

to the upholding of white supremacy, can we begin to imagine other ways of being in relation and join LGBTIQ People of Color in their struggles to dismantle white supremacy.

## 1.2 A FEW WORDS ON FORMAL DECISIONS

In this book, I sometimes use first-person plural pronouns (i.e. ‘we,’ ‘us,’ and ‘our’) when writing about white people, LGBTIQ people, and/or white LGBTIQ people. I belong to all of these groups and I find it important to remind myself as well as the readers of this book that I am part of the dynamics I am analyzing here. I experience oppression and I contribute to the oppression of others. I am part and parcel of what I write about not an ‘objective outsider’ writing about ‘interesting phenomena’ that have nothing to do with my life. The ‘we’ I use in this book is a small ‘we’ if you will. It indicates my inclusion in the groups I am writing about, but it does not necessarily include you, the reader. Sometimes you will be part of the ‘we’ I use, sometimes you will not. My use of ‘we’ in no way tries to subsume you or make any kind of assumption about you. I simply try to be honest in marking where I stand. If you are not part of the ‘we’ I use, then we are in some sense separated by our experiences of the systems of oppression I write about. I believe it is important to be honest about these separations as well because only if we acknowledge them, do we have any chance of overcoming what separates us.

Sometimes I also use third-person plural pronouns (i.e. ‘they,’ ‘them,’ and ‘their’) when I write about groups to which I belong. This is to indicate that even though oppression separates us into different groups who share certain experiences, we are not all the same, neither with regard to our position vis-à-vis other systems of oppression nor with regard to our politics. Thus, when I write about white people and/or LGBTIQ people who I feel have little in common with me, I often use third person plural pronouns to indicate a measure of distance. Neither commonality nor distance are absolute, of course, so that my choice of pronouns is largely dependent on my idiosyncratic sense of proximity as well as the specific flow of my argument. So bear with me if you stumble across my pronoun usage, and let them be a reminder to you that oppression positions and separates us but does not determine us.

I capitalize all terms referring to groups that have formed and chosen to name themselves in resistance against racism and colonialism, such as ‘Black,’ ‘Indigenous,’ ‘People of Color’ (and other compounds like ‘Women of Color’ or

‘Gays and Lesbians of Color’). This is a common practice to highlight that these are political self-definitions shaped in response to racism, *not* descriptions of skin-color or other physical features. Even though the term ‘white’ is also not to be misunderstood as an apparently ‘self-evident’ description of a particular range of skin colors, I specifically do not capitalize this term because whiteness denotes the dominant position within racist and colonialist systems of oppression. It refers to the group of people who, for the past 500 years, have invented, upheld, and benefitted from racism and colonialism. The term ‘white’ can therefore never be understood as a positive self-identification that marks a position of resistance against oppression.

I attempt to reproduce quotations exactly as they were originally written. I do not follow the custom of marking ‘mistakes’ by including [sic] in quotes. To me, this practice feels condescending and elitist in that it upholds standards of ‘correct language’ and shames authors who for whatever reason cannot or do not want to conform to that standard. I realize that not marking ‘mistakes’ leaves open the question whether the ‘mistakes’ are part of the original text or due to my erroneous copying of the text. This ambiguity is the prize that has to be paid for respecting the authors’ own spelling and word choices, regardless of whether or not I deem them to be ‘correct.’

Because my first language is German and this book was written in a German context, it includes a comparatively large number of quotes from German authors. All translations of these quotes are mine unless otherwise noted. Because the entire book is written in English, I do not presume that all readers understand German. For this reason, I put the translated quotes in the text and the original German versions in footnotes so that they do not interrupt the flow of reading.

I quote a large number of texts that liberally use various forms of emphasis. For ease of reading I do not specify each time that the emphases were, indeed, part of the original. I specifically note whenever I added an emphasis of my own.

### 1.3 HOW I CAME TO WRITE THIS BOOK

I grew up as an only-child in one of the more working-class dominated, but still solidly middle-class suburbs of Frankfurt/Main during the 1980s and 90s. Both my parents worked in large, international banks in Frankfurt. When I was two, my mother quit her salaried job to become my full-time caretaker. Parts of my family have deep roots in the area in and around Frankfurt. Other parts hailed