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RECOGNIZING RACE: THE IMPACT OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY FEMINIST MOVEMENTS ON RACE RELATIONS IN WEST GERMANY

by

Lindsey Stobaugh

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate School,
the College of Arts and Sciences
and the School of Humanities
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

After World War II, many West German women had a difficult time coming to terms with the atrocities that the National Socialist leadership committed during that war, as well as their own participation in the Party. Discussions of the roles of women within twentieth-century society began to grow in West Germany as the new women's movement (*die Neue Fraenbewegung*) emerged from 1960s student protests. This movement included primarily middle-class white German women. They often dismissed their participation in Party racism by framing themselves as victims of a patriarchal regime. As German women discussed these matters, they ignored the race issues that existed within their own society. As an increase in racial tension spread throughout West Germany in the 1980s, Black German women faced both gendered and racial discrimination. It was during this time that these women unified and asserted their presence in Germany through the creation of the Afro-German feminist movement. Much of the historiography surrounding the Afro-German feminist movement focuses on the significant impact it had on the ability of Afro-German women to establish a collective identity. This thesis, however, will add to this historiography by looking at the ways in which the Afro-German feminist movement interacted with the new women's movement in West Germany and how it influenced greater discussions of race and issues of racism among white feminists.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the help and support of many individuals. First, I would like to thank Dr. Allison Abra, my committee chair, for her advice, guidance, and constant support throughout this journey. In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Heather Stur and Dr. Brian LaPierre for serving on my committee and introducing me to important new ways in which I can expand this topic in the future. I would also like to extend a thank you to the individuals at the FFBIZ Feminist Archive in Berlin who so kindly sent me material due to distance and limitations caused by COVID-19.

The past two years have been difficult in ways I could have never imagined. With the added stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the encouragement and support from family and friends has proven to be invaluable in helping me through this process. I would first like to thank my parents for always supporting me through life, no matter what. I would also like to thank Jenna Campbell, Colin Damms, and Cody Turnbaugh. I am so grateful for their friendships and constant encouragement throughout this time. Lastly, I would like to thank Zach Calhoun and our wonderful cat Lucky for always being there to celebrate my successes and comfort me in the most difficult of times.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my father, Richard Stobaugh. For as long as I can remember we have bonded over our shared interest in history. Without his persistent encouragement to pursue a master's degree and his continued support along the way, I would likely not be where I am today.

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

In 1984, "Black, lesbian, feminist, warrior, poet, mother" Audre Lorde arrived in West Berlin at the invitation of white German feminist Dagmar Schultz to become a guest professor at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American studies at the Free University of Berlin. According to Schultz, one of the first questions Lorde asked was, "Where are the Black Germans?"[1] This question, seemingly simple at first glance, holds an extremely significant amount of weight as it is representative of the racial dynamics that existed throughout West German society for the majority of the twentieth century. While Black Germans had existed for many decades, before the mid-1980s they were disconnected from one another and extremely underrepresented in every corner of German society, including the social movements that flourished from the 1960s onward. This thesis focuses specifically on the West German women's movement and how the unique struggles and needs of Black German women went largely ignored by white German women and feminists until the mid- to late- 1980s. I will argue that it was not until this time, with the emergence of the Afro-German feminist movement and through the teachings and activism of women such as Audre Lorde and Dagmar Schultz, that race became a significant topic of concern or discussion among white German women.

During the 1960s, Germany, like many other Western countries, saw the rise of a New Left that encompassed young individuals who had become dissatisfied with the existing power structures. Members of this movement "aimed to create a society based an

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[1] Dagmar Schultz, "Audre Lorde: The Berlin Years 1984 to 1992: The Making of the Film and its Reception," *Feminist Studies* 40, no. 1 (2014), 199, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.15767/feministstudies.40.1.199.

anti-authoritarian, anti-fascist, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist principles."[2] The leading organization of the West German New Left was the Socialist German Student League (*Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund*/SDS). While women were involved in the New Left and the German SDS, they felt restricted because conventional gender norms governed their positions and activities. For example, many of these women were subjected to secretarial work; male members discouraged them from running for official positions within the organization; and many believed the only way to move up the hierarchy within the organization was to sleep with its male members.[3] Because of this, in the spring of 1968, women within the SDS established their own organization called the Action Council for Women's Liberation (*Aktionsrat zur Befreiung der Frauen*). The purpose of this organization, according to a flyer disseminated by these women, was to create a space for women to come together and "articulate and organize [their] unequal situation."[4]

Later that same year, on September 12, a spokeswoman for the Action Council for Women's Liberation gave a speech at the 23rd Delegates' Conference of the SDS that signified the beginning of the new women's movement in Germany. During a debate about organizational problems, feminist filmmaker Helke Sander stood up in front of the all-male panel and gave a speech in which she criticized the organization for its patriarchal structure and called on men and women within the organization to work

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[2] Katharina Karcher, *Sisters in Arms: Militant Feminisms in the Federal Republic of Germany Since 1968* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2020), 3.

[3] "Die Rosen Zeiten Sind Vorbei," *Der Speigel,* November 25, 1968, trans. DeepL Translator, accessed October 3, 2020, https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-45921992.html.

[4] *Aktionsrat für die Befreiung der Frau-Flugblatt*, (Cologne, Germany: FrauenMediaTurm-Feminist Archive and Library), accessed October 3, 2020, https://frauenmediaturm.de/neue-frauenbewegung/aktionsrat-befreiung-frau-flugblatt-1968/.

together to “tackle the oppression of women.”[5] After Sander completed her speech, the members of the panel continued to discuss other issues without addressing her complaints. In protest, a woman named Sigrid Rüder stood up and pelted six ripe tomatoes at the speaker, Hans-Jürgen Krahl, after shouting “Counterrevolutionary. . . agent of the class enemy!”[6] Many historians point to this event as the starting point of the new German women’s movement because it encouraged large numbers of women to become involved in and to take action against their oppressors. A few years later in March 1971, these women held a national women’s conference in Frankfurt, and according to German feminist Edith Hoshino Altbach, this was when German women “knew they had a movement.”[7]

The women involved in this new women’s movement were predominantly white Germans, regardless of the fact that many Black German women faced similar – and distinctive – struggles. Historian Sara Lennox points out how these white women, who had been involved in the SDS and fought against imperialist and racist policies in other countries, largely ignored the racism within their own movement and in West German society.[8] Following American occupation after World War II, a small but visible population of mixed-race German children emerged as a result of relations between white German women and Allied soldiers of color—mainly African American GIs. These children were often derogatorily referred to as *Mischlingskinder* (mixed-breed children).

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[5] “Hü und Hott,” *Der Spiegel,* September 23, 1968, trans. www.deepl.com, https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-45935475.html and Karcher, *Sisters in Arms,* 6.

[6] “Hü und Hott,” *Der Spiegel*.

[7] Edith Hoshino Altbach, “The New German Women’s Movement,” in *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature,* ed. Altbach, Edith Hoshino, et al. (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1984), 6.

[8] Sarah Lennox, “Divided Feminism: Women, Racism, and German National Identity,” *German Studies* Review 18, no. 3 (1995): 481, https://doi.org/10.2307/1431776.

According to Heide Fehrenbach, the increase of Black German children prompted discussions of race within Germany among officials and scientists. Influenced by American race relations and social science, rather than referring to race in terms of nationality or ethnicity as had been done in the past, German officials began to define race in terms of "color," and more specifically on a black-white binary.[9] Fehrenbach states, "as a result, the attribution of racialized identities previously and lethally targeted by the German state before 1945—whether Jewish, Slavic, or 'Mongoloid/Asiatic'—disappeared from official record-keeping on postwar reproduction. What remained were distinctions of nationality on the one hand and Blackness on the other."[10] Therefore, Black Germans were defined by their skin color, rather than their Germanness.

Because of this, many Black Germans felt (and still feel) excluded from German society. Black German women, specifically, have discussed and written about their experiences with isolation and how the lack of a collective Black German identity or culture throughout West Germany impacted their lives. This lack of identity and culture began to change, however, in 1984 with the arrival of Audre Lorde. Before Lorde entered Berlin, Black German women were fragmented. They had not formed a common identity among themselves, and, therefore, did not have a space to address or discuss these issues. As a result, many of these women had to endure alone the racism they experienced within the majority white German society. Upon Lorde's arrival, however, she encouraged Black German women to unite and to begin discussing and addressing their positions within Germany's current society, as well as its history. As a result, the Afro-German

[9] Heide Fehrenbach, "Black Occupation Children and the Devolution of the Nazi Racial State," in *Remapping Black Germany: New Perspectives on Afro-German History, Politics, and Culture*, ed. Sara Lennox (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 208, 211.

[10] Fehrenbach, "Black Occupation Children," 208.

feminist movement arose in 1984. As this thesis will demonstrate, the rise of the Afro-German feminist movement also had a significant impact on white German women as they began to come to terms with their involvement in Germany's past and present racism. These discussions were further propelled by the efforts of white German feminist Dagmar Schultz as she worked tirelessly to spread anti-racist sentiment among white German women, and challenged them to confront their whiteness its impact on themselves and on others.

Historiography

One of the first and most significant achievements of the Afro-German feminist movement was the publication of *Farbe bekennen: Afro-deutsche Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte* in 1986 (translated into English under the title *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out* in 1992). This was the first publication by and about Black German women that addressed the long history of Black people within German society. It includes the publication of Afro-German feminist May Ayim's[11] master's thesis, which was the first historical work to trace the history of Africans in Germany beginning in the Middle Ages. In addition, it incorporates many personal accounts and conversations among Afro-German women who discuss their experiences of growing up Black in Germany. Many historians often point to this publication as the start of Afro-German activism in German history; however, Asoka Esuruoso and Phillip Khabo Koepsell argue that it should be viewed rather as a "transition point" in Afro-German

[11] Formerly May Opitz. Opitz was the surname of Ayim's foster family. Ayim had an extremely difficult and abusive childhood. In 1992 she took her father's family name, Ayim, as a penname after the German government would not allow her to legally change her name. See May Ayim, *Blues in Black and White: A Collection of Essays, Poetry, and Conversations,* trans. Anne V. Adams (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 2002), 13, 145. While her name was still Opitz at the publication of *Farbe bekennen*, I will be referring to her as Ayim throughout this paper for consistency and clarity.

history. As Ayim points out in *Showing Our Colors,* Black people had existed in Germany for centuries, which challenges the traditional belief that their history started during post-World War II occupation. Esuruoso and Koepsell argue that starting the history of Black activism in 1986 overlooks and discredits the work that previous generations had done.[12]

That being said, however, there is no question that Audre Lorde's arrival, the publication of *Farbe bekennen*, and the establishment of Black German organizations such as the ISD (*Initiative Schwarze Deutsche*/Initiative of Black Germans) and ADEFRA (*Afro-Deutsche Frauen*/Afro-German Women) was the start of a unified and organized Afro-German feminist movement. In her essay, "Knowledges of (Un-)Belonging," Maureen Maisha Eggers points out how significant Black German women, specifically, were in the naming of the movement, the production of knowledge about the movement, and in the politicization of the movement. Throughout this essay, Eggers explores how epistemic production, more so than social mobilization alone, contributes to the delegitimization of "historicized racialized knowledges."[13]

Eggers separates the Black women's movement in Germany into three periods, "an outward movement, an inward movement, and a movement toward transformative action." She argues that each period can be defined by the different goals and ways in which it impacted the "(hegemonic) mainstream" of German society.[14] According to

[12] Asoka Esuruoso and Phillip Khabo Koepsell, "Introduction Alpha," in *Arriving in the Future: Stories of Home and Exile*, ed. Asoka Esuruoso and Phillip Khabo Koepsell (Berlin, Germany: epubli GmbH, 2014), 12.

[13] Maureen Maisha Eggers, "Knowledges of (Un-)Belonging: Epistemic Change as Defining Mode for Black Women's activism in Germany," in *Remapping Black Germany: New Perspectives on Afro-German History, Politics, and Culture*, ed. Sara Lennox (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 33-34.

[14] Eggers, "Knowledges of (Un-)Belonging," 34.

Eggers, during the outward movement, Black German women aimed the production of knowledge outward as a way to assert their presence within German society and to educate white Germans about their experiences. The establishment of organizations such as the ISD and ADEFRA, then, marked the shift of epistemic production inward. Eggers states that during this second phase of the movement, these women began to focus on building up the movement from within, by "defining and clarifying collective positions on issues affecting the quality of the daily lives of Black subjects in Germany."[15] She then states that from the 1990s onward, the movement's main goal has been to utilize its epistemic production of the past to transform German society as a whole to one that is more inclusive and understanding of Black Germans and their history.[16] Throughout this thesis, I will be focusing on the period Eggers refers to as the "outward movement" and examining the impact its epistemic production had on white German women's ideas about race and race relations.

Historians have also shown how the concept of race has gone through many stages in German history. While Heide Fehrenbach has discussed the reconceptualization of race after World War II in response to the growing mixed-race population, the exclusion of Afro-Germans from German cultural identity has been examined further by Tina Campt. According to Campt, the mainstream German cultural identity places "Germanness" and "Blackness" in separate categories. She states, "in German society, the 'racial identity' of blackness is imposed as a set of socio-ideologically constructed meanings, which equate blackness with exteriority to German culture, marginality within German society, and the status of 'foreign/er' in social relations." She argues that one

[15] Eggers, "Knowledges of (Un-)Belonging," 39.
[16] Eggers, "Knowledges of (Un-)Belonging," 34.

implication of this identity structure is that a German identity is contingent on whiteness.[17] Throughout her essay, Campt utilizes the dialogue between three Afro-German feminists published in *Farbe bekennen* to exemplify the exclusion of Afro-Germans in German culture, but she points out that in 1984 with the help of Audre Lorde, these women gained the strength to claim both identities.[18] Throughout this thesis I will look at the ways in which this assertiveness by Afro-German women to claim their German identity prompted discussions of race, belonging, and participation in racism among white feminists.

In addition, an understanding of how West Germany formed modern conceptions of race is essential to understanding why Black German women were left out of the German feminist movement. Sara Lennox states the exclusion of Afro-German women from the mainstream feminist movement can partly be contributed to white German feminists' rejection of national party politics and their "commitment to global sisterhood," which "seemed to make their German identity not very relevant."[19] The rejection of German identity among white German feminists played a large role in debates surrounding women's roles in National Socialism and racism of the past. Lennox points out how German philosopher and social scientist Christina Thürmer-Rohr argued that many German women denied their German identity as a way to reject their participation in the nation's past and current racist practices.[20] According to this logic, if

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[17] Tina Campt, "Afro-German Cultural Identity and the Politics of Positionality: Contests and Contexts in the Formation of a German ethnic Identity," *New German Critique,* no. 58 (1993): 113, https://doi.org/ 10.2307/488390.
[18] Campt, "Afro-German Cultural Identity," 113.
[19] Lennox, "Divided Feminism," 481-482.
[20] Lennox, "Divided Feminism," 484.

these women rejected their Germanness, they were also rejecting their participation within National Socialism and the racist policies and practices of their country.

Much literature exists that discusses the debates surrounding German women's participation, or lack thereof, in racist policies of the past, most notably during the Third Reich. Some scholars, such as Gisela Bock, have placed *all* women in the position of potential victimhood by arguing that women did not have agency within the oppressive patriarchal Nazi regime, and therefore could not have been perpetrators of its crimes. However, others such as Thürmer-Rohr and Claudia Koonz have argued that women did play an active role in upholding the Nazi system because the domestic work they performed as wives and mothers in the "private sphere" "contributed to the stability of the Nazi system."[21] However, none of these works discuss race or attempt to assess the impact that these women's whiteness had on their experiences. This is largely because discussions of race became extremely taboo in the decades following National Socialism for reasons that will be discussed throughout the third chapter of this thesis. In addition, according to Rita Chin, "the preoccupation with Holocaust remembrance prevented Germans from seeing other, more immediate forms of race thinking and racism that persist[ed] in their democracy."[22] This thesis, then, focuses on the emergence of discussions about race that were exchanged between Black and white feminists in West Germany as a result of the establishment of the Afro-German feminist movement in 1984.

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[21] Adelheid von Saldern, "Victims or Perpetrators? Controversies About the Role of Women in the Nazi State," in *Nazism and German Society, 1933-1945,* ed. David F. Crew (London, UK: Routledge, 1994), 100.

[22] Rita Chin et al., *After the Nazi Racial State: Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2009), 23.

The recognition of racism within the white German women's movement also required these women to acknowledge their whiteness, and its impacts and privileges. In her essay, "Boundless Whiteness," Susan Arndt argues that throughout history, feminism has focused on white women, and states that whiteness was and continues to be the "unspoken norm" of the movement.[23] She discusses how, unlike non-white individuals, white individuals often do not acknowledge their race. She states the reason for this relates to the fact that whiteness has become so normalized throughout Western societies. She points out that when white Germans were asked why they failed to mention their whiteness or use it as a descriptive characteristic, they often replied that they did not see it as important, and that they rejected such "'racial' attributions as dangerous."[24] This is further evidence that because of their past, most Germans have refused to acknowledge racial differences within their society. This does not mean that racial tensions did not and do not exist within German society, but that they are not acknowledged, and therefore largely ignored. As Arndt argues, by failing to recognize racial constructions and categories as an historical reality, the privileges embedded in whiteness as a result of past and present global power structures cannot be fully realized, and therefore cannot be addressed and reassessed.[25]

White German feminist Dagmar Schultz recognized this issue within the German feminist movement. Inspired by her involvement in the African American Civil Rights Movement, in 1981 she wrote an article for *Courage,* a German feminist magazine, in

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[23] Susan Arndt, "Boundless Whiteness? Feminism and White Women in the Mirror of African Feminist Writing," in *Body, Sexuality, and Gender: Versions and Subversions in African Literatures 1,* ed. Flora Veit-Wild and Dirk Naguschewski (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Rodopi, 2005), 158.

[24] Arndt, "Boundless Whiteness," 159.

[25] Arndt, "Boundless Whiteness," 160.

which she addressed white German women and encouraged them to be more mindful of their whiteness and to recognize their own roles in racist ideas and practices. Throughout this thesis, I will argue that Schultz was one of the main perpetrators of discussions of race within the German feminist movement, and that these discussions became more prominent after the establishment of the Afro-German feminist movement in 1984. As Arndt points out in her essay, racism within a certain society cannot be fully understood until white individuals recognize and address the implications of their whiteness. This idea will be discussed throughout this thesis in relation to the German feminist movement.

Sources

As the focus of this thesis concerns discussions about race among German feminists, its primary source base relies heavily on magazine and journal articles, memoirs and personal essays, speeches, and documentaries. In addition, many sources have required translation. This has been accomplished through the use of my own knowledge of the language, as well as with help from an online translator. Other sources, such as memoirs and documentaries, have already been translated into English.

Magazine and journal articles make up the majority of my primary sources throughout this project. The popular German news magazine *Der Spiegel*, which began publication in 1947 has proven useful for research surrounding occupation and for information about the student and women's movements. In addition, I utilize articles from several German feminist magazines including *Courage, Emma,* and *Beiträge zur feministischen theorie und praxis (Contributions to Feminist Theory and Practice).* *Courage* began circulation in June 1976 by a feminist collective and was very openly

socialist. Its founders were interested in creating an autonomous space for women, completely separate from male leftist politics. This magazine provided West German feminists with “a broad view of movement happenings, original analysis, and a regular forum for discussion of major issues” with articles written by a wide variety of individuals with varying skill levels, including academics, doctors, journalists, and activists.[26]

In contrast to *Courage,* the popular feminist magazine *Emma,* founded by Alice Schwarzer in 1977, included discussions about reformist politics and was much less radical in its orientation. Staffed by professional female journalists, many socialist feminists criticized *Emma* for downplaying the radicalization of the women’s movement and saw it as “an elitist, reformist and capitalist venture.”[27] This ideological divide between these two magazines can perhaps help to explain the differences among their content. While *Courage* included discussions of racism and critical analyses of white German feminist participation within that racism, Schwarzer herself, in an article published in *Emma* in 1993, attempted to avoid discussions of race among women by blaming past and present racism on men.[28] It is debates such as these that will be addressed throughout this thesis, but specifically in the last chapter.

Beiträge zur feministischen theorie und Praxis, which existed from 1978 to 2008, includes many discussions of race and racism. Each edition of this magazine includes articles surrounding a main topic or theme. In 1990, the twenty-seventh issue’s theme

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[26] Miriam Frank, “Feminist Publications in West Germany Today,” *New German Critique,* no. 13 (1978): 182, https://doi.org/ 10.2307/3115195.

[27] Frank, “Feminist Publications,” 182-184.

[28] Alice Schwarzer, “Frauenhaß & Fremdenhaß,” *Emma*, January/February, 1993, accessed September 5, 2020, https://www.emma.de/lesesaal/45328#pages/.

was Racism, Anti-Semitism, and Xenophobia within the feminist movement.[29] This issue, specifically, will provide much of the information surrounding discussions about racism within the various German feminist movements.

In addition, the meticulous records taken and kept by Dagmar Schultz surrounding her efforts and those of Audre Lorde have proven indispensable to this project. Schultz has written in detail about her experiences in the United States and her involvement in the Civil Rights Movement, as well as her time in the German women's movement. Beginning in the early 1980s, Schultz was aware of how significant Audre Lorde's presence and work would be to current and future generations of white and Black German women, and as a result recorded almost every seminar, poetry reading, and public discussion that Lorde participated in. Schultz has since published many of these recordings in the 2012 film *Audre Lorde: The Berlin Years from 1984 to 1992,* as well as in the recent book *Audre Lorde: Dream of Europe: Selected Seminars and Interviews 1982-1992*.

Chapter Outline

Each of these primary sources help to inform the arguments made throughout the chapters of this thesis. Chapter two will point out the major impacts that the rise of a new mixed-race population had on West German society and racial ideology following World War II. Using Hiede Fehrenbach's extensive research on the subject, combined with a variety of other secondary and primary sources, I will then examine how these new racial ideologies influenced West German policy concerning mixed-race children. I will also discuss the "solutions" that were enacted to address this new population. Using personal

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[29] *Beiträge zur Feministischen Theorie und Praxis: Rassismus, Antisemitismus, Fremdenhaß: Geteilter Feminismus*, 27, no. 1 (1990).

accounts of Black German women, specifically Ika Hügel-Marshall's memoir *Invisible Women: Growing Up Black in Germany* and accounts in *Showing our Colors,* this chapter will also discuss the impact that these policies had on the lives of Black Germans by examining their experiences with isolation and the absence of a collective Black German identity prior to 1984. It ends with a discussion of how these women's experiences motivated them to establish and assert a new Afro-German identity within German society, which I argue was essential for the emergence of discussions about race among white German feminists.

The third chapter will begin with a discussion of why and how race became a taboo subject in West Germany by the 1960s and examine how this led to tensions between Black and white women, specifically. While there were a few Black German women who attempted to become involved in the mainstream white German women's movement, race and racism were often dismissed as a non-issue. This chapter will then provide an in-depth discussion of Dagmar Schultz and why she was so significant in establishing discussions about race and racism within the white feminist movement. Schultz's ideas about race were greatly inspired by her time in the United States and her involvement in the African American Civil Rights Movement in Chicago, Illinois and Holly Springs, Mississippi. When she returned to Berlin, Schultz was instrumental in setting the foundation for the emergence of the Afro-German feminist movement. She invited Audre Lorde to act as a guest professor at the Free University of Berlin, and it was Lorde who gathered Afro-German women together and encouraged them to create a collective identity and assert themselves within German society. In addition, Schultz founded the *Orlanda Frauenverlag* (Orlanda Women's Publishing House) which was one

of the leading publishers of Afro-German work. This chapter discusses all of these accomplishments and more and argues that Schultz was one of the leading figures in encouraging discussions of race among white German women during the 1980s.

The final chapter of this thesis will look at the actual discussions of race that white German women engaged in during the 1980s and 1990s. These discussions were in their beginning stages due to the fact that talking about race was extremely taboo within German society up until that point. However, as I will argue, the wall surrounding these discussions began to crumble with the emergence of the Afro-German feminist movement, the arrival of Audre Lorde, and the influence of Dagmar Schultz. The most significant sources for this chapter include records of Audre Lorde's teaching seminars and readings throughout Germany, the German feminist magazine *Beiträge zur feministischen Theorie und Praxis* and a book published by Dagmar Schultz's publishing company Orlanda Frauenverlag entitled *Entfernte Verbindungen: Rassismus, Antisemitismus, Klassenunterdrückung* (*Remote Connections: Racism, Anti-Semitism, Class Oppression*).

The concluding chapter of this thesis will provide a discussion about the struggles Black Germans continue to face within unified German society. While the emergence of the Afro-German feminist movement influenced discussions of race, and while talking about race and racism has become less taboo within Germany, this does not mean that racist practices and racial violence have been eliminated from German society. Even today Blackness in Germany is correlated with foreignness, and many Black Germans believe they are excluded from their own culture and identity. In addition, most Germans do not know the rich history of Black Germans as German colonialism and involvement

with the slave trade is widely left out of school curriculum. As a result, many Black Germans and anti-racist activists continue to fight tirelessly against the discrimination and oppression that still exists within German society.

A Note on Terminology

Lorde was instrumental in encouraging Black German women to create an identity for themselves. Before the 1980s, Black German men and women were often referred to as "occupation children," "warbabies," and "*Mischlinge*." All of these labels, however, had been imposed upon them by white German society. When Lorde entered Berlin, she introduced these women to the term, "Afro-German," and many of the women involved in the movement took up this identity to define both their African and German heritage. It is important, however, to make a distinction between *Afro-German* (*Afro-deutsch)* and *Black German (Schwarze Deutsche)*. Tina Campt states that the term Afro-German "is both a consciousness-raising provocation and an articulation of the German and Afro-diasporic heritages of this population." She points out that as this movement began to grow, however, it came to encompass many other individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those of Indian, Arab, and Asian descent. As a result, the term Black German has also emerged as a common form of identification among members of these communities.[30] This being said, I will utilize both of these terms throughout this thesis when referring to these women, depending on how they refer to themselves in their writings. When no reference to their preferred identification is made, I will use Black German so as not to assume their ethnic heritage.

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[30] Tina Campt, *Other Germans: Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Memory in the Third Reich* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 8.

CHAPTER II - RACE IN GERMANY AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRO-GERMAN IDENTITY

The study of the history of Black Germans did not emerge in Germany until the 1980s. Until that point, much of the history surrounding Black Germans and German-African relations remained widely unknown. In fact, many Black Germans themselves believed their history began in 1945. However, in 1986, May Ayim challenged the simplistic and incomplete narrative of Black German history by tracing the appearance of Africans in Germany back to the Middle Ages in the book *Farbe bekennen: Afro-deutsche Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte.*[31] Since then, many historians have recognized and elaborated upon this history. According to Marion Kraft, German-African relations began in the thirteenth century when German crusaders made contact with Africans. She states, "images and reports of the time were generally positive and seemed to convey an equality of status."[32] However, these positive perceptions shifted in the eighteenth century with the expansion of the transatlantic slave trade and the rise of the European bourgeoisie. It was during this time that the ideas behind racial hierarchies emerged. Europeans began pointing to philosophical and pseudoscientific justifications for racist practices and beliefs that led to colonization, and the subsequent oppression and enslavement of African peoples whom they deemed as members of the "lower race."[33]

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[31] An English translation of this book was later published in 1992 by the University of Massachusetts Press entitled *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out,* ed. May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz, trans. Anne V. Adams (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992).

[32] Marion Kraft, "Re-presentations and Re-definitions; Black People in Germany in the Past and Present," in *Children of the Liberation: Transatlantic Experiences and Perspectives of Black Germans of the Post-War Generation,* ed. Marion Kraft (Oxford, UK: Peter Lang, 2020), 13.

[33] Kraft, "Re-presentations and Re-definitions," 16-18.

This chapter will provide a brief history of racism in Germany. It will examine how ideas of race shifted after World War II from a focus on nationality and biological make up, to a focus on skin color. This shift became especially clear after a small—but visible—population of mixed-race children emerged as a result of post-World War II occupation. The chapter then looks at the lives and experiences of several Black German women who were members of this population and discusses how this shift in racism impacted their lives and influenced their involvement in the Afro-German feminist movement in the 1980s. The complex history of German race relations, and the influence that navigating it had on future Afro-German feminists, are crucial to understanding the silences and divisions that would characterize the German women's movement upon its emergence in the 1960s.

A Brief History of African-German Relations

First, it is important to trace a brief history of the relationships between Africans and Germans and Black Germans in order understand the development of racial ideas pointed toward these individuals. Both Ayim and Kraft argue that twentieth century German racism is a result of its colonial history. At the end of the nineteenth century, Germany colonized several African countries, including German Southwest Africa, German East Africa, Cameroun and Togo.[34] German philosopher George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel introduced ideas about the superiority of the white race and the "uncivilized" and "uneducated" nature of African peoples in the mid-nineteenth century. Hegel argued that African "negroes" were "unready for freedom" and were "in need of

[34] Kraft, "Re-presentations and Re-definitions," 19.

awakening and education by Europeans."[35] Germans used these ideas to justify their colonial practices. These ideas surrounding European, and especially German, superiority continued to exist throughout German society after the colonial period and gained momentum under National Socialism in the 1930s and 1940s.

As a result of their defeat in World War I, Germany not only lost its African colonies, but as stipulated by the Treaty of Versailles, the victorious powers, including France, Belgium, Great Britain, and America, occupied German cities along the Rhine River. The French military, in particular, utilized their colonial African troops in the occupation, and between thirty and forty thousand African soldiers, from Madagascar, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, entered the country.[36] As a result, some white German women began to engage in relationships with the African soldiers, and it was during this time that the first cohort of Afro-Germans emerged within Germany.[37] Because many of these children were born out of wedlock and were often abandoned by their fathers, many Germans derogatorily referred to them as "Rhineland Bastards." According to Tina Campt, the occupation of the Rhineland and emergence of the Rhineland Bastard is an extremely significant turning point in German history. She states that these events not only reinforced German colonial ideas surrounding Blacks and blackness, but that the

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[35] May Opitz, "The Germans in the Colonies," in *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out,* ed. May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz, trans. Anne V. Adams (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 26.

[36] May Opitz, "African and Afro-German Women in the Weimar Republic and under National Socialism," in *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out,* ed. May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz, trans. Anne V. Adams (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 41.

[37] Heide Fahrenbach, "Of German Mothers and 'Negermischlingskinder': Race, Sex, and the Postwar Nation," in *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968,* ed. Hanna Schissler (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 167. Fehrenbach points out that while these African soldiers were portrayed as "sexually rapacious, syphilitic black beasts, intent on the rape, torture, or murder of German women, girls, and boys," large amounts of evidence exists that suggests the vast majority of relationships between white German women and African soldiers were mutually consensual.

discussions surrounding their implications shifted inward.[38] Germans were now concerned about the impacts of blackness from within their own nation.

Campt also points to the emergence of several discourses surrounding race that articulated German reactions to Blacks and Afro-Germans, and created long-lasting images and meanings concerning Black German populations. Two of these discourses are relevant here. The first supports the idea that race was an unchangeable biological trait that determined differences among humans, which justified and reinforced the racial hierarchy and its "social and political implications." These ideas led to the second discourse which expressed concerns surrounding racial mixing. Germans were anxious about the "negative genetic consequences of racial mixture" and the threat it posed to the "boundaries that constituted German national identity," including purity (whiteness) and superiority.[39] As will be discussed later in this chapter, these anxieties about German identity did not disappear from German society, and, in fact, grew even stronger during the Third Reich and remained for decades afterward.

In the 1920s, Germans began contemplating solutions to the "problem" that the Black Rhineland children posed to their society. Officials engaged in discussions about how to "secure and protect the purity of the race in the region from this emerging threat."[40] As early as 1927, they put forth ideas about a mass sterilization program directed at these children, but a program such as this would have been illegal under existing law. Officials also contemplated deporting these children; however, this proved to be an inadequate solution due to the fact that they were born to German women and

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[38] Campt. *Other Germans,* 28.
[39] Campt, *Other Germans,* 26, 62.
[40] Campt, *Other Germans,* 64.

were thus German citizens.[41] These discussions demonstrate that maintaining the purity of the German race was a high priority of officials even before the Nazis took power. Campt also makes it clear that when the Nazis did eventually secure power in the 1930s, even though National Socialist racial ideology focused on anti-Semitism, their ideals surrounding racial superiority extended to many others, including Black Germans. In 1937, Nazi officials took up the solution of sterilization that had been discussed ten years earlier. Physicians forcibly sterilized the Black children of the Rhineland, as well as many other "undesirables," including Jews, individuals of mixed racial heritage, those with physical or emotional disabilities, alcoholics, and epileptics.[42]

Anti-Black racism can also be seen throughout German society in terms of culture during this time. According to Uta Poiger, occupying soldiers introduced jazz music to the country following the First World War. As the music began to spread, so did German anxieties about this so-called "N****r music" that they believed would lead to degeneration and sexual deviance among young men and women. However, as Poiger points out, even those Germans who did listen to jazz music did not do so out of appreciation for Black culture, but because they were enthralled by its "exotic" nature.[43] For example, this can be seen in an article written by French-German poet Ivan Gull in 1926 entitled, "The Negroes Are Conquering Europe." In this article, Gull claimed that the "Negroes'" arrival throughout Europe, with their "primeval" music and dancing, had reinvigorated the art scene throughout the continent. It is very clear throughout this article

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[41] Campt, *Other Germans,* 64.

[42] Campt, *Other Germans,* 72, 78.

[43] Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 16-19.

that Gull was fascinated by the "exotic" nature of jazz and its Black performers. Referencing their performances, he observed,

> Negroes dance with their senses. (While Europeans can only dance with their minds.) They dance with their legs, breasts, and bellies. This was the dance of the Egyptians, the whole of antiquity, the Orient. This is the dance of the Negroes. One can only envy them, for this is life, sin, primeval forests, the singing of birds and the roar of a leopard, earth. They never dance naked: and yet, how naked is the dance! They have put on clothes only to show that clothes do not exist for them.[44]

Gull and other cultural commentators reinforced the racial stereotypes and hierarchies in which many Germans and Europeans already believed. In addition, jazz came to be associated with Jewishness as Germans believed it to be "created by 'Negroes' and marketed by Jews." This continued into the Nazi era throughout which the genre was often referred to as "N****r-Jew jazz," and remained taboo throughout National Socialist rule.[45]

When the Allied powers defeated the Nazis in 1945, ideas and feelings of racism remained within German society despite the abolition of official policies aimed at achieving racial purity. Similar to what had happened after World War I, Germany's defeat in World War II resulted in a military occupation by foreign powers. The Allies agreed to divide Germany into four occupation zones governed by French, British, American, and Soviet military powers. Before and during World War II, Germans had been exposed to large amounts of propaganda aimed at eliciting hatred and fear toward Black individuals, especially Black soldiers. During the interwar years, a politically

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[44] "The Negroes Are Conquering Europe," a document by Ivan Gull, in *Weimar Germany, 1918/19-1933,* edited by Eric D. Weitz and Eric S. Roubinek, volume 6, *German History in Documents and Images*, German Historical Institute, Washington, DC, accessed December 28, 2020, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=3906.

[45] Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels,* 20-26.

charged national propaganda campaign depicted the French occupation troops from Africa as "'wild beasts' intent on destroying the German race" who engaged in mass rapes of German women to defile German honor. This campaign was the "Schwarze Schmach," or the "Black Horror on the Rhine."[46] As a result of this propaganda campaign, many Germans feared the large number of African American soldiers who entered the American occupation zone in 1945.

Race and Post-World War II Occupation

However, the racial dynamics that emerged in 1945 as a result of the occupation of what would become West Germany were extremely complex. As historians of post-World War II Germany have pointed out, many Germans were pleasantly surprised by the kindness and generosity of African American occupying soldiers in 1945. According to Maria Höhn, because African American GIs were more willing to share their food rations, many Germans actually favored them over white American soldiers.[47] In addition, African American soldiers were equally amazed by the racial tolerance they experienced at the hands of many German civilians. Höhn points out that "for the first time in their lives, black soldiers could enter any pub, shop in any store; they could even date a white woman," without fear of arrest or physical violence.[48]

Nevertheless, these images and stories of racial tolerance should not overshadow the extensive racism that still existed within West German society. For example, Höhn

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[46] Maria Höhn, "Heimat in Turmoil: African-American GIs in 1950s West Germany," in *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968,* ed. Hanna Schissler (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 150.

[47] Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 91.

[48] Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins,* 92.

discusses how there was an increase in racist sentiments toward African American GIs in the early 1950s.[49] One reason for this was that West Germans were no longer as dependent on the generosity of African American (or white) GIs due to the increased economic independence many experienced during Germany's *Wirtschaftswunder* ("Economic Miracle"). Another reason was the influence of American ideals surrounding race.[50]

Both Maria Höhn and Heide Fehrenbach have argued that the presence of American troops had significant impacts on West German ideas about race and race relations after World War II. This holds particular significance because, as Höhn argues, many Germans pointed to racist practices within the American military, even after the official desegregation of the United States military in 1948, as a way of justifying their attitudes and distancing their racism from their Nazi past.[51] By 1948, the purpose of American occupation had shifted from punishment to rehabilitation as Americans attempted to reintegrate West Germany into Western society.[52] As the American military and other government officials worked to teach Germans the tenets of democracy, they also engaged in racial segregation characteristic of the Jim Crow South. These racist ideals and practices were, thus, extremely visible to the German population. Because of

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[49] Allied occupation of Germany began in 1945. While the Western powers, including the United States, Britain, and France agreed to establish "a democratic state with a market economy in their three zones," the Soviets attempted to establish a socialist state in the East over the next four years. In 1949, the establishment of the Federal Republic in the West, and the German Democratic Republic in the East made the split between West and East Germany official. Between 1945 and 1949, the Western Allies slowly transferred control back to German authorities. By 1950, there were only about eighty thousand American troops in West Germany. However, due to the start of the Korean War that same year, American troops increased to a quarter of a million by 1951, which also led to an increase in the presence of African American soldiers in the region. See Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, 35-36.

[50] Höhn, "Heimat in Turmoil," 151.

[51] Höhn, "Heimat in Turmoil," 152.

[52] Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations 1945-1949* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 127.

this, many Germans observed that it was possible for racism to exist alongside democracy. As Höhn states, "Germans could [now] reject the racial excesses of Nazism while at the same time invoking racial hierarchies of exclusion that were based in timeless laws of nature and tied firmly to the Western liberal tradition."[53] Many German citizens and officials upheld their racist beliefs following the Nazi defeat. However, as will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, Germans began to shift their racial thinking at the beginning of the 1950s. In order to distance themselves from the racist violence of the previous decade, their ideas about race began to resemble those of the United States.

West German attitudes toward interracial relationships between white German women and African American GIs was the area where these racist sentiments were most visible. According to Höhn, "while many people had made an uneasy peace with the black families that moved into their communities, approving of sexual relationships between black GIs and white German women remained unacceptable."[54] There are several reasons why many West Germans were unable and unwilling to accept these interracial relationships. First, the influence of past racism cannot be ignored. These attitudes were in part the result of decades of ideological and institutional racism that can be traced back to the eighteenth century with the emergence of biological racism throughout Europe. As previously discussed, these ideas found widespread support throughout Germany during the country's period of colonization in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. In addition, these racist sentiments gained

[53] Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins,* 14.
[54] Höhn, "Heimat in Turmoil," 152.

momentum through the vast amount of state propaganda that emerged after World War I and during the Third Reich. Another reason for the disapproval of interracial relationships among Germans is that white American GIs who, rather than attempting to eliminate such feelings, often reinforced them. Höhn points to a letter that the former national commander of the American Legion sent to General Dwight Eisenhower concerning interracial relationships in which he stated, "these negroes. . . likely are on the way to be hanged or to be burned alive at public lynchings by the white men of the south."[55]

These racist beliefs not only impacted African American GIs, but also the white German women who entered into relationships with them. Both German and American officials, as well as German civilians, accused women who fraternized with African American soldiers "of wanton materialism and moral deficiency and [they] were characterized as mentally impaired or asocial, or as prostitutes."[56] Historian Brenda Gayle Plummer describes a situation in which an African American GI requested a marriage application from his commanding officer. In reaction, the officer turned to the GI's white German fiancé and asked, "why she would wed a black man."[57] Accusations and inquiries such as these demonstrate further the racism that existed among the German population and American occupiers who completely rejected the idea that German women would voluntarily interact with Black soldiers.

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[55] Höhn, "Heimat in Turmoil," 152.

[56] Fehrenbach, "Black Occupation Children," 207.

[57] Brenda Gayle Plummer, "Brown Babies: Race, Gender, and Policy after World War II," in *Window on Freedom: Race, Civil Rights, and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1988*, ed. Brenda Gayle Plummer (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 72.

There is also an interesting shift that took place between the wars in German attitudes toward women who fraternized with Black soldiers. During post-World War I French occupation, Germans portrayed white women who had children with Black soldiers as victims of those soldiers' "bestiality." After World War II, however, Germans perceived white women in interracial relationships as "willing and willful fraternizers, who perpetrated a national betrayal of missing or maimed German men in order to indulge their 'craving' for material goods or sexual pleasures."[58] Fehrenbach argues that this shift in attitude can be contributed to the positive images of "friendliness, compassion, and generosity" many Germans held toward African American soldiers after the war. As a result, the white German women who entered into interracial relationships were often criticized and shunned by their fellow Germans and were called derogatory names such as "n****r whore" or "n****r lover."[59] These racist sentiments contributed to the extreme isolation and rejection mixed-race children experienced in post-World War II German society and to why the emergence of the Afro-German movement in the 1980s was so significant.

Occupation Children and Reconceptualizations of Race

Fraternization between German women and soldiers of all races led to the rise of a generation known as "occupation children" in the years following 1945. Regardless of race, these occupation children gained symbolic significance in post-war German society because, to many Germans, they represented military defeat and were associated with the occupation of Germany by outside powers. In addition, for a variety of reasons, the

[58] Fehrenbach, "Of German Mothers," 167.
[59] Fehrenbach, "Of German Mothers,'" 168.

majority of these children's fathers left Germany shortly after they were born. According to Plummer, many GIs, especially African Americans, faced barriers to expatriation due to the army's initial ban on German-American marriages, and their lasting ban on interracial marriages.[60] Further, according to an article in the German news magazine *Der Spiegel*, in 1950 the Allied High Commission for Germany prevented "'any proceedings to establish paternity or liability for maintenance of children' of foreign soldiers."[61] In other words, by ridding itself of the paternal responsibility for these children, the American government was also able to deny its national responsibility.[62] This is significant because these occupation children were now the responsibility of the German government. Moreover, the German government was strongly invested in establishing solutions to address the presence of mixed-race children beginning in 1950. Due to their recent past, the West German government was aware that their practices and policies toward mixed-race children would be closely observed by the democratic West, in which they were seeking incorporation.

Mixed-race occupation children held special significance among the other occupation children and faced the most scrutiny due to their visibility in West German society. In 1956, the Berlin Institute for Natural and Humanistic Anthropology completed a study in which this preoccupation was obvious. This study focused specifically on the "'mixed-race Negroes' among the occupation children." The author of this report, Walter Kirchner, stated,

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[60] Plummer, "Brown Babies," 76.

[61] Von Mary Wiltenburg und Marc Widman, "Children of the Enemy," *Der Spiegel,* January 2, 2017, trans. DeepL Translator, accessed October 27, 2020, https://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/wwii-g-i-babies-children-of-the-enemy-a-456835.html.

[62] Plummer, "Brown Babies," 77.

> What characterizes them is their descent from members of the occupation forces and the fact that this is evident from looking at them—in contrast to the approximately 90,000 other occupation children fathered by white soldiers. The attitude of the environment is thus determined not only by their racial otherness, but also by the dominant attitude toward the occupation power and to the girls and women who get involved with foreign soldiers.[63]

These negative attitudes West Germans held toward occupation and German women who became involved with soldiers, especially soldiers of color, combined with the presence of mixed-race occupation children, produced a great amount of debate among West German officials about race, race relations, and national identity in a post-National Socialist German society. These debates continued until discussions of "race" became taboo within West German society at the beginning of the 1960s, which will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

At this time, however, it is important to detail the shift in West German conceptions of race that took place around 1950. The country's attempt to distance itself from its Nazi past, combined with the influences of racial ideals from the United States, all contributed to West German reconceptualizations of race after World War II. The dominant racial ideals and policies of the Third Reich rested on scientific and biological conceptions of race. In 1934, Dr. Walter Groß, head of the Nazi Party's Racial Policy Office, provided a definition of 'race' in a radio speech directed at the German youth. He explained,

> The word 'race' still has two primary meanings today. In one sense, it means all the inherited physical and intellectual characteristics and abilities that a person has, in contrast to the abilities that he gains during his life. In this sense, 'race'

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[63]"The Academic Success of *Negermischlinge* ["Mixed-Race Negroes"]. Study by the Institute for Natural and Humanistic Anthropology (1956)," a document by Walter Kirchner, in *Occupation and the Emergence of Two States, 1945-1961*, edited by Volker Berghahn and Uta Poiger, volume 8, *German History in Documents and Images*, German Historical Institute, Washington, DC, accessed October 24, 2020, https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/docpage.cfm?docpage_id=5726, 2.

> means something like inheritance or genetics. However, the word in its deepest and most important sense applies to whole groups of people who are separated from other groups of people by their common genetic inheritance.[64]

Groß went on to state that while individuals of many colors exist throughout the world, "one is black, another red, the third yellow or white," the "differences between races are not limited to the physical and external. They extend to the character, to intellectual and spiritual traits."[65] From this speech, Groß made it very clear that Nazi racial ideology was not based on skin color, but on one's biological inheritance and that anyone born outside of Northern European ancestry was biologically inferior.

Nazis were most concerned with the Jewish "race" during their time in power. A pamphlet entitled "The German National Catechism," widely used throughout German schools in 1934, included a section dedicated to race called "Of Race and People (*Volk*)." This section aimed to teach students about race and focused on explaining why the Jewish race was the enemy of the German *Volk.* It included a list of questions and answers and at one point presented the question and answer, "Which race must the National Socialist race fight against? The Jewish race." It then went on to explain why Jews were the leading racial enemy of the Germans.[66] This is further evidence that under National Socialist ideology, skin color was not the major separating factor between races as it came to be after World War II.

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[64] "Rasse. Eine Rundfunkrede von Dr. Groß," Berlin: Rassenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP, (1934). Trans. Randall Bytwerk, German Propaganda Archive, Calvin University, accessed October 24, 2020, https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/gross2.htm.

[65] "Rasse. Eine Rundfunkrede von Dr. Groß."

[66] Werner May, "Of Race and People (Volk)" in *Deutscher National-Katechismus,* 2nd ed. (Breslau: Verlag von Heinrich Handel, 1934), 22-26. Trans. Randall Bytwerk, German Propaganda Archive, Calvin University, accessed October 24, 2020. https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/catech.htm.

This official national racial ideology, however, ceased to exist after Nazi defeat and during the subsequent Allied occupation. This does not mean that Germans did not continue to hold racist and anti-Semitic ideals. They definitely remained present among individual Germans, but these ideas were no longer supported by official German racial discourse.[67] As Fehrenbach, Rita Chin, Geoff Eley and Atina Grossmann point out, a separation emerged between conceptions of "race" and "ethnicity" during the 1950s in West Germany. It was at this point that Germans identified Jews as an ethnic group rather than a racial category.[68] As has been stated, the increased visibility of Blackness throughout Germany during the postwar years, combined with observations of racial segregation and inequality at the hands of their American occupiers, caused West Germans to increasingly think about race in terms of the black-white binary similar to what existed in the United States. As a result, according to Fehrenbach, "by 1950 West German federal and state Interior Ministry officials explicitly constructed the postwar problem of race around skin color and even more narrowly around Blackness."[69]

The mixed-race occupation children, often referred to as *Mischling, Mischlingskinder,* or *Negermischlingskinder,* were thus a central focus of postwar debates surrounding race in West Germany. It is important to note that the term "*Mischling*" was used during the Third Reich to refer to children born to Jewish and non-Jewish Germans. After 1945, it remained a racialized category but was instead applied to children born to

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[67] Heide Fehrenbach, "Learning from America: Reconstructing 'Race' in Postwar Germany," in *Americanization and Anti-Americanism: The German Encounter with American Culture After 1945,* ed. Alexander Stephan (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 112.

[68] Chin et al., *After the Nazi Racial State,* 3.

[69] Fehrenbach, "Black Occupation Children," 207.

"white German women and typically foreign men of color."[70] The change in definition of this one word represents the shift in ideas surrounding race that took place after the war ended. In 1952, a German weekly newspaper called *Das Parlament* published a report entitled, "What Has Become of the 94,000 Occupation Babies?" In this report, the author stated, "among the occupation babies, the 3,093 Negro mulattoes form a special group, presenting a human and racial problem of a special nature."[71] The fact that the author of this report referred to these children as presenting a "problem" to German society hints to the idea that their presence was something that needed to be addressed and "fixed." This is exactly what happened during the 1950s as debates arose among West Germans about what to do with these children, how they should be raised, and how they should fit into German society.

The early to mid-1950s proved significant in these debates surrounding mixed-race children. This was when they left the isolation of their homes and entered into West German society as they started school. Concern over the children entering public schools can be seen in a 1951 newspaper article entitled "Three Little Young Negroes. . ." The opening paragraph of the article reads as follows:

> Three little Negroes – there they sit, on the bench in the kindergarten. They are called Karl- Heinz or Gisela or Monika, and when they open their little mouths, they babble in the purest Bamberg dialect. Their black eyes still look out into the world without mistrust. They have no inkling yet of the difficulties and the suffering they are unlikely to escape. But next year already, life will begin in earnest for these children – and not in the joking way that is often meant, but in all seriousness. The oldest – born in 1946 – will enter school next year. Up until this

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[70] Heide Fehrenbach, *Race After Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 8.

[71] "What Has Become of the 94,000 Occupation Babies?" *Das Parlament* (Germany), March 19, 1952, quoted in May Opitz, "Afro-Germans after 1945: The So-Called Occupation Babies," *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out,* ed. May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz, trans. Anne V. Adams (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 80.

> point, they have grown up under the care of their own mothers, foster parents, or home sisters, but now it will be up to teachers to prevent these unknowing children from paying for things that some see as the unforgiveable faults of their parents, and it will be their job, above all, to tolerate no mockery or cruelty from the children's fellow students.[72]

In addition, the author of the aforementioned *Das Parlament* report later stated,

> It is obvious that the German public is not yet capable of assuming a posture free of racial prejudice. . . . Only a long-term education process will be able to dislodge the tradition that causes us after all this time to believe in the superiority of our own race. . . . The mulatto question will remain an internal problem for Germany that will not be easy to resolve. We must make the German public aware of this issue since mulattoes born in 1946 will be entering school in 1952.[73]

Through these two excerpts, it is clear that many West Germans did not view mixed-race children as a threat until they entered the public sphere. Until then, these children were mostly confined to their families or caretakers. However, once they became more visible throughout West Germany, their presence began to cause many anxieties among West German officials and citizens as they wondered how these children would be incorporated into the majority white German society, culture, and identity.

The legacy of traditional German ideas about race and national identity cannot be ignored here. Because Germans have historically viewed themselves as a "pure" race, they had difficulties accepting a visibly mixed-race German population as the author of the *Das Parlament* report suggested. However, because of their violent racist past, which was still very much present in the minds of many Germans (and non-Germans) in the

[72] "Newspaper Article about Children of African-American Members of the Allied Forces (1951),"
in *Occupation and the Emergence of Two States, 1945-1961*, edited by Volker Berghahn and Uta Poiger, volume 8, *German History in Documents and Images*, German Historical Institute, Washington, DC, accessed October 23, 2020, http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=4560.

[73] "What Has Become of the 94,000 Occupation Babies?" 81.

early 1950s, they had to redefine their national identity and come up with alternate "solutions" to address the new "racial problem" mixed-occupation children presented.

It is also worth noting that conflicts surrounding race relations and national identity were not unique to post-war Germany, and that other countries, such as Britain, experienced similar struggles during this time. According to historian Chris Waters, the rise in population of Black migrants in Britain after the war became source of anxiety throughout the country. As a result, a "new 'science,' that of 'race relations,'" emerged and was led by anthropologists and sociologists. These scientists created this new way of discussing and thinking about race in order to distance themselves from the ideals of scientific and biological racism that had defined Nazi Germany. Instead, according to Waters, as "Britishness and whiteness became increasingly synonymous" after the war, British scholars and researchers began to focus on the physical and cultural differences that separated Black migrants from white Britons.[74]

This process of moving away from Nazi racism was even more crucial in the place that had once been the Nazi state. Germans, too, attempted to address their new "race problem" through anthropological studies, such as the one carried out by Walter Kirchner and the Berlin institute for Natural and Humanistic Anthropology in 1956. The contents of Kirchner's report reveal several important facts about racism and how it played out within West German society in the 1950s. First, it presents concrete evidence of the fact that, like the British, West Germans began to move away from biological racism that had been so prevalent before and during the Nazi era. In the report, Kirchner

[74] Chris Waters, "'Dark Strangers' in Our Midst: Discourses of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947-1963," *Journal of British Studies* 36, no. 2 (1997): 209-212, https://www.jstor.org/stable/176012.

explicitly described how the environment, rather than their biological makeup alone, could have significant impacts on these children's everyday lives and academic performances. He stated, "for all that, one can by no means speak of a below-average intellectual ability of the mixed-race children, as all teachers emphasize. If one considers all those factors that come under the umbrella of 'domestic environment,'. . . one can readily register a good, or at least normal, overall impression of the children's intelligence."[75] Here, Kirchner rejected the idea that people's race had any major impact on their mental abilities, which stood in stark contrast of the racism of the colonial era in Germany when people of the "darker" race were seen as inherently "inferior."

Instead, like the British anthropologists and sociologists who discussed how the "darkness" of the migrant "strangers" separated them from British culture and society, Kircher argued that these children's "dark skin color, curly hair, and so on," could present problems on a sociological level. He stated, "by contrast, one cannot dismiss the possibility that the *Mischling* has genetic material passed on to him which will make him into an outsider in the environment in which he finds himself."[76] This proved to be true for the majority of mixed-race children who grew up in West Germany during this time. The rejection of these children in West German society and the impact it had on them will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. However, Kircher argued that because "the prejudice against the *Mischling*. . . is a purely sociological problem," it was "subject to historical changes."[77] As this suggests, some West German academics and officials believed it was possible to reduce the amount of racism that existed within West

[75] "The Academic Success of *Negermischlinge* ["Mixed-Race Negroes"]," 6.
[76] "The Academic Success of *Negermischlinge* ["Mixed-Race Negroes"]," 1.
[77] "The Academic Success of *Negermischlinge* ["Mixed-Race Negroes"]," 7.

German society through educating citizens on how to respond to and interact with these children.

Significantly, a previous study on mixed-race occupation children published a couple of years earlier by the German section of the World Brotherhood influenced portions of Kirchner's report. This organization was an offshoot of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in the United States, whose mission was to foster "good human relations irrespective of race, creed, and nationality."[78] In Kirchner's report, he stated that while in 1956 prejudice against the mixed-race children was "undoubtedly present in latent form," (perhaps due to the children's general isolation until that point), West Germans needed to take action in order to prevent those prejudices from "erupting." Like British anthropologist Anthony Richmond, who argued that British prejudice "could be remedied through education," Kirchner presented the idea that schoolteachers could help reduce the problem in West Germany.[79] He argued that teachers should encourage tolerant behavior among their students and should not treat the mixed-race children any differently from the white children. In addition, by meeting with white students' parents in the evenings, teachers should encourage those parents to support their efforts at racial toleration as well.[80] This would then facilitate the equal treatment of students of all races, educate younger students not to engage in prejudicial behavior, and encourage a sense of tolerance among white parents.

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[78] "'World Brotherhood' Organization Established in Germany," *Daily News Bulletin* 21, no. 163 (August 26, 1954), Jewish Telegraphic Agency Archive, accessed October 27, 2020, https://www.jta.org/1954/08/26/archive/world-brotherhood-organization-established-in-germany.

[79] Waters, "'Dark Strangers'," 231.

[80] "The Academic Success of *Negermischlinge* ["Mixed-Race Negroes"]," 5.

However, as the author of the *Das Parlament* article opined, it would have taken years, if not decades, to completely eliminate racism from West German society through reeducation. As a result, West German officials enacted other "solutions" to address the "problem" of mixed-race occupation children during this time. One of the first "solutions" the West German government widely promoted and attempted to carry out was the deportation and adoption of mixed-race children to families in foreign countries. Helga Emde, born in March 1946 to a white German woman and an African American soldier, discusses this solution in an essay she wrote describing her experience growing up in postwar Germany. She pens,

> In the late 1950s the so-called "mixed-race question" was even a central issue in debates of the German Federal Parliament. One option seriously discussed was deporting the Black children to their so-called "fatherlands," under the pretext that climatic conditions were more suitable there. Strangely enough, Denmark, Sweden and Norway were deemed suitable, too. At the same time, many Black German children were placed in Black U.S. American families for adoption. Other plans called for special homes and schools for "mixed-race children" to meet their assumed need for special care, and to avoid additional difficulties.[81]

As is seen in this quotation, another "solution" that was implemented was the establishment of separate homes for these children. Perhaps the most famous of these homes was the Albert Schweitzer Children's Home run by Irene Dilloo, a white German pastor's wife. Located in the "remoteness of the northern Hessian woods" the purpose of this home was to isolate the mixed-race occupation children from white society so they

[81] Helga Emde, "Bridges," in *Children of the Liberation: Transatlantic Experiences and Perspectives of Black Germans of the Post-War Generation,* ed. Marion Kraft (Oxford, UK: Peter Lang, 2020), 185.

could “grow up ‘among themselves’ and “to spare them the experience of being discriminated against.”[82]

According to Fehrenbach, “advocates of separate homes for interracial children or their adoption abroad supported such measures as a means to ‘protect’ the children from the psychological and emotional toll of living as a colored minority in a historically white land. . .”[83] In other words, West German officials and citizens who supported these solutions proclaimed they would be beneficial and advantageous for these mixed-race children, thus painting themselves as “protectors” in hopes of exemplifying a non-racist society to the rest of the world.

However, no matter how well intended these solutions might have been, the inherent racism and attempts to exclude them from German society cannot be ignored. The fact that the West German government promoted Denmark, Sweden, and Norway—demographically white Nordic countries—makes it difficult to believe that they were sending these children away to places that were better prepared or racially “suited” for them. The question arises of how sending these children to other “historically white land[s]” would protect them from the “psychological and emotional toll of living as a colored minority.” Instead, this makes it seem as though the West German government was really attempting to eliminate the mixed-race children’s presence from their society. In addition, while Frau Dilloo argued that the isolation of mixed-race children would protect them against the discrimination and racism of German society, she also had plans

[82] Roy Merz, “Unexpected Encounters with the Past,” in *Children of the Liberation: Transatlantic Experiences and Perspectives of Black Germans of the Post-War Generation,* ed. Marion Kraft (Oxford, UK: Peter Lang, 2020), 98.

[83] Fehrenbach, “Of German Mothers,” 177.

to send these children away once they reached adulthood "to work as economic and religious missionaries in Africa."[84] This end goal reveals the inherent and unacknowledged racism that existed within her program, and acts as further evidence that the majority of these solutions attempted to handle the "problem" of mixed-race occupation children by eliminating their presence. It was this environment of isolation and rejection in which many future Afro-German activists grew up that would later provide them with the motivation and drive to create a common identity among themselves, and to assert that identity within West German society.

"Afro-German Women Speak Out": The Rise of a New Afro-German Identity

As a result of the establishment of the Afro-German feminist movement in the mid-1980s, many Black German women began to speak out about their experiences growing up in post-World War II Germany. They described how this isolation and rejection from German society significantly impacted their lives. This can clearly be seen in Ika Hügel-Marshall's memoir *Invisible Woman: Growing Up Black in Germany.* Hügel-Marshall was born in a small Bavarian town in 1947 to a white German woman and an African American GI. In her memoir, she discussed how her mother and father were shunned by Germans who believed their relationship to be "immoral" and "a violation of racial purity." After her mother became pregnant in 1946, Hügel-Marshall's father was unexpectedly restationed back to the United States.[85] Hügel-Marshall would not speak to or see her father again until 1993, just a year before his death.

[84] Merz, "Unexpected Encounters with the Past," 99.
[85] Ika Hügel-Marshall, *Invisible Woman: Growing Up Black in Germany*, trans. Elizabeth Gaffney (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2001), 3-4.

Hügel-Marshall grew up surrounded by whiteness. This was not only true within her own family as her mother remarried a white man in 1948 and had a white daughter with him, but also within the larger West German society. She explained,

> There was only one world, one culture—the white one—and that is the world I was born into. No Black culture existed, and I had no Black father, no Black grandmothers, no Black siblings, and no Black neighbors in my environment. There was only one reality, one truth. Everyone was white, and all children looked exactly like their parents. And so I imagined that I must be white, too—what else could I be? It was a long time before I really looked into a mirror. In those days, though, I understood that there were good and bad things and friendly and unfriendly people, I hadn't yet learned to divide the world into Black and White. I saw no reason in the world that I wouldn't be able to grow up with my white mother in my white family and be perfectly happy.[86]

Hügel-Marshall stated that the first five years of her life were "relatively trouble free." She lived happily among her all-white family and was somewhat sheltered from the realities of the outside society. While she was aware that she was different from other children, she did not understand why and was unaware of what exactly that difference meant in post-World War II German society.

Like so many other mixed-race occupation children, Hügel-Marshall's mother, convinced by the Youth Services Department of the West German Government, sent her to live in a children's home when she was just six years old. This home was called God's Little Cabin Children's Home and was administered by the Pentecostal Society and the Independent Protestant Association. Hügel-Marshall stated that because she was the only Black child in the home, she faced discrimination from her caretakers, from other children who lived in the home, and from teachers at the school she attended. As a result of this discrimination and the derogatory comments made toward her, Hügel-Marshall

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[86] Hügel-Marshall, *Invisible Woman,* 5.

began to understand that her Blackness not only made her different, but also made her an outsider living within West German society. She recalled,

> It takes me a long time to absorb that I am perceived as different from everyone around me, and it takes me a long time to absorb that this difference is something bad. But eventually I do absorb it. . . My otherness is irrefutably proven whenever I am impolite or naughty, I am called *little devil* or *unmanageable creature* and am told that I lack intelligence, and that I'm a creature of base instinct. 'That's the Negro in her coming out,' they say. I don't know what to make of these statements at first, though it's clear that they're saying something bad, and it has to do with me. . . I have no choice but to believe what I hear people say about me. How would I know whether what they say is true? Whom could I ask?[87]

Throughout the rest of her memoir, Hügel-Marshall discussed the psychological and emotional turmoil she faced as a result of constant discrimination and isolation as she grew older. As can be seen in the above quotation, from a young age she began to internalize the discrimination she faced and believed that her Blackness made her inferior to her white peers. As she was constantly critiqued about every action and decision she made, she stated, "I have no faith left in myself. I finally internalize that I'm laughable, negligible. And knowing myself to be a nothing, I then stop defending myself, stop fighting back."[88] However, Hügel-Marshall did not give up and did eventually gain the confidence to fight back against her oppressors. For example, when she was sixteen, she expressed interest in becoming a teacher, but was told that she would be incapable of anything more than child-care work. However, after several years of hard work, dedication, and standing up for herself, she eventually graduated with a degree and became a certified pedagogical social worker and would eventually receive a teaching position at a university in Berlin in 1992.

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[87] Hügel-Marshall, *Invisible Woman,* 28.
[88] Hügel-Marshall, *Invisible Woman,* 38.

Even as Hügel-Marshall overcame certain obstacles as she "grew older, stronger, and smarter," the negative psychological effects from years of discrimination, oppression, and isolation did not go away. The ideas of inferiority and strangeness that she internalized as a young child remained with her. She stated that as an adult, she sometimes wondered what it would be like to be around and talk to other people of color. However, she also mused,

> Blacks are utterly strange to me, and I fear them. I've come to hold certain beliefs about them by generalizing from my own case: I am Black and I am ugly, awful to look at with hair so wild no stylist could tame it. I'm a bad seed, wayward, immoral, filthy, stupid. The last person I'd want to meet is someone like me.[89]

As was the case for many Black Germans, until her involvement in the Afro-German feminist movement, Hügel-Marshall did not have any contact with other Black Germans or people of color. Because of this, she was never able to share or discuss her experiences with anyone who truly understood what she was going through.

While Black German woman each had their own unique experiences growing up in post-World War II Germany, there are certain themes that can be seen throughout the majority of their personal accounts. The first is the isolation these women felt throughout their lives. Because there were so few Black Germans to begin with, many did not encounter anyone else who looked like them. Because of this, many of these women internalized the racism they encountered and developed a sense of inadequacy about themselves and others who looked like them. This is clearly seen throughout Hügel-Marshall's memoir, as well as several other women's accounts. In Helga Emde's personal account in *Showing Our Colors,* she stated the only Black individuals she came in contact

[89] Hügel-Marshall, *Invisible Woman,* 85.

with as a child were Black soldiers, from whom she ran "in fear and terror." Other than that, she did not encounter any other Black German or person until well into adulthood. According to Emde, because of this, she "internalized the prejudices and racism of my surroundings at a very early stage. Black meant frightening, strange, foreign, and animalistic. . . . Black means unworthy of existence." Later in this account, Emde discussed how this internalization led her to try "to be as white as [she] could be."[90] Another woman, May Ayim, born in 1960 to a white German woman and a Ghanaian medical student and subsequently given up for adoption, discussed how when she was a child, she attempted to eat soap to "clean" the Blackness out of her.[91]

It was this shared experience of isolation and separation that ultimately drove many Black German women to become involved in the Afro-German feminist movement, as they longed for a sense of community. In reference to her attendance at weekly meetings with other Afro-Germans, Hügel-Marshall notes, "I don't know what's more unbelievable—the thirty-nine years in which I lived in total isolation, never seeing a Black face that wasn't my own, or the fact that now, suddenly, I'm not alone any more."[92] For Hügel-Marshall and so many other Afro-Germans, this new sense of community empowered them and allowed them to express themselves in ways that had previously seemed impossible.

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[90] Helga Emde, "An 'Occupation Baby' in Postwar Germany," in *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out,* ed. May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz, trans. Anne V. Adams (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 101.

[91] May Opitz, "The Break," in *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out,* ed. May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz, trans. Anne V. Adams (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 207.

[92] Hügel-Marshall, *Invisible Woman,* 91.

The second theme that is consistent throughout almost every personal account about being Black in Germany is the fact that Blackness was always associated with foreignness. In other words, to many West Germans (and even many Germans today), Blackness and Germanness cannot coexist. In her personal account in *Showing Our Colors,* Ellen Wiedenroth explained, "To be Black and to be German—there's something wrong about it, there's something peculiar. Black Germans are excluded from our thought-patterns, they don't even exist in the consciousness of most West Germans."[93] This, of course, was one of the long-term impacts that traditional German ideas about racial purity and superiority has had on German society.

In 1984, white German feminist Dagmar Schultz held a conversation with three Afro-German women, Laura Baum, Katharina Oguntoye, and May Ayim, in which they discussed their experiences with exclusion from German society and identity. They each spoke about how they felt as though they were constantly having to justify or explain their existence to other Germans. While Oguntoye and Ayim were both from West Germany, Baum grew up in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Her perspective gives insight into how race relations played out under a socialist government and how, regardless of legislation against racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia, those relations were similar to those in the West. At one point during the conversation, Schultz asked the three women, "How do others see you—how do you handle it?" to which Ayim replied,

> It often happens with me that people have their own expectations and ignore what I say. When I tell them that I grew up here [in West Germany] and have spent my entire life here, the question still might come afterward: 'Yes, and when are you going back?' Crazy. Now and then I have the feeling of not belonging anywhere;

[93] Ellen Wiedenroth, "What makes me so different in the eyes of others?" in *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out,* ed. May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz, trans. Anne V. Adams (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 167.

> on the other hand I've grown up here, speak this language, actually feel secure here, and can express myself as I want. I share a background with these people here even if they don't accept me. 'Yes, I'm German,' I say, perhaps out of spite to shake up their black-and-white thinking.[94]

In addition, Oguntoye and Baum noted how amazed people always were that they were able to speak German so well. Baum stated, "Yes, that happens a lot, People think I'm a foreigner. If I speak flawless German, I get this 'admiration.'"[95] This also provides insight into how racism in West Germany actually played out up until reunification in the late 1980s. During this time, outward and violent racist practices were not very common. Rather, Germans engaged in a somewhat 'passive,' or 'covert' racism. Perhaps this is one reason why racism went unaddressed in West Germany for so long, especially among white women as will be seen throughout the next chapter.

Tina Campt examines this conversation between Schultz and these three Afro-German women in an essay entitled "Afro-German Cultural Identity and the Politics of Positionality: Contests and Contexts in the Formation of a German Ethnic Identity." In this work, she discusses how these women challenged "the dominant conception of German cultural identity" by formulating a new identity known as "afro-deutsche." Campt points out that in Germany, Germanness is conflated with whiteness, and German society excludes individuals who do not fit that criteria from the dominant German cultural identity. However, she states that Afro-German women have lived in somewhat of an "in-between" stage, "simultaneously on the margins of German culture and

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[94] Laura Baum, Katharina Oguntoye, and May Opitz, "Three Afro-German Women in Conversation with Dagmar Schultz: The First Exchange for This Book," in *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out,* ed. May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz, trans. Anne V. Adams (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 150.

[95] Baum et al., "Three Afro-German Women in Conversation with Dagmar Schultz," 151.

thoroughly permeated by it, and between traditional conceptions of black and white racial identifications." She argues that because of this, these women have "developed a cultural and ideological 'agility.'" By this, Campt means that these women's experiences have taught them how to navigate between a "variety of cultural and ethnic identifications" which has allowed them to "resist both complete marginalization and assimilation within German society."[96]

As a result of this "agility," these women were able to establish an identity of their own known as "Afro-deutsch" or "Afro-German." By proclaiming this new identity, these women rejected the identities of *Mischling, Mischlingskinder,* or *Negermischlingskinder* that had been imposed upon them by West German society. Instead, they now insisted upon the recognition of their multiple identifications and laid claim to both their Blackness and their Germanness.[97] This can be seen in a speech Hügel-Marshall gave in October 1992 at Amherst College in Massachusetts. In this speech, Hügel-Marshall discussed the increase of racial violence that had been taking place in Germany since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. During the speech, she asserted, "Well, the Afro-German community is no longer willing to endure conditions that force them out of their country. We are part of the German population—we've been there a long time—and now we are fighting for a place within our own society. We are fighting for the place that is rightfully ours."[98] The speech demonstrated a complete shift in Hügel-Marshall's attitude toward herself and Black Germans in general as a result of her involvement in the Afro-German feminist movement.

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[96] Tina M. Campt, "Afro-German Cultural Identity," 110-116.
[97] Tina M. Campt, "Afro-German Cultural Identity," 116.
[98] Hügel-Marshall, *Invisible Woman,* 100.

Many other Black German women experienced a similar shift in attitude. Because these women were now able to articulate their identity and oppression, they could finally embark on the difficult journey of dismantling the long-standing racist practices they faced throughout their lives. The Afro-German feminist movement offered them a space to do just that. In addition to transforming their own positions within Germany, these women were also able to transform German society as a whole. Through asserting this newfound identity, Black German women found the power to call upon Germans, especially white German women, to acknowledge and address their own contributions to the racism that existed within their society and movement.

Conclusion

This chapter has made it clear that Black Germans have a rich and complex history that began centuries before post-World War II occupation. While the first accounts of Africans in Germany were quite positive, these ideas began to shift with the introduction of the transatlantic slave trade, biological racism, and colonization. One of the first significant turning points in German racial history was when Africans entered Germany in large numbers for the first time as French occupiers following World War I. This resulted in the rise of a mixed-race population referred to as "Rhineland Bastards," and it was at this point when German anxieties about race and racial mixing turned inward. However, it is important to note that at this point, skin color was not the most significant racial characteristic to German racial ideology. Until the end of World War II, Germans classified anyone outside of Northern European ancestry as a racial enemy, no matter the color of their skin. However, as is clearly seen throughout this chapter, these ideas changed following World War II as a result of American occupation and the

emergence of another mixed-race population, this time referred to as *Mischlingskinder*. With the rise of this small, but visible population of mixed-race children (most often born of African American fathers and German mothers), combined with the influence of American racial practices among the United States occupying forces, Germans began to take on the black-white binary racial ideology.

As a result, West German officials were caught in a conundrum. They had to ascertain how to address the so-called "problem" that these mixed-race children presented to West German society, while at the same time proving to the Western world that they had moved away from their violent racist past and had adopted democratic practices. One of the ways in which the West German government did this was to present their "solutions" as advantageous and beneficial for the mixed-race children. However, as is clear throughout this chapter, this was not the case. These children experienced isolation, discrimination, and oppression that had lasting psychological and emotional impacts on their lives. It was not until decades later in the 1980s, with the help of Audre Lorde and the Afro-German feminist movement, that many Black Germans who had grown up in the previous decades began to appreciate themselves and their history.

It is important to point out that official and public focus on mixed-race children began to decrease in the early 1960s. Fehrenbach attributes this to the fact that by that time, the West German government had "exhausted the children's use as advertisement of West Germany's successful democratic transformation." As a result, a false narrative of "harmonious ethno-racial homogeneity" emerged, and "the use of the word *Rasse* [breed, or race] and reference to things "racial" were rendered taboo, at least as applied to

contemporary German society."[99] This, I argue, is perhaps one of the main reasons why such a large gap existed between white and Black German women during and after the emergence of the white German women's movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As will be seen in the next chapter, white German women and feminists often ignored the racial issues that existed within West German society during this time. It was not until the 1980s, as a result of the work of Dagmar Schultz and the Afro-German feminist movement, that white women began to recognize and openly discuss issues of racism within their own movement and within the broader German society.

[99] Fehrenbach, "Black Occupation Children," 218.

CHAPTER III - THE DIVIDE BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE GERMAN WOMEN AND THE IMPACT OF DAGMAR SCHULTZ

In 1982, German feminist Dagmar Schultz wrote an essay in which she criticized members of the predominately white German women's movement and their failure to confront issues of racism and antisemitism. She wrote, "what is still lacking in the German Women's Movement is an intensified contact with women of foreign origin and a self-critical analysis and discussion of racism and antisemitism…"[100] The women's movement in West Germany had begun in 1968 when women broke away from the German student movement as they became dissatisfied with the sexism they faced from its male members. Shultz became involved in the movement upon her return to Berlin in 1973 after spending ten years in the United States. During her time in the United States, Shultz had been very active in both the African American Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement. According to Schultz, it was during those ten years that she gained an understanding of the significance of her whiteness, the privileges it afforded her, and its impact on those around her. When Shultz returned to Berlin in 1973, she very quickly noticed that women of lower classes, as well as immigrant, Black and Jewish women remained on the fringes of the German movement.[101] Shultz was highly disappointed and dissatisfied with the divide that existed between minorities and white German women and, as I will argue in the latter part of this chapter, became one of the

[100] Dagmar Schultz, "The German Women's Movement in 1982," in *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature,* ed. Edith Hoshino Altbach et al., (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984), 376.

[101] Dagmar Schultz, "Witnessing Whiteness – ein persönliches Zeugnis" in *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte: Kristische Weißseinsforschung in Deutschland*, ed. Susan Arndt, Maureen Eggers, Grada Kilomba, and Peggy Piesche, trans. DeepL Translator (Münster: Unrast Verlag, 2005): 13, dagmarschultz.com/downloads/Critical_Whiteness_long.pdf.

most influential antiracist feminists as she worked tirelessly to close this divide and to open up discussions of race and racism within the West German women's movement.

Before discussing Schultz's impact, however, it is important to understand why such a deep divide emerged between white German women and German women of color throughout 1960s West German society. Throughout the first half of this chapter, I will argue that there were two main factors that led to a rise in tension between these two groups of German women. The first was the fact that, beginning in the early 1960s, discussions of race and racism throughout West German society became extremely taboo. During this time, Germans attempted to distance themselves from their Nazi past by avoiding discussions of current internal racism altogether. Because discussions of German racism were absent from public and official discourse, West German officials were able to argue that racism was no longer an issue within their own country. As a result, anyone who did speak out about Germany's current internal racist practices risked accusations of bringing racism back into their society, or in the case of white German women, into their social movements.

Here, it is important to emphasize the phrase 'current internal racism.' By this I mean the racism that was taking place within the boundaries of German society during that specific time. This clarification is significant because with the rise of the German student movement in the 1960s, young Germans did become critical of racist practices, but only of those that existed outside of their current society, especially within countries such as the United States and South Africa. Because the West German women's movement grew out of the student movement in the late 1960s, many of these practices bled over into their movement as well.

This point leads to the second factor that contributed to such a deep divide between Black and white German women, which was the emergence of a preoccupation with Holocaust remembrance among German students and women. Again, with the rise of the German student movement, many young Germans began to push their parents and the older generation to acknowledge their roles and participation in the Nazi past. As Rita Chin and Heide Fehrenbach have discussed, a preoccupation with Holocaust remembrance and focus on Nazi racism emerged throughout West Germany, taking attention away from the racism happening within German society at that time.[102]

I argue that each of these factors—the taboo nature of discussions surrounding the current internal racial problems and the preoccupation with past and external racism—meant that the needs and struggles of Black German women went ignored throughout West German society and, specifically, in the women's movement. Because of this, Black German women generally distrusted the white German feminist population to fight against discrimination and oppression on the basis of both gender *and* race. As a result, strong tensions arose between these two groups of women until figures like Dagmar Schultz were able to bridge the divide.

Understanding the Conflict between Black and White German Women

After the defeat of National Socialism in 1945, Germans were left to rebuild their national identity in the face of economic, social, and cultural upheaval. In addition, German officials felt pressure from their Western occupiers, especially the United States, to restructure their society along democratic principles. As discussed in the previous

[102] Rita Chin and Heide Fehrenbach, "Introduction: What's Race Got to Do With It? Postwar German History in Context," in *After the Nazi Racial State: Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2009), 23.

chapter, the small population of mixed-race children that emerged as a result of relationships between foreign occupation soldiers of color (mainly African American GIs) and white German women had a significant impact on German reconceptualizations of race and the formation of a new German national identity at the end of World War II.

In order to distance themselves from their Nazi past, Germans understood that they needed to also distance themselves from their previous racial ideologies. Influenced by the racial practices and ideologies of their American occupiers, as well as by the increasing visibility of mixed-race occupation children, Germans began to distinguish between race and nationality, and to think of race in terms of a Black-white binary. For many Germans, this was their way of rejecting the racial ideologies and policies that had existed under National Socialism. In addition, as stated in the previous chapter, German officials also attempted to utilize mixed-race occupation children and the policies enacted towards them as evidence that Germans had overcome their racist past. Because officials presented their policies of deportation and isolation for mixed-race children as protection against the racism that existed within West German society, they were able use those policies as evidence that West Germany was on its way to becoming a society free from racist ideologies and was one that could easily be reincorporated into the Western democratic world. As Heide Fehrenbach states, however, as these children grew up and the West German government could no longer use them to their advantage, "they receded as an object of social policy." In addition, in 1960, the West German Interior Ministry ceased to conduct surveys on the number of mixed-race children throughout West Germany due to fears concerning its legality in a post-World War II German society. [103]

[103] Fehrenbach, "Black Occupation Children," 218.

As a result, discussions and reference to anything about "race" subsided throughout West Germany.

While Fehrenbach focuses on the impact that mixed race occupation children had on why discussions of race were rendered taboo in German society, in her study concerning Turkish guest workers in Germany, historian Rita Chin argues that there was a more direct link between the legacy of National Socialism and the taboo nature of race as a category in West Germany. Chin argues that in order to distance themselves further from their past, "West German leaders sought to construct a stable liberal democracy in which categories based on race were irrelevant."[104] As a result, the term *Rasse* (race) and any reference to racism was seen as taboo and was largely eradicated throughout reconstructed Germany. Many Germans came to believe that because racial categories and ideologies were no longer explicitly spoken or written about, the issue of rac*ism* was no longer a problem within West German society.

Chin points to the large population of foreign guest workers, especially Muslim Turks, who were invited into West Germany after World War II to fulfill the labor shortage that emerged as a result of the demographic, social, and cultural upheavals the country was experiencing. She discusses how in the 1970s, as it became clear to West German officials that these migrant workers were quickly becoming a permanent population within West German society, many Germans began to see these individuals as threats to their national identity. She states, "it was precisely the idea that Turks and other labor migrants now constituted a permanent presence in German society that made

[104] Rita Chin, "Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race," in *After the Nazi Racial State: Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2009), 99.

certain kinds of race-based thinking seem useful as a way to account for fundamental differences between peoples once again." However, due to the taboo nature of that race-based thinking, Germans began to point to cultural differences, rather than racial or biological differences, as the "primary basis for explaining fundamental incompatibilities between Turkish guest workers and Germans."[105] However, by pointing to the policies and social behavior enacted against foreign laborers, Chin is able to prove that racism and racist practices did still exist within German society, but that the elimination of race and racism from the German national discourse "produced a kind of blindness to the more subtle ways that Germans have constructed barriers to the inclusion and incorporation of guest workers and their descendants."[106]

As will be explored in more detail later, this phenomenon can very clearly be seen within the West German women's movement throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Due to this taboo nature of race, any white German women and feminists felt extremely uncomfortable discussing issues of racism that existed within their current society and movement, and as a result, the needs and struggles of many Black women went ignored and unacknowledged, which deepened the divide between the two groups of women.

What is interesting, however, is the fact that while Germans staunchly avoided discussions and acknowledgement of racism within their own country, members of the New Left and the German student movement became very involved in speaking out against racist practices within other countries, most notably the United States and South Africa. As historians Martin Klimke and Maria Höhn point out, beginning in the early

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[105] Rita Chin, "Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race," 82.
[106] Rita Chin, "Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race," 99.

1960s, the main student organizations in the United States (Students for a Democratic Society/SDS) and West Germany (Socialist German Student Union/SDS) held a close relationship as they both sought to fight against authoritarianism and Western imperialism of Third World countries. As a result of this connection, members of the German SDS became very aware of the African American Civil Rights Movement, were extremely influenced by their ideals and protest tactics, and even began to support the movement from within West German society.[107]

In September of 1967, the German SDS "officially declared its solidarity with the rising black power faction in the movement."[108] In addition, two years later, German activist KD Wolff established the Black Panther Solidarity Committee in November of 1969. According to Höhn and Klimke, the three major goals of this committee were to educate Germans about the Black Panther Party and the "fascist terror of the ruling class in the USA," to establish alliances with African American GIs stationed in Germany, and to provide "material support of the Black Panthers." In addition, "the committee organized solidarity demonstrations, film screenings, and went to local high schools educating people about the African American civil rights struggle and the Black Power movement."[109]

West German students engaged in similar actions against South African apartheid. Quinn Slobodian discusses how members of the German SDS, in solidarity with a former fellow student from South Africa, Neville Alexander, participated in the "first major

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[107] Maria Höhn and Martin Klimke, *A Breath of Freedom: The Civil Rights Struggle, African American GIs, and Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 108.

[108] Höhn and Klimke, *A Breath of Freedom,* 112.

[109] Höhn and Klimke, *A Breath of Freedom,* 114-115.

protest of German students against the racist South African regime" in 1961. In 1960, Alexander organized the "first SDS working group on African issues," and educated his German peers on African racism through sharing his own experiences and knowledge on the subject. Alexander returned to South Africa in 1961 but was arrested two years later "for distributing leaflets for the African People's Democratic Union of South Africa, whose program called for the abolition of apartheid." According to Slobodian, when Alexander's former peers heard about his arrest, they began to organize and carry out protests against the South African government in West German, and even created a fund for his legal defense.[110]

The irony and hypocrisy within the German student movement relating to racial issues and discussions of racism is clear. These students became so focused on helping African Americans and Black South Africans fight against the racism they faced with the United States and South Africa, that they failed to acknowledge the struggles their fellow Germans of color were experiencing within their own country.

Similar hypocrisy was also evident in the women's movement, which grew out of the student movement in the late 1960s. In 1968, as women were becoming more and more frustrated with their inferior positions within the student movement, several women in West Berlin formed the Action Council for Women's Liberation (*Aktionsrat für die Befreiund der Frauen*) to confront the issues they faced throughout the male dominated SDS and German society. It was this organization that would develop into the new German women's movement in the early 1970s. In 1968, German feminist Helke Sander

[110] Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 23-24.

gave a speech at the national convention of the SDS in Frankfurt in 1968 on behalf of the Action Council in which she outlined some of the focal points of the emerging movement. These included “patriarchy, token women. . . the politics of personal life, [and] the rights and needs of mothers.” As the movement grew, its members began to focus on larger issues and projects which included the campaign to abolish the abortion law (Paragraph 218), the establishment of women’s centers and houses for battered women, as well as the creation of health centers, counselling centers, tea and coffee houses, bookstores, and facilities serving immigrant women.[111] However, because many of these women were previously active in the SDS, they continued to take up some of the same issues as their male counterparts. One example of this was their focus on racist practices in foreign countries, although their attention was more focused on the experiences of women.

In January 1981, the popular German feminist magazine *Courage* published an edition entitled “Süd Afrika” (“South Africa”) that contained several articles detailing the experiences of Black and white women living within South Africa. In one article entitled “Und die weissen Frauen?” (“And the White Women?”), two German women, Annette Biermann and Jutta Kneifel, wrote a report about their visit to South Africa in 1979 where they assessed the situation of the “white women’s movement.” According to Biermann and Kneifel,

> Feminists are almost exclusively a small group of privileged white college students who model themselves very much after the American-European women's movement. Against the background of women's groups organizing at universities where only whites are admitted, and the systematic racial segregation in all areas

[111] Altbach, “The New German Women’s Movement,” 5-8.

> of life and society, it is extremely difficult to include the majority of black women in the movement.[112]

In addition, they pointed to the unique struggles of Black women in South Africa who wanted to be involved within the women's movement, but who asserted, "there are more important struggles here for us as blacks than the women's movement' we want, first of all, basically a more dignified life and to be recognized as free citizens of our country." Biermann and Kneifel went on to discuss several projects initiated by the women's group at the University of Cape Town, several of which dealt with protecting the rights of Black women in South Africa. In addition, they were critical the movement's inherent racism and the unacknowledged privilege many white South African women possessed, and noted, "another project deals with the very revealing analysis of the still prevailing 'settler consciousness' of white women. They are still carriers of the ideology of colonialism and exploitation of the previous centuries."[113] Biermann and Kneifel argued that while white South African women faced oppression through sexism, they still had a certain amount of privilege due to the fact that they "belonged to the ruling class, to the myth of the 'great family of white settlers,' simply because the color of [their] skin. . ." and that their "claim to equality automatically includes participating equally alongside the white man in the oppression of the black class."[114]

While Biermann and Kneifel were quite critical of white South African women, it is notable that they made no comparison to their own movement, and to the similar experiences of Black and white German women. Black German women would have most

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[112] Annette Biermann and Jutta Kneifel, "Und Die Weissen Frauen?" *Courage*, January, 1981, trans. DeepL Translator, accessed January 11, 2021, 27, http://library.fes.de/courage/pdf/1981_01.pdf.
[113] Biermann and Kneifel, "Und Die Weissen Frauen?" 27.
[114] Biermann and Kneifel, "Und Die Weissen Frauen?" 27.

likely agreed with the statement made by the Black South African woman quoted in this article about wanting a more "dignified life and to be recognized as free citizens of [their] country." As exemplified throughout the previous chapter, Black German women, while German citizens, faced many obstacles and challenges and obstacles to their freedom. In addition, white German women, too, were guilty of unacknowledged privilege and had past experiences with colonialism.[115] Here, one can see the lasting influence of the belief among Germans that racism was a nonissue within their own country.

At the same time as discussions surrounding ongoing racism among Germans remained taboo, the 1960s saw a rise in efforts among West Germans to acknowledge and begin to reckon with their Nazi past, or what is commonly referred to as *Vergangenheitsbeweältigung*. During the 1960s, West Germany, like many other Western countries, saw the rise of a New Left that encompassed young individuals who had become dissatisfied with the existing power structures that governed their country. The German New Left called for the democratic takeover of the "Great Coalition" government of the Federal Republic, which they considered to be authoritarian.[116] As

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[115] It is important to point out that German women were not passive subjects of their country's colonial practices. As German feminist Kerstin Engelhardt points out, many were "directly involved in the process. . . as missionaries or settlers, but also in Germany, where they actively supported colonial policy." See Kerstin Engelhardt, "Weiße deutsche Frauen: Kolonialistinnen in der Vergangenheit, Rassistinnen in der Gegenwart. Das Beispiel Namibia," in *Entfernte Verbindungen: Rassismus, Antisemitismus, Klassenunterdrückung*, ed. Ika Hügel et al. (Berlin, Germany: Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1993), 120.

[116] "Zur Sonne," *Der Speigel,* June 24, 1968, trans. DeepL Translator, accessed October 3, 2020, https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-46020891.html. According to this article, "The catalyst in Germany was the Grand Coalition in Bonn—for the red students no longer just an unnecessary, anti-democratic alliance, but an indication of decline." The Great Coalition took place in 1966 when the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) joined with the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU). This infuriated members of the New Left and the SDS as the SPD had been the only legal leftist party in West Germany. As Richard W. McCormick points out in his monograph *Politics of the Self,* "this coalition meant that there was no longer any parliamentary opposition at all on the left." As a result, members of the New Left became infuriated and began more intense protests against what they viewed to be an authoritarian government. See Richard W. McCormick, *Politics of the Self: Feminism and the Post Modern in West German Literature and Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 37.

Fehrenbach and Chin point out, members of the New Left and the German SDS believed that the "successful building of German democracy also required another, very specific relationship to race: repudiation of Nazi racism and remembrance of German complicity in that racial project."[117] In other words, the generation of 1968 believed that acknowledgment and reconciliation with their past was the only way to a successful democratic society. As a result, they began to call on their parents and the older generation to speak out about National Socialism and to reckon with their involvement in Nazi atrocities and racial ideologies. Significantly, these young Germans focused on the Nazi racism of the past, which looked much different than the racialized thinking of the 1960s, and, as Fehrenbach and Chin argue, "the preoccupation with Holocaust remembrance prevented Germans from seeing other, more immediate forms of race thinking and racism that persist[ed] in their democracy."[118]

This can very clearly be seen throughout the women's movement, as those writing the first women's and social histories of Nazi Germany began to debate the roles of women in National Socialism and to reassess the assumed innocence of the "female victim." On one side of this debate, there were women such as historian Gisela Bock who believed all women were potential victims because they did not have agency under the male-dominated patriarchal National Socialist state.[119] However, on the other side of this debate were women such as Christina Thürmer-Rohr and Claudia Koonz, who suggested that women did have agency during National Socialism and were complicit in the atrocities. Thürmer-Rohr became a controversial figure in this debate with the publication

[117] Rita Chin and Heide Fehrenbach, "Introduction," 22.
[118] Rita Chin and Heide Fehrenbach, "Introduction," 23.
[119] Saldern, "Victims or Perpetrators?" 102.

of her book, *Vagabundinnen* (later translated into English under the title, *Vagabonding: Feminist Thinking Cut Loose*). Throughout this book, Thürmer-Rohr argued that women had been complicit in the crimes that men had committed against them and against humanity throughout history. She stated, “the question of the complicity of women in the destruction processes directed by men and in men’s destructive logic meets—at least within the women’s movement—with iron resistance. It provokes rage.”[120] Yet, she maintained that the “norms of sexual complementarity and sexual equality” had led to collaboration between women and men. She pointed to the failure of women for allowing men to achieve “the possibility of manifold and total annihilation” and stated that the only way women could “relieve [themselves] of the consequence,” was by acknowledging that failure.[121]

In her book, *Mothers in the Fatherland,* published the same year as *Vagabundinnen* in 1987, Claudia Koonz came to a similar conclusion. Koonz stated in her introduction, “the fact that women bore no responsibility for issuing orders from Berlin does not obviate their complicity in carrying them out.”[122] Koonz argued that while there were women who were outspoken about their support for Nazism, even those women who did not explicitly state their support but continued to engage in normal family life were complicit in the atrocities. She wrote, “as fanatical Nazis or lukewarm tag-alongs, they resolutely turned their heads away from assaults against socialists, Jews, religious dissenters, the handicapped, and ‘degenerates.’… Mothers and wives…made a

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[120] Christina Thürmer-Rohr, *Vagabonding: Feminist Thinking Cut Loose,* trans. Lise Weil (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1991), 43.

[121] Thürmer-Rohr, *Vagabonding,* 40.

[122] Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 5.

vital contribution to Nazi power by preserving the illusion of love in an environment of hatred."[123]

These debates, while significant, pushed women's attention to their participation in racism of the past, which distracted them from the racism that was happening in the present and within their own movement. As Dagmar Schultz put it in an article entitled, "Racism in the New Germany and the Reaction of White Women," "when antisemitism was part of the discussion, situations developed in which white Christian women publicly accused themselves of being guilty, probably in the hope of achieving a kind of therapeutic cleansing. Reactions to Black women raising the issue of racism were far more rejective or aggressive."[124] This, combined with the absence of discussions about race due to its taboo nature, created tension between Black and white women, and as a result, Black German women often felt that their struggles and needs went unacknowledged by white German women.

This can perhaps most clearly be seen in Ika Hügel-Marshall's memoir, *Invisible Woman: Growing up Black in Germany*. Hügel-Marshall was an Afro-German woman who was involved in the white German women's movement before the Afro-German feminist movement emerged in 1984. While she participated in demonstrations and protests for equal rights and against oppression, she noticed that these efforts focused solely on gender equality and the oppression of women, and that these women made very little attempt to incorporate racial equality and the double-sided oppression faced by Black women. In her memoir, Hügel-Marshall wrote,

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[123] Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland,* 18.

[124] Dagmar Schultz, "Racism in the New Germany and the Reaction of White Women," *Women in German Yearbook* 9, (1993): 245, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20688788.

> None of my sisters in the women's groups—no one in the entire women's movement, in fact—is interested in hearing the story of Black women's struggles. They don't want to see that our society is racist as well as sexist. These white feminists don't understand that they too are the beneficiaries of the racist status quo or that the pervasiveness of racism allows them to ignore that Black and white skin are not accorded equal value.[125]

Hügel-Marshall discussed how one Sunday during a meeting at the Women's Center, she finally gained the courage to address the other German women and to speak up about racism within the movement. Addressing these other women, she proclaimed, "as a Black woman, I feel that our struggle for equality against sexism and oppression has overlooked the problem of racism."[126] Instead of listening to Hügel-Marshall's struggles, however, the other women dismissed her comment, and were even offended by it. These white women argued that because they were feminists, they were different from the "typical white person," and thus could not be racists. They presented themselves as Hügel-Marshall's victims, stating that it was actually Hügel-Marshall who was guilty of racialized thinking and that it was her own fault for perceiving them as racists. In addition, they told Hügel-Marshall that while there were some situations where it was important to confront racism, the women's movement was not one of them.[127]

This interaction left a lasting impact on Hügel-Marshall. At that moment, it became clear to her that she could not trust white feminists to stand up and fight for her rights as a Black woman. She wrote, "it's all too easy for whites to hide from the actual, unbearable situation that I and other Black women find ourselves in. All they have to do is refuse to hear us or hear us only half way."[128] This story serves as proof of the division

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[125] Hügel-Marshall, *Invisible Woman,* 81-82.
[126] Hügel-Marshall, *Invisible Woman,* 82.
[127] Hügel-Marshall, *Invisible Woman,* 82-83.
[128] Hügel-Marshall, *Invisible Woman,* 83.

and tension that existed between Black and white German feminists throughout the 1970s, and of the refusal of white women to acknowledge the existence of racism, not only in West German society as a whole, but especially within their own movement.

Australian scholar Sara Ahmed has studied and written about how organizational commitment to anti-racism can actually open the door for increased racist activity. While Ahmed focuses on universities and their diversity programs in Australia and the United Kingdom, many of her findings can be applied to the West German women's movement. Ahmed argues that, "if the emphasis on equality as a positive duty takes the form of finding practical solutions to problems, then it might be that the solutions are creating problems by concealing the problems in new ways."[129] For example, Ahmed discusses how universities will often deny accusations of racist activity by pointing to its diversity and calling attention to its "levels of pastoral care." As a result, many students and faculty often do not speak out about racism they have experienced out of fear of dismissal, or due to the possibility that they might be made into the "problem."[130] This notion can clearly be seen in the relationship between Ika Hügel-Marshall and her white German feminist counterparts. Here, the influence of the predominant belief among West Germans that racism no longer existed within their society is evident. Because white German feminists dismissed Hügel-Marshall's claim by asserting their inability to be racist, they avoided the conversation and thus engaged in further racist activity. In addition, they made Hügel-Marshall feel as though she was the "problem." After Hügel-Marhsall pointed out their racism, one woman replied, "Being white, we can't judge

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[129] Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 142.

[130] Ahmed, *On Being Included,* 144-145.

whether you perceive us as racist. If you think about it that way, it's actually you who determines what is and isn't racism."[131] Rather than acknowledging their racist behavior, these white feminists placed the blame upon Hügel-Marshall.

Ahmed goes on to discuss why institutions and organizations often dismiss claims of racism and the negative impact that diversity might have on discussions of racism. She states, "when racism becomes an institutional injury, it is imagined as an injury to whiteness. The claim 'we would never' use the language of racism is a way of protecting whiteness from being hurt or damaged. *Diversity can be a method of protecting whiteness.*"[132] This, again, can be applied to the white women involved in the German women's movement. It is clear through their defensive behavior that these women perceived Hügel-Marshall's claim to be threatening. As will be discussed in detail later, Audre Lorde has pointed out the fear that existed among white German women during this time, and how it often prevented them from assessing their participation in their nation's past and present racism. This refusal to acknowledge their complicity was a way for German women to protect their whiteness and to protect themselves against feelings of guilt. According to Lorde, "that terror of self-scrutiny is sometimes disguised as an unbearable arrogance, impotent and wasteful."[133] In other words, the fear these women held, and their inability to confront their history so as to protect their whiteness, blocked the creation of a relationship with German women of color.

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[131] Hügel-Marshall, *Invisible Woman,* 83.

[132] Ahmed, *On Being Included,* 147.

[133] Audre Lorde, "Forward to the English Language Edition," in *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out,* ed. May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz, trans. Anne V. Adams (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992) viii.

Further, literary scholar Susan Arndt discusses the impact that whiteness has had on the broader feminist movement. She discusses how feminists of color have historically been largely overlooked because whiteness has become the "unspoken norm" throughout the women's movement. She states, "the thrust of this emancipatory movement and theory was limited from the outset, insofar as its early adherents spoke of women and in fact meant 'white women.'"[134] Arndt discusses how, unlike non-white individuals, white individuals often do not acknowledge their race. She states the reason for this relates to the fact that whiteness has become so normalized throughout Western societies. She argues that, in order to change this, white women have to become aware of their whiteness, and have to acknowledge and understand the privileges and impacts it has on their own lives, as well as the lives of others. She states that until white women recognize the fact that racial categories, while constructed, are an historical reality, significant change cannot happen within the feminist movement.[135] In other words, the significance and privilege of whiteness must be acknowledged, understood, and reassessed before any significant change can happen.

Before discussing how white and Black German women began to work to overcome these obstacles, it is important to point out that this type of division was not unique to the German feminist movement, and that these challenges can very clearly be seen throughout the American feminist movement as well. Self-proclaimed "revolutionary feminist" and scholar bell hooks has detailed this division in the American movement throughout her many publications. Hooks differentiates between reformist

[134] Arndt, "Boundless Whiteness?" 158.
[135] Arndt, "Boundless Whiteness," 159-160.

feminists, who wanted to "simply alter the existing system so that women would have more rights," and revolutionary feminists, who "wanted to transform that system, to bring an end to patriarchy and sexism," and states that many individual Black women who joined the feminist movement were revolutionary feminists. She points out that while the seeds of the American women's movement and second wave feminism were planted within the African American civil rights movement, "most women, especially privileged white women, ceased even to consider revolutionary feminist visions, once they began to gain economic power within the existing social structure," which prevented discussions about racism from entering mainstream feminist discussions.[136]

Hooks also discusses the significant impact that the unique nature of American race relations had on the division between Black and white feminists. She states that because integration was fairly new at the beginning of the movement, Black women "were learning how to interact with whites on the basis of being peers for the first time in their lives." She asserts, "no wonder individual black women choosing feminist were reluctant to introduce their awareness of race. It must have felt so awesome to have white women evoke sisterhood in a world where they had mainly experienced white women as exploiters and oppressors." She points out how once the younger generation of Black feminists did begin challenging white female racism, American women, just as white German women, became defensive and "accused [them] of being traitors by introducing race. . . [and] deflecting focus away from gender." However, as hooks makes clear, this could not have been further from the truth, as African American women realized that

[136] bell hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000), 3-5.

“there could be no real sisterhood between white women and women of color if white women were not able to divest of white supremacy, if feminist movement were not fundamentally anti-racist.”[137]

However, what is different between the German and American struggle with introducing race into the feminist movement, is that it was much more successful in the United States and happened at a much faster rate. hooks emphasizes,

> There has been no contemporary movement for social justice where individual participants engaged in the dialectical exchange that occurred among feminist thinkers about race which led to the re-thinking of much feminist theory and practice. . . I witnessed the revolution in consciousness that occurred as individual women began to break free of denial, to break free of white supremacist thinking. These awesome changes restore my faith in feminist movement and strengthen the solidarity I feel towards all women.[138]

This begs the question as to why American feminists began to come to terms with their privilege and address this division so much earlier and more successfully than German feminists? A likely answer resides in the fact that discussions of race and racism in America were much more prevalent and less taboo than within Germany. Another contributing factor could be the fact that American second-wave feminism grew out of the civil rights struggle and white American women were much more aware of the racial difference and struggles of Black women. It is clear that Germany’s history with race and racialized thinking had a large impact on why white German women were so reluctant to address racial differences for such a long time, and why they faced much more difficulty in doing so, as will be seen throughout the next section of this chapter.

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[137] hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody,* 57-58.
[138] hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody,* 58.

Anti-Racist Feminist Dagmar Schultz and Her Influence

In 1973, white German feminist Dagmar Schultz recognized the division between White and Black Germans that existed in the predominately white German women's movement. In a biographical essay entitled "Witnessing Whiteness," Schultz spoke out about the racism that existed within the women's movement at its conception. She stated, "on a theoretical level, *white* women [brought] with them their knowledge and experience from the left-wing movement, but the direct confrontation with racism and personal contact with affected women/people [was] largely absent."[139] Schultz was, and still is, perhaps one of the most influential antiracist German feminists. She has dedicated her life to the spread of antiracism and to encouraging white women to become self-critical and to acknowledge the privileges their skin color affords them. In addition, in recent years Schultz has worked to commemorate the work and influence of African American poet, feminist, and activist Audre Lorde on Black and white German women, their relationships with one another, and on the spread of antiracist ideas among white women. However, scholar and friend of Schultz, Sara Lennox, put it best when she stated, "with typical modesty, Schultz does not reveal the major role her own often unacknowledged efforts have played in making racism a central concern for German feminism."[140] Throughout the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss how it was Schultz who initially influenced antiracist discussions among white German women, and that it was through her efforts, combined with those of Audre Lorde and Black German such as May Ayim,

[139] Schultz, "Witnessing Whiteness," 13.

[140] Sara Lennox, "Antiracist Feminism in Germany: Introduction to Dagmar Schultz and Ika Hügel," *Women in German Yearbook* 9, (1993): 225, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20688786.

Ika Hügel-Marshall, and Katharina Oguntoye, that those discussions continued to grow and develop throughout German society.[141]

Dagmar Schultz was born in Berlin, Germany in 1941. In "Witnessing Whiteness," she attempted to trace the process of how she became aware of her skin color and its significance. While Schultz had several encounters with Afro-Germans as a child, she explained that it was not until she moved to the United States in her early twenties that she developed a consciousness of her whiteness, which would remain with her throughout her time in the U.S., and which she would bring back to Germany and attempt to spread throughout the German women's movement in the early 1970s.[142]

Schultz graduated high school in Berlin in 1959. Upon graduating, she became involved with "young left-wing students, actors, Germans and Greeks," and in 1961 became a student herself at the Free University of Berlin, where she studied Journalism, North American and Romance Studies. Two years later in 1963, Schultz applied for and received an immigrant visa to the United States and moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan where she began the master's program at the University of Michigan. In 1964, Schultz began attending events hosted by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and it was during this time that she started to understand "the manifold dimensions of racism" within the United States and, "even in the North."[143] She recalled, "I begin to move in the

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[141] I am not in any way trying to take attention away from the extremely groundbreaking and significant efforts that Afro-German women had on influencing discussions of race among white women. As will be discussed later in this chapter, Audre Lorde was instrumental in these discussions, and it was through her courses and workshops that many women were exposed to the struggles and difficulties German women of color faced throughout society and in the women's movement. However, I think it is important to acknowledge the work and influence of Schultz in these discussions as well, as she really initiated these discussions among white German women.

[142] Schultz, "Witnessing Whiteness," 1-2.

[143] Schultz, "Witnessing Whiteness," 5. Like many children in the American school system, Schultz was taught that racism did not exist in the Northern United States. She discusses this further in an

consciousness of my skin colour: I learn to understand my skin colour as a phenomenon with multiple material and emotional effects, learn that I am *white* and am considered part of the *white* collective, whether I want to be or not. I practice being *white* in contrast to *whites* whose views I do not share."[144] This was the first time in which Schultz really began to understand the significance of her whiteness, and to separate herself from the broader white population in the United States by declaring her solidarity with people of color. It was also during this time that Schultz recognized the concept of white privilege as she began to notice that white individuals only became aware of their skin color "when they want[ed] to distinguish between black people or to use their skin colour to justify various forms of exclusion. Or when they experience[ed] themselves as an absolute minority."[145] It was revelations and ideas such as these that Schultz would bring back to Germany ten years later and attempt to implement throughout the German women's movement.

Upon having completed her master's thesis entitled, "The Role of Broadcasting in Africa with Special Emphasis on West Africa," and graduating from the University of Michigan in 1965, Schultz applied for and was granted a teaching position at Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi. In an essay entitled, "Strangely Beautiful Land – Land of Injustice," Schultz wrote about her time in Mississippi in detail. She stated,

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essay entitled, "Strangely Beautiful Land – Land of Injustice." In this essay she states, "The notion I had of the position of the African Americans originated from a reading of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind,* from history lessons and from newspaper articles. It could be summarized in one sentence: the South treated Blacks poorly, the North treated them well. Although I lived in one of the northern states, this notion was quickly dispelled." See Dagmar Schultz, "Strangely Beautiful Land – Land of Injustice," *Frankfurter Hefte* 21, (1966): 1,
http://www.dagmarschultz.com/downloads/StrangelyBeautiful%20Land.pdf.

[144] Schultz, "Witnessing Whiteness," 5.

[145] Schultz, "Witnessing Whiteness," 5.

"after having worked in the civil rights movement and come in close contact with a large number of Blacks – light and dark, 'good citizens' and militants, rich and poor – I concluded that I could not understand the neuroses of many African Americans and the psychological disease of many Whites if I did not travel to the Deep South."[146]

In "Witnessing Whiteness," Schultz remembered how the year she spent in Mississippi had an even deeper impact on her racial consciousness. She described a meeting she attended with several members of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), recalling her thoughts as they sang "Oh Freedom, oh Freedom, oh Freedom over me…and before I'd be a slave, I'd be buried in my grave, and go home to my Lord and be free." She wrote, "how often have I sung this song at parties and meetings in the North, how different it sounds here!" As she listened to the unique struggles of these Southern African Americans, she thought to herself,

> I stand here in the ranks of the people and see that worlds separate us: how well I am doing as a *white* person, nothing in my life comes close to the reality of the people here, for whom it is a matter of food or hunger, registration or prison, hope or despair, life or death… Now I wonder what my contribution here can be. At the same time, as essential difference between *being white* and black becomes clear to me: I can choose if, when and how long I want to expose myself to this system.[147]

Schultz's time in Mississippi revealed to her that while she would never be able to fully understand the unique challenges and struggles faced by people of color, she could help to alleviate those struggles by acknowledging and listening to them, and by working to spread antiracism throughout her own community as a white woman.

After spending a year in Mississippi, Schultz traveled to Puerto Rico in 1966 where she worked for the Office of Economic Opportunity and was in charge of the

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[146] Schultz, "Strangely Beautiful Land – Land of Injustice," 2.
[147] Schultz, "Witnessing Whiteness," 7-8.

island wide family planning program. Schultz then returned to the United States in 1967 to continue her studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In "Witnessing Whiteness," she wrote about a research project that she took part in on the integration of schools in the South. In this project, Schultz interviewed numerous teachers who told her something along the lines of: "for me all children are equal, I can't see if they are black or *white*." Schultz asserted, "once again I realize the serious effects of *color blindness* (ideological color blindness): These teachers also don't realize that many of the black children cannot read well because they don't have glasses, that they don't listed because they have an ear disease, that they don't do their schoolwork because the family lives in one room."[148] Shultz's position against "color blindness" later became an essential component of her antiracism efforts in the German women's movement as she called on white German women to acknowledge the impact of their whiteness, as well as to recognize that "racism has to do with skin color."[149]

Upon completing the doctoral program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Schultz accepted another teaching position at Columbia College in Chicago in 1969. During this time, she also became involved in the Chicago Women's Liberation Union (CWLU), which again had a significant impact on how she would approach the subject of antiracism in the German women's movement just four years later. According to Schultz, the CWLU was "very progressive in its political attitudes."[150] She discussed how members of the CWLU would ask themselves self-critical questions, such as "why is our

[148] Schultz, "Witnessing Whiteness," 11.
[149] Schultz, "Racism in the New Germany and the Reaction of White Women," 245.
[150] Dagmar Schultz, "Meeting Audre Lorde, 1981: Racism within the White Women's Movement," interview by Dagmar Nöldge and Frederike Mehl, FFBIZ Das Feministische Archi*v*, December 14, 2015, transcript.

movement primarily *white?* Can we be relevant to black women? Can we make a reference to the Black Liberation Movement?" In addition, inspired by this organization, Schultz presented similar questions to students in her seminars at Columbia College, such as, "what is the relationship between black and *white* women? Should black and *white* women work together in the same organization? What does the discovery of gender mean for black girls and women compared to *white* women in the struggle against white-dominated capitalist society? How do class, differences between African Americans and migrant blacks, sexual orientation come into play in building a social movement?"[151] Because Schultz had been so invested in the antiracist efforts of the American women's movement, the fact that these discussions were virtually absent from the German women's movement greatly troubled her.

Schultz returned to Berlin in 1973 where she became a research associate at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies at the Free University of Berlin. Upon arrival, Schultz became involved in the women's movement that had begun five years prior, however, as she admits, she was not immediately involved with immigrant and Black German women. In an essay entitled, "Kein Ort nur für uns allein: Weiße Frauen auf dem Weg zu Bündnissen," (No Place Just for Us: White Women on the Path to Alliances), Schultz discussed how she "first gave in to the pull of the white women's movement" so as to become reaccustomed to life in Germany with the women's movement "as a point of reference." She initially became involved with women's issues through the women's health movement and helped to establish the *Feministisches Frauen*

[151] Schultz, "Witnessing Whiteness," 12.

Gesundheits Zentrum (Feminist Women's Health Center/FFGZ) where she "had little contact with immigrants and at that time no black German women."[152]

Nevertheless, Schultz quickly realized that the self-criticism and discussions pertaining to racism and the position of Black women within the movement that had been present in the American movement were largely absent from the German movement. She realized, "in this country where Jews, migrants, black Germans did not confront *whites* in the 1970s, *white* women are made easy not to look beyond their circles. The clearer it becomes to me that the absence of black and Jewish women is decisive for the movement's self-image, the more uncomfortable I feel."[153] This statement is significant as it not only confirms Rita Chin's argument that Germans were weary of discussing racism and racial issues because they were afraid of opening a doorway for racism to creep back into German society.[154] But, in addition, it exemplifies the complexity surrounding why these women were so reluctant to acknowledge the existence of racism in their own movement. White German women did not want to risk their legitimacy by engaging in issues that had been silenced, as it might have interfered with their chances at success.

In her article "Racism in the New Germany and the Reaction of White Women," Schultz attempted to explain why white German women failed to engage in conversations about racism or to acknowledge the inherent racism that existed within their movement. She claimed,

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[152] Dagmar Schultz, "Kein Ort nur für uns allein: Weiße Frauen auf dem Weg zu Bündnissen," in *Entfernte Verbindungen: Rassismus, Antisemitismus, Klassenunterdrückung,* ed. Ika Hügel et al. (Berlin, Germany: Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1993), 158.

[153] Schultz, "Witnessing Whiteness," 14.

[154] Chin, "Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race," 101.

> The attitudes of white women toward Black women are, in my opinion, less influenced by guilt feelings. In part, this has to do with the fact that German colonial history is considered insignificant on account of its shorter duration and because we do not learn anything about it in schools and in the family. Therefore, white women develop no guilt feelings about it, but also no feeling of responsibility… The confrontation with antisemitism is loaded with guilt feelings; the one with racism expresses, however, the loathing of having to deal with a problem area that white German women had up to now [1993] relegated to the United States or other western European countries.[155]

This, again, points to the fact that while Germans, especially German women, began to confront their contributions to anti-Semitism and the actions taken during National Socialism, this was not the case with anti-Black racism. Because many white German women were not exposed to the realities that Afro-Germans and Black Germans faced throughout history, and because of the stigma surrounding race discussions, it took white German women longer to confront those issues that existed within their movement and society. Schultz recognized this and, as a result, dedicated her work to spreading information about the existence of racism within German society and to influencing a racial consciousness among white German women.

In 1980, Schultz attended the World Conference on Women in Copenhagen where she first met African American poet, feminist, and activist Audre Lorde. As Schultz recalled this first encounter,

> I was spellbound and very much impressed with the openness with which Audre Lorde addressed us white women. She told us about the importance of her work as a poet, about racism and differences among women, about women in Europe, the USA and South Africa, and stressed the need for a vision of the future to guide our political practice. On that evening it became clear to me: Audre Lorde must come to Germany for German women to hear her, her voice speaking to white women in an era when the movement had begun to show reactionary tendencies.[156]

[155] Schultz, "Racism in the New Germany and the Reaction of White Women," 244.

[156] Dagmar Schultz, "Director's Statement," accessed November 19, 2020, http://www.audrelorde-theberlinyears.com/press_in.html.

During this conference, Schultz approached Lorde and asked if she would be interested in becoming a guest professor at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies, to which Lorde expressed interest. Shultz met Lorde again one year later at the annual conference of the National Women's Studies Association of which the theme was "Women Respond To Racism." During this conference, Shultz listened to Audre Lorde and white American feminist Adrienne Rich speak out against racism within the American women's movement. Rich directed her speech toward white women and spoke about the paralyzing nature of guilt and called on them to become aware of their complicity in racism so that they could fight against it. Lorde, on the other hand, spoke out about the legitimacy and power of anger among both Black and white women when dealing with racism.[157] Schultz was so inspired by their speeches that she published a report on the conference in the German feminist magazine *Courage.* According to Sara Lennox, this single article "may have initiated the discussion of racism within the German women's movement."[158]

Schultz's article in *Courage,* entitled "Dem Rassismus in sich begegnen," ("Encountering Racism within Oneself"), is divided into two sections. In the first section, Schultz gave details about the conference, its structure, and summarized the speeches of both Lorde and Rich. In the second section, Schultz then directly addressed white German women involved in the German women's movement and wrote,

> My participation in this conference made me aware that the discussion of racism is just as necessary in our country, but is still largely avoided in the women's movement. Most of us are aware that racism against foreigners and German

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[157] Alice Henry and Toni White, "Women Respond to Racism," *Off Our Backs* 11, no. 7 (1981): 2-3, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25793786.

[158] Lennox, "Antiracist Feminism in Germany," 225.

> colored people is a basic feature of our society and that anti-Semitism is less obvious only because Jews in Germany are hardly (or no longer) present. But where do racism and anti-Semitism make themselves felt in us? How are we taught to adopt certain prejudices? How can we defend ourselves against stereotypical images that we consciously reject reappearing from the subconscious in a perfidious manner? How do we deal with such feelings and attitudes? And what are the political implications of strategies of action that include or ignore this aspect?[159]

Here, Schultz acknowledged the concern among Germans that speaking out about race might have led to the reappearance of racism within German society. While Schultz did not present a solution to this conflict, she pointed out the devastating impact that silence about racism had on their movement. She discussed how white women, by not acknowledging the unique struggles of Jewish or Black German women, were not only denying these women's reality, but also their own responsibility within that reality. Schultz ended this article by calling on women of the FRG to become involved in pursing these questions. She stated, "we are at the beginning of a complex self-examination and only know that it is necessary – for ourselves, for our relationships with those who are discriminated against in this society, and for our political work."[160]

In addition to this article, the NWSA conference also inspired Shultz to publish *Macht und Sinnlichkeit,* a collection of selected translations of poetry and prose by Lorde and Rich, which according to Schultz, had the intended effect of "fanning the flames of discussion about racism and anti-Semitism in the women's movement."[161] This was just one of many antiracist publications that emerged from Orlanda Frauenverlag (Orlanda

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[159] Dagmar Schultz, "Dem Rassismus in sich begegnen," *Courage*, October, 1981, trans. DeepL Translator, 21, http://library.fes.de/cgibin/courage.pl?id=07.01015&dok=198110&f=198110_017&l=198110_021&c=198110_017.

[160] Schultz, "Dem Rassismus in sich begegnen," 21.

[161] Schultz, "Witnessing Whiteness," 15.

Women's Publishing House), which Schultz, along with several other women founded in 1974. Schultz admits that until 1987, the publishing company was comprised of an all-white staff. With the rise of the Afro-German feminist movement in 1984 and the subsequent publication of *Farbe bekennen: Afro-deutsche Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte* (which was an Orlanda publication), Schultz realized that "it [was] not acceptable that [they] publish[ed] books by black female authors and on anti-racism and anti-Semitism and remain a *white* German team." As a result, Orlanda Frauenverlag became one of the only integrated publishing companies in West Germany.[162]

Finally, in 1984, four years after the initial invitation offered by Schultz, Audre Lorde entered Berlin as a guest professor at the JFK Institute. This is perhaps one of Schultz's most significant contributions to the spread of antiracism throughout the German women's movement. While Lorde came to Berlin to teach literature and creative writing, she ended up becoming one of the most influential feminists in Germany for both Black and white women.[163] It was Lorde who initiated the formation of a Black collective identity throughout West (and even East) Germany and who inspired the beginning of the Afro-German feminist movement. She also encouraged Black German women to write about their lives and to assert their new identity through the publication of *Farbe bekennen*. However, this book and Lorde's efforts also greatly impacted white German women and the way they viewed themselves, as well as their society and culture.

[162] Schultz, "Witnessing Whiteness," 17.

[163] Lorde's contract with the free university lasted only a year, she returned to Berlin almost every year until her death in 1992. Lorde was diagnosed with liver cancer before her arrival in Berlin. While in Germany she began receiving alternate forms of treatment for her cancer, which her partner, Gloria Joseph, claimed added years on to her life. Lorde died on November 17, 1992 in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. See *Audre Lorde: The Berlin Years 1984-1992,* directed by Dagmar Schultz (2012; Germany: Third World Newsreel).

Upon her arrival in Berlin, Lorde, too, noticed the inability of white women to acknowledge the existence of racism and to discuss issues of race within their movement. In the introduction to *Farbe bekennen*, written in 1984, Lorde stated,

> Despite the terror and isolation some of these Black women have known from childhood, they are freer of the emotional dilemma facing many white feminists in Germany today. Too often, I have met an immobilizing national guilt in white German women which serves to keep them from acting upon what they profess to believe. Their energies, however well intentioned, are not being used, they are unavailable in the battles against racism, antisemitism, heterosexism, and xenophobia. Because they seem unable to accept who they are, these women too often fail to examine and pursue the powers relative to their identity. They waste that power, or worse, turn it over to their enemies. Four decades after National Socialism, the question still lingers for many white German women: how can I draw strength from my roots when those roots are entwined in such a terrible history? That terror of self-scrutiny is sometimes disguised as an unbearable arrogance, impotent and wasteful.[164]

This is an interesting contrast to Schultz's argument that national guilt did not play a role in white women's inability to confront their racism and prejudices against minority individuals living within their society. It is significant to point out that Lorde, as an outsider, recognized and acknowledged this immobilizing obstacle many white German women faced. As a result, Lorde was able to help these women confront their past, and thus become more open to engaging in discussions of race not only among their white peers, but also alongside Black and immigrant women. It is these discussions that will be the subject of the next chapter.

Conclusion

As a result of the efforts of both Dagmar Schultz and Audre Lorde, discussions about race and racism finally began to emerge among white German women and feminists in the late 1980s and continued to grow throughout the next few decades. This

[164] Audre Lorde, "Forward to the English Language Edition," viii.

is significant because, as discussed throughout the first half of this paper, any mention of race or racism was seen as extremely taboo throughout West German society due its connection with National Socialism. While the generation of 1968 became critical of their parents for ignoring their participation in and contributions to Nazi atrocities, these same young people were reluctant to acknowledge their own responsibility in addressing the racism that existed within the current West German society. This was especially true in the new German women's movement that emerged in 1968 as its members refused to listen to and discuss the unique struggles faced by Black German women within their movement. This began to change, however, with the arrival of Dagmar Schultz and with her entrance into the movement in 1973. Greatly inspired by the ten years she spent in the United States and by her involvement with the African American Civil Rights Movement and the American women's movement, Schultz became disturbed by how far behind German women were with their confrontation of racism in relation to women in the United States. As a result, Schultz began to work tirelessly to make more white women aware of their skin color and its impacts, as well as of the unique experiences of Black, immigrant, and Jewish women living in Germany. While the issues of racism were certainly not eradicated from German society or among German women, the efforts of Schultz, Lorde, and many other Black and white German women at least inspired its acknowledgement and opened the door for more women to become involved in working against its existence, which will be the focus of the final chapter of this thesis.

Today, at 79 years old, Schultz has not stopped working to spread information and knowledge about Audre Lorde and her invaluable contributions to both the Black and white German women's movements. In 2011, Schultz was awarded the Margherita von

Brentano Prize of the Free University of Berlin for outstanding achievements in the advancement of women and gender research. According to Schultz's website, she was awarded this prize because she "had made important contributions to many aspects of women's studies and gender studies and to their institutionalization." Through this award, Schultz was endowed with 15,000 euros.[165] In her acceptance speech, Schultz spoke in memory of Lorde and stated, "Audre Lorde had a decisive influence on the emergence and development of the Black German movement and on white women's confrontation with racism and difference." In addition, Schultz spoke about her plans for the money she was awarded, which included the creation of "a film about Audre Lorde's work at the Freie Universität," as well as her goal to "set up an Audre Lorde archive at the FU Library with the materials [she had collected throughout the years]."[166] Both of these goals were accomplished. The film, *Audre Lorde: The Berlin Years 1984-1992* was released in 2012 and the Audre Lorde Archive is still in operation at the Free University today

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[165] "Preise," DagmarSchultz.com, accessed November 24, 2020, http://dagmarschultz.com/deutsch/preise.html.

[166] Dagmar Schultz, "Rede zur Verleihung des Margherita-von-Brentano-Preises," (speech, Berlin, Germany, June 17, 2011), trans. DeepL Translator, http://dagmarschultz.com/downloads/Rede_MvB_preis.pdf.

CHAPTER IV – THE INFLUENCE OF AUDRE LORDE AND BLACK GERMAN FEMINISTS ON THE EMERGENCE OF RACE DISCUSSIONS AMONG WHITE GERMAN WOMEN

In March 1984, the first joint congress of foreign and German feminists was held in Frankfurt. While the majority of women involved in this conference were "emigrant women from various nationalities," there was at least one Afro-German woman present. That individual was May Ayim.[167] The title of this conference was "Sind wir uns denn so fremd?" ("Are we such strangers to each other?"). According to Nevel Gültekin, one of the organizers of this conference, their main goal was to bring foreign and German women together, not only to acknowledge and discuss their similarities and differences, but also to assert their positions within German society as women.[168] However, what ended up taking place was a much more intense confrontation between foreign and white German women than had been anticipated. As can be seen throughout the documentation on this conference, foreign women took this opportunity to educate white German women on their struggles, and to challenge them to recognize and acknowledge their roles in the "latent" racism and prejudice that existed within German society.

As Turkish journalist Ayse Tekin pointed out in an essay looking back at this conference, "this situation was experienced as a 'shock' by the German women" who were in attendance.[169] Many of these white German women felt attacked by the foreign

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[167] Neval Gültekin, "Eine schweigende Minderheit meldet sich zu Wort," in *Sind wir uns denn so fremd? Ausländische und deutsche Fraeun im Gespräch,* ed. Arbeitsgruppe Frauenkongreß (Berlin, Germany: sub rosa Frauenverlag, 1985), 9.

[168] Gültekin, "Eine schweigende Minderheit meldet sich zu Wort," 5-13.

[169] Ayse Tekin, "Unterschiede wahren, Zusammenarbeit möglich machen," *Beiträge zur feministischen Theorie und Praxis*, 17 no. 36, (1994): 104, https://doi.org/10.25595/840.

women who voiced their concerns. This can clearly be seen in several letters published in the documentation of the conference from German women who reflected upon their experiences. In her account, Doris Kiefer discussed her experience in the working group entitled “Similarities and Differences Between German and Foreign Women.” In her letter, Kiefer included several expectations she had going into this workshop, which was dedicated to learning about the situation and experiences of foreign women and identifying commonalities and differences across cultural backgrounds. But nowhere on this agenda did Kiefer expect to be challenged to confront her own racism by other women. So, as can be expected, when the foreign women began to do just that, Kiefer and other German women became defensive. Kiefer recalled,

> I had the feeling that some foreigners assumed from the outset that Germans were hostile to foreigners or at least lacked understanding. Unfortunately, due to the tense atmosphere, it did not come to a deeper discussion. I didn’t want to, or didn’t dare to, share my experiences and ideas in this atmosphere, and certainly didn’t want to admit possible prejudices. From there, however, neither the differences became clear, nor the similarities as women.[170]

In this situation, Kiefer was unwilling to take the first step necessary towards breaking down the barriers between German and foreign women, and because of this, the women in this workshop were unsuccessful in meeting their goals.

Even those women who attended the conference who did acknowledge that “a German woman cannot be free of racism and that we have to understand and fight racism within ourselves,” such as Anja Ruf, still had a difficult experience. Ruf described how during preparations for the conference, she and other German women “were looking

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[170] Doris Kiefer, “Brief aus Freiburg,” in *Sind wir uns denn so fremd? Ausländische und deutsche Fraeun im Gespräch,* ed. Arbeitsgruppe Frauenkongreß (Berlin, Germany: sub rosa Frauenverlag, 1985), 170.

forward to it and quite 'naturally' expected an atmosphere of solidarity and friendliness." However, she, too, pointed out how she felt "attacked" by foreign women. She recalled,

> They hurled all their frustration and anger about the long-standing racism of German women and the women's movement at us! This was so massive, violent and emotional that we German women sat there thunderstruck, unable to do anything. We were no match for these attacks! None of us had actually dealt with the question of racism between women in any depth. . . We Germans were not capable of any argumentation, but their arguments and positions were just gushing out. Characteristic for us German women, however, is that at least for me there is hardly any memory left of what was said. . . I didn't understand exactly what they were even asking us to do, and with what I did understand of it, I didn't think I could do it at all. I was completely unclear about what I was supposed to say all of a sudden about "my racism," as if I had a public confession to make![171]

It is clear from this evidence that while white women may have had the right intentions initially, they were not yet ready to confront their own racism, or the racism within the women's movement and German society. They did not understand what foreign and Black German women wanted from them and were unwilling to listen in an environment they felt was "too aggressive." As a result, the conference "had little after-effect in the white women's movement."[172] However, this unwillingness among white women to engage in these conversations finally began to change with the arrival of Audre Lorde in Berlin in 1984. Throughout this chapter, I argue that it was the arrival of Lorde to Berlin and through her teachings and influence on the Afro-German feminist movement that white women really began to understand how to confront their racism and discuss why it was the necessary first step in reconciling relations between themselves and foreign and Black German women.

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[171] Anja Ruf, "What do foreign and German women have in common?" in *Sind wir uns denn so fremd? Ausländische und deutsche Fraeun im Gespräch*, ed. Arbeitsgruppe Frauenkongreß (Berlin, Germany: sub rosa Frauenverlag, 1985), 162-163.

[172] Dagmar Schultz, "Racism in the New Germany and the Reaction of White Women," 243.

As has been examined throughout the previous chapters, discussions of racism within German society were virtually eliminated from official and public discourse in the 1960s so that Germans could distance themselves from the intense racism that existed under National Socialism. As a result, racism came to be seen as a non-issue throughout Germany, and many Germans believed that it had been eradicated from their country and society. However, as scholar Sara Ahmed has pointed out, "commitments to antiracism can become performances of racism."[173] This most certainly became the case within German society and throughout the West German women's movement as exemplified in the previous chapter. White Germans were so convinced that they had cured themselves from racialized thinking, that they ignored the everyday racism happening within their society, as well as within their social movements. In the previous chapter, I wrote about the deep divide that existed between white German women and German women of color as a result of this denial of racism among white women. In this chapter, I will discuss how that divide began to wane as discussions of race and the acknowledgment of racist practices within their society and movement began to emerge among white German women, as is revealed in some of their own writing from the 1990s. Further, I will argue that this change began as a result of the influence and teachings of Audre Lorde as she not only encouraged Black Germans to assert their presence within German society, but also encouraged white German women to acknowledge that presence. As will be presented throughout this chapter, Lorde believed this to be an essential first step to bringing discussions of race and racism into the German women's movement.

[173] Ahmed, *On Being Included,* 145.

Audre Lorde: Her Ideas, Teachings, and Impact on White German Women

Prior to her arrival to West Berlin as a guest professor at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies at the Free University of Berlin in 1984, Lorde was a very influential and significant figure in social movements in the United States. Lorde was born to Grenadian parents in Harlem, New York in 1929. In 1945, Lorde's parents moved them out of the "racial comforts of the predominantly black. . . central Harlem neighborhood they'd established themselves in for years," to Washington Heights, which was made up of mostly "working- and lower-class subcommunities of white ethnics." In addition, Lorde became the first Black student to attend the sex-segregated St. Catherine's School, located one block from where she lived. As a result, Lorde, like many of the Black German women she would later interact with and inspire, grew up in a majority white environment. According to Alexis De Veaux, Lorde's biographer, "these early experiences would define and shape her later ideas about women, community, and difference."[174]

Another similarity between Lorde's upbringing and that of many Black German women was their feelings of isolation. Growing up as a Black lesbian woman in New York during the 1950s was not easy for Lorde, as she always felt like an outsider. According to De Veaux, in the 1950s, the political left in the United States was still not fully open to the idea of overt homosexuality and as a result, the "homophobia made the left wing a problematic political home for Audre."[175] In addition, as a lesbian, Lorde was also viewed as a "sexual outsider" within the Black communities of New York. In other

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[174] Alexis De Veaux, *Warrior Poet: A Biography of Audre Lorde* (New York: W. W. Norton Company, Inc., 2004), 23-24.

[175] Alexis De Veaux, *Warrior Poet,* 45.

words, Lorde never fully “fit in” into any of the communities she attempted to join. De Veaux states, “Lorde both enjoyed her exotic position and resented the isolation of being an outsider.”[176] Owing to these feelings of isolation and loneliness that Lorde experienced in her early years, she truly understood the hardships and struggles that Black German women were going through.

Lorde spent the majority of her young adult life learning how to navigate her multiple and complicated identities. Even as Lorde identified as a lesbian, she married Ed Rollins, a white man, in March 1962 at twenty-two years old and had two children with him before their divorce in 1970.[177] During her marriage, she was offered a position as the “poet-in-residence” at Tougaloo College in Jackson, Mississippi. Here, Lorde held a small poetry workshop. At the start of her workshop, Lorde was hesitant to share with her students the fact that she was married to a white man. However, considering the hostile and racist climate of the American South, Lorde felt she owed it to her students to be honest about such a fact. According to De Veaux,

> Lorde’s revelation opened the students to engage a more complex reality, one in which they could be pro-black, discuss racism, and still relate to her as a black woman married to a white man. They could examine their own firsthand notions of blackness, not just the rhetoric of blackness. Together, she and her students came to see the emancipatory potential of their identities when articulated as both self-constructed and historic; embracing the boundaries of identity while at the same time not being limited by them. At Tougaloo, the seeds of what would become Audre Lorde’s theory of difference first sprouted into language.[178]

Over the next twenty years, Lorde developed and expanded these ideas about embracing one’s multiple identities and acknowledging and accepting each other’s differences,

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[176] Alexis De Veaux, *Warrior Poet,* 56.
[177] Alexis De Veaux, *Warrior Poet,* 76.
[178] Alexis De Veaux, *Warrior Poet,* 96.

while applying them in her personal, social, and professional engagements. Throughout almost all of her own work, Lorde made a point to address and assert each of her identities which included black woman, warrior, poet, mother, lesbian, and cancer survivor. She believed that choosing one all-encompassing identity was “a destructive and fragmenting way to live.”[179]

As Lorde continued to teach at several different institutions over the years, she continually challenged her students, both black and white, to confront their experiences with and engagements in racism, even though it was often unpopular with her students.[180] It was this type of difficult confrontation with racism, identity, and difference that Lorde would bring to and spread throughout the German women’s movement, as well as among the newfound Afro- and Black German community in 1984.

During that same year, a collection of essays and speeches written by Lorde entitled *Sister Outsider* was published in the United States. These writings showcase the development of Lorde’s theories that had begun to emerge during her time at Tougaloo College. As a “Black lesbian feminist socialist,” Lorde considered herself to be “at once, both inside and outside of diverse communities organized around race, sex, sexuality, age, and economic class.”[181] As Lorde scholar Lester Olson states, “most of us may be located both inside and outside of the imagined communities to which we appear to belong, but Lorde was especially so as a consequence of her membership in several

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[179] Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference,” in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984), 120.

[180] Alexis De Veaux, *Warrior Poet,* 112.

[181] Lester C. Olson, “Liabilities of Language: Audre Lorde Reclaiming Difference,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84 (1998), 452, https://doi.org/10.1080/00335639809384232.

subordinated communities."[182] As a result of Lorde's numerous positions within these different communities, she became hyper-aware of the differences that existed among individuals who claim and hold different identities. Olson later points out, "in a cultural context wherein an acknowledgement of any difference often implies division and hierarchy, Lorde employs a range of both simple and complex patterns of identification to promote cooperation across differences."[183] In other words, instead of viewing differences as qualities that separated individuals, Lorde recognized the potential power in acknowledging and accepting those differences. She believed this would create a stronger force within movements and organizations to enact social change. This idea will be discussed in more detail throughout this section.

In 1980, Lorde presented a paper at the Copeland Colloquium at Amherst College entitled "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," in which she explained her ideas about "human" differences and how they can and should be used productively. By "human differences," Lorde meant those social and economic differences that an individual's age, race, class, sex, and sexual identity encompassed. Because this was before Lorde had any connections with Germany, the ideas presented in this paper are pointed toward the United States. However, many of her ideas and theories would ultimately prove transferable to the situation in Germany as well.

In this paper, Lorde argued that individuals living within a profit economy are instilled with the idea that differences among individuals are something to be feared. She described three ways those differences are traditionally handled, which include ignoring

[182] Olson, "Liabilities of Language," 452.
[183] Olson, "Liabilities of Language," 452.

them, emulating them if they are perceived to be superior, or destroying them if they are viewed as inferior. As a result, she stated, differences have traditionally been used as tools of "separation and confusion," which has contributed to our inability and/or refusal to recognize those differences and use them for "creative change within our lives."[184]

Lorde went on to point out what she referred to as a "mythical norm" that individuals often define themselves against. She identified that norm in the United States as "white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, christian, and financially secure." She explained, "those of us who stand outside of that power often identify one way in which we are different, and we assume that to be the primary cause of all oppression, forgetting other distortions around difference, some of which we ourselves may be practising." Lorde then referred to white women involved in the women's movement in the United States and discussed how this idea related to their actions. She stated, "white women focus upon their oppression as women and ignore differences of race, sexual preference, class, and age. There is a pretense to a homogeneity of experience covered by the word *sisterhood* that does not exist."[185] In other words, white women tended to view sexism as the most significant form of oppression faced by *all* women, while ignoring other forms of oppression such as racism, ageism, heterosexism, elitism, and classism. As a result, they also tended to ignore their participation within those other forms of oppression. As will be discussed later, this was a significant criticism that also emerged among both German women of color and white German women as they began acknowledging their

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[184] Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex," 115-116.
[185] Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex," 116.

own privileged position in their movement and the broader German society in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

For Lorde, the failure of white women to acknowledge differences, especially racial differences, as well as their privileged position within society presented the most significant barriers to the "mobilization of women's joint power." Because Lorde believed that dismantling these challenges would result in greater societal change, she outlined several different ways in which they could be overcome. The first was that white women had to recognize and acknowledge the privileges they held, as well as the benefits and options their whiteness afforded them within a patriarchal society. For example, she discussed how white women had the option to "co-exist with patriarchy in relative peace," under the guise of "sharing power," or obtaining equal rights.[186] Women of color did not share this possibility. The second necessary step to overcoming the challenges to joint power was to "root out those internalized patters of oppression."[187] Here, Lorde was referring to the participation and complicity of many women in the various forms of oppression mentioned above. Lastly, Lorde promoted the idea that women should "recognize differences among women who are our equals, neither inferior nor superior, and devise ways to use each others' differences to enrich our visions and our joint struggles."[188] In other words, Lorde believed that women had to recognize and understand their differences in order to create a stronger movement and fight against different forms of oppression.

[186] Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex," 119.
[187] Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex," 122.
[188] Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex," 122.

Lorde believed that one way white women could begin to acknowledge the differences in their positions compared to those of women of color, was to read and engage with the literature produced by those women of color. Lorde was critical of the absence of literature by women of color in women's studies courses as she believed this absence reinforced the idea among white women that their form of oppression was the most significant. For Lorde, literature produced by women of color was a way for others (especially white women) to begin to notice and understand the differences they embodied. Lorde stated, "to examine Black women's literature effectively requires that we be seen as whole people in our actual complexities – as individuals, as women, as human – rather than as one of those problematic but familiar stereotypes provided in this society in place of genuine images of Black women."[189]

However, Lorde argued that white women were reluctant to read this literature because it would prove to be too "guilt provoking." According to Lorde, "for as long as any difference between us means one of us must be inferior, then the recognition of any difference must be fraught with guilt. To allow women of Color to step out of stereotypes is too guilt provoking, for it threatens the complacency of those women who view oppression only in terms of sex."[190] In other words, acknowledging and reading this literature produced by individuals who experienced oppression in such different ways would reveal those oppressions to white women and force them to re-evaluate their own involvement in them.

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[189] Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex," 118.
[190] Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex," 118.

Lorde voiced these concerns about ignoring differences and the immobility that fear and guilt produced among white women again at the third annual National Women's Studies Association conference held at the University of Connecticut in 1981. The theme of the conference was, "Women Respond to Racism" and Lorde gave a speech entitled "The Uses of Anger." In this speech, Lorde pointed out the barriers that existed among white women that prevented them from acknowledging the unique oppressions and hardships faced by women of color. She also spoke about the anger racism provoked in her and discussed the ways in which the anger harbored by Black and white women could be used in productive ways.[191]

As was shown in the previous chapter, during the early 1980s Dagmar Schultz grew increasingly bothered and unsatisfied about the absence of immigrant and Black women within the German women's movement. After hearing Lorde speak at the NWSA conference and engaging with her poetry and prose, Schultz was no doubt inspired by her theories and contributions. This was especially true in relation to the importance of reading literature written by Black women and the doors it would open among white women that could lead to a unified women's movement. As a result, Schultz finally brought that literature into the German women's movement in 1983, by publishing the book *Macht und Sinnlichkeit. Ausgewählte Texte von Audre Lorde und Adrienne Rich* (Power and Sensuality: Selected Texts by Audre Lorde and Adrienne Rich). According to Schultz, she "wanted to try selected texts by Audre Lorde and Adrienne Rich to help spark the discussion about racism in the white women's movement."[192] This effort was

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[191] Audre Lorde, "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984), 124-133.

[192] Schultz, "Kein Ort nur für uns allein," 159.

further facilitated by her invitation to Lorde to become a guest professor at the Free University of Berlin, which eventually happened in 1984. Through these efforts, Shultz and Lorde were able to further expose white German women to Black literature, as well as hold them accountable for actively engaging with it and confronting their prejudices.

This can most clearly be seen throughout the poetry seminars Lorde conducted at the university. Dagmar Schultz recorded every seminar and reading Lorde gave throughout the eight years she spent visiting Berlin and published them in a book entitled *Audre Lorde: Dream of Europe: Selected Seminars and Interviews 1984-1992*. Through this collection, we are able to clearly see the impact that Lorde had on white German women, and how she motivated them to confront the taboo subject of racism within their society and movement. In Lorde's very first poetry seminar in April 1984, she explained to the class of majority white students why poetry was so significant to her life. She declared, "I want to tell you that poetry is personal, this is where it starts but it does not remain there. The magical and wonderful quality of poetry is that it can arc across differences. Poetry is one of the few ways we have of dealing with what is genuinely different between us, a key for making something creative out of difference."[193] This was something she continuously addressed throughout her seminar. Lorde assumed that each person in attendance was there because they understood that there needed to be a change within German society, and that poetry was "a very important part of that change."[194]

Lorde also addressed the issue of racism in her first session. She provided her students with a "common definition" of racism by comparing it to the common cold. She

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[193] Lorde, *Dream of Europe*, 21.
[194] Lorde, *Dream of Europe*, 30.

stated, “we catch it and very often are not even aware of it.” She continued by acknowledging that no one, not even people of color, were free from the disease of racism and made sure her students understood that her class acted as a “safe space” in which they could “examine the unspoken agendas and feelings within [themselves] and with each other.”[195] With these words, Lorde immediately placed racism, discussions of its existence, and how it impacted the lives of both people of color and white individuals at the center of her seminar. While she acknowledged that these discussions would surely make some individuals upset, uncomfortable, or angry, she expected them to embrace those feelings and constructed her class as a safe space for those feelings to be unleashed. This is significant for two reasons. First, this group of individuals had grown up in a society that had rejected the existence of racism for two decades. Second, as will become clearer throughout this chapter, many individuals had not engaged in these difficult discussions due to feelings of fear and guilt. Lorde, however, encouraged white Germans to break through those feelings and provided them with a space to do so. This was undoubtably significant for these individuals as they engaged in some of the first discussions about race among white German women.[196]

Over the next two months, Lorde introduced her students, both Black and white, to the poetry and literature of Black women that dealt with their unique hardships and the racism they faced throughout their everyday lives. Through this literature, Lorde not only

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[195] Lorde, *Dream of Europe*, 22.

[196] It should be addressed that in her second session, Lorde asked the men to leave her class. She explained, “Since we are primarily women dealing with women’s work I feel there are some gaps I cannot make. It is not that you won’t benefit from this, but I have to make some way. I am asking you to leave the group because you are men and I will not be dishonest, you can stay until the end of the hour. Next week or maybe some day there will be room.” It is unclear whether any men ever entered back into the seminar. See Lorde, *Dream of Europe,* 25.

exposed her students to the differences between white and Black women, but to the pain Black women experienced within a racist society. It was through this exposure that Lorde encouraged her students to begin to think critically about the privileges their whiteness afforded them. Lorde believed that in order to understand a poem, one must first recognize the feelings that a poem elicits in the reader. For example, after reading Mari Evans' poem "Vivre Noir!" Lorde stated to her students, "The point of this poem is to encourage you to feel what it means to be Black in a society where even the flesh-color bandaids are the hue of someone else's flesh; what this says to children, what this says to human beings growing up in a society where flesh is defined as somebody else's."[197] Lorde wanted her students to attempt to understand what people of color went through on a daily basis in the hope of encouraging them to re-evaluate their own position in society and the way they treated others who were different from them.

As these sessions went on, however, it is clear that Lorde became somewhat frustrated with her white students. She could feel them becoming more distant as a result of not being able to "deal" with the challenges her class posed to them and their whiteness. Lorde largely contributed this to feelings of guilt among her students. For example, after a session in which they read two poems, "Nikki-Rosa" and "Woman Poem" by Nikki Giovanni, Lorde stated to her class, "Last week I felt very strongly that you had worn down, that you are not used to feeling intensely, that you are particularly not used to responding to Black Women's work, that you had done it for an hour and felt it was too much. I hope this was in fact so." However, later in this session, Lorde became more critical and began to challenge her students even further. She stressed that their

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[197] Lorde, *Dream of Europe*, 48.

defensiveness and feelings of guilt were useless and immobilizing and stated, "Either you are prepared to jump in, and your feet are going to get very wet, or you wish to remain observant in which case you do not belong here."[198] It is significant that Lorde pushed these women to feel and embrace these difficult feelings and to become more vocal about them. Lorde believed that silence was unproductive and dangerous to social change. Because silence in reference to racial differences and racism had been the norm in Germany for so long, Lorde's work to break those silences among these white women was extremely important.

Throughout this poetry seminar, Lorde introduced these white German women to ideas about race and racism that they had never been exposed to before. In her final session, Lorde said to her students, "I am less concerned with leaving a group of women who are rabidly involved with poetry and the lives of Black women in America, although it would be really great for you to make those connections. I am more concerned with leaving a group of women who begin to ask questions about their own lives in new ways."[199] Lorde went to Berlin to introduce German men and women to Black literature, which she accomplished. Moreover, as will be seen further throughout this chapter, she, along with other Afro-German and anti-racist white women, also accomplished the difficult task of introducing discussions of race within a society that had rejected them for so long.

In addition to a record of Lorde's seminars, *Dream of Europe* also includes several readings Lorde gave throughout Germany, as well as the conversations that took

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[198] Lorde, *Dream of Europe*, 42.
[199] Lorde, *Dream of Europe*, 72.

place at those readings between Lorde and audience members. These reveal how Lorde was able to reach a larger audience and educate more individuals not only on the existence of racism, but on their roles within that system and how it impacted themselves and those around them. For example, during a conversation following a reading at the Schokofabrik Women's Center in Berlin in November 1988, a woman in the audience spoke up and stated, "I have talked to a lot of people about racism and Afro-Deutsche existence in Germany since I first heard you read. I'm constantly confronted with trivializing Afro-Germans to the question of numbers; there aren't that many or I don't know any. It is not a group of such mass that people find it easy to identify. It confuses me to think about how many people are to be counted."[200] Lorde responded to this woman by acknowledging that while Black people in Germany were a minority, they were still part "of an international community of People of Color." She stated, "we are two thirds of the world's population, there are the numbers!" [201] Further, Afro-German woman and activist, Katharina Ogyntoye, who was also participating in the reading, endorsed Lorde's statement and exemplified how her own view of race relations was beginning to change. She stated,

> I am familiar with the position that was brought up, I'm constantly confronted by this claim; *but there are so few Afro-Germans, how can one be conscious of racism or even recognize it?* It has become apparent to me that white Germans must develop a set interest in racism in order to fight it, otherwise you will continue to wait for the victim to take you by the hand and show you the way. That will not do in Germany. In Germany you cannot sit quietly and wait for the ace to fall, it will be too late. Perhaps they can afford that in England, Holland, even America but Germany cannot afford it. The annellation will come first.[202]

[200] Lorde, *Dream of Europe*, 211.
[201] Lorde, *Dream of Europe*, 211-212.
[202] Lorde, *Dream of Europe*, 212.

This woman from the audience offers an important example of a white German woman who was inspired by Lorde to begin engaging in discussions about racism with her fellow Germans. While it is clear she was still learning how to have those conversations, the fact that she continued to attend Lorde's readings and ask these types of questions is noteworthy. In addition, it is important to point out how the dynamic between white German women and German women of color had shifted from the moment when Ika Hügel-Marshall attempted to bring up discussions of racism among her white peers within the women's movement, as was discussed in the previous chapter. The fact that Oguntoye, as a Black German woman, was able to speak out, educate, and challenge the white women in attendance at this reading proves just how much influence Audre Lorde and the creation of the Afro-German feminist movement had, not only for starting these discussions, but for granting Black German women the confidence to assert themselves and their unique struggles within their predominantly white society.

The Impact of the Broader Afro-German Feminist Movement

While Lorde's Black women's poetry seminar only had about 40 students (including at least one Black German woman), the discussions that took place within her class and at her readings demonstrate how race discussions initially began to develop among Germans—especially white German women. These interactions and conversations with Lorde, and her methodologies in the seminar, were crucial to influencing how those discussions would progress. However, she was not alone. Other Black German women and the Afro-German feminist movement as a whole also played an important part in further sparking discussions about racism in German society.

As explained throughout the first chapter of this project, Audre Lorde was an essential player in the formation of the Afro-German feminist movement. In July 1984, just four months after her arrival, Dagmar Schultz conducted an interview with Lorde for *Die Tageszeitung (Taz)*, a popular German newspaper. When Schultz asked Lorde, "How do you perceive the situation of Afro-European women, especially Afro-German women?" Lorde asserted, "It is absolutely necessary that Afro-German women make contact with each other and begin to develop a support network for themselves; whether this takes place by meeting each other, attending a class on Black women writers, sending out a call or advertisement in a women's paper, it doesn't matter."[203] As a result and with Lorde's encouragement, these Afro-German women began to come together and discuss, for the first time, with other Black individuals the unique struggles they faced on a daily basis. This proved to be a powerful experience for these women. As they began to define themselves and to understand what it meant to be part of the so-called "hyphenated people," they also began to assert themselves within German society and make their presence and struggles visible to those around them—including white German women.

In an essay entitled "Knowledge's of (Un-)Belonging," historian and member of the Afro-German feminist movement Maureen Maisha Eggers discusses how the Black women's movement in Germany can be divided into three phases. The first phase consisted of the outward production of information pertaining to Black Germans and their movement. She states, "the scholarly work of Black women activists at this time is mainly addressed to the (white) German public." During the second phase this scholarly production shifted inward and Black Germans created "autonomous spaces for epistemic

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[203] Lorde, *Dream of Europe*, 121.

production on Blackness." The third and final stage of the movement, according to Eggers, is defined by the active use of this epistemic production "to change the position of the movement within German society and thus transform society as a whole."[204] It is the first phase of the movement that is most significant to the argument of this thesis. It was these epistemic productions, as will be discussed below, combined with the teachings and influence of Audre Lorde and Dagmar Schultz, as discussed previously, that impacted white women the most when it came to the acknowledgment of racism and the discussions they had thereafter.

One of the most significant productions of Black German feminists during this phase was that of *Farbe bekennen: Afro-German Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte.* This book was the first of its kind, in that it was written by and about Afro-German women and their history. According to Schultz, when she approached Lorde in 1984 asking if she would like to publish more work in German, Lorde responded by stating before they published any more of her work, "she would like the Afro-German women to publish something."[205] This marked the beginning of the project that would become one of the most essential readings for not only Black and white German women, but women of all origins in various places throughout the world.

This book is composed of two sections, containing both scholarly and creative work by Black German women. The first section is comprised of Afro-German scholar May Ayim's master's thesis in which she wrote the first history of Black Germans and Black individuals in Germany and discussed the various forms of racism they faced

[204] Eggers, "Knowledges of (Un-)Belonging," 34.
[205] Schultz, interview.

throughout the decades.[206] The second section of this book includes personal accounts and poetry from several Afro-German women from three generations and of various backgrounds discussing their experiences growing up in a predominately white society.

Dagmar Schultz's publishing company, Orlanda Frauenverlag, published *Farbe bekennen* two years later in 1986. This publication was extremely significant, not only for the broader population, but for Schultz herself as well. In an essay entitled "Kein Ort nur fur uns allein" (No Place Just for Us Alone), she discussed the extreme impact that this project and publication had on her life. According to Schultz, this was the context in which her "first intensive contacts with Afro-Germans came about," and the first time in which she really began to confront and deal with German colonial history and its lasting impacts. In addition, she confessed how this was not an easy task for her. She wrote, "The feeling of inability to deal constructively with the monstrous destructive power of the Germans became fragile: I now had to deal with people who were survivors and who were claiming their right to live in this country and to call themselves Germans." [207] As the subject of the previous chapter, it should be very clear that Schultz had been involved in anti-racist work for the majority of her adult years. However, as explained in this quotation, her involvement in this project forced her to re-evaluate her Germanness in new ways. The fact that this publication had such a large impact on someone who had been involved in this type of work for decades is proof of just how powerful it was in

[206] Ayim received a lot of criticism from her professor when she presented her thesis topic. After rejecting the topic, her professor stated, "there is no racism in Germany of today." This interaction is significant as it is further proof that until this book was published and Afro-German women began to make themselves seen and heard throughout German society, Germans refused to believe that racism existed within their country. See Ayim, *Blues in Black and White,* 153.

[207] Schultz, "Kein Ort nur für uns allein," 159-160.

spreading information about the experiences of Black Germans and the constant racism they faced within a society that had previously refused to listen.

Farbe bekennen was not as revolutionary for every individual who read it, and Shultz and the book's authors still encountered resistance to their ideas and work. As Schultz described it in "Witnessing Whiteness," "for some *white* women the encounter with Afro-Germans at readings from *Farbe bekennen* is too much. They feel attacked, burst into tears, and are often hastily comforted by a whole group of *white* women. Escape into victim status is apparently the easier way."[208] Here, one can see the lingering effects of the decades of ignoring racism and suppressing conversations about it and its impacts.

However, for many other white women the book did cause them to look inward, and to begin to think about and recognize their contributions to the racism these women of color endured. One example of this is exhibited in a film directed by Schultz and released in 2012 entitled *Audre Lorde: The Berlin Years 1984 to 1992.* During a discussion in which Audre Lorde, her partner and Black feminist Gloria I. Joseph, and Dagmar Schultz were speaking to a majority white audience, a young white German woman spoke up and stated, "the book focuses more obviously on racism than on feminism. And I asked myself what was my issue with racism. And then, when I read the poems, it became very close."[209] In addition, in the preface to the English version of *Farbe bekennen,* which was published in 1992, Schultz recounted the developments throughout the white German women's movement since the book's initial publication.

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[208] Schultz, "Witnessing Whiteness," 15.
[209] *Audre Lorde: The Berlin Years 1984-1992.*

She discussed how more and more white women were attending Lorde's readings and engaging in discussions about race with Black German women. In addition, she pointed out the increase in women's conferences and meetings that focused on "differences among women" and stated, "an increasing number of white women are taking the first steps toward their position in this world and, in Audre Lorde's words, toward moving beyond the first lesson of patriarchy—"divide and conquer"—to "define and empower."[210] Here is direct evidence that Audre Lorde's teachings and writings, as well as the writings in *Farbe bekennen,* had a significant impact on white women and how they began to recognize and approach the different forms of oppression women from different backgrounds faced.

The publication of *Farbe bekennen* was an essential catalyst for the Afro-German feminist movement because it allowed Black Germans to create a common political language among themselves and empowered many other Black Germans to become involved in the movement. However, it is also important to mention that the creation of the Afro-German movement had significant impacts beyond Afro- and Black Germans. As has been stated in previous chapters, Black, immigrant, and Jewish women had similar (although by no means identical) experiences when it came to racism and attempting to assert their presence within German society. In her preface, Schultz also acknowledged how the publication of *Farbe bekennen* impacted the work of immigrant and Jewish women. She wrote,

> Since the first edition of *Farbe bekennen* was published, some changes have taken place within the white women's movement: at readings and in discussions and

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[210] Schultz, "Preface to the English Lanugage Edition," in *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out,* ed. May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz, trans. Anne V. Adams (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), xx.

> private groups, Afro-German women have confronted us directly with our inability or unwillingness to perceive them as Black Germans. At the same time, immigrant and refugee women have challenged white women to deal with the fear, competition, and distance that they sense in white German women's behavior toward them. In similar developments, Jewish women have publicly addressed the antisemitism among non-Jewish women, whose awareness is seriously hampered by their idea that to acknowledge the existence of Jewish women would involve experiencing guilt.[211]

After 1986, Black and foreign women began working together more frequently and on a larger scale to address the struggles and needs of minority individuals, as well as to challenge white women in their prejudices and racism.[212]

According to Kataja Kinder, Black German feminist and co-founder of the Black women's organization ADEFRA, "the book was central. . . We developed our own voice, and that strengthened and empowered us. Then everything really got started. The ISD was founded, and a lot happened all at the same time."[213] The ISD, or the *Initiative Schwarze Deutsche* (The Initiative of Black Germans), is an organization that was established and run by Afro- and Asian-Germans in 1986. This group was open to individuals, men and women, from various backgrounds. As pointed out in a 1993 brochure, the organization was inclusive to anyone impacted by racism and living within

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[211]Schultz, "Preface to the English Language Edition," xix.

[212] For example, in June 1990, the Conference by and for ethnic and Afro-German minorities was held in Bremen, which prompted a "second nationwide congress. . . organized by and for immigrant, Black German, Jewish and exiled women in Berlin" in October 1991. These conferences provided minority women a space in which they could gather together and create a common cause among themselves. Here, they decided that they could not create an overarching name for their movement, because creating a "single name for a heterogeneous group" would suppress the differences between them, which was exactly what they had been fighting against within the white German women's movement. Nevertheless, at these conferences, minority women from different backgrounds established a common cause through listing their grievances against the predominately white German society, as well as toward white German feminists and women. See Tekin, "Untersheide wahren, Zusammenarbeit möglich machen," 106.

[213] Katharina Oguntoye, Katja Kinder, Maureen Maisha Eggers, and Peggy Piesche, "Looking Backward and Forward: Twenty Years of the Black women's Movement in Germany," in *Remapping Black Germany: New Perspectives on Afro-German History, Politics, and Culture*, ed. Sara Lennox (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 262, 264.

Germany. The authors of the brochure asserted, "our definition of *Black* is not limited to skin color, but instead encompasses all minorities affected by racism."[214] However, despite these expressions of solidarity, many Black German women still felt as though they needed a space of their own to discuss the unique struggles faced by women of color. As a result, ADEFRA (Afro-DEutsche FRAuen), a sister organization to the ISD exclusively for women, was formed later that same year. While both of these organizations held the goal of creating a community for Black Germans where they could stabilize their own identity, they also worked to educate the broader population on the existence and experiences of Black individuals within Germany and to promote an anti-racist society.[215]

These organizations acted as yet another vehicle through which Black Germans were able to expose white Germans to their history, as well as to challenge them to acknowledge their prejudices and racism. For example, in November 1990, ADEFRA held a meeting in Munich in collaboration with organizations related to the German Green party. Although this meeting was entitled, "International Meeting for Black Women: Risk Your Life and Leave Your House," it was open to white women as well. In fact, there were several workshops that were organized by and for white women, including "White Mother-Black Child," and "Differences Between Women—A Critical Look at Dealing with the Other." In reference to these workshops, a member of ADEFRA later wrote,

> They stimulated discussions between black and white women. However, as so often happens, partly in a manner that was hurtful to us and left us feeling angry.

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[214] Leroy T. Hopkins, "Speak, so I Might See You! Afro-German Literature," *World Literature Today,* 69, no. 3 (1995): 534, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40151392.

[215] Hopkins, "Speak, so I Might See You!" 534.

> In the workshop "White Mother- Black Child," it became evident how deeply rooted racism still is in many white women, and how they try hard to hide this behind a claim of general ignorance. For most of the black women, this was the first time they had attended a meeting exclusively for women. Despite our different ways of life, and different self definitions, the results of the meeting were positive, and many expressed the desire for further meetings and opportunities for exchange.[216]

This meeting took place when discussions about racism were just beginning to emerge and spread throughout the white women's movement and it is important to point out that many of these women still had a difficult time accepting and working through these issues that were so deeply rooted in their society. What is notable here, however, is that through the organizing and efforts of Black German women, these discussions were actually beginning to take place. Black German women were at the forefront of this progress, even though it would take several more years for these discussions to happen on a larger scale.

Challenges to Race Discussions Among White Women

One reason why the discussions of racism that began to emerge in the late 1980s took several years to spread throughout the broader white German women's movement was due to the challenges that came as a result of unification in the early 1990s. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the official unification of East and West Germany in October 1990, many women living in Germany, regardless of race or nationality, had to adjust to the shifting gender structures and laws that emerged with the new unified Federal Republic. As historian Myra Marx Ferree points out, from its

[216] Ika Hügel-Marshall, "ADEFRA: How It All Began – A Conversation with Ria Cheatom, Jasmin Eding, and Judy Gummich," in *Children of the Liberation: Transatlantic Experiences and Perspectives of Black Germans of the Post-War Generation,* ed. Marion Kraft (Oxford, UK: Peter Lang, 2020), 355.

inception, one of the main concerns of women involved in the West German women's movement was the decriminalization of abortion. Because the FRG and GDR had such different policies pertaining to this issue, and because it was the "only aspect of the FRG system that was not immediately applied to the East," it once again became a primary concern for women following unification.[217]

Before unification, abortion was a criminal offense in the FRG "unless a woman could win approval for legally accepted 'justifications' of fetal deformity, threat to the mother's health, rape, or 'social necessity.'" However, in the GDR, abortion during the first trimester had been legal since 1972. As can be expected, women from the former GDR were extremely concerned that this significant right would be taken from, while women of the former FRG saw unification as an opportunity to "revisit and revise" their existing law.[218] In addition, women from the East and West did not always agree on how to approach such issues, which led to further disillusionment and division within the movement. According to Dagmar Schultz, Eastern women often complained about Western feminists who "communicated to them that they had nothing to offer and had better adopt feminism western-style." Because of this, "women of color could not expect much solidarity from white eastern women" as "most of them were preoccupied with their own situation."[219] These preoccupations, combined with the previous widespread reluctance among west German women to engage in discussions about racism, often overshadowed the issues of racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia in German society

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[217] Myra Marx Ferree, *Varieties of Feminism: German Gender Politics in Global Perspective,* (Stanford, California: Stanford California Press, 2012), 146.

[218] Ferree, *Varieties of Feminism,* 145-147.

[219] Schultz, "Racism in the New Germany and the Reaction of White Women," 245.

and made minority women feel as though they had to fight twice as hard to assert their ideas and struggles within the broader women's movement.

Despite the tensions, the majority of white Germans, both women and men, rejoiced at their reunification with their "German-German brothers and sisters" across the border that once existed. Yet at the same time Black, foreign, and Jewish individuals were confronted with increasingly visible and hostile forms of racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism. In an essay entitled "1990: Home/land and Unity from an Afro-German Perspective," May Ayim wrote,

> In the days immediately following November 9, 1989, I noticed that hardly any immigrants or black Germans were to be seen around town, at least only rarely any dark-skinned ones. I wondered why not many Jews were about. . . Moving around alone I wanted to breathe in a bit of the general enthusiasm, to sense the historical moment and share my reserved joy. Reserved because I had heard about the imminent policy-tightening regarding immigrants and asylum-seekers. And further, like other black Germans and immigrants, I knew that even a German passport did not guarantee an invitation to the East-West festivities. . . Our participation in the celebration was not invited.[220]

The "policy-tightening" Ayim refers to in this quotation is most likely in regard to the immigration law passed by the government of the FRG in 1990 known as *Ausländergesetz*. This law contained "severely intensified restrictions on immigration and residence permits," and made "civil servants liable for reporting on the living and working conditions and conduct of immigrants," which could then be used as justification for deportation.[221] *Ausländergesetz*, in combination with the rise in nationalism and right-

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[220] May Ayim, "1990: Home/land and Unity from an Afro-German Perspective," in *Blues in Black and White: A Collection of Essays, Poetry, and Conversations*, trans. Anne Adams (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 2002), 47-48.

[221] Katharina Oguntoye and May Opitz, "Preface to the English Language Edition," in *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out,* ed. May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz, trans. Anne V. Adams (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), xix.

wing radicalism, made Germany an extremely dangerous place for foreigners and immigrants. In addition, because Blackness had been traditionally associated with foreignness throughout German society, Black ethnic Germans also faced increased threats and violence as their dark skin marked them as non-German in the eyes of many white Germans. As a result, while unification brought white Germans from the former East and West together, it not only further excluded Germans of color from embracing their German identity, but also presented a threat to their lives.

Another reason why race discussions did not rapidly spread throughout the women's movement was due to the fact that there were still German women who refused to acknowledge women's roles in the oppression of minority women, including prominent German feminist Alice Schwarzer. Schwarzer is often referred to as the German equivalent of American feminist Gloria Steinem. In 1977 Schwarzer began publishing a popular German women's magazine entitled *Emma.* This magazine was the less radical counterpart to *Courage,* the magazine in which Schultz first addressed white German about the need to address racism within themselves and their movement in 1981.

In 1993 Schwarzer wrote an editorial in which she basically relieved women of any responsibility for the racism of a male-dominated patriarchal system. It is clear from the first paragraph of Schwarzer's editorial that she was guilty of buying into the idea that white women often viewed women as a "class" in and of itself and believed sexism to be the primary form of oppression faced by all women.[222] She wrote,

> Truly, we live in amazing times. Seldom have we women had so much reason to be proud. Proud of our free thinking and acting, of our interference in world

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[222] Ilona Bubeck, "Eine neue bürgerliche Frauenbewegung?" in *Entfernte Verbindungen: Rassismus, Antisemitismus, Klassenunterdrückung*, ed. Ika Hügel et al. (Berlin, Germany: Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1993), 33-42.

> affairs. Proud that we are no longer women of men's grace, but that we walk upright. At the same time, however, we are powerless in the face of the escalating manhood mania on all fronts, whether in Mölln or Bosnia. These boys in their jumper boots simply hate everything that is "different." Different from them, different from him. Turks or black are different for the New German master race, Jews or disabled, homosexuals or women.[223]

There are several important points to unpack in this quotation. The first, as stated above, is the harmful fact that Schwarzer grouped all women, regardless of differences in class, race, or ethnicity, into one category. By doing so, she ignored the fact that while white women may have enjoyed those accomplishments of which to be proud, many other non-white women still faced immense challenges within Germany. This was especially in relation to the rise in racism following unification. Second, while Schwarzer did mention racism, she claimed that only men were to blame for its existence. Later in the editorial, Schwarzer criticized German society for ignoring the existence of misogyny and claimed that there was too much focus on other forms of oppression, such as xenophobia. She asserted that while there was "indignation" about a dozen murders motivated by xenophobia, there was silence about several hundred "women-hating murders."[224] From this editorial, it is clear that the oppression of women was the most important issue for Schwarzer and that she remained uncritical towards her own involvement in the oppression of minority women throughout German society.

One year later in 1994, a Turkish journalist working in Germany named Ayse Tekin criticized Schwarzer in an essay entitled "Unterschiede wahren, Zusammenarbeit

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[223] Alice Schwarzer, "Frauenhaß & Fremdenhaß," *Emma*, July/August, 1993, accessed January 21, 2020, https://www.emma.de/lesesaal/45328.

[224] Schwarzer, "Frauenhaß & Fremdenhaß."

möglich machen," (Preserving Differences, Making Collaboration Possible") that was published in issue 36 of *Beiträge zur Feministischen Theorie und Praxis*. She wrote,

> A serious mistake is the exclusion of Black women, which unfortunately is made in some feminist circles as an easier alternative instead of facing a confrontation with their demands. Thus, in the recent controversy over Emma magazine, Black women's reactions to the July/August 1993 issue were dismissed as those of "small radical groups." Or else the "uncomfortable" minority women are not even asked for contributions, but instead women who fit the image that exists in people's minds, even though they do not necessarily share the feminist positions of white German women.[225]

Schwarzer's publication was clearly a danger to the progression of race discussions throughout the German women's movement. The fact that Schwarzer, a woman who held such a prominent and influential position within German society, released such an insensitive publication is evidence that many white German women had a long way to go concerning issues of racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism within their society.

While it is clear that German unification and the influence of white German women who refused to acknowledge their own racism presented several challenges to Black German and antiracist feminists in the early 1990s, this did not stop them from continuing their efforts to spread their message throughout German society and the German women's movement. In a 2015 interview, Dagmar Schultz recalled how, regardless of these challenges, confrontation with racism and right-wing movements did exist.[226] It is significant to acknowledge that while there might not have been widespread efforts among white German women in the broader feminist movement to confront the rising racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism, these discussions were in their beginning stages. In addition, it is equally important to acknowledge that these efforts, as has been

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[225] Tekin, "Unterschiede wahren, Zusammenarbeit möglich machen," 108.
[226] Schultz, interview.

proven, were initially inspired by Black German women and other women of color living within Germany.

Literature Review

While this chapter has focused on discussions by white and minority women about racism conducted at the seminars and readings of Audre Lorde and at conferences, there is another area in which these discussions were being held as well, and that is in academic and feminist literature. These publications really began to take off in 1990. While there were numerous significant publications that dealt with racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia in the new Germany and within the German women's movement, I will be discussing two specific publications in this section, which include the feminist magazine *Beiträge zur Feministischen Theorie und Praxis* and a book published by Dagmar Schultz's publishing company Orlanda Frauenverlag entitled *Entfernte Verbindungen: Rassismus, Antisemitismus, Klassenunterdrückung.*

While not a comprehensive list of publications that dealt with the issues of racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism among German and foreign women, these two publications are significant in several ways. First, they provided Black and Jewish German women, as well as foreign women, with a platform to not only inform the broader German public about their experiences with oppression, but also to voice their ideas and contributions to feminist thought and theory. In addition, they provide essential insight into the realizations about these issues among white German women, and the discussions that were taking place among them and minority women within German society.

The feminist magazine *Beiträge zur Feministischen Theorie und Praxis* (Contributions to Feminist Theory and Praxis), was in publication from 1978 to 2008. According to German historian and scholar Gisela Notz, German feminists established this magazine in order to publish feminist research and implement more "theoretical clarity" among involved German women. In addition, it acted as a "broad discussion forum" for the many women's projects that arose throughout the movement.[227] Notz went on to discuss how, over the years, this publication "developed into a recognized forum and work tool that [was] used in a variety of ways both in the women's movements and in political education work, in trade union, church and other contexts at universities."[228] It is clear that this magazine held a certain amount of status and influence among German women and within the German women's movement. This is why it was so significant that they released a special edition focusing on minority women entitled "Geteilter Feminismus: Rassismus, Antisemitismus, Fremdenhaß" ("Shared Feminism: Racism, Antisemitism, Xenophobia") in 1990.

In this edition, Black and Jewish German women, as well as foreign women, were provided with a significant platform to write about and discuss the unique oppressions they faced within German society. Several individuals who have previously been acknowledged are featured in this edition including Black German feminists Marion Kraft, Helga Emde, and Ika Hügel-Marshall, as well as anti-racist German feminists Dagmar Schultz and Gisela Notz. In addition to these women's important contributions,

[227] Gisela Notz, "Den 'Beiträgen' ist die Bewegung abhanden gekommen," *Sozialistische Zeitung,* May 2008, trans. DeepL Translator, accessed February 12, 2021, http://www.vsp-vernetzt.de/soz-0805/0805211.php.

[228] Notz, "Den 'Beiträgen' ist die Bewegung abhanden gekommen."

particularly significant is the editorial note that was featured at the beginning of this issue, in which its white German authors acknowledge their shortcomings in dealing with and discussing racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia.

The editors of this issue began their note by pointing out that they were "white, secular Christian, German" women, attempting to "catch up" with the developments of these "'other' women. . . about racism, anti-Semitism, [and] feminism."[229] These women then explained the title "Shared Feminism," and stated that it had two meanings. The first was their realization that there were in fact "racist, anti-Semitic, [and] xenophobic" exclusions made within the German women's movement. Secondly, the title was a reference to their aspirations to create a utopian feminism, in which *all* women, no matter their background or skin color, would be included. According to these women, this would happen through "recognizing, accepting, making fruitful our otherness, but also by discussing with each other which differentiations, points of view, content positions can no longer be acceptable for feminists."[230] Here, the influence of Audre Lorde and her ideas about the importance of conversing with other individuals and recognizing differences and similarities in order to create a stronger women's movement can clearly be seen.

These women then acknowledged the fact that white German women, including themselves, were often reliant on Black, Jewish, and foreign women to educate them on

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[229] Ute Annecke et al.,"Editorial," *Beiträge zur Feministischen Theorie und Praxis: Geteilter Feminismus: Rassismus, Antisemitismus, Fremdenhaß*, 13, no. 27 (1990): 5. The editorial staff for this edition included Ute Annecke, Heidrun Ehrhardt, Inge Hehr, Carola Möller, Gisela Notz, Brunhilde Sauer-Burghard, and Christa Wichterich.

[230] Annecke, "Editorial," 5.

the existence racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia and on how to refrain from engaging in them. They wrote,

> The fact that we can use the insights of black and Jewish women writers. . . that we can learn from them, is both relieving and shameful. Thus, also in this issue – as so far predominantly in feminism discourse – the analysis of the connection between sexism, racism, anti-Semitism is predominantly done by the 'affected' themselves. This indicates that we do not feel affected by anti-Semitism and racism. . . Only the strong public appearance of Afro-German women has made us realize that WE are black and foreign as well as black and German. Our cluelessness, our thoughtlessness, we must now recognize as racist.[231]

Throughout this note, the editors used a capitalized "WE" to address what they imagined as the "utopian feminism." In this quotation, when they stated, "WE are black and foreign as well as black and German," they were referring to an all-encompassing feminism. In addition, in this quotation, the significant influence of the Afro-German feminist movement and its members can again be seen. Their unapologetic assertion of their identity and experiences in German society was essential in educating white women and encouraging them to become involved in anti-racist discussions.

It is also worth mentioning that this fact that the "affected women" were usually the ones who had to educate white women on racism and reveal to them their racist actions, was a common theme throughout the broader feminist movement in general. Lorde addressed this issue in the American women's movement in her speech at the National Women's Studies Association Conference. In this speech, Lorde spoke out about the excuses she would often encounter from white women about why they did not discuss racism at certain conferences or in certain university classrooms in the United States. These excuses included assertions such as "how can we address the issues of

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[231] Annecke, "Editorial," 5.

racism? No women of Color attended." Or, "we have no one in our department equipped to teach their work." Here, it is clear that these women viewed racism as a "Black woman's problem," and that they were the only ones who could discuss it.[232] However, the fact that the editors of *Beiträge* acknowledged this inadequacy within themselves and their own movement, and that they recognized it as racist is worth mentioning. They were beginning to accept the fact that they, too, had to put in the work and effort to unlearn the racist principles of their society, rather than relying on others to do so for them. This is significant because, according to Lorde, this was the first step in moving forward and toward their desired utopian feminism.

Throughout the remainder of this note, these women continued to acknowledge and define their privileges as white women, as well as the common excuses used by white women to avoid engaging in discussions about racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia. They pointed out how white women often became defensive or blamed their internalized racism on their parents and how they were raised in order to avoid these discussions. In addition, they acknowledged the similarities in their own actions toward minority women and racism and those of men toward women and sexism. They stated, "actually, we should recognize the parallel of our behavior in men's behavior towards feminist demands: we listen, but do not make the topic of anti-Semitism/racism our own. Racism thus becomes our feminist side contradiction: if women were liberated, racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia would automatically have been eliminated." Lastly, these women ended their note with a discussion of what needed to happen among white feminists in

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[232] Audre Lorde, "The Use of Anger: Women Responding to Racism," in *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley, CA: The Crossing Press Feminist Series, 1984), 125.

order to achieve a utopian feminism. They dismissed the notion that as feminists, they were "on the right side anyway," and insisted that in order to create a stronger feminism, white women "would have to give up privileges [and] engage in a struggle that does not serve [their] immediate advantages."[233]

There were seven editors for this edition of *Beträge.* The fact that these women had such a difficult and eye-opening discussion with one another is one thing, but that they published their conclusions in a widespread feminist magazine was significant. Some German feminists were critical of the fact that this did not happen until 1990, and rightfully so as Black and Jewish German women and foreign women had been pushing and fighting for their recognition for quite some time up to that point. However, the fact that it did eventually take place, and that more women were exposed to their shortcomings and the writings of minority women from this publication, was a significant step forward for the German women's movement as they began to recognize the struggles and needs of German women of color.

Another publication that dealt with the issues of racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia of the German women's movement was a book entitled *Entfernte Verbindungen: Rassismus, Antisemitismus, Klassenunterdrückung.* This is just one of the many published works by Schultz's company, Orlanda Frauenverlag, that dealt with these issues. Edited by Ika Hügel-Marshall, Chris Lange, May Ayim, Ilona Bubeck, *Gülşen Aktaş, and Dagmar Schultz, this 1993 publication encompasses twenty essays written by both minority and white German women that present a "disillusioning account of the*

[233] Annecke, "Editorial," 7.

deficits of the women's movement," according to one review in the German newspaper Die Tageszeitung.[234]

Like the editors of *Beiträge,* those of *Entfernte Verbindungen* began with a letter to their readers explaining the purpose and process of their publication. In this letter, the editors discussed how the political events that had taken place in the three years previous to this publication greatly impacted the content of their discussions. They pointed to the Gulf War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and German unification and the increased nationalist and racist sentiments that emerged as a result. They argued that the "worsening political situation [and] the endangerment of black women and men. . . make joint action more and more necessary," but also pointed out how feminist and left-wing organizations have historically failed in making those sorts of alliances. Reminiscent of Audre Lorde's teachings, these editors asserted that ignoring the differences between immigrant, Black, Jewish, and white Christian women led to distrust, which in turn created political paralysis, which they argued was detrimental, especially "in view of the immense political pressure and the growing danger from the right." They then criticized the women's movement for focusing solely on sexism, and asserted, "analyzing patriarchy alone is inadequate. . . and hinders the development of women's politics that are clearly directed against racism, anti-Semitism and class oppression." According to the editors, by focusing on these issues, they hoped to "find an approach for alliance politics

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[234] Helga Luckoschat, "Diskreditiert sich die Frauenbewegung selbst?" *Die Tageszeitung,* April 10, 1993, trans. DeepL Translator, accessed February 20, 2021, https://taz.de/Diskreditiert-sich-die-Frauenbewegung-selbst/!1621265/.

against nationalist, right-wing radical tendencies and destructive social power structures."[235]

It is clear throughout this letter that the editors of this book, just like those of *Beiträge*, hoped their publication would act as a valuable and educational critique of the women's movement and their inadequacies in dealing with racism and anti-Semitism. However, the tone of this letter is much more urgent than that of the *Beiträge* editors', and it is evident that they also viewed their publication as a call to action. As stated in the letter, they hoped to influence more white German women to become actively involved in the fight against increasing racism and violence against women of color in the post-unification German state.

Again, similarly to *Beiträge,* there are many important and influential essays in this publication written by German women of color in which they attempt to explain the history of the racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia they experienced as minority German women. For example, Hügel-Marshall and May Ayim wrote about some of their experiences growing up Black in Germany. In addition, Indian-German poet and journalist Sheila Mysorekar wrote about the isolation she felt growing up in a predominantly white society, but also about her difficulties as an Asian within the Black German women's movement. She stated, "many of us refer to ourselves as blacks, also to express our contrast and opposition to the white dominant society. However, there are

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[235] Ika Hügel et. al., "An unsere LeserInnen," in *Entfernte Verbindungen: Rassismus, Antisemitismus, Klassenunterdrückung*, ed. Ika Hügel et al. (Berlin, Germany: Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1993), 11-12.

contradictions and even hostility between Africans and Asians."[236] This points to the fact that while Black Germans were united in their fight against the racism and oppression from white Germans, they still had conflicts and tension within their own movement. While these essays, and the others included in this publication, present significant information, for the purpose of this chapter, I will be focusing on one essay in particular by a white German woman named Ilona Bubeck that exemplifies how the arrival of Lorde and the creation of the Afro-German feminist movement encouraged white women to become more aware of their race and involved in antiracism.

Bubeck had been active in the women's movement, specifically the lesbian women's movement, before the arrival of Audre Lorde and the rise of the Afro-German feminist movement and she has since spoken out about how Lorde made a significant impact on her life and her own racial consciousness. In the documentary film *Audre Lorde: The Berlin Years 1984 to 1992*, which was released in 2012, upon remembering Lorde and her influence, Bubeck states,

> I learned from her that it's not the differences between people that divide us, but the fact of not dealing with these differences and of remaining silent. I haven't always been successful at this, but it's always worth working on. In that respect, Audre has influenced me the most. I think no one else ever encouraged me that much or made me aware of my own responsibility and of my own power, like Audre did."[237]

As Bubeck is speaking, images and videos of her engaging in serious and lively conversations with Lorde play in the background. In the years following her involvement with Audre Lorde and anti-racist practices, she became a significant figure in anti-racist

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[236] Sheila Mysorekar, "Weiße Taktik, weiße Herrschaft," in *Entfernte Verbindungen: Rassismus, Antisemitismus, Klassenunterdrückung*, ed. Ika Hügel et al. (Berlin, Germany: Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1993), 111.

[237] *Audre Lorde: The Berlin Years 1984-1992*.

feminism and contributed several writings to the cause, which includes her essay in *Entfernte Verbindungen.*

In this essay, entitled "Eine neue bürgerliche Frauenbewegung?" ("A New Bourgeois Women's Movement?"), Bubeck criticized the white German women involved in the women's movement of ignoring different forms of oppression outside of sexism. Again, reflective of Lorde's teachings and ideas as presented at the beginning of this chapter, Bubeck discussed how white women have often viewed women as a "class" and is critical of "feminist women researchers," such as Claudia von Werlhof who support this idea. She argued, "the two-class model of man/woman is misleading and prevents a differentiated consideration of the contradictions between women and the different power relations in which they are also involved." Throughout the essay, she was critical of the idea that "all women are victims," and pointed out how white women, too, have been involved in and benefited from the oppressive capitalist system and argues that by not recognizing this, white German women also ignore "class differences as well as differences based on ethnicity and culture from being recognized as mechanisms of oppression."[238]

Bubeck serves as a perfect example of a white German woman who was transformed by the ideas and teachings of Audre Lorde. The impact of Lorde and Black Germans can be seen further throughout several other essays in this book published by white German feminists as well. For example, the call of Black Germans for white Germans to acknowledge German colonialism can be seen in Kerstin Engelhardt's essay entitled, "Weiße deutsche Frauen: Kolonialistinnen in der Vergangenheit, Rassistinnen in

[238] Bubeck, "Eine neue bürgerliche Frauenbewegung?" 34-37.

der Gegenwart: Das Beispiel Namibia" (White German Women: Colonialists in the Past, Racists in the Present. The example of Namibia"). Like Bubeck, Engelhardt too refuted the idea that women have traditionally been victims of the patriarchal state and thus uninvolved in historical affairs, specifically in colonialism. She pointed out how white German women were active participants in colonization not only through education African women the tenets of traditional western family and female values, but also in maltreatment of Africans and the dissemination of racist ideas within Germany as "colonial women's organizations in the empire engaged in intensive nationalist and racist colonial propaganda."[239] In addition, she related this past participation in colonialism and German women's refusal to acknowledge it to the modern racism of the German women's movement. She stated,

> For in the suppression of one's own history of domination lies the danger of denying one's own racism (and anti-Semitism) and in this way carrying it on unbroken. The effects on society as a whole are obvious; the numerous racist attacks of recent times are only possible in a social climate that largely tolerates and even encourages such attacks. And women bear responsibility for this to the same extent as men.[240]

As is clear throughout both of the publications discussed in this section, Black and anti-racist German feminists were making significant progress in establishing and expanding conversations about race within the white German women's movement and among white German feminists in the early and mid-1990s. While they faced many challenges from unification in 1990 and the publication of Alice Schwarzer's *Emma* article in 1993, credit must be given to German women who engaged in these anti-racist conversations and who continually tried to create a better society for minority women during this time.

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[239] Engelhardt, "Weiße deutsche Frauen," 120-130.
[240] Engelhardt, "Weiße deutsche Frauen," 135.

It is worth noting the difference in attitudes of the extremely defensive women who attended the 1984 conference in Frankfurt described at the beginning of this chapter, and those who authored the editorial note in the 27th issue of *Beiträge zur Feministischen Theorie und Praxis* just six years later. As those authors acknowledge, the fact that white German women eventually did begin having discussions about racism and their roles within it was largely due to the efforts of Audre Lorde and other Black Germans involved in the Afro-German feminist movement. Lorde's teachings provided Black and white German women alike with insight into how to achieve a more productive feminism.

CHAPTER V – CONCLUSION

Audre Lorde's arrival in Berlin in 1984, the subsequent emergence of the Afro-German feminist movement, and the efforts of anti-racist feminist Dagmar Schultz all had significant impacts on bringing discussions of race forward among white German women beginning in the mid- to late- 1980s. The significance of these discussions, however, cannot be fully understood without first acknowledging the extremely complex history surrounding German conceptions of race, especially the shift that took place following World War II. Before the end of the war in 1945, German racial ideology was based upon notions of biological racism. Rather than focusing on the color of one's skin to explain racial inferiority, Germans focused on one's biological make-up and believed that anyone born outside of Northern European ancestry, regardless of skin color, was biologically and racially inferior.

These ideas began to change after 1945 as many Western nations, and especially Germans, began to reject the biological racism that had so destructively defined the Nazi era. However, because ideas of German racial purity and superiority preceded the Nazi era and were ingrained in German society, their lasting impacts cannot be ignored. This can perhaps most notably be seen in relation to the rise of a new cohort of mixed-race children that emerged as a result of relations between white German women and foreign soldiers of color, most commonly African American GIs. These children took on special significance following 1945 because while Germans attempted to distance themselves from the Nazi idea of German racial and biological superiority, they still hoped to find an alternative way to protect the "purity" of their national identity and culture. Because of this, Germans had to adopt new strategies to address the presence of these children

throughout their society. As Heide Fehrenbach has proven, the existence of American racial ideologies and racist practices among American occupying troops offered Germans an outlet by 1950. As Germans began to understand that racism could exist alongside Western democracy, they embraced a racial ideology similar to that of the United States. Instead of viewing race in terms of biology, they now "constructed the postwar problem of race around skin color and even more narrowly around Blackness."[241]

As a result, the German government began implementing numerous "solutions" to address the rising Black German population. These included deportations disguised as adoption or placement within isolated homes for mixed-race children. The German government presented these "solutions" as protection for mixed-race children against the discrimination they would have within the predominantly white broader German society. However, as exemplified throughout the second chapter of this thesis, this led to extreme feelings of isolation, loneliness, and rejection among these children. It was within this harsh environment of exclusion from German national identity that the Black German women who would make up the first generation of the Afro-German feminist movement grew up. In addition, it was because of these experiences that they found the motivation to create an all-encompassing identity that they could claim as their own and through which they could finally assert both their German and African backgrounds within German society. The formation of this newfound Afro-German identity was essential to the rise in race discussions that would begin to take place among Black and white women in the 1980s.

[241] Fehrenbach, "Black Occupation Children," 207.

This context of German racial ideology is also significant to understanding why such deep divisions arose among Black and white German women, especially in the 1960s with the emergence of the German women's movement. As Fehrenbach and Rita Chin have pointed out, discussions of German racism became extremely taboo throughout German society beginning in the early 1960s. While this taboo nature of race was somewhat challenged by the German student and women's movement, this was only in reference to the biological racism of the Nazi past and the racist practices of other countries such as the United States and South Africa. As a result, members of these social movements tended to ignore the racism that existed within their own society and movements. In the third chapter of this thesis, I build upon Fehrenbach's and Chin's findings and argue that these were major reasons for the large division that emerged between Black and white German women, and for the fact that Black German women did not trust white women to fight against discrimination and oppression on the basis of both gender *and* race.

This division, however, began to slowly break down with the introduction of white German anti-racist feminist Dagmar Schultz to the German women's movement in 1972. After spending ten years in the United States and because of her active involvement in the African American Civil Rights Movement and the American women's movement, Schultz realized that lower class, Jewish, and Black German women, along with immigrant women, were largely excluded from the German women's movement. Many sources, and even those written by Schultz herself, tend to point to Audre Lorde as the main source of influence surrounding race discussions among white German women. And while Lorde's impact is no doubt extremely important, Schultz, too, played an

undeniable role in bringing about these discussions within the white German women's movement. Influenced by her time in the American Civil Rights Movement, Schultz had an understanding that it was the responsibility of white individuals to address the issues of racism within their own communities, rather than relying solely on the teachings and education of the "affected women." As a result, Schultz called upon white German women to become aware of their own involvement in racism and attempt to actively work against it. It was ideas such as these that Schultz brought with her and attempted to implement throughout the white German women's movement through her various publications and personal conversations with German women.

That being said, however, the extremely significant contributions of Audre Lorde in tandem with Afro- and Black German women must be reinforced. Beginning in 1984, all of these forces combined to create one of the most significant publications, not only in Black German history, but in the emergence of race discussions throughout West Germany in the 1980s. This, of course, was *Farbe bekennen.* As historian and member of the Afro-German feminist movement Maureen Maisha Eggers has stated, the first stage of the Afro-German feminist movement was dedicated to the outward production of knowledge surrounding Black German history. In other words, women involved in the movement were focused on educating the broader German society about their new community and identity, and about their presence within German society. As has been presented throughout this thesis, it was within this context that many white German women were first introduced to Afro-Germans and that the many conversations detailed within the last chapter began to take place.

The impact of all of these individuals and their efforts can clearly be seen through the ways in which white German women evolved in their approaches toward Black Germans and in their engagement in race discussions. As presented in Ika Hügel-Marshall's memoir, white German women in the early 1970s had no interest in addressing racial issues throughout German society, and completely denied their existence within the white German women's movement. This reluctance slowly began to shift, however, as can be seen throughout the documentation of the first joint congress of foreign and German feminists in March 1984. While many white German women who attended this conference were initially open to learning more about the experiences of Black German and foreign women, they were not yet prepared to confront their own racism or the racism with the German women's movement. Finally, however, in 1990, publications written by white German women who wrote critically about their own involvement in German racism and acknowledged the impact it had on German women of color began to appear. This shift, as has been exemplified throughout this thesis, was the result of the efforts of women such as Audre Lorde and Dagmar Schultz, in combination with the formation of the Afro-German feminist movement. And while these discussions were not being widely held among the broader German women's movement, they still proved to be a significant turning point in German racial history. This was the first time since the beginning of the 1960s, that Germans began addressing the racism that taking place within their own society, rather than focusing on past and external racist practices.

However, it is important to acknowledge that while this took place among German women and with the German women's movement, the broader German society is

still grappling with some of these same issues today. According to a *New York Times* article published in October 2020, while thousands of Germans, both Black and white, have openly displayed their support for anti-racist movements in other countries, most notably the United States Black Lives Matter movement, many Black Germans have criticized the white German population for simultaneously ignoring the racist practices, especially in relation to police brutality, taking place within their own country.[242] In reaction, Black German men and women have formed new organizations based largely upon those initiated in the 1980s, including the ISD and ADEFRA, known as Black Lives Matter Berlin and Black Brown Berlin.[243] These organizations are still fighting the same fight of the 1980s. On the BLMB website, they discuss how they are a transnational organization, which seeks to "form and promote a black community in the fight against racism and deprivilegation," as well as to create a better understanding of Black history in Germany among both Black and white Germans.[244]

It should be concerning that so few people believe and/or understand the extent to which anti-Black racism exists in Germany today. Many individuals attribute this to the fact that German colonialism is not a required subject in school curriculum throughout Germany.[245] This largely unknown history, combined with the lasting influence of the taboo nature surrounding race discussions, has contributed to the fact that Black Germans

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[242] Valeriya Safronova, "Black Germans Say It's Time to Look Inward," *New York Times,* October 4, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/04/style/black-germans-say-its-time-to-look-inward.html.

[243] It is important to note that the Initiative for Black People in Germany (ISD) and the ADEFRA, now known as Generation ADEFRA, are still in operation today.

[244] "BLMB Community Consent," Black Lives Matter Berlin, accessed November 30, 2020, https://www.blacklivesmatterberlin.de/blmb-community-guidelines/.

[245] Safronova, "Black Germans Say It's Time to Look Inward." The absence of German colonialism is also taken up by May Ayim in *Farbe bekennen,* as well as Marion Kraft in her essay, "Re-presentations and Re-definitions: Black People in Germany in the Past and Present," 20-22.

and their experiences, stories, and struggles have gone unappreciated and unacknowledged among the broader, majority white German society for far too long. While white Germans cannot make up for their country's past, they can contribute to its future by acknowledging and becoming critical of their whiteness, as well as by recognizing their part in the racism that Germans of color face on a daily basis. This is the type of self-reflection that is needed for meaningful discussions about race and racism among Black *and* white Germans to take place.

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