

# **Citizenship and National Identity in Ika Hügel- Marshall's *Daheim Unterwegs: Ein Deutsches Leben***

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In the aftermath of World War II, encounters between African Americans and Germans had important political and cultural effects on both sides of the Atlantic.

While a lot of scholarly attention has been devoted to the influence of this encounter on the African American community, few such debates have endorsed its impact on German society. The large number of mixed- race children born to African American soldiers and white

German women in Germany, however, can be considered an important demographic effect of this encounter. It is not a leap to conclude that their presence posed a tremendous challenge to German conceptualizations of citizenship and national belonging, which after the Second World War were still thought of in terms of consanguinity, ethnic homogeneity, or more specifically, in terms of whiteness.

In her autobiography *Daheim Unterwegs. Ein Deutsches Leben* (1998) Ika Hügel-Marshall – a Black German woman born in 1946 – the author shows that even though she was part of a white German family by way of her mother's lineage, her experience of growing up Black in Germany was shaped by anti-Black racism and exclusion from the white German national body.

In her book *Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others* (2006), Sara Ahmed contends that “[t]he alignment of race and space is crucial to how they materialize as givens, as if each ‘extends’ the other.” (p.121) Drawing on Sara Ahmed's phenomenological readings of social spaces, I contend that if citizenship is thought of in terms of whiteness it is Hügel- Marshall's ‘lack’ thereof that disrupts this process of extension and thus prevents her from taking up space within the German national framework. By exposing the exclusionary mechanisms inherent to such monolithic ideas of citizenship and national belonging, Hügel- Marshall seeks to enable a more inclusive understanding of what she calls “ein deutsches Leben.”