

# Transfeminism: What Do Audre Lorde and Black German Feminism Have to Do with It?

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## Vortrag

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Contributors to the May 2016 special issue of *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, *Trans/Feminism*, were among those who found aspects of Black feminist theorist and writer Audre Lorde's work forming a major genealogical influence on transfeminism. Transfeminism argues for putting the body back into feminism, for a radical opening up of the category of gender and woman so that feminism can fight for the equality of all genders, of cis-gendered women as well as trans women. Transfeminism at its core promotes a true *transing* of the category of gender and also of woman. According to transfeminist and transgender theorist Bobby Noble, the act of *transing* implies transgressing and therefore destabilizing, deconstructing and eradicating seemingly bounded categories. Such categories appearing to be clearly delineated manifest, for example, in embodied man-and womanhood that appear to be inextricably linked to the male and female sex assigned at birth (Bobby Noble "Trans. Panic." 46 in Anne Enke (ed.) *Transfeminist Perspectives in and beyond Transgender Studies and Gender Studies* 45-59). Authors in the issue note Lorde's emphasis on personal written narrative as well as poetry, uses of the erotic, uses of anger, and intersections of sex, gender, race, class, and sexual orientation, as roots of the movement, albeit without substantively proving their claims. Proving that Lorde and parts of her work have the capacity to serve as such a genealogical predecessor make up the second half of Dr. Bettray's book titled *When Black Feminist Thought Meets Transnational Transfeminism: The Works of Audre Lorde and Angela Y. Davis*. In this book she uses the work of these two Black U.S. feminists with strong ties to Germany to demonstrate how their insights are informed by both the German philosophy of Hegel, Kant and the Frankfurt School, and activism in Germany. This work, then, as it relates to Germany, can inform a feminist activism worldwide and thus add to the important liberation struggle of transwomen and in particular Black transwomen who are vulnerable to and exposed to heightened levels of violence.

In her talk entitled "Transfeminism: What do Audre Lorde and Black German Feminism Have to Do with It?," Dr. Bettray will draw from the second half of her book and show how transfeminists' unproven claim to Lorde as a major genealogical imprint on transfeminism indeed proves correct and viable. Focusing on the uses of anger, she will show that this feminist theoretical and activist concept can and indeed ought to be productively applied to transfeminism and thus becomes a part of transfeminism's budding theoretical foundation as it has inherent in it the traveling power to transgress national boundaries and shape new feminisms such as the Black German feminism in the 1980s. It is, in fact, undeniable that elements of Lorde's writing influenced Black German feminism as it formed during this decade. In sum, Dr. Bettray sets out to show why this power needs to inform transnational transfeminism.