can often feel like you are lagging behind what you are following. I suspect there is a connection here between the sense of being behind the organization and that killjoy feeling of being stuck on fast forward: as if you have to rush to catch up with others. You do have to rush: what blocks you seems to be just ahead of you. The wall refers to what keeps its place or stays in place; what is stationary. However, the mechanisms for stopping something are mobile. For something to be immobile (for an institution not to be moved by the efforts to transform it), the means for defending against movement move.

The wall is a finding. Let me summarize that finding: what stops movement moves.

We learn from this: that when you notice movement (and movement is often what catches our attention), we are not noticing what stays put.

I can still hear voices saying, but isn't the brick wall a metaphor? It is not that there really is a wall; it is not an actual wall. This is right. The wall is a wall that might as well be there, because the effects of what is there are just like the

effects of a wall. And yet not: if an actual wall was there, we would all be able to see it, or to touch it. And this makes an institutional wall hard. You come up against what others do not see; and (this is even harder) you come up against what others are often invested in not seeing. After all, if the diversity worker had not attempted to change the existing policy, the wall would not come up. The wall comes up in response to the effort to modify an existing arrangement. When no attempt at modification is made, a wall is not necessary; nothing needs to be blocked or stopped.

Diversity work is hard because what you come up against is not revealed to others. I have been speaking here of diversity work as hard in the sense of difficult. But the brick wall is hard in other senses. In physics, hardness refers to the resistance of materials to change under force. The harder something is, the more force we have to apply. When we use the description "it is a banging your head against a brick wall," we are referring to coming up against something that is hard. Let's talk about actual walls. A wall is hard; it matters that a wall is made from hard matter. Let's say the wall is made from cement. Cement is a binder: it is a substance that sets and hardens and can combine other materials together. Through cement, bricks can be stuck together firmly to become walls. Hardness is necessary for the wall to function or to be functional. A wall has a job to do. A wall too has a job description.

You can witness the hardness of a wall. Say you throw something against the wall: a little object. You can tell how hard the wall is by what happens to what is thrown against it: a wall might be scratched at the surface by encountering the object. And this too is what diversity work can feel like: scratching at the surface, scratching the surface. The object might splinter and break by the force of what it comes up against. Hardness here is a quality of something revealed through an encounter between things. Diversity work certainly involves an encounter between things: our bodies can be those little objects hurled against walls, those sedimented histories. Watch what happens. Ouch. And maybe it happens, time and time again. Banging your head—we sense the point of this phrase as the sore point of repetition. The wall keeps its place, so it is you that gets sore. I come up against a wall if I try to change something that has become harder or hardened over time. Literally I mean: a wall as material resistance to being changed by force. The materiality of resistance to transformation: diversity workers know this materiality very well. We live this materiality.

Materiality: if we are hit by something, we become conscious of something. Of course we learned from *Mrs. Dalloway* that you can be hit by something

before you become conscious of something. If we are hit by something, again and again, our body might register this impact as an expectation: that the wall will come up. Diversity workers become conscious of the brick wall as that which keeps its place *after* an official commitment to diversity has been given. Timing matters. It is the practical effort to transform institutions that allows this wall to become apparent.

This practical effort, let us be clear here, is somebody's effort: it is the effort of a diversity worker; of her blood, sweat, and tears. That I can share this story is also a consequence of the efforts of a diversity worker. I used to think that as a researcher I was generating data on diversity work, but I have come to realize diversity work generates its own data. We are thickening our descriptions of institutions by showing how institutions are thick; thick in the sense of a deep or heavy mass.

The story of a diversity policy that does not do anything is a tantalizingly tangible example of what goes on so often. But even if the story makes something tangible, it shows us how some things are reproduced by stubbornly remaining intangible. After all, the diversity worker has to labor to convince others of the existence of the policy even though she has paper evidence of that policy ("I can show you the minutes"). She has evidence; she can point to it; but it is as if she has nothing to show. We learn from this: intangibility can be a product of resistance; it could even be described as an institutional achievement.

Diversity work: you learn that tangibility is quite a phenomenon. In recent years, for example, I have been involved in an effort to challenge the problem of sexual harassment in universities. And this has been an experience of coming up against wall after wall. As Leila Whitley and Tiffany Page (2015) have shown, there is a problem in locating the problem of sexual harassment. A wall can come up to prevent students from making complaints in the first place. Often students are actively discouraged by explicit argument or implicit narratives: if you complain, you will hurt your career (this can work as a threat: you will lose the very connections that enable you to progress); or if you complain, you will hurt the professor (whose reputation will be damaged); or if you complain, you will ruin a center or collective (often aligned with something critical and progressive). Another wall comes up once complaints have been made. Testimonies are heard as an injury to the professor's reputation, as what stops him from receiving the benefits to which he is entitled. Complaints about sexual harassment are not made public as a way of protecting the organization from damage. Even if the complaints are successful, even if a contract is

terminated (which is rare) or someone leaves rather than face a tribunal, it can be as if what happened never happened. No one is allowed to speak of it; no one speaks of it. A wall can be the effort to stop a complaint from being made. If that complaint is made, then a wall can be what happens to a complaint; how it is stopped from going through the whole system.

Indeed so often just talking about sexism as well as racism is heard as damaging the institution. If talking about sexism and racism is heard as damaging institutions, we need to damage institutions. And the institutional response often takes the form of damage limitation. This is so often how diversity takes institutional form: damage limitation.

You encounter the materiality of resistance to transformation when you try to transform what has become material. Sexual harassment is material. It is a network that stops information from getting out. It is a set of alliances that come alive to stop something; that enable a complaint to be held up or to become confidential, so that it never comes out into the public domain. And notice here: so many complex things are going on at the same time. It is not activity that is coordinated by one person or even necessarily a group of people who are meeting in secret, although secret meetings probably do happen. All of these activities, however complex, sustain a direction; they have a point. Direction does not require something to originate from a single point: in fact a direction is achieved through consistency between points that do not seem to meet. Things combine to achieve something that is solid and tangible; bonds become binds. If one element does not hold, or become binding, another element holds or binds. The process is rather like the cement used to make walls: something is set into a holding pattern. The setting is what hardens. Perhaps when people notice the complexity, or even the inefficiency and disorganization, they don't notice the cement. When you say there is a pattern, you are heard as paranoid, as if you are imagining that all this complexity derives from a single point.

A pattern is experienced as weight. We learn from this: to try to bring someone to account is to come up against not just an individual but histories, histories that have hardened, that stop those who are trying to stop what is happening from happening. The weight of that history can be thrown at you; you can be hit by it. The word *harass*, remember, derives from the French *harasser,* "tire out, vex." When you speak of harassment you can end up being harassed all over again. Harassment is a network that stops information from getting out by making it harder to get through. It is how someone is stopped by being worn down. What happens to a policy can happen to a person. A

policy disappears despite there being a paper trail, despite the evidence, or perhaps even because of the evidence. People disappear too, because of what they make evident, of what they try to bring into view. Sometimes these are the choices: get used to it, or get out of it. No wonder if these are the choices, many get out of it.

Sexual harassment works—as does bullying more generally—by increasing the costs of fighting against something, making it easier to accept something than to struggle against something, even if that acceptance is itself the site of your own diminishment; how you end up taking up less and less space. It is because we perceive this wall that we end up having to modify our perception (perhaps this is what it means to get "used to it"). You might feel you cannot afford to become alienated from those around you; not only might you lose access to material resources (references, scholarships, courses to teach), but you might lose friends, connections that matter. Maybe you too begin to feel that the wall is inside your own head. I return to this idea of an inside wall in chapter 7. It is happening all around you, and yet people seem to be getting on with it. You can end up doubting yourself, estranged from yourself. Maybe then you try not to have a problem. But you are left with a sickening feeling.

Because all around you there is a partial sighting of walls, a partial sighting that is at once a justification: oh he's a bit of a womanizer; oh yeah I was warned about him; oh yeah that was the booze talking; there might even be a smiling, a joking, there might even be a certain kind of affection. This affection is structured as an appeal to students whose concern is bordering on disclosure: let it go; let him off. A culture is built around this affection, which is to say: harassers are enabled by being forgiven, as if their vice is our virtue. And those who know it is wrong even when they try to persuade themselves otherwise, even when they try to minimize a mountain of abuse, can feel all the more wrong, can feel the full force of it, when the wall finally does come into view: she is not okay; I am not okay; this is not okay; "How could I let this happen?"

Guilt; shame; they can leak out, getting everywhere. Perhaps sometimes we just can't do this; it means being prepared to be undone, and we just don't know if we are ready to put ourselves back together again, as I discussed in chapter 1. I also explored in that chapter how to expose a problem is to pose a problem. We can now see how, if to expose a problem is to pose a problem, then the problem you expose is not revealed. The exposure becomes the problem. It is not surprising then that those who don't come up against walls experience those who talk about walls as wall makers. And we are back to the

feminist killjoy. It is never long before she makes an appearance. The feminist killjoy is understood as a wall maker. The wall maker is the one who makes things harder than they need to be; she makes things hard for herself. Just recall the words of the diversity practitioner: "They just look at me as if I am saying something really stupid." We can imagine the eyes rolling when she points out the policy, when she tries to say, to show, that she has institutional support.

A wall comes up in the reframing of walls as immaterial, as phantoms, as how we stop ourselves from being included, how we stop ourselves from doing something, from being something. To think about materiality through institutional brick walls is to offer a different way of thinking the connection between bodies and worlds. Materiality is about what is real; it is something real that blocks movement, which stops a progression. But this something is not always something that can be apprehended. It might be an arrangement of things, a social as well as physical arrangement, that stops something from happening or a body passing through or information from getting out. It might be the force of momentum that carries something forward, that picks up more and more things, so that more and more weight is acquired, so that things tend that way, bodies lean that way, almost independently of individual will. I return to this *almost* in the final section of the chapter. This means that what is real, what is in concrete terms the hardest, is not always available as an object that can be perceived (from some viewing points), or an object that can touched (even by those who are seated at the same table). What is the hardest for some does not even exist for others.

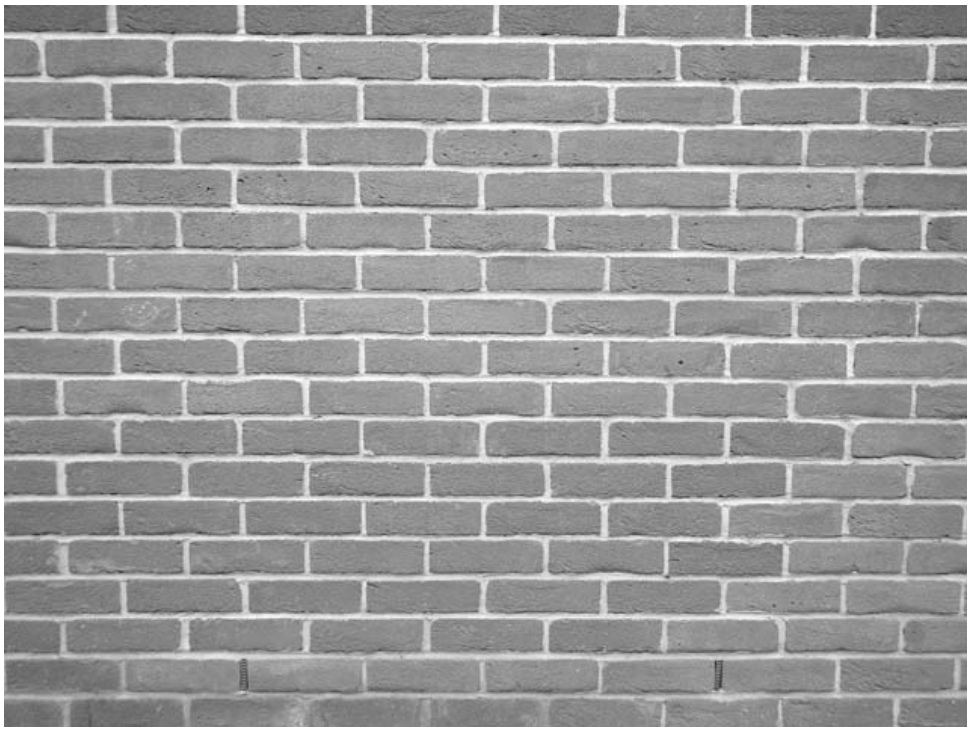
A LIFE DESCRIPTION

Diversity work in the second sense also involves coming up against walls. When we fail to inhabit a norm (when we are questioned or question ourselves whether we are "it," or pass as or into "it") then it becomes more apparent, like that institutional wall: what does not allow you to pass through.

A job description can be a wall description.

A life description can be a wall description.

I have already noted how when diversity workers talk about walls, the walls become phantom walls, as if we bring the walls into existence by talking about their existence. When something is not really in our way, we are in our way. We have to show what we know: walls are not just perceptions. But perception



A life description

does still matter. Some perceptions are walls. What you are perceived as being can be what stops you from being.

Let's return to my discussion of stranger danger from chapters 1 and 5. There are techniques, bodily as well as disciplinary techniques, whereby some bodies are recognized as strangers, as bodies out of place, as not belonging in certain places. These techniques are formalized in Neighborhood Watch programs in which the stranger is the one whom citizens must recognize in order to protect themselves: their property, their bodies (Ahmed 2000, 2004). Recognizing strangers becomes a moral and social injunction. Some bodies are in an instant judged as suspicious, or as dangerous, as objects to be feared, a judgment that is lethal. There can be nothing more dangerous to a body than the social agreement that that body is dangerous. We can simplify: it is dangerous to be perceived as dangerous.

There are so many cases, too many cases. Just take one: Trayvon Martin, a young black man fatally shot by George Zimmerman on February 26, 2012. Zimmerman was centrally involved in his Neighborhood Watch program. He was doing his civic neighborly duty: looking out for what is suspicious. As George Yancy has noted in his important piece "Walking while Black," we

learn from Zimmerman's call to the dispatcher how Trayvon Martin appeared to him. Zimmerman says, "'There's a real suspicious guy.' He also said 'This guy looks like he's up to no good or he's on drugs or something.' When asked by the dispatcher, he said, within seconds, that, 'He looks black.' Asked what he is wearing, Zimmerman says, 'A dark hoodie, like a gray hoodie.' Later, Zimmerman said that 'now he's coming toward me. He's got his hands in his waist band.' And then, 'And he's a black male'" (Yancy 2013, n.p.). If some questions are assertions in disguise, some assertions are just that: assertions. Note the sticky slide: suspicious, "up to no good," coming at me, looking black, a dark hoodie, wearing black, being black. The last statement makes explicit who Zimmerman was seeing right from the very beginning. That he was seeing a black man was already implied in the first description, "a real suspicious guy." He is up to no good: his hands are in his waistband; a gun might as well appear because he is here. The unarmed black man is seen as armed whether or not he is armed. He is seen as armed; seen as arm. The wayward arm makes another appearance. You become arm when your whole body is perceived as a potential weapon. Unarmed; armed; arm.

Let me repeat: there can be nothing more dangerous to a body than the social agreement that that body is dangerous. And later, when Zimmerman is not convicted, there is a retrospective agreement with that agreement: that Zimmerman was right to feel fear, that his murder of this young man was self-defense because Trayvon was dangerous, because he was, as Yancy describes so powerfully, "walking while black," already judged, sentenced to death, by the how of how he appeared. Racism is a matter of perception, as Claudia Rankine (2014) has shown so convincingly: a black body is magnified, appears larger, a demon; immigrants appear more, a swamp, a spread. The law makes this perception, however wrong, a right; a right to kill as the right to perceive the other as a wrong or to perceive the other wrongly. Racism makes a wrong a right. If racism is a matter of perception, perception matters.

The stranger is a dark shadowy figure. I use the word *dark* deliberately here: it is a word that cannot be untangled from a racialized history. To use this word as if it can be disentangled from that history is to be entangled by that history. The very perception of others is thus an impression of others: to appear as a stranger is to be blurry. The blurrier the figure of the stranger, the more bodies can be caught by it. Racism is a blunt instrument. Stop and search, for example, is a technology that makes this bluntness into a point: Stop! You are brown! You could be Muslim! You could be a terrorist! The blunter the instrument, the more bodies can be stopped. To explore how bodies are per-

ceived as dangerous in advance of their arrival thus requires not beginning with an encounter (a body affected by another body) but asking how encounters come to happen in this way or that. The immediacy of bodily reactions is mediated by histories that come before subjects, and which are at stake in how the very arrival of some bodies is noticeable in the first place. The most immediate of our bodily reactions can be treated as pedagogy: we learn about ideas by learning how they become quick and unthinking. There is nothing more mediated than immediacy. You can be stopped by a perception. You can be killed by a perception.

Strangers become objects not only of perception but also of governance: bodies to be managed. You can be managed out of existence. Gentrification is a public policy for managing strangers: a way of removing those who would be eyesores; those who would reduce the value of a neighborhood; those whose proximity would be registered as price. We learn from this. There are technologies in place that stop us from being affected by some bodies; those that might get in the way of how we occupy space. We might not even have to turn away from those who would get in the way.

Walls are how some bodies are not encountered in the first place.

Walls are how other bodies are stopped by an encounter.

Indeed an exploration of the role of walls in politics might first explore walls as borders: a walled nation, a walled neighborhood. As Wendy Brown (2010) notes, walls built from concrete and barbed wire function as barricades. Walls are put up by governments as a mechanism to control the flow of human traffic. Brown demonstrates how walls as a stark image of sovereign power are reminders of a failed sovereignty. A border is instituted most violently when it is under threat.

A wall comes up to defend something from someone; walls as defense mechanisms.

A wall becomes necessary because the wrong bodies could pass through.

Even in the case of physical walls that make concrete the intent to bar and to block, walls are differentiated: some bodies are allowed to pass through, which means that the wall does not come up in the same way even if a wall is there, literally, actually. A wall is not encountered as a wall: it is an open door, a passage through. A wall remains functional: for the body who is allowed through, the function of such a wall is to stop others from getting through. As Leila Whitley (2014) explores, for those who pass through without a door being opened, without legitimate documents, a body becomes a border. A body can be a document: if your papers are not in the right place, neither are you.

Whitley shows how those who manage to get through without the right papers experience the border as imminent, always potential, as that which could come up at any time. When you know you could be stopped at any time, a wall is anywhere and everywhere. A border then would not be what you leave behind when you cross a border; a border would go with you wherever you go. I return to another way in which bodies can become walls in chapter 7.

Some bodies might appear wrong even with the right papers; histories of racism are condensed in the very figure of the stranger as the one who does not pass by receding into whiteness, as I noted in chapter 5. A wall can be how you are stopped from residing somewhere. Or a wall can be what you experience once you get here.

We could think of whiteness as a wall. You know that experience: you walk into a room and it is like a sea of whiteness. A sea: a wall of water. It can feel like something that hits you. It is not just that you open the door and see whiteness but that the door feels as if it is slammed in your face, whether or not it is. It is not always that you are not allowed in. You might even be welcomed; after all, you would promise to add diversity to an event. But you would feel uncomfortable. You would stick out like a sore thumb. So you might leave the situation voluntarily, because it would be too uncomfortable to stay. When you leave, you leave whiteness behind you.

For those who are not white, whiteness can be experienced as wall: something solid, a body with mass that stops you from getting through. Whiteness can be like that crowd I discussed in chapter 2: many as momentum, many as movement. Things are fluid if you are going the way things are flowing. If you are not going that way, a flow acquires the density of a thing, something solid. What one body experiences as solid, another might experience as air.

A wall; no wall. There; nothing there.

Flight, bright, light, white.

There; nothing there. No wonder "there" can become despair.

Heavy, slow, down, brown.

When you speak of whiteness, it can then seem like you are making something from nothing. We speak of whiteness. We keep speaking of whiteness. Walls come up. Walls keep coming up. One time after I gave a talk on whiteness, a white man in the audience said, "But you're a professor?" You can hear the implication of this *but*: but look at you, Professor Ahmed, look how far you have gone! How easily we can become poster children for diversity, how easily we can be held up as proof that women of color are not held up. Being a diversity

poster child: it can make the world you come up against recede as if you bring it to an end; as if our arrival and progression makes whiteness disappear.

Look at you: look, look!

A diversity poster child.

I am supposed to smile.

I don't smile.

Your own body becomes used as evidence that the walls of which you speak are not there or are no longer there; as if you have eliminated the walls through your own progression. You got through, so they are not there. The figure of the wall maker discussed in the previous section is transformed into the wall breaker: as if by progressing and professing we bring the walls down.

When women of color become professors, this is not the only kind of reaction we receive. When a colleague of mine, a feminist of color, became a professor, someone said to her, "They give professorships to anyone these days." In one case you fulfill the fantasy of meritocracy, a singular brown body becoming shiny happy evidence of inclusion. In the other, the very fact of your arrival erodes the value of what it is that you enter, tarnishing something shiny. A wall can come up by how she becomes evidence that there are no walls (see: she was not stopped by being brown or female); or by how her progression becomes deflation (see: if she can become a professor, anyone can).

No wonder, when you bring up walls, some people just blink. It is another way in which you might encounter startle: the startle of what you bring up as well as the startle of turning up. And we are not simply talking here about a difference of view; some people see the world in one way, others in another way. When you bring up walls, you are challenging what lightens the load for some; you are questioning how space is occupied as being for some. You become a threat to the easing of a progression when you point out how a progression is eased.

Coming up against walls teaches us that social categories precede a bodily encounter, deciding how a body appears in an instant. This is where things get real. We have a way of responding to the arguments that gender and race are not material while class is material, an argument articulated so often that it feels like another wall, another blockage that stops us from getting through. The walls are precisely evidence of the materiality of race and gender; though of course this is a materiality that only some come up against. Many of the recent arguments against intersectionality, identity politics, and so on (this is not my *and so on*: this is not my sticking together of words as a way of sticking

together certain bodies, but one I have encountered in some recent writings by some Marxist writers, and by *some* I mean some) as being somehow less material than class can be understood as an enactment of privilege, the alignment of body to world. Race might seem immaterial or less material if you are white; gender might seem immaterial or less material if you are a cis man; sexuality might seem immaterial or less material if you are straight; (dis)ability might seem immaterial or less material if you are able-bodied, and so on. Class too can be understood in these terms: class might seem to be immaterial or less material if you benefit from class privilege, those networks and buffer zones; those ways a body is already somehow attuned to a bourgeois set of requirements.

If walls are how some bodies are stopped, walls are what you do not encounter when you are not stopped; when you pass through. Again: what is hardest for some does not exist for others.

ACADEMIC WALLS

In this section I want to think more about academic walls. Universities too have walls, and I am not only speaking of the mandate to become the police, to become Neighborhood Watch; to look over and at students with suspicion, to count the bodies of international students—are they all present; they are all present—although we can and must include that mandate.[1] It is through doing diversity work within the academy that I began to understand how walls are mechanisms; to understand how things keep their place. The diversity work I am describing in this section primarily relates to pointing out sexism and racism within citational practice (and by this I include not only who is cited in written texts but who is speaking at events). In my introduction to this book I described citations as academic bricks through which we create houses. When citational practices become habits, bricks form walls. I think as feminists we can hope to create a crisis around citation, even just a hesitation, a wondering, that might help us not to follow the well-trodden citational paths. If you aim to create a crisis in citation, you tend to become the cause of a crisis.

When we speak about what we come up against, we come up against what we speak about.

Another way of saying: walls come up when we talk about walls.

Diversity work is often about making points; we might call these sore points. You make public what you notice. You might point out that apparently open or neutral gatherings are restricted to some bodies and not others. You often

become a sore point when you point out such restrictions, almost as if, without pointing them out, they would not exist. In simple terms: when you notice a restriction, you cause a restriction.

For example, when you make an observation in public that the speakers for an event are all white men, or all but one, or the citations in an academic paper are to all white men, or all but a few, a rebuttal often follows that does not take the form of contradiction but rather explanation or justification: these are the speakers or writers who just happen to be there; they happen to be white men. You say: this event has a structure. The response becomes: this is an event, not a structure. It is as if by describing the event as having a structure, you are imposing a structure on the event. Even by describing a gathering as "white men," you are then assumed to be imposing certain categories onto bodies, reducing or failing to grasp the heterogeneity of an event; solidifying through your own description something that is fluid.

When you describe stabilization as worldly, a restriction in who gathers that is in the world, you are treated as stabilizing a world as if it is a thing. So much is invested in not noticing how social and institutional gatherings are restricted. There is what we might call a goodwill assumption that things have just fallen like that, the way a book might fall open at a page, and that it could just as easily fall another way, on another occasion. Of course the example of the book is instructive; a book will tend to fall open on pages that have been most read. As I explored in chapter 2, tendencies are acquired through repetition. A tendency is a direction: it is a leaning that way, a falling that way, a going that way. Once a tendency has been acquired, a conscious effort to go that way is no longer necessary. Things fall that way almost of their own accord. The reproduction of the same thing is precisely what does not have to be willed. No wonder there is so much investment in not recognizing how restrictions are structured by decisions that have already been made. These restrictions are precisely what do come into view. And no wonder diversity work is so trying: it takes a conscious willed effort not to reproduce an inheritance.

In the previous chapter I referred to diversity work as a cataloging of incidents.

A wall is a catalog.

A history of what comes up.

One time I pointed out that the speakers for a gender studies conference were all white. Someone replied that my statement did not recognize the diversity of the speakers. When perceiving whiteness is a way of not perceiving diversity, diversity becomes a way of not perceiving whiteness.

Another time I suggested an exercise on Twitter: go to the index of a book near to hand and count how many of the references are to men and to women. I did my exercise with a book that happened to be on my desk at the time (I was reading it for my project on utility). Out of hundreds of citations to individuals in the index, I could find only a few references to women. Two of these were telling: a woman referred to as the partner of a male artist; a woman referred to as a daughter of a male god.

Sexism: women as existing only in relation to men; women as female relatives.

I tweeted this finding, and the author replied that I had described the patterns right as "they were in the traditions that influenced" him. It is interesting that justifying sexism is one of the few times that passivity (*x* is in what I read, so *x* is in what I write) becomes a masculine and academic virtue. Sexism is justified as what is received because it is assumed as in what is received. Sexism becomes a received wisdom. Sexism, in other words, by being accepted as in the pattern or in the traditions is rendered not only acceptable but inevitable.

Sexism: the elimination of a gap between inheritance and reproduction.

One time I pointed out the whiteness of the field of new materialism. Someone invested in that field replied to me that it might be right to describe the field as white but that this whiteness was "not intended." Citational privilege: when you do not need to intend your own reproduction. Once something has been reproduced, you do not need to intend its reproduction. You have to do more not to reproduce whiteness than not to intend to reproduce whiteness. Things tend to fall how they have tended to fall unless we try to stop things from falling that way. An intending is required given this tending, given this tendency.

Another time I had a conversation with someone on Facebook about the masculinist nature of a certain field of philosophy. They responded with a "well of course," as if to say, well of course it is like that. It is the philosophy of technology. I have begun calling these kinds of arguments disciplinary fatalism: the assumption that we can only reproduce the lines that are before us. Disciplinary fatalism rests on the gender fatalism discussed in chapter 1, "boys will be boys" becoming "boys studying toys will be boys studying toys." We can note here how fatalistic arguments make something inevitable: it will be this way. They then record the consequence of their arguments as evidence of the argument: it is this way. The techniques that justify something as intrinsic are intrinsic to making something be what it is. A momentum is almost enough to keep things going that way; the force of a momentum is supplemented by justifications, denials, prompts, persuasions, which all participate in sustain-

ing a direction. A momentum lessens the effort required to bring something about (just as it increases the effort required not to bring something about, as I described in chapter 4). Individual effort is still required, perhaps at those moments of deviation, when the rightness of a path is questioned. A hand might then appear to stop things from going astray.

Another time I was invited to speak at a conference on phenomenology. I was sent the calls for papers, which referred to twelve white men and one white woman. I pointed out this citational practice, and the person who invited me was very apologetic; he said my point made him "feel somewhat ashamed." Perhaps we learn from this response how feminism becomes dismissible as moralizing: as if the point of making feminist points is to shame others, to make them feel bad. The discourse of moralizing is about how feminist ideas are received, not how they are sent out. After all, you can feel bad as a way of doing nothing, and we send out these letters because we want something to be done.

The histories of racism as well as sexism are littered with good intentions and bad feelings; they seem to bind together in a certain way, as if to say: by feeling bad, I mean well.

This invitation was not unusual: I have had numerous invitations to be a speaker at events when the calls for papers refer only to white men (or all but one). You can be invited to reproduce what you do not inherit. The wall breaker is about to make another appearance here. Whiteness can be reproduced by the assumption that by inviting you (somebody not white), they will bring an end to it. Whiteness: by invitation only. We do not bring an end to it. The genealogy remains the same despite or even through the extension of an invitation to somebody who is not part of that genealogy. Inviting those who are not white to insert themselves into whiteness can be how whiteness is reinserted.

If we question the genealogy, we learn the techniques for its reproduction. In his e-mail response, the person who invited me wrote that he knew of feminists and scholars of color working in this area and gave an explanation of why he did not cite them: "I believe my predominant mentioning of white men and the deficits in their theorizing is—in an unreflected way—owed to the circumstance that I do try to also cater to my more conservative colleagues, who I feel might need a kind of reassurance, achieved by citing people they are well acquainted with." Sexism and racism as citational practices are also a catering system; justified as a form of reassurance, a way of keeping things familiar for those who want to conserve the familiar. They are a way of keeping

acquaintance, a friendship network, a kinship network, something that white men do on behalf of other white men, to reassure them that the system in which they reproduce themselves will be reproduced.

A system in which we are acquainted is a system of acquaintances.

Friendly, like.

White men: a citational relational. Perhaps thought as such becomes something that happens "between men," to borrow the title of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's (1985) important book on homosociality. I have had so many experiences within the academy of how intellectual life is assumed to be between men. Another time a male professor writes an e-mail in which he mentions a new woman colleague appointed to his center. He notes her credentials. And then he writes that she was a student of such-and-such male professor. He then adds for emphasis, "Yes, the" such-and-such male professor, who was taught by another such-and-such male professor, and was friends with another such-and-such male professor. Yes, the: the letter was gushing about men, passing over the woman quickly to get to the main point/men point. She is mentioned only in relation to men: and the relationship between men (which reads like a closed circle, or a closing of a circle: male teachers, friends, colleagues) is established as the primary relationship.

Sexism: how women are introduced only to be passed over.

Another time I was interviewing a practitioner. She shared with me a story. She had been looking at the new web page of the senior management team at her university. They had just put up photographs of each member of the team. Her friend looked over her shoulder and asked, "Are they related?" Are they related? What a good question. Well perhaps they are not related in the sense of how we might usually use the word *related*. They are not related. Or are they? Each member of the team could be one of a kind. The homogeneity of an appearance registered by or in this question points to another sense of being related: being as relation. They were all, as it happens, white men. To use this expression is not to summarize a relation; the relation is itself a summary (how the institution can be built around a short series of points). The photograph gives us a summary of a summary: this is who the organization is; this is who the organization is for. Of course an image can change without changing a thing. This is why diversity is so often a poster: as I discussed in chapter 5, you can change the whiteness of an image in order to keep the whiteness of a thing.

When we talk of white men, we are describing something. We are describing an institution. An institution typically refers to a persistent structure

or mechanism of social order governing the behavior of a set of individuals within a given community. So when I am saying that white men is an institution, I am referring not only to what has already been instituted or built but the mechanisms that ensure the persistence of that structure. A building is shaped by a series of regulative norms. White men refers also to conduct; it is not simply who is there, who is here, who is given a place at the table, but how bodies are occupied once they have arrived.

In one course I taught, each year I taught it, some students assigned to my seminars would not turn up. Instead, they turned up in the class of the white male professor, taking his class even though they were assigned mine. I was so intrigued by what the explanation would be that I asked one of these students when she came to my office hour why she went to his class. "He's such a rock star," she sighed wistfully. And then, as if to give substance to her admiration, as if to explain this admiration in more educational or at least strategic terms, she added, "I want to go to America to do a PhD." She did not need to say more. Her ambition was offered as an explanation of a decision. She estimated that if you had a reference signed by white men, you would increase your own chances of moving up or moving forward in academic life. She had already digested an institutional diet, which is at once a social diet; higher = him. Note an estimation of a value that will be added is enough to add value.

White men: the origins of speculative philosophy, one might speculate.

Speculate, accumulate.

Another time, two academics, a brown woman and a white man, are presenting a shared research project. They are equal collaborators on the project; but he is a senior man, very distinguished, well known; perhaps he too is an academic rock star. He jokingly refers to her as "his wife" at the end of the presentation. He is describing how he sees their relation by joking about their relation: the husband, the author, the originator of ideas; the wife, the one who stands behind him. Maybe she provides helping hands; maybe she makes the tea. She doesn't of course; she provides ideas; she has ideas of her own. Her intellectual labor is hidden by a joke; how it is hidden is performed by the joke.

When it is not funny, we do not laugh.

I pointed out in chapter 2 how if you don't participate in something you are heard as being antagonistic toward something, whether or not you feel antagonistic. When you talk about white men, you are heard as making an accusation against him. Well, maybe I am talking about him: a pronoun is an institution. Him: for some to become him is to pass into them, a singular pronoun, a general body. To refer to white men is to refer to what as well as who has already

been assembled in a general sense. This is not to say that white men are not constantly being reassembled; you can meet up in the present; you can have a future meeting, because of how the past splinters into resources.

Maybe a brick is a chip off the old block. Reproduction and paternity are understood by this expression, "a chip off the old block," in terms of likeness: like from like. And if a chip comes from a block, a chip might also become a block from which another chip will come: like to like. Diversity workers have to chip at that block, or chip off the block.

Chip, chip.

Sharp.

Splinter.

I will come back to this expression "chip off the old block" in chapter 9. Diversity work teaches us about this block; how organizations become reproduced around and from the same bodies. One practitioner I interviewed called the mechanism "social cloning," referring to how organizations recruit in their own image. I attended a diversity training session. A fellow participant talked about how members of her department would ask whether potential job candidates would be "the kind of person you can take down to the pub." To become relatable is to restrict a relation; people you can relate to because they are at home not only in meeting rooms or the seminar rooms, but in social spaces, spaces that have their own histories. Norms might become more regulative the more casual the spaces.

When rules are relaxed, we encounter the rules.

Flinch.

How then is "white men" built or how is "white men" a building? Another practitioner relayed to me how they named buildings in her institution. All dead white men, she said. We don't need the names to know how spaces come to be organized so they can receive certain bodies. We don't need the names to know how or who buildings can be for. If citations are academic bricks, bricks too cite; bricks too can be white.

Whiteness: reassembled, brick by brick.

Another time, I pointed out that a speaker list for an event included only white men. I should add that this conference took place at Goldsmiths, where I work, and these kinds of "only white male" or "only but one" events happen regularly here, I suspect because of the kinds of bodies that tend to be organized under the rubric of critical theory. Someone says in reply that I sounded "very 1980s" and that he thought we had "got over" identity politics. Not only might we want to challenge the use of identity politics as a form of political

caricature, but we might want to think this over. Feminist and antiracist critique are heard as old-fashioned, as based on identity categories that we are assumed to be over. Some words are heard as dated; and those who use these words become those who lag behind.

This is how: it can be deemed more old-fashioned to point out that only white men are speaking at an event than to have only white men speaking at an event. I suspect that criticality—the self-perception that in being critical we do not have a problem or that in being critical we are over it—is often used and performed in these academic spaces. I have called critical racism and critical sexism this: the racism and sexism reproduced by those who think of themselves as too critical to reproduce racism and sexism.

Words like *racism* and *sexism* are heard as melancholic: as if we are holding on to something that has already gone. I have heard this viewpoint articulated by feminists: that focusing on racism and sexism is an overly negative and old-fashioned way of relating to the world, a bad habit or even a knee-jerk feminist response to traditions that we should embrace with more love and care.[2] If feminist critiques of racism and sexism are knee-jerk, we might need to affirm the intelligence of feminist knees. Even within feminism there is a sense of: we would do better, go further, if we could put these words and the very critical impulse behind us. Perhaps a critical impulse, the impulse to critique something, becomes another version of willfulness: as if she opposes things because she is being oppositional, as if her critique has become an automatic pilot, as if she cannot help herself. We learn as well then: theory is a social landscape like any other. It is probably true that you would travel further the less you use words like *racism* and *sexism*. Feminist work that does not use these words is more likely to travel back into wider academic discourse. Some words are lighter; other words weigh you down. If you use heavy words, you slow down. Heavier words are those that bring up histories that we are supposed to get over.

There are now many strategies for declaring racism as well as sexism over. In *On Being Included* (Ahmed 2012) I called these strategies "overing," strategies that imply these histories would be over if only we would get over them. Overing thus becomes a moral injunction. You are asked to get over it, as if what stops it from being over is that you are not over it. For example, one argument I hear often, whether made or implied, is that race and gender are human issues, so that being posthuman means in some way being postrace and postgender, or that gender and race are about subjects, so the injunction to get over it becomes "to get over ourselves." We could call this oversubjec-

tivity. The perception of feminists as having too much subjectivity (as overly subjective), which I discussed in chapter 3, becomes a requirement to give that subjectivity up; to give up.

A willfulness maxim is a refusal of this injunction: don't get over it if you are not over it. So yes: when histories have not gone, we might have to be willful to hold on. We will be judged as doing identity politics when we do not let go; when we labor over certain points, it will be assumed that it is because we are sore.

As I have already noted, when we describe how only certain bodies are speaking at an event, we are pointing out a structure. Pointing out structure is treated as relying on identity. Perhaps we are witnessing the effacement of structure under identity, not by those who are involved in what is called identity politics but by those who use identity politics to describe the scene of an involvement. Or, to put the argument even more strongly, when you point out structure, it is as if all you are doing is projecting your own identity onto the situation such that when you are describing who is missing, you are simply concerned with being missing yourself. White male genealogy is protected by the assumption that anyone who challenges that genealogy suffers from self-obsession. It is ironic, really, or perhaps not: you do not need to assert yourself when the genealogy does it for you. Also note how the two senses of diversity work become obscured here: as if you are only doing diversity because you are being diversity, because all you are doing is being a person of color or a woman concerned with her own exclusion (or both; being both is way too much being).

It is interesting how quickly and easily identity politics has become a charge, something that sounds intrinsically negative. Sometimes even mentioning race is enough to be judged as doing identity politics. Another time I respond on a Facebook wall to a blog that argues for the separation of ontology from politics. The blog included the following statement: "A great white shark eating a seal is simply an event that takes place in the world. It is simply something that happens. A person shooting another person is also, at the ontological level, simply an event that takes place." I write on a third party's wall: "Give more detail, show how things tend to fall: a white police officer shooting a black man and your ontological event is no mere happenstance." I gave some different details (a great white shark becomes a white police officer: I wanted the person-to-person encounter to echo the shark-to-seal encounter) to show how events can be "purely ontological" only if they are hypothetical, only if we strip subjects and objects of any attributes.

What follows? Much tangled discussion. My own use of the example of race is read by the blogger as an accusation against the blogger: "You rhetorically chose the example for a particular reason to try and position me as somehow indifferent to or supportive of racism." More responses: "We've become so accustomed to performing a shallow search for the most obvious or appealing or fashionable hook for explanations." And more: "The very clear position she took in responding to [blogger], namely that he was wicked for observing that shootings exist without immediately making appeals to identity politics." And more: "[Blogger] argued that the thing called 'a shooting' exists. That's not saying little, apparently, since it's so controversial. That was Ahmed's reaction, actually: no, you can't say that things exist; you have to choose my favourite political lens with which to talk about them." And more: "People like Sarah [*sic*] will tend to ignore other, perhaps more telling objects and trajectories because they have already *found* their necessary and sufficient cause through their over-determined political lens. Nothing really learned; we expected Sarah [*sic*] to come to that conclusion." One might comment here on flaming and the rather monstrous nature of any virtual conversations across blogs and walls. The use of racism as an example becomes an accusation made against someone (one of the most efficient techniques for not addressing racism is to hear racism as an accusation); a fashionable hook that stops us from searching for more complex causes; a political lens that distorts what we can see; a conclusion that is already made. Racism becomes a foreign as well as foreigner word: what gets in the way of description; what is imposed upon what would otherwise be a neutral or even happy situation (something that just happens).

A wall becomes a defense system. Sexism and racism are reproduced by the techniques that justify the reproduction. When these words are dismissed, we are witnessing a defense of the status quo: it is a way of saying, there is nothing wrong with this; what is wrong is the judgment that there is something wrong with this. The very systematic nature of sexism and racism is obscured because of the systematic nature of sexism and racism: so many of those incidents that wear us down, that we don't speak of, that we have learned not to speak of. We have learned to sever the connection between this event, and that, between this experience and that. To make a connection is thus to restore what has been lost (where loss should be understood as an active process); it is to generate a different picture. Apparently unrelated phenomena, things that seem "just to happen," to fall this way or that, become part of a system, a system that works. It is a system that works because of how it smooths progression.

We need to throw a wrench in the works, to stop the system from working. Or to borrow Sarah Franklin's (2015) evocative terms, we need to become a "wench in the works." Before we can do that, before we can be that, we have to recognize that there is a system. And we have to recognize that it is working.

Making feminist points, antiracist points, sore points, is about pointing out structures that many are invested in not recognizing. That is what an institutional brick wall is: a structure that many are invested in not recognizing. It is not simply that many are not bruised by this structure. It is also that they are progressing through the reproduction of what is not made tangible. When we are talking of sexism as well as racism, we are talking about systems that support and ease the progression of some bodies.

Sexism and racism can also ease the progression of some bodies through the distribution of labor. I remember reading an academic reference in which a young white male academic was described as "the next [male professor]." I have no doubt that such expectations can be experienced as pressure points. But think about the narrative of nextness: there is a waiting for the next such-and-such, such that when a body arrives who can inherit that position, he is given that position. And then: if you are perceived as the next such-and-such, you might be given more time to become him. Sexism and racism become systems of inheritance in which white men are freed up to take the place of other white men. More time to become him translates as more time to develop your ideas, your thoughts, your research. A way is cleared that enables or eases the progression of some bodies. And that way is cleared by requiring that others do less-valued work, housework; the work that is required for the reproduction of their existence. If your way is not cleared, you might end up part of the clearing system for others, doing the work they are released from doing. Sexism and racism enable some to travel faster. Sexism and racism slow other bodies down; holding them up, stopping them moving forward at the same rate.

CONCLUSION: THE MASTER'S RESIDENCE

I want to return to the Grimm story "The Willful Child" discussed in chapter 3. This story is also an institutional story. It is a story that circulates within institutions. It offers a warning, a threat: speak up and you will be beaten. The story is also an invitation to those who are at risk of identification with the wayward arm: become the rod as a way of avoiding the consequences of being beaten. Become the rod: too much violence is abbreviated here. But

we witness the endless invitations to identify with those who discipline as a way of being disciplined without being beaten. No wonder: the willful child comes up whenever there is a questioning of institutional will. Whenever, say, she brings up sexism or racism, the willful child quickly comes after her: as if to say, speak up and her fate will be yours. There are many within institutions who cannot afford that fate; there are many who cannot raise their arms in protest even when the will of the institution is exposed as violence, even when that violence is directed against many. We need to give support to those who are willing to expose the will of the institution as violence; we need to become our own support system, as I explore in more detail in part III, so that when she speaks up, when she is, as she is, quickly represented as the willful child who deserves her fate, who is beaten because her will is immature and impoverished, she will not be an arm coming up alone; she will not be an arm all on her own.

In the conclusion to chapter 3, I assembled a feminist army of arms. Perhaps the arm in the Grimm story is also a feminist point. To make a feminist point is to go out on a limb. No wonder the arm keeps coming up. She makes a sore point. She is a sore point. We keep saying it because they keep doing it: assembling the same old bodies, doing the same old things. She keeps coming up because there is so much history to bring up. But when she comes up, this history is what is not revealed. Her arm is spectacular; when she makes these points, she becomes the spectacle. Her soreness becomes the spectacle. And no wonder: what follows her aims to discipline her. And no wonder: what precedes her aims to warn her. If we are to bring the walls down, we have to be willing to keep coming up, whatever precedes or follows.

When the arms come up, they come up against walls: that which keeps the master's residence standing. Arms in the labor and effort of what they come up against show us what is not over, what we do not get over. It can take willfulness to insist on this *not over* because the masters will not admit this world as their residence. To recognize the walls would get in the way of their standing, because it would make explicit that this standing (as intellects, say, as the originators of ideas, say) depends on histories that have sedimented as physical barriers to the progression of others. When we push against these walls, we are pushing against what does not appear to those who have been given residence. And when we do this kind of diversity work, trying to bring the house down by showing what stands up, like a statue that turns a violent past into a memorial,[3] there will be consequences. The judgment of willfulness will find us. Even to question what or who is standing is to become a vandal,

a "willful destroyer of what is beautiful or venerable."[4] When the judgment of willfulness finds us, we find others through the judgment.

Arms: we need them to keep coming up. The arm that keeps coming up out of the grave, out of a death that has been and will be a collective assignment, can signify persistence and protest or, perhaps even more importantly, persistence as protest. We need to give the arms something to reach for. Or perhaps we are the ones being reached by the arms. After all, we know some of us are only here now on these grounds because arms in history have refused to keep laboring, to keep building or holding up the walls that secure the master's residence. We are here because the arms were striking; because the arms are striking. Arms in history, hands that clench into fists, arms as protest signs, arms raised as salute, arms that say, do not shoot. Some of us are only here now on these grounds because those arms in history have spoken, a history that is now, a history that is still.

We strike at what is still. Audre Lorde titled an essay with a proclamation: "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (1984a, 110–13). In that unflinching "will never" is a call to arms: do not become the master's tool!