



# On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life

*Sara Ahmed*

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## **On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life** Sara Ahmed

What does diversity do? What are we doing when we use the language of diversity? Sara Ahmed offers an account of the diversity world based on interviews with diversity practitioners in higher education, as well as her own experience of doing diversity work. Diversity is an ordinary, even unremarkable, feature of institutional life. Yet diversity practitioners often experience institutions as resistant to their work, as captured through their use of the metaphor of the "brick wall." *On Being Included* offers an explanation of this apparent paradox. It explores the gap between symbolic commitments to diversity and the experience of those who embody diversity. Commitments to diversity are understood as "non-performatives" that do not bring about what they name. The book provides an account of institutional whiteness and shows how racism can be obscured by the institutionalization of diversity. Diversity is used as evidence that institutions do not have a problem with racism. *On Being Included* offers a critique of what happens when diversity is offered as a solution. It also shows how diversity workers generate knowledge of institutions in attempting to transform them.

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