

## CHAPTER 3 CONVERSATIONS WITH THE “OTHER WITHIN”

### Memories of a Black German Coming of Age in the Third Reich

In the National Socialist (NS) state, race served as the primary signifier of difference through which specific groups of Germans were produced as subjects in particular ways. The memory narratives of Afro-Germans offer a unique view from within this regime—one that focuses our attention on the everyday politics of race. Their testimony reveals some of the very local processes of subject formation in this regime that produced individuals as differentially valued legitimate and illegitimate racialized and gendered subjects. Yet before exploring the testimony of these individuals, it seems important to dwell momentarily on what might seem an obvious point—that race is neither an essence nor a scientific fact of biology. Individuals are not born “raced” but rather become raced subjects through complex social processes of constructing meaning. As I argued in chapter 1, defining race as essence or as a “natural” biological trait that differentiates individuals has never been either objective or restricted to a separate province of science or biology. Defining and establishing racial difference has always been a political project with concrete social consequences. As we saw in both the colonial mixed-marriages debates and during the Rhineland campaign, in spite of the fact that the power of a scientific discourse of race lies in the authority of its claim that race is an objective term of human classification, this has never been the case. There is no “essence” of race (biological or otherwise), only the social and political consequences that arise from social definitions of race that impute certain meanings to what are seen as racial differences. Race is nothing more and at the

same time nothing less than a mode of differentiation between individuals in society, yet race is such a mode with particularly powerful material and symbolic effects.

In this study, both race and gender are conceived as powerful modes of social differentiation that produce and inscribe meaningful forms of subjectivity. With respect to defining each of these categories, I adopt Judith Butler's concept of "materialization" as way of describing the social and discursive processes through which not only gender and sex but also the raced body come to take on meaning in society. Materialization is particularly useful concept that at once connotes both the ways in which gender and/or race are produced as meaningful (that is, how they come to matter [verb]) and the equally social processes through which we come to think of the sexed, gendered, or raced body as "real" or material substance (that is, as matter [noun]) in ways that erase and obscure the processes of their production as such. Butler argues that both sex and gender come to matter and are produced as material through the forcible reiteration and citation of regulatory social norms. Her notion of materialization is particularly helpful with regard to the functioning of race, allowing us to conceive of social construction as more than simply a linguistic process and accounting in important ways for the historical accumulation of meaning of the category of race as substance and its often quite material effect on the lives of individuals in society.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, specifically with regard to defining the concept of race, rather than speaking of racial essences or experiences, we must think of racialization as a process through which particular meanings of social differences are produced and come to be attributed to, synonymous with, and identified as the differences we refer to as *race*. In this way race is both a representation of social difference and, at the same time, the social process of representation through difference produced as meaningful. Beyond a notion of social construction that focuses primarily on language and discourse, the meaning of race is also the product of histories and bodies whose meaning has evolved from historical and material groundings (that is, from concrete situational and ideological contexts that have evolved over time). Indeed, at the most basic of levels, the "raced bodies" of Africans and Afro-Germans and their presumed racial difference from whites have historically come to take

on diverse forms of social meaning in German society. The situation of Afro-Germans exemplifies this process.

As a potentially important marker of identity, it is tempting to say that the raced bodies of these individuals have historically been the decisive factor in the constitution of their subjectivities. One could certainly argue that the basis or “substance” of identity is intrinsically linked to the “experience of race” and living the material consequences of this raced body. On one level, this is an obvious and verifiable conclusion. Yet it is an issue that provokes me to recall the comments of one of my Afro-German interview partners, Fasia Jansen, whose testimony will be explored in depth in chapter 4. At one point in our conversation, Jansen remarked that she never “felt” Black. When I asked whether this was really the case, Jansen turned the tables on me by asking whether I had in fact felt this myself. When I replied that I did in fact feel my blackness, she responded with a second unanswerable question: exactly when was this the case? Jansen’s insightful challenge led me to recognize at that moment that I never actually felt my blackness—in other words, I could not say that I experienced either the substance of race or race as substance.

As this example demonstrates, it is necessary to conceive of experience in terms that are just as complex as those of race, gender, and identity. Experience is not simply something that people have or that which happens to people. As my interview partner emphasized, both of us had often had to contend with what was not so much the “experience” of race as events that “happened to us” but rather with situations in which we were made to feel “raced”—moments when we became different from others, when our skin color, our bodies, became Black and when that category was seen to carry particular forms of social meaning. At the same time, we in turn constructed our own often very different interpretations of the meaning of these situations. Here both race and experience have little or nothing to do with any underlying substance.

The effects and consequences of the meanings attributed to race interpellate us as individuals and make our presence as Black people (our physical bodies) come to mean in specific ways. Thus, it is difficult to speak either of any substance of race as “essence,” of the “experience” of race as a substantive defining moment of identity (that is, the

“formative experience” of the raced body in the world), or, for that matter, of the “construction” of race as purely a discursive effect. The way in which the raced body comes to matter as a meaningful social object is a process that exceeds each of these concepts and shapes and concretely affects the interactions of human bodies in the world. As I will show in the following pages, the memory narratives of Afro-Germans in the Third Reich both affirm the apparent truth of the link between race, body, and subjectivity and point to a far more complex and often contradictory interpretation of this relation.

**THE “MARKED” EXCEPTION:  
AN AFRO-GERMAN IN THE HITLER YOUTH**

In his memory narrative, my first interview partner, Hans Hauck, repeatedly refers to his experiences of racialization in terms of his “heritage.” As mentioned earlier, Hauck was one of the Afro-German children born of the Rhineland occupation. He was born in Frankfurt in 1920 and at the time of our interview resided in Dudweiler-Saarbrücken, where he had grown up and lived for many years. “Heritage,” as we have seen, was a primary element of German responses to the Afro-German children of the Rhineland, specifically their blackness and mixed racial heritage, their illegitimacy, and their connection to German defeat and the country’s subsequent occupation. In chapter 1, I quoted a brief statement from Hauck’s narrative in which he addresses the issue of his heritage in relation to his father and his experiences growing up in post-World War I Germany as the son of a former enemy. His heritage, he explains, was an issue of which others made him aware. On closer examination, however, the role of heritage in Hauck’s narrated biography becomes far more complex. In this connection, it is instructive to look at a longer version of the interview.

**EXCERPT A**

TC: What are your memories of your first eight years with your mother?

HH: That I was always happy, that I cuddled a lot with my mother. Of course. You see, I saw her so seldom. I wasn’t with her all day. Otherwise, it was a childhood like anybody

else's. I forgot about the rejection just as fast as it happened. I just kept being reminded of it. But it's no special case. There are other children who — where for example the father is in prison or where the children are in a similar situation. Just for me it was because of my heritage, or my father's heritage.

TC: Did you ever talk about this in your family?

HH: I — not in my presence, never. That was taboo. It was a subject that wasn't talked about. Although when I was small I often heard them talking about it—even when I was older and in school. But when I came around the conversation ended.

TC: What kind of an impression did that make on you? That they always spoke about it but not in your presence?

HH: Well, I became aware of what it means when something is different than the rest. But I couldn't say that this was any different from other illegitimate children.

TC: But the issue of your heritage, that wasn't —

HH: That wasn't an issue. That was taboo. You can be sure of it.

TC: Who did you grow up with? Your mother and your grandmother?

HH: My grandmother. And an aunt was also there. Sometimes my uncle came by—my mother's siblings. They didn't live here, or at least not all the time. She had married and he worked out of town. But when they were there, the whole family was together. The photos prove it.

TC: And did you have the feeling that you were accepted in your family?

HH: Yes. You can't say that I wasn't accepted. I myself — because I always heard things, but nothing *real*, I was also sensitized to or more sensitive than other kids, quite early in my life. Even then, I was already very perceptive. It's something that came in handy in school. But it made a lot of things in my life more difficult, not easier.

TC: How would you describe this? For example?

HH: When one gets over things easily or is less motivated or less sensitive, one doesn't take as much in. People who are less — some people are just narrow-minded. And life is much

easier for them. They don't think as much about things. Right or wrong, that's another question. I thought about my heritage and such things quite early on. But I was too young to talk to my mother about it.

TC: And what kinds of thoughts did you have about your heritage? How did you understand or name it? Did you talk to anyone about it?

HH: I was told about it. I knew that my father was Algerian. But we never talked about it. It was just sort of mentioned in conversation: "You can't deny your heritage"—which was not at all meant to be mean. They always said that to me when I yelled or acted silly.

TC: How did you respond to that?

HH: I couldn't imagine that Algerians were different. I didn't even know what that meant. I came to understand it much later. But my mother was dead by then. I couldn't talk to her about it.

TC: How old were you when you began to understand this?

HH: I was eight and a half years old when she died—eight and a quarter.

TC: And when you started to understand [what it means to be Black]. . . .

HH: The neighbors' kids taught me that soon enough.

TC: How?

HH: It's hard to understand. I was insulted and verbally abused about my father's heritage. That was just after the war. The fathers of all the other kids were German soldiers. And mine was the enemy.

TC: That was after the war?

HH: That was after the war. The war ended in 1918, and he was here as an occupation soldier. He fought in the war and was here later as an occupation soldier.

TC: And how did you respond to these insults?

HH: At first I always defended myself, and later it was always my fault. It was something in my life that worked to my disadvantage. Without even questioning, it was my fault. Back then, people were really, really backward. It's something I've often noticed about other occupation children after World War II.

- TC: Did you know other occupation children — ?
- HH: Twenty-five years later, sure I did. I knew a lot after World War II.
- TC: Did you know any from World War I?
- HH: I got to know them when I was sterilized.
- TC: When were you sterilized?
- HH: 1935. Actually the trouble started when I left school.
- TC: How old were you then?
- HH: I was fourteen when I left school. And then at thirteen—that was when Hitler came—I was in the Hitler Youth.
- TC: You had no problems getting in?
- HH: No problems!
- TC: Even though it was well known that your father —
- HH: Even though it was well known—no problem. And that was something new for me, no — At thirteen you don't think about politics. But the whole thing, the games and the marching and playing soldier, that was fun. But —
- TC: And that's why you joined?
- HH: That's why I joined. In the Catholic Youth I had more problems.<sup>2</sup>

In this extended excerpt, we see that Hauck's statements discussed earlier are embedded in a discussion of his memories of his family situation and his childhood environment. Directly following the sequence describing his father, Hauck recalls his reaction to the negative responses to his Black heritage he encountered in his youth. He compares his experiences with Germans in the post-World War I period to the situation of children of occupation troops following World War II. When asked if he also knew children like himself from the post-World War I occupation, he replies that he first met such individuals when he was sterilized. This first mention of his sterilization occurs relatively early in Hauck's narrative (page 5 of the interview transcript). Remarkably, when asked to describe this childhood experience, Hauck does so by first speaking of a period in his life that in my reading of his narrative becomes at least as significant as his sterilization: the two years directly preceding his sterilization that he spent as a member of the Hitler Youth. The connection Hauck makes between these two experiences in his narrative—sterilization and membership in the Hitler Youth—seems an implicit attempt to resist an interpretation of

his life defined solely by persecution or victimization, for he effectively qualifies his experience of sterilization (marginalization) by mentioning his membership in the Hitler Youth (integration), almost in the same breath.

Hauck begins telling the story of his forced sterilization by placing it in direct relation to his memories of an experience that can be seen as its exact inverse: membership in the Hitler Youth, arguably the ultimate symbol of assimilation within National Socialism. However, in the context of Hauck's life history (as well as the experience of Afro-Germans more generally), assimilation is a highly problematic concept, as it not only connotes an adaptation to norms or values that are not one's own but also implies a distancing from, rejection of, or displacement of some supposedly "authentic" set of sociocultural values (or, in this case, a community) to which one "belongs." To describe Hauck as having been "assimilated" into German society would assume that he did not originally belong to it as well as presume the existence of and his implicit rejection of another community in favor of acceptance in German society.

Hauck mentions his participation in the Hitler Youth in such a way that it seems more or less unremarkable. It is almost as if the story of his Hitler Youth experience, in many ways an almost ironic example of "normality" and conformity to the norms of this period, is meant to counterbalance the implied "abnormality" or exceptional status associated with sterilization. The experience of social rejection that Hauck indirectly cites through his reference to his sterilization is in this way destabilized when placed in the context of his equally significant experience of integration in the Hitler Youth—in effect, the two events appear to be irreconcilable. Yet although his membership in the Hitler Youth seems highly improbable, Hauck seems not to have perceived it as unusual: he was simply doing the same as the other German boys of his generation. After all, Hauck was not only a child of African heritage but also a German boy who, contrary to the dominant perceptions of his society regarding the Afro-German children of Black occupation troops, aspired to many of the same things as other "Aryan" German youths. Thus, he was probably attracted to the Hitler Youth for some of the same reasons as the more than 3.5 million other boys who voluntarily joined the organization between 1932 and 1934.

The Hitler-Jugend (HJ), including the Bund Deutscher Mädel



(BDM), was the largest youth organization in Western Europe up to that time. By 1939, 8.7 million of the 8.87 million Germans between the ages of ten and eighteen were members of either the HJ or the BDM.<sup>3</sup> Many of these youths had political as well as what might be described as more “trivial” motivations for joining, including those Hauck mentions: “play” or, more specifically, “the games and the marching and playing soldier [*das Spiel und das Antreten und Soldatenspiel*].” The question remains, however, whether the Hitler Youth served the same function in Hauck’s life as it did in the lives of the white German children of his generation. What role did “play” serve for Hauck within the Hitler Youth? As we shall see, in Hauck’s narrative play will come to take on several different meanings with regard to the HJ and military contexts in general, including a gendering function, a protective function, survival, and finally an identificatory function that produces him as a legitimate German subject by virtue of group membership.

Hauck joined the Hitler Youth in 1933, the year the Nazis’ seized power, at a time when membership was voluntary (after 1936, membership in the Hitler Youth became compulsory under the provisions of the *Jugenddienstpflicht*). Furthermore, the fact that the Saarland was first integrated into the German Reich in 1935 makes even more significant Hauck’s early membership in the HJ. On the one hand, joining allied him with the NS regime before the Saarland’s official entry into the Reich, in this way setting him apart from the French sympathies also present in the Saarland. On the other hand, Hauck’s acceptance into the Hitler Youth so soon after its official government sanction and despite public knowledge of his Black heritage attests to the fact that he was at least to some extent accepted by his community and, by extension, integrated at this local level into German society.<sup>4</sup> This observation directly challenges the dominant interpretation of the history of Afro-Germans in the Third Reich. Rather than portraying himself in a manner consistent with such historical readings—namely, as a marginalized victim of Nazi persecution—Hauck’s memories of his membership in the Hitler Youth highlight experiences of integration into the social fabric of his community in ways that complicate and contest both the images of fear, loathing, and endangerment portrayed in earlier public discourses on Black Germans and the forms of marginality posited by the paradigm of victimhood that dominates contemporary historical representations of Black Germans in this period.

Perhaps most significantly, although Hauck's narrative does not discount other equally valid Afro-German accounts of persecution (including his own sterilization), his memories of his experiences of integration within the Hitler Youth demonstrate that this was not always necessarily the case at the local level. The insights revealed by exploring the contrast between his recollections of local enactments of racial ideologies and those operative at higher levels of state and institutional discourse and policy are some of the most important products of memory work, adding another layer of complexity to our understanding of the differential effects of the Nazi racial state.

In Hauck's narrative, the counterpositioning of the seemingly contradictory experiences of sterilization and membership in the HJ is neither superficial nor coincidental. Rather than being an attempt to defend his membership in the HJ from criticism, these dichotomous tendencies in his life history—integration versus marginalization, typicality versus particularity, his status as an “insider” (German) versus “outsider” (Other) and, perhaps most provocatively, victim versus participant—reflect the tenuous and complex position that Hauck occupied in his society. Throughout his narrative, Hauck emphasizes the tensions arising out of such oppositions, which, I believe directly reflect the process through which he came to be constituted as the raced German subject now referred to as Black German.

As an individual situated squarely between the binaries that structured the construction of German subjecthood at the time—binaries of legitimate and illegitimate racial, national, and political subjecthood—Hauck's account suggests the extent to which these categories are both inextricably intertwined and always already incommensurate with the complexity of the experiences and subject positions of any given individual. In this way, Hauck's narrative reflects how the categories intended to produce legitimate German subjecthood in the Third Reich were thwarted because of their inherently flawed and unstable status as the basis of a system of racialized state politics. Here it is most instructive to read Hauck's account through the ways in which it undoes the stability of the categories constructed as most stable and unquestioned in the Third Reich as well as for our understanding of who constituted its “victims.” Moreover, what is perhaps most compelling about his account is how it undoes this not from the outside but from within—through the system's foundational logic. In other words,

the power of Hauck’s narrative lies less in its portrayal of an individual struggle against a system of racial oppression than in how it reveals the inherent instability of a system based on oppositions of inside and outside, self and other, purity and pollution, integration and marginalization. Because of their intrinsically contradictory nature, these oppositions served ironically as the most available site of contestation for some Black Germans, whose lives were situated both precisely and precariously on the lines of these distinctions.

Hauck’s narrative of his life is structured around a selection of memories that are often contradictory in the picture they paint. The tensions of the association he makes between his sterilization and being a member of the HJ exemplifies this. But precisely through these contradictory memories Hauck necessarily articulates his subjectivity as a Black German because of the fact that for Hauck, neither blackness nor Germanness is in any way a self-evident or self-explanatory term. It is necessary to read below the surface of his memory text and engage the tensions of his recollections as illustrations of the complicated texture of his life and his understanding of himself as a German of African descent. This texture is expressed both thematically, through the events he recounts in his memory narrative, and more subtly at the discursive level, through the narrative strategies he uses to render these memories. One example of this is a strategy I have termed indirect negation or “relativization,” which occurs repeatedly in Hauck’s narration.

A first example of indirect negation occurs at the beginning of excerpt A. In this passage, Hauck describes his memories of his mother. Although he saw very little of her, he describes their relationship as close. He then immediately qualifies this statement by remarking that his childhood was more or less typical and unremarkable: “Otherwise, it was a childhood like anybody else’s [*Ansonsten war es eine Kindheit wie alle anderen auch*].” This statement serves as a preface to his next remark, which, like his later statements regarding his sterilization and the Hitler Youth, calls into question his claim to typicality by asserting that he quickly forgot the discrimination he experienced (though he also remarks that others often reminded him of it). In this case, he relativizes his memories of the discrimination he suffered as the son of a Black occupation soldier by likening it to that which the child of a prison inmate might experience. He does so again a few lines later, remembering how he was made to feel different from others

because of his heritage, when he likens this memory to the experiences of other illegitimate children.<sup>5</sup>

Hauck's use of indirect negation in his narration emphasizes the tensions in his life arising from being totally integrated into his society (an insider) yet at the same time being made to feel like a complete outsider within this same environment. The tension of being marginalized at the center rather than the peripheries of German society is a central element in Hauck's life history. Indeed, for Hauck, marginalization involved neither being relegated to the margins of society nor being expelled from it. Contrary to the image of the marginalized passive victim of Nazi racial politics that pervades many accounts of Afro-German history during this period, Hauck's memory narrative shows a more complex positioning in which his status as a subject was constructed in relation to simultaneous processes of inclusion and exclusion, recognition and misrecognition, belonging and not belonging. The process of positioning exemplified both by Hauck's involvement in the HJ and by the narrative strategies of memory and storytelling he uses to render them are central elements of the Afro-German experience in the Third Reich to which I refer as "Other within." I use this term to articulate the paradox of being internal to and to some extent an acknowledged member of this society yet also thoroughly marginalized by and within it.

The notion of the Other within which I have developed in relation to the accounts of my Afro-German interview partners stands in direct contrast to Patricia Hill Collins's notion of an "outsider within." Collins's formulation relates to the contradictory social positioning of African-American women in the United States. She asserts that, on the one hand, through their role in the political economy (in particular, their ghettoization in domestic work), African-American women have a unique insider perspective on the dominant group and thereby the opportunity to see white power demystified. On the other hand, they can never belong to this group and thus remain outsiders. The result is an outsider within status in which Black women have "a distinct view of the contradictions between the dominant group's actions and ideologies."<sup>6</sup>

The difference between our two concepts hinges on the role of a Black community among African-Americans versus the lack of any

such community for my Afro-German interview partners. Implicit in Collins’s notion of Black women’s positioning in American society is a conception of a discrete separation between inside and outside that presumes the existence of two distinct racial communities, Black and white. Beyond the fact that such a description of the experience of Blacks in the United States is rather simplistic and, as such, severely limited, this conception of inside and outside is quite problematic (if not untenable) with regard to Hauck’s experiences as well as those of much of the Afro-German community. For although Hauck experienced marginalization and discrimination and thus was made to feel like an outsider, as with the issue of assimilation, there exists no real outside for Hauck—either actual or imagined—because once again, there is no alternative community to which he can return.

Michelle Maria Wright offers a compelling alternative conception of the Other within in the Afro-German context. Focusing on a very different object of analysis than my own, Wright engages the counter-discourse of the Black German subject constructed in the work of contemporary Afro-German writers. In her analysis of the poetry of May Ayim, Wright reads the Black German subject as paradoxically both an “Other-from-Within” and an “Other-from-Without,” or as she terms this in the title of her essay, “Others-from-Within from Without.”

Whereas African Americans function in white American racist discourse as the Other-from-Within (i.e., they are recognized as having been born and raised in the U.S., even if racists believe they do not belong there), white Germans insistently and consistently misrecognize Afro-Germans as *Africans*, or Others-from-Without, even though they obviously share the same language and culture. In other words, unlike African Americans, Afro-Germans must confront a racist discourse directed at Africans, rather than Afro-Germans. Technically speaking, there is no such thing as an *anti-Afro-German* discourse, only an *anti-African* discourse, raising the question of how one, as an Other-from-Within, should respond to a discourse that posits one as an Other-from-Within, should respond to a discourse that posits one as an Other-from-Without.<sup>7</sup>

Although I agree with the paradox that Wright highlights in this passage, the differences in our respective uses of the trope of the Other within as a model for analyzing Black German subject formation can be attributed to the very different historical contexts in which our respective Black German subjects are situated. In the case of the Black German children of the Rhineland occupation, this population was construed as a threat to the German national body politic not on the basis of a conception of them as external to the nation (although the stereotypes on which this construction was based were drawn from an exteriorized colonial imaginary); rather, the threat they were seen to pose was the potential to pollute the national body from within (in other words, the threat of “invisible blackness”). This was particularly the case in the NS racial state, where the sterilization of Black German children was a direct attempt to interrupt what was portrayed as the insidious interiority of the Black in the German national body by means of a scientific solution that terminated the reproductive capacity of a population assumed to exist as an internal national pollutant.

Wright’s insightful points notwithstanding, in the context of the Third Reich the concept of the Other within remains a useful interpretative model for explaining the seemingly contradictory configurations of memory that comprise Hauck’s narrative and the complex positions he occupied in the Nazi regime. This concept illustrates how, although “marked” by race as an exception to his society’s norms and made to feel this difference through discrimination, he nevertheless also was well integrated into this society as a German. Hauck’s membership in the Hitler Youth is a striking example of this fact.

**“BEING A MAN/PLAYING SOLDIER” — THE HITLER YOUTH  
UNIFORM AS SOCIALIZATION, (DIS)GUISE, OR SURVIVAL**

Despite the explanatory potential of the concept of the Other within for interpreting his life history, Hauck’s membership in the Hitler Youth provokes a number of questions about the specific nature of his involvement in this organization. From its inception, the Hitler Youth was intended as the primary socializing sphere or educational force for the youth of the Third Reich. Its central task was that of racial indoctrination, or, in Hitler’s words, instilling “both a rational and instinctive sense of race in the hearts and minds of the youth entrusted to it.”<sup>8</sup>

Thus, the Hitler Youth explicitly sought to produce specific forms of racialized subjectivity among its members that were consistent with the aims of racial purity and productivity at the core of the NS regime. In this way the HJ was intended as an institution concerned primarily with the production of legitimate racial subjects.

The stark contrast between the intended function of the Hitler Youth and Hauck’s account of his participation in it as a non-Aryan of African descent begs the question as to what function the Hitler Youth served for him and whether the socializing role of this NS institution had its intended effect. Perhaps more significantly, how did this process function when the object of this process was not its intended object? Hauck’s comments beg the question of whether and to what extent his difference from other “Aryan-German” Hitler Youth was “visible” or apparent to him or others at the time. As we will see, the “*un*-remarkableness” or self-evidence that characterizes his account of this period of his life reflects in interesting ways his understanding of the nature of his social interactions at the time and as such, offers one indication of how Hauck engaged and negotiated the processes of racialization and gendering that played out in this regime. In a later passage in the interview, Hauck addresses some of these questions and the issue of his complicated position in German society when he comments more extensively on his experiences in the Hitler Youth.

#### EXCERPT B

TC: How long were you in the Hitler Youth?

HH: At thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen years old. And after that, I always had the right to wear the uniform. You can’t forget that I worked for the railroad. And I can thank him for that, the SS officer I mentioned earlier. . . .

TC: And what exactly did he do for you?

HH: I was never denounced. Even when I was no longer in the Hitler Youth. No one even asked after that. No one pressed me anymore, and that was worth a lot.

TC: Compared to the time before you were in the Hitler Youth?

HH: Compared to others, to German boys who couldn’t get away with that.

TC: And during this time, did you try to understand for yourself

what the difference was, being inside of these organizations, in the Hitler Youth or the Wehrmacht, as you say, “being accepted,” as opposed to had you not been in them, having had “problems”?

HH: Of course after my sterilization, it was clear that it was over for me with the Hitler Youth, with the whole spirit of it, which I more or less understood at fifteen or sixteen, in contrast to the thirteen-year-old.

TC: I don’t quite understand what you mean.

HH: In contrast to the thirteen-year-old who enjoyed the whole Hitler Youth game, the fifteen-year-old didn’t anymore. He was able to think more about it, but he had to go along.

TC: “Had to”?

HH: Well, what should I have done? No one forced me. But the circumstances forced me. I had to. I was an apprentice with the railroad. Without being in the Hitler Youth, I wouldn’t have been allowed to do that. We appeared at all sorts of different occasions in uniform, in Hitler Youth uniform.

TC: Did that make a difference in how you were treated? When you wore this uniform?

HH: Yes. No one saw anymore that I didn’t really belong.

TC: No one?

HH: No, no one. And those who did know said nothing. It wasn’t at all like that. There were many who knew. [But] as far as I can remember it never caused me any problems.

TC: With the uniform?

HH: With the uniform.<sup>9</sup>

Here, Hauck recalls an important dimension of his involvement in the HJ to which he had also referred earlier in our interview, the issue of “play.” In this passage, play (the “Hitler Youth game”) involves taking on a military guise—in this case, playing soldier. His description of his experience in the Hitler Youth focuses primarily on the aspect of appearance through the element of disguise. In this passage, Hauck recalls how, in the Hitler Youth, “play” on military appearance (the uniform) functioned in his case as a disguise (“No one saw anymore that I didn’t really belong [(*Es hat ja niemand mir angesehen, daß ich eigentlich gar nicht dazugehörte*)]”). The uniform simultaneously



marked him as German and masked his difference from other Germans. As a form of disguise, the uniform seems not only to have masked his difference but also to have supplanted it with masculinity. In this way, Hauck's participation in the Hitler Youth can be seen less as a question of socialization than as a process of subject formation through a curious form of camouflage. Indeed, according to Hauck, his membership in the Hitler Youth was in many ways responsible for the silent acceptance he encountered in his social interactions, most often in relation to his uniform. As he describes it, the uniform silenced opposition and doubt through its symbolic presentation of belonging to the NS regime (and indirectly Germanness) and in this way provided not only a form of privilege but also a means of protection. Moreover, the uniform may even have offset Hauck's racial Otherness with an alternate form of belonging or identification that strengthened a different aspect of his identity, his masculinity. This, of course, would later be symbolically robbed of him through sterilization, when Hauck's body became the racialized object of both scientific and political intervention. In Hauck's life history, sterilization can be seen as a form of emasculation that occurred during puberty, almost simultaneously with the end of his involvement in the HJ.

As this reading of Hauck's memory narrative demonstrates, Hauck's association of his forced sterilization with his membership in the HJ not only underscores the gendering function of the HJ but also indirectly makes that of his sterilization more apparent. Reading these two sets of memories in relation to one another foregrounds the fact that both had a substantial gendering impact on his status as a German subject. If, on the one hand, the Hitler Youth represents a masculine ideal via the uniform and “play” on military disguise, sterilization, on the other hand, has equally significant implications for gender in a negative sense, representing an extreme form of emasculation and a direct attack on male sexual and procreative potential. Sterilization was not only an antinatalist strategy of racial hygiene intended to accomplish racial purity by preventing the procreation of and racial mixture with “inferior races” but also an explicit attempt at emasculation—in this case, of Black German sexuality and the desexualization of this threat to the purity of the Aryan race. The tension that arises from the counterpositioning of these two events in Hauck's narrative can in this way also be seen as the gendered tension of masculinity versus emascula-

tion. Hauck's reference to the Hitler Youth when asked about his sterilization indirectly compensates for his symbolic emasculation through reference to a form of adolescent masculinity, membership in the HJ.

The Hitler Youth uniform is the central point of reference in Hauck's memory of the Hitler Youth and its function in his life. The uniform was a symbol not only of membership but also of belonging in general, expressing a relation to this institution that went beyond official ties. Specifically, the HJ uniform established a relation of "belonging to" by way of appearance. "Belonging to" is perhaps more appropriate than simply belonging in this case, for it goes beyond a subjective feeling of inclusion in that belonging is materially expressed by the institution or group of which he is a part. Hauck's "belonging to" the HJ and by implication, the NS regime, is both confirmed and documented through the uniform, an external form of marking that signifies his affiliation to these institutions and its members. His emphasis on the HJ uniform affirms this fact and underlines the importance of the visible signification of his belonging to this group. The uniform not only confirms this internal tie but also offsets the visible markings of race (deracing him and effectively erasing race). Indeed, for Afro-Germans in the Third Reich, the markings of race implicitly signified precisely the opposite: not belonging, or otherness.

Ironically, in his account of his experiences in the Hitler Youth, Hauck narrates that which was most visible about him—his skin color—through that which mitigated this visibility at the time—the uniform. Yet what is particularly noteworthy about Hauck's narrative is how his memories of these experiences background race and gender in ways that indirectly make their effects more visible almost by virtue of their absence. Similarly, Hauck's memory narrative presents an interesting mapping of the social topography of race and gender in the Third Reich—one in which some of the details that shaped social interactions most profoundly (like race and gender) are also remembered in ways that make them seem differentially visible or totally unremarkable, while this visibility or invisibility makes their negotiation much more profoundly present.

Sociologist Karen Fields provides a useful vocabulary for understanding such indirect modes of articulating the differential visibility of racial and gendered social relations reflected in individual narratives of memory. In her analysis of the oral account of her grandmother,

Mamie Garvin Fields, Fields introduces the term “inward invisible topography” to describe how complex processes of racialization are recorded, internalized, and articulated in and through individual accounts of memory. Fields uses this concept to explain and account for how her grandmother represents the subtle intricacies of Southern racial order in her recollections of local social interactions during her youth in Charleston, South Carolina. Fields explains:

Such features are often not the main subject of the story, from Gram’s point of view. . . . These did not command Gram’s front-burner attention as they do mine. They are there in the way Mt. Kilimanjaro is there in Africa. For many intents and purposes, it is *merely* there . . . it is hardly to be missed yet hardly to be noticed, at once native and alien to the life around it. Tourists are the ones who preoccupy themselves with looking at it. I am saying this to give warning that, as Gram’s interlocutor, I was a tourist to her life with a tourist’s habit of gawking. . . . The Kilimanjaro I gaze at . . . often comes into view in the form of unintended or unintendable memory. The inner horizon of the South’s racial order is not the aspect we generally tend to think of first. It is easier to think of the South’s Jim Crow regime in its outward and visible signs—its laws, its segregated spaces, its economic arrangements, its intermittent physical atrocities. . . . But one learns through the testimony of inhabitants that it can at the same time be mapped out as an inward and invisible topography. It has objects analogous to mountains, rivers, and the like, which must be climbed, crossed, circumambulated, avoided, or otherwise taken into account. At the same time that these are not visible to the naked eye, and not immediately obvious to aliens on the scene, to insiders, much of the time, they are not specifically noteworthy. They remain, in the phrase of Harold Garfinkle, “seen but unnoticed” features of social life. As such they enter human memory. They often emerge in oral testimony as unintended memory. In actual life they emerge above all as social order.<sup>10</sup>

In his memory narrative, Hauck articulates the “seen, but unnoticed” dimensions of his racial and gender formation through the sub-

tle *lack* of emphasis he initially places on his membership in the Hitler Youth. What his narrative highlights is less his membership than the seemingly insignificant detail of the uniform. The Hitler Youth was part of Hauck's life in Nazi Germany that he seems almost to have taken for granted as a normal part of the childhood of a German boy of his generation. It is a naturalized part of his social landscape—one that he narrates as an almost unremarkable detail in his memory. To use Fields's terminology, as part of the familiar topography of his everyday life in the Third Reich, he navigates it blindly; its unremarkability rendering it essentially invisible. It is I, his interlocutor, who stumble upon it as a huge obstacle in the landscape of his life that cannot be overlooked. In response, Hauck explains that through the uniform, the Hitler Youth was in fact not only remarkable but instrumental in his survival within this regime. Hauck's subtle narration of these memories offers one example of a kind of backgrounding or minimizing of race and gender that characterizes his narrative. Yet his articulation of the significance of these events in his life through side comments on such details illustrates one of the ways in which processes of race and gender come to matter and materialize, and thus produce individual subjects socially. However, while these processes come to produce individuals as raced and gendered subjects, they also necessarily and simultaneously produce modes of navigating these differentially visible and invisible social topographies. For what Hauck also recounts are the ways that his production as a Black German subject within this regime paradoxically worked against the grain and to his advantage. In fact, Hauck's account of his experiences in the Hitler Youth suggests that this organization did not necessarily serve the function intended for it by the Nazis as one of its primary socializing institutions, designed to instill a sense of racial pride and superiority in German youth as the future of the so-called Aryan race. On the contrary, through the uniform and his ability to "play" an Aryan German Hitler Youth, Hauck was able to lay claim to a form of legitimate subjecthood as a German—one to which he would otherwise not have had access.

Hauck's emphasis on the significance of the uniform makes clear the extent to which the Hitler Youth did indeed function to construct him as a particular type of German subject—one visibly associated, allied, and identified with the Nazi regime. One significant reference to this in excerpt B occurs when Hauck links his memories of the HJ uniform to

the element of “military play”—specifically, military presentation (“We appeared at all sorts of different occasions in uniform, in Hitler Youth uniform”). The military presentation of the Hitler Youth and the legitimacy of its affiliation with the NS regime, symbolically represented by the uniform, enabled Hauck to gain access to other forms of acceptance or respectability in German society—in his case, access to professional training.<sup>11</sup> But again, the HJ uniform symbolized a legitimacy and acceptance that were not only National Socialist but more specifically a privileged form of masculinity. In this way, the uniform and his membership in the Hitler Youth gender Hauck as they engender in him a sense of belonging as a German, at the same time marking this Germanness as masculine.

Hauck’s account of his memories of the Hitler Youth reveals that the organization functioned not only to produce legitimately indoctrinated racial subjects but also that these subjects were necessarily gendered. As a central institution for the production of legitimate forms of German masculinity among youth, the HJ served a gendering function as a masculine point of identification that in some ways counterbalanced the rejection Hauck experienced on the basis of his ethnic heritage. His memory narrative reveals that, at least initially, the Hitler Youth produced him as a subject recognized as German and male yet did so in ways that occluded the fact that he was also of “illegitimate” racial heritage and had been “branded” as such through sterilization. In this way, Hauck’s narrative shows us how racialization is a process that necessarily begins with bodies and the assumed meaning of their substance as such but is also a process of constituting meanings for those bodies that often has little to do with their physical attributes. The function of the uniform in Hauck’s narrative is key to understanding this process.

Recognizing the significance of such a “little” detail like the uniform in Hauck’s story is the key to understanding this process. Similarly, engaging the status and function of what Hauck describes as play allows us to see how it reflects the simultaneity and mutual constitution of processes of gendering and racialization in his life. In Hauck’s narrative, play enacted a form of masking that effectively “deraced” Hauck’s blackness in ways that seem superficially to have mitigated some of the effects of race for him in this regime. At the same time, it also indirectly raced Hauck as a German subject through its gendering

of him as a masculine Aryan male. The masculinity ascribed to him through the military presentation of the uniform was necessarily and simultaneously a form of masculinity achieved through his ability to play an Aryan-German Hitler Youth. Indeed, for German males in the Third Reich, masculinity was constitutive of Aryanness, and Aryanness was attainable only through privileged forms of masculinity such as the military.

The masking of racial difference that Hauck describes in his account of his experiences in the HJ also mirrors a kind of discursive masking effected through his seemingly unreflective association between the two sets of memories. In his narrative, this takes the form of a rapid and almost too easy shift from the topic of his sterilization to what ironically seems the less volatile issue of his participation in the HJ. But this masking in no way accomplishes an erasure or complete silencing of this more deeply embedded story. Hauck does indeed tell the story of the effects of his sterilization—the gendered effects of an attempted racial emasculation. Yet he tells this story indirectly and between the lines. Hauck's comments on the gendering effects of the uniform and the HJ directly expose those of his sterilization.

Hauck's sterilization is the loud silence in his narrative, present both chronologically, as it occurs in the midst of his tenure in the HJ, and discursively, as the implicit reference that frames and introduces the story of the HJ. Hauck's cryptic allusion to his sterilization when intimating that this action initiated an inarticulable shift in his relation to the HJ marks the sterilization as a very visible gap, an event whose effects are undeniable yet are never explicitly described in the interview. In fact, Hauck mentions the sterilization only once in detail, and then only in the form of a sequential recounting of the events leading up to his sterilization. This silence is in no way an absence but is rather a presence representable only indirectly through the telling of this other related story. This tension vividly recalls Jean-François Lyotard's conception of silence as a sign of "something that remains to be phrased which is not, something which is not determined."<sup>12</sup> This tension is at the same time inherent to the process of memory and storytelling, where the telling of one story always involves the masking—though not erasure—of another.

Although he makes no direct statement to this effect, the end of Hauck's "active" participation in the Hitler Youth at age fifteen seems

chronologically to have coincided with his sterilization. Hauck comments indirectly on the connection between these two incidents in his somewhat cryptic remarks in excerpt B—in particular, the statement that, “In contrast to the thirteen-year-old who enjoyed the whole Hitler Youth game, the fifteen-year-old didn’t anymore. He was able to think more about it, but he had to go along.”

Hauck’s statements in this passage express a change in his perception of the Hitler Youth and perhaps in the implications of National Socialism in his life more generally. Although the element of military play in the Hitler Youth functioned to Hauck’s advantage as a form of disguise prior to his sterilization, it appears that up until this point he was not necessarily conscious of this fact. At age thirteen, Hauck probably did not originally regard joining the Hitler Youth as a strategic move. It is important to underline the fact that Hauck was compulsorily sterilized between the ages of fifteen and sixteen (at a time when he was at the peak of puberty and in full consciousness of his sexuality), whereas his experiences in the Hitler Youth preceded this, occurring at the beginning of puberty. That Hauck suffered such a violation of his sexuality at this important stage in his psychosexual development must necessarily have affected his recollections of this experience and explains in part the distinction he makes between the impressions of a thirteen-year-old and a fifteen-year-old. Thus, Hauck’s sterilization can be seen to have initiated a process of retrospective reinterpretation of this experience as well as a reevaluation of the strategic value of his membership in the Hitler Youth. At this point, the play = appearance = disguise equation became a conscious strategy for Hauck. He describes this in his subsequent statements, in which play in the Hitler Youth is rearticulated as strategy and consequently takes on the aspect of survival: “Well, what should I have done? No one forced me. But the circumstances forced me. I had to. I was an apprentice with the railroad. Without being in the Hitler Youth, I wouldn’t have been allowed to do that.”

In excerpts A and B, the strategic value of Hauck’s membership in the Hitler Youth is primarily that of protection by means of disguise. The protective function of the Hitler Youth in Hauck’s life is closely linked to and supplemented by his embeddedness in a supportive local community. As we shall see in the next section, these two elements also play a central role in the events of his later life.

As my reading of these excerpts from Hauck's memory narrative shows, it is important to be as attentive to the forms of meaning and articulation displaced in and through silence as it is to engage the content of more direct utterances and articulations. The silences in Hauck's narrative offer compelling expressions of the effects of race and gender in his life. Hauck's account urges us to think of race and gender as complicated processes of differentiation where neither race nor gender is something that people either are or have but is that which they acquire to be socially recognizable or intelligible to others. None of my interview partners were either "Black" (that is, raced) or gendered prior to their social interactions in a public sphere that made it necessary for others to discern a place for these individuals in society. Both race and gender were attributed to them, but because the category of "Black German" was more or less unthinkable, the concrete way in which this category was lived in relation to the racial politics of the Third Reich was highly paradoxical.

The Hitler Youth served a different function for Hauck than the Nazis intended. Beyond and in addition to its role as an institution intended to produce legitimate German subjects for the Nazi regime, the Hitler Youth provided Hauck with a chance for survival and, paradoxically, an opportunity to elude Nazi scrutiny at least temporarily. Through the uniform, Hauck came to benefit from the privileges of being identified as a legitimate German subject. At the same time, the military dimension of the Hitler Youth strengthened the gendering function of the HJ, thus fulfilling its original objective as a primary instrument of Nazi German subject formation. In fact, military institutions can be seen to have served a gendering function more generally in Hauck's life history that continued, if not intensified, later in his life. Masculinity was subsequently symbolically restored to him through his membership in another military institution that also affirmed in him a sense of belonging in ways that again ran completely counter to Nazi racial ideology and that compel us view this regime in even more complex terms.

Hauck was inducted into the German Wehrmacht in 1942. He served three years of active duty on the Russian front until being interned as a prisoner of war in the Soviet Union from 1945 to 1949. The experiences that Hauck describes in the interview (membership in the Hitler Youth, sterilization, military service in the Wehrmacht, and



internment by the Soviet army) complicate and provocatively challenge a perception of Afro-German children of the Rhineland occupation as thoroughly marginalized in German society. We will engage these issues more directly in the final sections of this chapter.

**THE GERMAN WEHRMACHT:  
THE MILITARY AS A “CHANCE”**

Before proceeding to a more extensive discussion of the implications of race, military institutions, and processes of gendering, it is helpful to begin this section with a summary of the chronology of Hauck’s life discussed thus far in this section. Hauck voluntarily joined the Hitler Youth at the age of thirteen and was a member of this organization for approximately two years (1933–35). In 1935, at the age of fifteen, he began his training as an apprentice with the railroad. Between the ages of fifteen and sixteen Hauck was compulsorily sterilized by the Nazis.<sup>13</sup> A gap exists in Hauck’s narrative of his life between the ages of sixteen and nineteen, a time about which he provides no information. Hauck then refers to events that occurred between 1939 and 1942, when he was inducted into the German Wehrmacht. He served three years of active duty on the Russian front until being interned as a prisoner of war in the Soviet Union from 1945 to 1949. However, his induction into the army was far from a seamless process.

**EXCERPT C**

Perhaps I’ve been more desperate than others in desperate situations. I was once. I attempted suicide. . . . I shot myself, and my friend’s father came to my rescue. Later, I was in the hospital, and it was covered up by a police officer. . . . I was twenty-one. They wanted to take me to premilitary training, and I was always afraid of that. The premilitary training was conducted by the SA. I never had anything to do with them. *Here, in the Hitler Youth, everyone knew me.* No one would have — I can’t put it any other way, would have wanted to do me any harm. Some even good. But there, where we were evacuated to during the war, no one could guarantee anything. Saarbrücken was empty because of the war. . . . The border was three kilometers away, and the French

artillery was shooting in here. There was no one here. And our department of the railroad was moved into central Germany . . . to different places. I myself was with a few other colleagues in Paderborn and afterwards in Schneidemuhl and then in Opladen. And in Opladen I attempted suicide, because I couldn't get away from it any more, from the notices to report to premilitary training with the SA. And I didn't want to go there under any circumstances. That would have led to complications that I was afraid of. . . . Proof of Aryan ancestry and that whole mess. *They didn't know me there*. And I couldn't possibly prove Aryan ancestry—where would I get that from? . . . Here I was supported. I already said before that I had people here who helped me. . . . *Out there, no one knew me*. And there's no doubt that there I was really up against something. I wanted to avoid that. Because at the time we were already at war with Russia and you could already tell that they were going to call us up as soldiers. In the meantime there were already lots and lots who had become soldiers who didn't have to become soldiers before. And that's how it was with me too. I was asked if I wanted to become a soldier. I said yes. I now had a chance, the normal—I explained it before—the normal chance, 50–50. Either I make it through or not. And I made it.<sup>14</sup>

Hauck entered the army in 1942, following a failed suicide attempt at age twenty-one that occurred out of desperation regarding being drafted into the army. After being evacuated from the Saarland, Hauck was ordered to appear for premilitary training. He recalls that at the time, premilitary training (*vormilitärische Ausbildung*) was conducted by the SA, adding, “I had nothing to do with them [*Mit der hatte ich nie was zu tun*].” Here, the local—in the form of local community ties—plays a central role in his memories of this period, to which he refers on three occasions in this excerpt (see statements highlighted in excerpt C). Unlike in the story of his experience in the Hitler Youth, the important detail in his story of his induction into the army is his description of space—specifically, the way in which Hauck narrates his memories of his interactions in different locations. Hauck tells the story of how he came to be accepted into the army, yet he tells this story through the local spaces of community that made it possible for him to do so without incurring substantial harm to himself.

Local space plays a critical role in Hauck’s memories of his life in this period, and he refers to these spaces on three occasions in the passage. In the first instance, Hauck contrasts the SA with the Hitler Youth. After being evacuated from the Saarland, Hauck was ordered to appear for premilitary training. He recalls that premilitary training was conducted by the SA and emphasizes that he “had nothing to do with them.” In his memory, the SA represents the threatening unknown, while, ironically, the HJ is portrayed as familiar and protective. The HJ, on the one hand, is presented as part of Hauck’s small-town milieu, taking on the related attributes of support, community, and perhaps even “home.” On the other hand, the SA is set in the context of Hauck’s evacuation from the Saarland—that is, his displacement to a “foreign” environment outside the boundaries of his community and beyond the reach of familiarity. In these sequences of his narrative, the Hitler Youth continues to be remembered as serving a protective function in Hauck’s life. Again, this function is embedded in the broader context of the local as community and personal ties.

The second instance where Hauck mentions the importance of the local as a protective space occurs in relation to his Black heritage. Here, he implies that proof of Aryan heritage would not have been an issue in his local community, which played a crucial role in his life as a protective buffer. Following his evacuation, however, Hauck refers to himself as being “out there,” in the realm beyond the boundaries of his local community, remembering this space as his greatest threat. These comments provide Hauck’s third reference to the importance of the local: “Here I was supported. I already said before that I had people here who helped me. . . . Out there, no one knew me. And there’s no doubt that there I was really up against something. I wanted to avoid that.”

Although the protective buffers in Hauck’s life did not always protect him from harm (as his sterilization and failed suicide attempt indicate), in many cases these buffers were instrumental in providing important alternatives for him in disadvantageous situations. That the father of Hauck’s friend from the Hitler Youth intervenes in his suicide attempt dramatically illustrates this point. Hauck explains at length later in the interview that the friend’s father was the former leader of Hauck’s Hitler Youth group. He rescued Hauck by arranging his induction without the need for proof of Aryan heritage—a relatively

easy task at this point because of the army's need for manpower at this point in the war. Hauck's memory narrative demonstrates that although in the Third Reich race and racial difference served as the state's mode of defining membership in the larger German collective, this was contested in important ways at local levels of society, where community ties often functioned in oppositional ways to create and enable the recognition and inclusion of subjects deemed unworthy of membership in other social contexts.

Returning to excerpt C, the fear of the conscription process that Hauck describes in his memory narrative can be attributed to one primary factor, *Fremdsein* (Otherness)—specifically, the situation of finding himself outside of his home community. Surprisingly, this was not the first time that Hauck had been called up for military duty.

#### EXCERPT D

HH: I was conscripted at nineteen, like everyone else.

TC: Conscripted? What is conscripted?

HH: Conscripted. That means for the army, drafted into the army. It's called conscription.

TC: That was at nineteen. That was two years after you were sterilized?

HH: That was two years, yeah, after I was. . . . I wasn't quite seventeen, I was sixteen when I was sterilized. And at conscription, 1939—it's called conscription into military service—I was unworthy for service.

TC: "Unworthy"?

HH: Yes. I was allowed to work, but back then I wasn't allowed to become a soldier. Only in the course of the war, in 1941 they got looser. And in 1942, I was called up with my own permission. It depended, I could have then said, "You didn't want me, and now I don't want you." But then I wouldn't be sitting here today. It's that simple. We've got examples of that.

TC: But back then you had to do it, you had to join the Wehrmacht. Or?

HH: Yes, maybe I could have refused. But then I wouldn't be able to talk about it now. I know about one such case. A

mate that I was sterilized with, he never came back. He got sent to a camp. And I went because I saw it as a chance. It was the first time that I was treated the same as others. Because the other “Aryan” German boys, my mates, my schoolmates, they were called up, too. And I wanted that, and then I was called up. And then I was quite conscious of my fate, that I had a chance, 50–50. Either I survive it, or I don’t. And I survived.<sup>15</sup>

Hauck explains that he underwent his first military review at the age of nineteen, sometime around 1939. Hauck presents this fact with a similar sense of self-evidence as that with which he describes his membership in the HJ, remarking once again that he was reviewed for military service “like everyone else [*wie alle anderen auch*].” This is yet another example of the narrative strategy of relativization discussed earlier. With this phrase, Hauck again emphasizes his perception of himself as representative of the norm in this period. Yet the norm in relation to which Hauck seems pressed to identify is a gendered and racialized one—the masculine, racially pure norm of military induction, to which he refers in excerpt C, is established by the young Aryan-German men who met the requirements of racial purity that defined their status as legitimate representatives of the Nazi state. Again, Hauck emphasizes normality and integration through masculinity and the institution of the military. His emphasis on his own typicality again seems to minimize or relativize the exceptional dimensions of his situation—that it was in fact quite unusual that a non-Aryan who only a few years before had been compulsorily sterilized by the Nazis was not only called up for duty in the Wehrmacht but also eventually accepted for service.<sup>16</sup>

Hauck’s memories of his induction portray it as a relatively uncomplicated process over which he exercised a certain amount of control, yet he qualifies this impression by explaining that although he consented to join the Wehrmacht, this was in no way a question of free choice. Instead, joining the Wehrmacht was a matter of compulsion and/or survival. In many ways, the Wehrmacht played a role in Hauck’s life similar to that of the Hitler Youth. In the preceding passage, Hauck describes the Wehrmacht as a “chance” in two respects: first, it offered 50–50 odds of surviving the war, and second, it offered

a chance to be treated as an equal to Aryan Germans. It is significant that he saw another military institution as presenting this chance, for in his memory narrative Hauck presents his experience in the Wehrmacht as the first time that he was treated as an equal, not only to the Aryan soldiers but also in the more general context of Nazi Germany, through the privileged status ascribed to soldiers as protectors of the Fatherland. Contrary to his statements, however, the Hitler Youth appears in fact to have been Hauck's first experience with equal status. The treatment he received as a soldier and as a member of the Hitler Youth can be attributed largely to the role of the military uniform in each of these organizations. Hauck's Wehrmacht uniform can be seen to have functioned as *Verkleidung* (a disguise) in the same way that the Hitler Youth uniform did in his adolescence. The structures and the uniform of the Wehrmacht would probably have functioned in a similar way.

Furthermore, in Hauck's narrative, equal status is represented not simply as equal status as a German but specifically as equal status as a German male. In excerpt D, for example, he states, "It was the first time that I was treated the same as others. Because the other 'Aryan' German boys, my mates, my schoolmates, they were called up, too. And I wanted that [*Das war das erste Mal, wo ich mit anderen gleich gesetzt wurde. Denn die anderen 'arischen' deutschen Jungen, meine Kameraden, meine Schulkameraden, die wurden auch eingezogen. Und das wollte ich.*]" Hauck's comments illustrate how the gendering function of military institutions through the vehicle of masculinized masquerade/disguise (the uniform) gave him access to a form of German subjecthood that had previously been denied to him. Hauck's membership in the German *Männerbund* of the Wehrmacht can be seen to have compensated symbolically for that which Hauck lost sexually through sterilization. As with the Hitler Youth, masculine gender identification (male German subjecthood) at least temporarily supplanted or displaced ethnic heritage and racial difference.

What becomes increasingly apparent in Hauck's memory narrative is that his status as a German subject and the elements central to it—his sense of belonging and parity with other Germans—are most clearly articulated in relation to his experiences in military settings. The gendering function of both the Wehrmacht and the Hitler Youth played a crucial role in defining the military as a site for the articulation

of Hauck’s German subjecthood. Military organizations appear in Hauck’s memory narrative as environments in which he was either able or forced to reflect more critically on his status as a German, which, in turn, seems to evoke clearer and more complex formulations of his conception of his German identity. This is true not only with respect to his experience in the Wehrmacht and the Hitler Youth but also in a third military episode in Hauck’s biography, his experience as a prisoner of war in the Soviet Union.

**LIFE AS A SOLDIER: “GERMANNESS,” BELONGING,  
AND MILITARY SETTINGS**

**EXCERPT E**

HH: I was drafted and became a soldier, and in 1945, I was taken prisoner. I was wounded five times. I was home twice, on leave and when I was wounded. And in ’45, in January, I was taken prisoner by the Russians.

TC: How long were you a prisoner?

HH: Until 23 April 1949. . . . I can’t really describe what it was like being a prisoner. Imprisonment isn’t easy—everyone knew that — But I was treated more humanely by the Russians than I ever was by my own countrymen.

TC: In what way?

HH: In what way? Because no one made a big deal about my heritage there.

TC: And the other German soldiers, did they notice this? That you were treated differently?

HH: I wasn’t treated differently.

TC: Just more humanely?

HH: I was treated just like the other Germans. Just they didn’t make any distinctions. My own Fatherland didn’t do that. It discriminated against me. Only as a soldier did it treat me as an equal.

TC: And did you have the feeling during your time as a soldier that you were really accepted?

HH: In the army, you didn’t notice any difference.

TC: In spite of your —

HH: I made private first class after the first five months—that means I was promoted. You didn't notice any discrimination in the army. There were many army officers who didn't agree with the system and didn't say anything. But you noticed that. In the army they didn't discriminate against me.<sup>17</sup>

Hans was taken prisoner by the Soviet army in January 1945 while in Polish territory, just south of Warsaw. He was interned for just over four years in a Soviet prison camp in or near Minsk until his release in April 1949. In his narrative, Hauck comments, "I can't really describe what it was like being in prison. Imprisonment isn't easy—everyone knew that." But this silence in his testimony is again not one of absence but selective presence. At precisely the moment when Hauck emphasizes that he cannot describe his experience of internment, he in fact begins to tell a different story of this same experience. As in his narration of his sterilization, Hauck shifts the topic slightly, focusing instead on his perception of having been treated better by his Russian captors than by his German comrades. When asked to explain this statement, he replies that unlike the Germans, the Russians did not make an issue of his Black heritage. In the exchange that follows, I misinterpret two remarks, "I was treated more humanely by the Russians than I ever was by my own countrymen [*Ich bin von den Russen mehr als Mensch behandelt worden, als wie vorher von meinen eigenen Landsleuten*]" and "Because no one made a big deal about my heritage there [*Weil dort wegen meiner Herkunft niemand ein Trara gemacht hat*]," to mean that Hauck received special treatment from the Russians and hence ask, "And the other German soldiers, did they notice this? That you were treated differently? [*Und die anderen deutschen Soldaten, haben sie das auch mitgekriegt? Daß du anders behandelt wurdest?*]" Hauck corrects my misinterpretation of his statements by clarifying that he did not receive special treatment. Yet the events of Hauck's internment are left unsaid. However, Hauck's description of this related experience outlines what was inarticulable, allowing it to speak through its salience for his identification as a German. What Hauck found remarkable about the treatment he received from the Russians was that they made no distinction between him and the other German prisoners, effectively giving Hauck equal status by acknowledging him as a legitimate Ger-



man subject: “I was treated just like the other Germans. Just they didn’t make any distinctions. My own Fatherland didn’t do that. It discriminated against me. Only as a soldier did it treat me as an equal.”

In the comparison that Hauck makes in this sequence, it is significant not only that he differentiates between his treatment by the Russians and Germans but also that he distinguishes between how he remembers being treated as a civilian by his “Fatherland” and how this treatment changed when he became a soldier. In German society (*das Vaterland*), Hauck recalls being discriminated against (*benachteiligt*), whereas in the Wehrmacht (*als Soldat*), he was treated equally (*gleich behandelt*). Hauck emphasizes the equal status and treatment that he enjoyed as a member of the Wehrmacht no fewer than three times in this excerpt.

Equal status provides one possible answer to the question of why Hauck articulates Germanness in relation to military contexts. Military settings were sites where Hauck enjoyed unquestioned status as a legitimate German subject. This is certainly one effect of the military as an institution in which processes of group identification play a significant role. At the same time, these particular military contexts were more than symbolically representative of Germanness: the Hitler Youth and the Wehrmacht were institutions that not only personified Aryan masculinity but also were intended to produce privileged forms of male subjectivity. In all the military settings in which he found himself, Hauck’s status as a German was reinforced by the fact that he enjoyed this status as a member of a group of men (or boys) in uniform. In this way, the play in which Hauck participated, not only in the HJ but also in the Wehrmacht, must also be read as the pleasure of playing an Aryan man or, in another formulation, playing masculinity as a soldier. Yet the central paradox of Hauck’s participation in both the Hitler Youth and the Wehrmacht is that the specific form of German subjecthood (the pure Aryan male) produced, constructed, and conveyed through these institutions should have excluded Hauck as a person of African heritage. Like the Hitler Youth, the Wehrmacht may have also served its intended role of subject formation (that is, producing legitimate and recognized forms of subjectivity) in spite of the fact that the object of this process was not its intended recipient.

When Hauck distinguishes his treatment in German society from that of the military, he identifies the army as the vehicle of change:

“Only as a soldier did it treat me as an equal [*Erst als Soldat hat es mich gleich behandelt*].” In this sequence, the structure of Hauck’s statement marks this distinction in his memory. *Das Vaterland* is the agent of the grammatical structure, executing the action as the subject of the final three sentences of this passage. In his recollection, the army initiates and enables the transformation of the actions of Hauck’s Fatherland, for Hauck effectively acquired equal status in German society as an adult through the army. A still more provocative example of the association of Germanness and the military in Hauck’s memory appears in the following excerpt.

**EXCERPT F**

TC: Did you ever experience any aversion because of your heritage in other countries?

HH: Nah. Because of my heritage, no. Because of being German.

TC: It was because of your being German and not — ?

HH: Yes! I mean — I didn’t travel around with or I didn’t posture with the fact that I . . . that [I was] “inferior” under the Nazis — In the Russian camp, I could have gone home much earlier, being from the Saarland.

TC: Why?

HH: If I had [gone along with] the other Saarlanders—who I’m not saying were wrong—they said they were French and marched around like that, even though they could barely speak a word of French. They got home sooner. It’s understandable from a human point of view. But I didn’t have such a standpoint. I needed a position for myself. Not for the Russians—to get home. I needed it for myself, personally—“Who/What am I?” I never listened to [the soldiers]. I’m German and was so, contrary to what Hitler thought, or the Nazis. I’m German, even [in Russia]. I didn’t want anything more. . . . I’m not saying that those comrades who did it were wrong. They were right. They got home sooner. But they had never experienced that inner conflict like I had. And that’s the difference. That’s why I couldn’t be abroad and somehow make out — I’ve never been an opportunist, never in my life. I would have had it much easier. I was in the Hitler Youth, but not for opportunistic reasons.<sup>18</sup>

In excerpt F, I begin our exchange by asking whether Hauck encountered negative responses to his Black heritage outside of Germany. During this time, he spent several years working on building and reconstruction projects in various European countries. Hauck responds by stating that, on the contrary, the negative responses he remembers were related to his being German rather than to his Black heritage. He alludes to the fact that he did not draw attention to or speak openly about his experiences as a German of color under the Nazis: “I didn’t travel around with, or I didn’t posture with the fact that I [was] ‘inferior’ under the Nazis [*Ich bin ja nicht damit gereist oder ich habe ja nicht damit posiert, daß ich es . . . unter den Nazis minderwertig*].” His comments seem intended to contrast his memories of his negative experiences as a German abroad with those of the negative treatment he suffered as a German of color by “Aryan” Germans under National Socialism. His recollections emphasize the irony of the fact that following the war, he was identified as a German and associated with Nazi Germany, whereas in the Third Reich, his status as a German was officially rejected.

The account Hauck offers in excerpt F is characterized by a series of shifts in his memory. Taken together, they form a memory technology that structures Hauck’s articulations of himself as a German subject in the Third Reich. Each shift expresses important associations among Hauck’s conception of himself as a German, the military as the site of his articulation of this subjectivity, and the NS discourses of German subjecthood that influenced this articulation. Hauck’s statement in the second line marks the first of five memory shifts in this excerpt. This initial shift is structural rather than thematic. Here he reinterprets the topic that I set out in my question (his negative experiences related to his Black heritage) to assert almost its inverse. Hauck indirectly questions my assumptions that his blackness rather than his Germanness was the primary source of his negative experiences. Curiously, almost as soon as he introduces this subject, he seems to foreclose it as the topic of discussion, initiating a second shift in the narrative just a few lines later. Rather than elaborating on this topic, he introduces a different, seemingly unrelated one—his memory of his experiences as a German and, in particular, as a Saarlander during internment. Indeed, Hauck’s abrupt transition from one memory to the next prompts the question of whether one has anything to do with the other or whether these could be explained as more random elements in a “stream of con-

sciousness” structure of memory. Consistent with the fact that memory is rarely if ever a random process, the statements that follow clarify the connection between these two memories. Their relationship is predicated on the fact that both are examples of situations in which it would have been to Hauck’s advantage to have distanced himself from being German. In each of these situations, Hauck faced the choice either of playing down or denying his Germanness or of acknowledging it and accepting the less favorable consequences.

Hauck recounts that during his internment, other German soldiers from the Saarland falsely claimed to be French to obtain early release. His remarks in this sequence are prefaced with an open-ended supposition: “If I had gone along with the other Saarlanders . . . [*Wenn ich mit den anderen Saarländern . . .*].” Introducing his memories of these events with this phrase positions Hauck in a particular relation to the other Saar-German prisoners. The supposition that connects these episodes in his narrative emphasizes his participation in and status as a potential member of this group—as a Saarlander himself, Hauck fulfilled the constitutive criterion of this group and in this way could have made the same claim to being French to forgo internment. When recalling his memories of this episode in his life, Hauck expresses understanding for the actions of his fellow Saarlanders but makes a distinction between their ability to assert this claim and his own inability to do so. As we will see in the following section, the distinction that Hauck makes between himself and the other Saar-German prisoners of war is particularly important for understanding his conception of himself as a German.

**“STANDPUNKT BEZIEHEN”: POSITIONALITY  
AND CONSTRUCTING AN IDENTITY AS A  
BLACK GERMAN IN THE THIRD REICH**

Central to Hauck’s account of his memories of his internment as a Russian POW is what he refers to as his “standpoint” (*Standpunkt*). The notion of standpoint he articulates is perhaps Hauck’s most direct expression of his subjectivity as a German of African descent. The concept of positionality, which has been most extensively developed in the field of feminist theory, offers substantial insight into the subjectivity Hauck articulates in his narrative.<sup>19</sup> Synthesizing and elaborating on

the work of leading feminist theorists, Leslie Adelson defines positionality:

Positionality does not demarcate a *place* nor does it consist of choice alone (although it does entail a standpoint). Rather, it characterizes a set of specific social and discursive relations in a given historical moment. These relations concern and also produce gender, race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, and other practices through which power is constructed, exercised and resisted or challenged. . . . Positionality can serve as an analytical as well as a strategic tool with which to explore women’s roles as both subjects and objects of construction.<sup>20</sup>

Feminist theorists have used positionality primarily to theorize “the fundamentally relational nature of identity.”<sup>21</sup> In her critique of Linda Alcoff’s interpretation of positionality, Adelson cautions against a conflation of the notion of standpoint with positionality that would reduce positionality to a “place” located “*outside* of an allegedly monolithic center of power, on the *margins* of power, or subsequently in an *alternative* center of power.”<sup>22</sup> Adelson asserts that the notion of positionality as place renders agency problematic by always setting its subject in relation to a totalizing source of power. Alternatively, Adelson argues that positionality is not merely about places but also about movement, drawing on Teresa de Lauretis’s notion of

a movement between the (represented) discursive space of the positions made available by hegemonic discourses and the space-off, the elsewhere of those discourses: those other spaces both discursive and social that exist, since feminist practices have (re)constructed them, in the margins (or “between the lines,” or “against the grain”) of hegemonic discourses and in the interstices of institutions, in counter-practices and new forms of community. These two kinds of space are neither in opposition to one another nor strung along a chain of signification. The movement between them, therefore, is not that of a dialectic, of integration, of a combinatory, or of *différance*, but is the tension of contradiction, multiplicity, and heteronomy.<sup>23</sup>

The significance of de Lauretis's formulation of movement across social and discursive spaces lies in her emphasis on being both within and without representation. Movement is central to the sense of agency inherent in the concept of positionality, for it is the movement between these spaces of representation (rather than outside of them) that enables a form of agency in one's own construction. De Lauretis's emphasis on movement between and across discursive spaces of representation offers a compelling framework for reading Hauck's narrative of his experiences in internment in fascinating ways.

As discussed earlier, Hauck's memory narrative in excerpt F is marked by a series of shifts where his memories of these experiences link what seem to be unrelated experiences. "Standpoint" gives the passage its organizing structure both as a narrative and temporally, with respect to how he links experiences from different periods of his life. At the same time, this narrative sequence is based on this memory association: "If I had [gone along with] the other Saarlanders—who I'm not saying were wrong—they said they were French and marched around like that, even though they could barely speak a word of French. They got home sooner. It's understandable from a human point of view. But I didn't have such a standpoint. I needed a position for myself."

In the preceding sequence, Hauck explains that the actions of the other Saarlanders are understandable *von Menschenstandpunkt*—that is, from a human perspective or standpoint. But he emphasizes that he personally lacked such a self-evident standpoint or position. The process of *Standpunktbestimmung* (finding his own place) was more complicated for Hauck than for the other Saar-German soldiers because his position as an Afro-German was much less clear. Hauck's reference to his lack of a self-evident standpoint is in fact an indirect reference to his racial difference from the other German soldiers. This difference ruptures the male solidarity and group identification of the Wehrmacht, the element that until this point had made such military contexts protective spaces of acceptance for Hauck. However, in his account of his memories of this period, the white German Saarlanders betray this bond of solidarity, and the actions he describes and simultaneously excuses in his recounting are told in such a way that they ironically render his own difference more substantial. What Hauck portrays as these men's choice to "pass" as French without jeopardiz-

ing either the security of race/whiteness or the privileges of this identification underscores the very different stakes of his own decision not to do so. Hauck’s articulation of this decision is ambivalent. This ambivalence draws attention to the fact because of his African descent, his own status as a Saar-German soldier of the Nazi Wehrmacht might itself be seen as a form of passing—yet a form that undermines his German status in a qualitatively different way.

In his memories of this episode, Hauck differentiates himself from the other Saar-German POWs through standpoint, or a recognized and acknowledged position as a legitimate German subject. For it is precisely his lack of a self-evident position made it necessary for Hauck to define one for himself: “I needed a position for myself. Not for the Russians—to get home. I needed it for myself, personally—‘Who/What am I?’”

In this sequence, Hauck’s memory narrative shifts once again, setting his struggle with positionality in internment in relation to other contexts in which he experienced this same struggle. In this way, his memories of internment come to represent the role of positionality in his life more generally, in ways that relate it directly to Hauck’s status as an Other within. To borrow from de Lauretis, Hauck’s position as an Afro-German as an Other within constructs him as both “within and without representation.”<sup>24</sup> As a German he shares the language, cultural values, and socialization of this society and in this way is fully a part of it. Hauck’s membership in the HJ and the Wehrmacht are evidence of this paradoxical interiority, and in his memory narrative, he uses these aspects of his biography to represent himself most strongly as a German. Yet his status as a *Black* German contests this representation, in many ways undermining the basis of the dominant construction of Germanness to which he refers in his narrative. Hauck is forced to engage and confront these boundaries when he recalls these memories of his experiences as an Afro-German in each of these contexts.

The patterns of memory Hauck uses to articulate his standpoints in the context of each of the episodes he recounts reflect a form of subjectivity as a German that is characterized by a relational process of positionality. The standpoint on being German that Hauck constructs in and through his memory narrative of internment can be read as part of an ongoing struggle to develop and articulate his German identity. However, this struggle should not be mischaracterized as an individu-

alistic process of continual self-invention. Positionality is not solely a question of situational contingency. As we have seen thus far in his narrative, for Afro-Germans such as Hauck, positionality is a complex social process through which individuals are constituted as raced, gendered, and often sexualized subjects in relation to larger discourses of nation and national identity.

What is perhaps most important to the concept of positionality is the notion of continuity that I would argue distinguishes my understanding of positionality from those cited previously. Hauck's memory narrative of his experiences as a POW is one example of such an articulation of himself as a German of African descent. His account of these experiences emphasizes his ability to develop and maintain a sense of continuity within this process. This emphasis on continuity can be seen in a third shift contained in the following sequence of his memory narrative: "I needed a position for myself. Not for the Russians—to get home. I needed it for myself, personally—'Who/What am I?' I never listened to [the soldiers]. I'm German and was so, contrary to what Hitler thought, or the Nazis. I'm German, even [in Russia]. I didn't want anything more."

In this sequence, Hauck makes a seamless transition from describing his struggle for a standpoint as a Saar-German POW in relation to the Russians to describing his standpoint as a German in relation to Nazi discourses on German subjecthood in the Third Reich. This third memory shift is characterized more by a transition than by a break in Hauck's narrative. This shift emphasizes continuity between these two contexts, for Hauck is challenged on the issue of his German identity in both of the situations to which he refers. In the Third Reich, the discourse of Aryan purity posed the primary challenge for Hauck. In the POW camp, not his Soviet captors but rather the Saar-German prisoners challenged him. Setting his memories of each of these contexts in relation to one another, the story Hauck recounts of the Saar-German prisoners' actions foregrounds the issue of his relation to his subjectivity as a German—or as he states the question, "Who/What am I now? [*Was bin ich jetzt?*]" On first reading, this challenge appears to cast doubt on the sense of belonging that Hauck associates with the military and the equal status he feels he has by now achieved. At the same time, this challenge reinscribes him as an Other within this institution. Here, acceptance and belonging through masquerade and male gender



identification are displaced by a sense of Otherness that returns as a challenge from his past. However, Hauck’s response to this challenge is self-affirming. The provocation his narrative asserts serves to reactivate the reflective process of *Standpunktbestimmung* (positionality) that Hauck describes in memories of his youth in response to NS discourses on Germanness. In this third memory shift, Hauck establishes this link between these formative moments of subject formation in his remembered past. His response to the question/challenge regarding his identity is the affirmation, “I’m German,” rendered through a form of cross-temporal intertextuality, explicitly redirecting it backward in time to address the other German and Saar-German prisoners and the Nazi racial ideology that excluded Hauck during his youth in the Third Reich. In this way, his narrative reflects the larger structure of memory, which is always inherently dialogical and intertextual. Always cross-temporal, memory is that which links the present and the past, making the past meaningful for today and allowing both the past to speak to the present and the present to speak to the past.

Despite the fact that these challenges and Hauck’s resulting struggle concerning his German identity recur in different contexts and under different circumstances, a continuity exists in his positioning(s) vis-à-vis Germanness in each of the contexts he cites. An important difference between the Russian POW camp and the Third Reich, however, is that whereas in Germany, the status of being German was advantageous, in the POW camp his affirmation of Germanness disadvantaged him. Yet this distinction does not seem to make a difference to Hauck. But why not? Hauck’s response is found in the fourth shift in his memory narrative: “I’m not saying that those comrades who did it were wrong. They were right. They got home sooner. But they had never experienced that inner conflict like I had. And that’s the difference.”

In this sequence, Hauck shifts the context of his narrative from describing his memories of the position he came to develop as a German of African descent in the Third Reich back to his standpoint in the Russian prison camp. After explaining the relationship he sees between the two, Hauck returns to discuss the actions of other Saar-German POWs that served as the initial point of departure for this memory narrative. He begins by directly comparing his actions with those of his comrades and by comparing their respective standpoints. He explicitly refuses to pass judgment on their actions, opting rather to acknowl-

edge them on the basis of what he sees as their legitimate motivations from what he referred to previously as *Menschenstandpunkt*. However, Hauck's acceptance hinges on the fact that despite the potential similarities of their position as Saarlanders, he views them as being in a very different situation than himself—they were constituted as white and therefore were legitimate German subjects, whereas he was a Black and thus illegitimate German subject. At this point, what began as a comparison in Hauck's narrative becomes, through the invocation of race, a direct contrast. This contrast revolves around the experience of *innerer Widerstreit* (inner conflict) regarding his German subjecthood, which serves as the central motivating force in this situation. Hauck's inner conflict on the issue of his status as a German subject had been an ongoing struggle for him long before the POW camp; it shaped and defined his relation to Germanness in this particular situation and is presented by him as the decisive factor in his narrative.

To return to the earlier question of why Hauck chose to affirm his position as a German even when it was disadvantageous for him to do so, his narrative demonstrates that although his position as a POW was comparable to that of his Saar-German comrades, his past and continuing struggle for recognition of his status as a German made it impossible for him to behave like the others. In fact, this recurrent struggle for affirmation led him to develop a standpoint on his identity that made it extremely difficult for him to renounce or distance his Germanness, even under such potentially advantageous circumstances. Relinquishing or repudiating this hard-won and conflicted status would in effect have meant conceding to those who had sought all along to deny his status as German.<sup>25</sup>

In the concluding lines of this passage, Hauck's explicit reference to the Hitler Youth provides the most important context for understanding the final shift: "That's why I couldn't be abroad and somehow make out. . . . I've never been an opportunist, never in my life. I would have had it much easier. I was in the Hitler Youth, but not out of opportunistic reasons."

This last memory shift is again a temporal one, moving from Hauck's more recent past to his internment as a prisoner of war and finally to his experience in the Hitler Youth. In spite of these temporal transitions, Hauck maintains a thematic continuity within this narra-

tive sequence. What links his earlier comments on his and other Saarlanders’ motivations for either affirming or distancing themselves from being German to his remarks on his participation in the HJ is the issue of opportunism.

In this concluding sequence, Hauck’s transition begins once again with a sentence fragment that relates his comments back to the question posed at the beginning of the excerpt, which initially evoked this particular configuration of memory associations. He continues by linking his previous description of the inner conflict he experienced early in his life with the issue of opportunism. Hauck’s reference to opportunism certainly needs unpacking. In one sense, Hauck’s remark is negative, as he rejects an opportunistic interpretation of his actions. Here he implicitly refers to the other Saar-German prisoners. His statement, “Opportunist war ich noch nie,” is an almost defensive gesture of demarcation, seeming to make explicit what went unspoken in the rest of the excerpt—that the true opportunists were the Saarlanders who pretended to be French. In this way, Hauck’s remark indirectly places him in opposition to these “real opportunists.”

The issue of opportunism (his own and that of others) seems a preoccupation that Hauck articulates only late in this excerpt. Opportunism appears as a double-edged form of critique that Hauck directs not only at the Saarland POWs but also, and more importantly, at himself. This issue goes beyond the context of his experiences in internment, a subtext or submerged self-critical discourse querying his memories of his struggle for legitimate status as a German. Hauck seems to respond to this criticism, defensively emphasizing his point three times in this sequence. In another sense, though, Hauck’s reference to opportunism must be read in relation to the issue of passing. Despite the problems that accompany Hauck’s situation in these terms, it seems clear that in this sequence of his memory narrative he responds to a potential interpretation of his actions as taking advantage of his situation by passing—pretending to be something or someone he is not. It is nevertheless somewhat ironic that Hauck feels it necessary to make such a defensive statement at this point in his narrative rather than earlier, when describing his memories of the Hitler Youth, a context in which such an accusation would in some ways appear more likely. Yet precisely this link between these sets of memories (the Hitler Youth,

the Wehrmacht, and internment) in the final lines of this passage helps to explain their significance in Hauck's memory and their role in his subject formation.

Hauck's reference to the Hitler Youth underscores it as another episode in his life that might also be interpreted as opportunistic. He speaks to the issue raised at the beginning of this chapter regarding the function of his membership in the Hitler Youth. The association he makes by linking his memories of the Hitler Youth to those of internment underscores the fact that opportunism is also an underlying self-critique with regard to Hauck's membership in the HJ, for his references to both situations appear as attempts to justify strategic situations in which he came to assert himself as a German. In each of these situations, Hauck's assertion of his status as a German was supported by or orchestrated through his membership in a uniformed male institution that represented the German nation and in this way both directly and unintentionally sanctioned his status as a masculine German subject in spite of his official status as an inappropriate racial subject.

In the final analysis, the comparison/contrast Hauck makes between himself and the other Saar-German prisoners revolves around their respective status as German subjects. In excerpt F, Hauck articulates his status as a German as a dynamic process of positioning where the decisive factors are what he refers to as *innerer Widerstreit* (inner struggle) and *Standpunkt* (standpoint). Both are active processes through which he enacts a form of German subjecthood that he was repeatedly denied (though unevenly and often in contradictory ways) on the basis of his racial heritage. In Hauck's memory narrative, this process is enacted as a continual negotiation and renegotiation of positions in relation to changing contexts, situations, and circumstances, yet he does so without relinquishing a sense of continuity.

In the end, the notion of identity as positionality directly addresses the aspiration toward equal status with other Germans that Hauck expresses in various ways through his memories of his youth in the Third Reich, particularly in relation to military settings. The positionings that Hauck constructs in his narrative allow him to constitute himself as a legitimate subject in his memories of the past. At the same time, these positionings indicate some of the ways in which Nazi institutions like the HJ and the Wehrmacht had a crucial impact on the for-

mation of Hauck’s subjectivity in ways that, in fact, worked very much against the grain of their intended function.

What is most remarkable about Hauck’s account is how it vividly testifies to the fact that, in some ways, race proved too slippery even for National Socialism. This is, of course, in no way intended to dispute the effectiveness of the Nazi state as a monstrously successful system of racialized genocide. Yet although race was this regime’s primary organizing principle for both participation in the state and recognition and inclusion in the social collective, because race is a signifier with no fundamental basis, the Nazi regime was unable to harness race completely to either one fixed meaning or even the plethora of negative associations with which the National Socialists sought to justify their policies of racial hygiene and eugenics. Hauck’s narrative attests to the fact that even the most extensive attempts to reduce some racial Others to their essence and to exclude them from society were unable to account for the central paradox of race: its simultaneous excess and lack of meaning. Paradoxically, this conundrum in the end worked to Hauck’s distinct advantage.