

CHAPTER 4 IDENTIFYING AS THE “OTHER WITHIN”

National Socialist Racial Politics and an Afro-German Childhood in the Third Reich

Hans Hauck’s memory narrative demonstrated how the processes of racial differentiation and signification that formed the core of Nazi racial politics came to produce him as a complex German subject in ways that appear to contradict the regime’s fundamental goals. The emphasis placed on reading subjecthood and the productive effects of National Socialist racial politics in his narrative are in no way intended to minimize the fact that Afro-Germans also suffered greatly from the persecution and discrimination many of them endured within this regime, even when their experiences were ambivalent and contradictory, as in Hauck’s case. As I argue in the preceding chapter, such tensions both exemplify the politics of race in the Third Reich and reflect the specific situation of Afro-Germans, whose status was thoroughly ambivalent at numerous levels.

In this chapter I once again seek not to assess the extent of these individuals’ victimization by this regime but rather to examine the effects of a state-sponsored system of racialization and the processes through which, both in spite and because of the role of race therein, Black Germans came to constitute themselves as particular kinds of German subjects when, paradoxically, exactly the opposite was the regime’s goal. Individuals like Hauck and my next informant, Fasia Jansen, articulate complicated forms of belonging and subjectivity as Germans that are precisely what the racial policies of the Third Reich sought to extinguish. In Hauck’s memories of his life in this regime, military institutions serve as sites through which he articulates this sub-

jectivity and thus reflect the critical role these institutions played in constructing him as a legitimate German subject. At the same time, local spaces also play a key role in his narrative. In Jansen’s narrative, the racialization of space takes a more central role. It is crucial to read the processes of subject formation she recounts through the complex social topography she constructs in her memory narrative of her life in this period.

When reading narratives of memory and oral history, it is important to pay attention to how individuals describe and narrate their memories of the places and spaces of their past. Closely examining these descriptions is necessary because, particularly with respect to issues of race and gender, social interactions occur not just on a verbal level but also and quite profoundly on a physical level through the ways in which we physically encounter one another and the barriers often erected (materially, politically, socially, and symbolically) to hinder such contact and interaction. The ways in which individuals describe the landscapes of their social interaction can offer a vivid reflection of their societies’ larger social and political organization.

This is particularly the case for Nazi Germany, a regime that worked not only through terror, coercion, ideology, and propaganda but perhaps most importantly through physically “placing” people, relegating them to particular sites and spaces inside and around the center and periphery of society based on the different value placed on human lives. The National Socialist (NS) government attempted to regulate all contact (both public and private) between those it deemed legitimate and illegitimate members of this society. In ways even more pronounced than Hauck, Jansen’s memory narrative is structured around compelling descriptions of the places and spaces that served as formative sites of social interaction in her life in the Third Reich. Both accounts map an intricate social geography of subjecthood where race and gender came to signify and interpellate her in ways that reveal important tensions and contradictions in Nazi attempts to “rule by race” in the Third Reich.

As I argued in chapter 2, National Socialism’s most explicit response to its Afro-German population focused primarily on policies directed against the Black children of the Rhineland occupation. This project aimed first to neutralize the threat of racial pollution through compulsory sterilization, with a supplemental politics of containment

that attempted to prevent interracial contact between Aryan and non-Aryan Germans (including people of Black racial heritage) through racial legislation that policed and prohibited social interaction. Both policies explicitly aimed to protect the purity of the Aryan race and formed part of the larger NS program of social administration that aimed at comprehensive regulation of the social sphere by subordinating private life to the rule of the state. This chapter is concerned with the application of this second approach to managing the perceived threat a Black German population might pose. In Jansen's memory narrative, Nazi intervention in her life took the form of its efforts to remove her as an illegitimate racial Other from public and private interaction with the privileged, legitimate subjects of this regime.

As we shall see in the pages that follow, Jansen's memory narrative demonstrates that in her case, rather than accomplishing the erasure of a racial Other from German society by relegating her to a place outside or at the margins of social contact, these processes unintentionally produced a contestatory and resistant subject, even in the context of the overly regulated spaces of marginality to which she was often assigned. Moreover, reading Jansen's narrative in relation to Hauck's articulations of the effects of the processes of racialization and gendering gives us an even more concrete sense of the extent to which these processes are neither separate nor overlapping but rather simultaneous and mutually constitutive. The significance of this distinction helps us to understand the power of National Socialism as productive, producing subjects to be regulated on numerous levels and subjects with equally multiple avenues of resistance within these same complex subjectivities. Although my two interview partners' narratives differ substantially with regard to the picture they paint of their local encounters with the Nazi regime's racial politics, they nevertheless offer compelling accounts of the ways in which Afro-Germans came to be signified as raced and gendered subjects and document in profound ways complex processes of subject formation in the Third Reich.

AMBIVALENCE AND AMBIGUITY IN THE NAZI PERSECUTION OF AFRO-GERMANS

Unlike Hauck, Fasia Jansen's life history is completely unrelated to the Rhineland occupation. Jansen was born in 1929 in Hamburg; her

father was a Liberian consul general living in Hamburg, her mother an employee at the Liberian consulate. Her parents never married, and Jansen never met her father.¹ In her narrative, Jansen does not describe the nature of the relationship between her mother and her biological father (her mother married another man in 1936), nor does she say how long they were in contact or the circumstances under which their contact ended. She does, however, describe several later interactions with her Liberian half-siblings—Jansen’s father was married to a Liberian woman at the time of his involvement with Jansen’s mother.² In addition, she describes having a very close relationship to her stepfather, a communist who was later denounced to the Nazis and eventually interned in a work camp because of his political convictions.

One of the most striking aspects of Jansen’s memory narrative is her unequivocal articulation of herself as a German. Yet the affirmation of Germanness expressed in her narrative is most often articulated through her memories of the discrimination and persecution she faced through the Nazi regime’s attempts to constitute her as precisely the opposite—specifically, NS practices of racialization aimed at negating her status as a German subject and member of the racial collective of Nazi Germany.

EXCERPT G

TC: And with your [step]father, did you talk to him about racism, about the racism you might have experienced because of your skin color?

FJ: Well, my family loved me particularly intensely, perhaps because of that.

TC: Do you think?

FJ: I always wanted to be a dancer, and my father was crazy about Josephine Baker.

TC: Aha.

FJ: She was a tap dancer, and I absolutely wanted to be a dancer. Then I got accepted to train as dancer. So I started when I was a little over eleven years old. And at thirteen I had to leave the school, because the director of the dance school said, “She can’t become a dancer,” and “I’ll get in trouble with the Reich Culture Office, the Reich Chamber of

Culture,” and “You have to imagine, when the curtain goes up and there’s a Black girl standing there. I’ll get in trouble if I keep Fasia in school here.” So I had to leave the dance school and that was awful for me.³

In 1940 Jansen began training as a dancer at a dance academy in Hamburg, despite the Law against the Overcrowding of German Schools and Universities (Gesetz gegen die Überfüllung deutscher Schulen und Hochschulen) passed on 25 April 1933, which restricted the number of “non-Aryans” attending German schools and universities to no more than 1.5 percent.⁴ A later measure, the Directive on the Admission of Foreigners and Foreign Non-Aryans to German Schools and Universities (Runderlaß zur Zulassung von Ausländern bzw. ausländischen Nichtariern zu den deutschen Schulen und Hochschulen) of 3 May 1933, recommended that to avoid diplomatic difficulties, foreigners and non-German citizens should not be informed of the reason for their exclusion from German universities and schools.⁵ More significant than these general regulations was a 22 March 1941 directive from the Ministry of Science, Child Development, and Education (Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung) regarding “the admission of Gypsies and people of mixed Black and white blood to public schools [*Zulassung von Zigeunern und Negermischlingen zum Besuch öffentlicher Volksschulen*],” which established the following guidelines:

The admission of Gypsy children who do not hold German citizenship and therefore are not required to attend school is fundamentally rejected. Inasmuch as the fact that these children do not attend school poses a danger to public order or safety, it will be the responsibility of the police department to take the appropriate steps against these elements, if necessary through deportation.

For Gypsy children who hold German citizenship and thus are required to attend school, the fundamental rejection of their admission to public schools will not be feasible. Since the number of Gypsy children is, as a rule, insufficient, it will not be possible to establish special schools. Insofar as these children present a moral or other danger to their German-blooded schoolmates,

they may be removed. In such cases, the notification of the police department is recommended.

*For the treatment of Negro mixed-blood children, the same principles are to be observed. This directive is not to be published.*⁶

This measure provided the precarious legal basis for Jansen’s removal from the dance academy, though the wording of the directive (“they may be removed [*können sie jedoch von der Schule verwiesen werden*]”) left its implementation open to the discretion of local authorities.⁷ In spite of these regulations, however, Jansen was admitted to the dance academy and allowed to complete two years of training before being forced to leave. On the basis of her expulsion from the dance school, Jansen applied for compensation after the war.

EXCERPT H

FJ: I applied for compensation.

TC: Did you get it? Did you . . .

FJ: No, it was rejected umpteen times. First of all, they couldn’t establish that Negroes fell under the racial laws, and then, of course, there were contradictory statements made about the wrong done to me when I was a small child, at eight, nine, and ten years old. And then my relatives had to testify, you know, about when [things happened], was that then and then, or was it like this. . . . Well, these kinds of complications came up in between, you know. But for example, it was established without a doubt that I was forced to leave dance school—I wanted to become a dancer—I had to leave on racial grounds. The dance school also confirmed this even after the war, that they had to get rid of me because they would have gotten into trouble, and it was for racial reasons that they had to get rid of me. But sometimes I ask myself how I actually withstood all that. I sometimes ask myself, was I trying to be German? Which is what I am. I come from Hamburg, I speak this Hamburg dialect, which always shocks people from Hamburg, and which also gives you a bit of a plus, when you speak Hamburger Platt.⁸

Jansen directly relates her experience of marginalization to her subjectivity as a German. Here, her memories of the difference she was made to feel under National Socialism are articulated through reference to her sense of herself as a German. After explaining the reasons for the rejection of her claim for compensation, her narration becomes more reflective. At this point, Jansen's memory narrative recalls Hauck's use of the narrative technique of relativization. Shifting the focus of her narration in this passage, Jansen poses the rhetorical question of why and how she withstood this treatment. Her response is a second question: Was it because she was trying to be German? But she in fact already is German. She affirms the undeniable fact of her Germanness in her reference to herself as a Hamburg native and through her identification with this very specific sense of Germanness through her regional dialect, Hamburger Platt. Yet Jansen's Hamburger Platt—the ultimate measure of her Germanness—stands in direct contrast to her color. Moreover, this reference seems structurally intended to contrast the memory of marginalization Jansen recounts only moments earlier. Yet her shift when she moves from the topic of the rejection of her claim to compensation to her identification as a German should, once again, not be read as coincidental. Rather than an interruption of the flow of her narration, this shift establishes an important associative link within her memory narrative. As we will see, Jansen's claim to compensation is intimately linked to her sense of herself as a German.

In excerpt H, Jansen states that her entitlement to compensation was rejected because the authorities disputed her claim to have been the victim of racial discrimination. The definition of racial persecution established in the Law for the Compensation of Victims of Nazi Persecution (*Bundesentschädigungsgesetz zur Entschädigung für Opfer der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung*, or BEG) took as its legal basis the NS definition of race and the individual groups that the Nuremberg Laws explicitly targeted for persecution. Thus, the issue of Jansen's status as a victim of racial persecution is intimately tied up with the thorny question of the more general legal status of Germans of African descent in the Third Reich. In this way, the link in Jansen's memory narrative between compensation for Nazi crimes and her status as a German foregrounds this issue as exemplary of the troubled forms of recognition and misrecognition of legitimate and illegitimate subjects

experienced by Afro-Germans like Jansen as well as Hauck both in the Third Reich and thereafter, most notably in the postwar prosecution of the regime’s crimes.

Although the primary focus of NS racial persecution was the Jewish population, Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann maintain that it is impossible to separate Nazi anti-Semitic policies from the regime’s racial hygienic measures: “the two are indivisible parts of a whole” because Nazi racial legislation aimed at the racial hygienic improvement of the body of the German nation.⁹ These laws were directed not only at Jews but at all individuals of alien blood (*artfremdes Blut*) and alien races (*Fremdrassigen*) as well as “racially less valuable” members of the German population. For Afro-Germans, the definition of the categories of “non-Aryan” and *artfremdes Blut* are most relevant, particularly in Jansen’s case.

The First Decree to the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service (Erste Verordnung zur Durchführung des Gesetzes zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentum), promulgated on 11 April 1933, defined a non-Aryan as “an individual descended from non-Aryan (in particular Jewish parents or grandparents), where at least one non-Aryan parent or grandparent was present. This is particularly the case when one parent or grandparent belonged to the Jewish religion.”¹⁰ Thus the legal definition of a non-Aryan was based on the two preceding generations, when the decisive issue of confessional membership in the Jewish religion was not a factor. Marianne Sigg contends that one of the major contributions of the Nuremberg Laws was the refinement given to the category of “non-Aryan,” a result of the legal profession’s growing and insistent demands for clarity regarding the definition of key terms in NS racial legislation, in particular *non-Aryan* and *Jew*.¹¹

The Nuremberg Laws further refined the distinction between “Aryan” and “non-Aryan” by replacing the category “non-Aryan” with “Jew” and the category “Aryan” with “persons of German or related blood” (*Deutsche oder artverwandtes Blut*). Directly opposed to this last classification was the more flexible category of *artfremdes Blut*.

The following stipulations are to be observed in determining which racial requirements must be fulfilled in order to obtain the rights of a Reich citizen:

a) In principle, only German citizens or those of related blood shall have the rights of Reich citizens. The German *Volk* is composed of members of different races and their mixtures. The blood resulting from these mixtures and present in the German *Volk* is *German blood* [*deutsches Blut*].

Blood related to [*artverwandt*] German blood is the blood of those peoples whose racial composition is related to that of German blood. This is without exception the case for those peoples wholly settled in Europe and their offspring in other parts of the earth outside of Europe that have maintained the purity of their blood.

The term “German or of related blood” [*deutsches oder artverwandtes Blut*], replaces the until now traditional term of “Aryan descent.” Individuals of German or related blood shall be referred to with the term “German-blooded” (compare Ordinance from 26.II.1935, MbliB.S.1429) paragraph 2f, 151 ff.

b) *Alien blood* [*artfremdes Blut*] is all blood that is not German blood, nor related to German blood. Alien blood in Europe is, as a rule, only the Jew (see below comment c) and gypsy. Persons of alien blood cannot obtain the rights of a Reich citizen.

c) *Jewish* [*Juden*] citizens, in particular, cannot become Reich citizens. The group of persons who are prohibited from employment as Jews is determined according to paragraph 5 of the Blood Protection Law. According hereto, a Jew by blood is he who is descended from at least three full-Jewish grandparents; furthermore, by virtue of the law, a Jew is also any citizen of Jewish mixed-blood in the first degree who belongs to the Jewish religious community, or who through marriage to a Jew converted to Judaism, or belongs to this religion because of the decision of his parents; this is assumed to be the case when a half-caste is born of a marriage—legal or illegal (see note 6 to paragraph 1 of the Blood Protection Law)—to a Jew that occurred after the Blood Protection Law came into effect, or when the individual was born of extramarital relations with a Jew after 31 July 1936. For specific cases, see notes to paragraph 5 of the First Reich Citizenship Law. Half-castes of the second degree or German-blooded individuals are not considered Jews when they do not belong to the Jewish religious community. An exception to this rule is only with

regard to the racial classification of the grandchildren. Here paragraph 2, line 2, and paragraph 5, line 1 of the Second Reich Citizenship Law stipulates that a grandparent is without question a full Jew if he belonged to the Jewish religious community. See notes to paragraphs 2 and 5 of the First Reich Citizenship Law.

d) Aside from persons of alien blood, *half-castes* [*Mischlinge*] born of relations between persons of German blood and those of alien-blood are neither German-blooded nor of related blood. These half castes can also not be considered people of alien blood. The half-caste has both German and alien hereditary factors. The legal treatment of half-castes is based on the recognition that they are the same neither as those of German nor as those of alien blood. The status of half-castes is explicitly specified only for persons of Jewish blood. According to this, the Jewish half-caste is an individual who is descended from one or two full-Jewish grandparents; an individual with more than two full-Jewish grandparents is a Jew; an individual with no full-Jewish grandparents will be treated as German-blooded and will no longer be counted as a half-caste, even should he prove to have a slight influence of Jewish blood. The same principles for the racial classification as a Jewish half-caste will serve as the basis for the classification of other types of alien blood. Even if, according to paragraph 2, the half-caste is not entitled to the rights of a Reich citizen, as this is limited to citizens of German or related blood, paragraph 2 of the First Reich’s Citizenship Law bears out the biological fact that the half-caste possesses at least one-half German genetic makeup, taking this into account in that the Jewish half-caste citizen is also provisionally awarded the rights of a Reich citizen.

e) Which race a person belongs to can never be judged simply through their membership in a particular group of people. Rather, it can only be determined by their personal, racial-biological characteristics.¹²

Although this explication of the category *artfremdes Blut* explicitly defines only the status of Jews and Gypsies, it was nevertheless intended to serve a model function for all others of *artfremdes Blut und deren Mischlinge*. For Afro-Germans, the decisive legal stipulations

were made in the supplementary decrees to the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor and the Marriage Protection Law. In their official commentary to these laws, Wilhelm Stuckart and Hans Globke on three occasions explicitly refer to the application of the laws to “Negro half-castes [*Negermischlinge*].” The most important of these references concerns paragraph 6 of the First Supplementary Decree to the Blood Protection Law of 14 November 1935 which forbade marriages “if their offspring were likely pose a danger to the purity of German blood.”¹³ Stuckart and Globke provide the following explanation:

Whether grounds for preventing a marriage according to paragraph 6 exist will usually be established through the certificates of proof of ancestry required of the engaged couple before the marriage, according to the ordinance of 26 November 1935 . . . (birth certificate, marriage certificate of parents, in cases of doubt, other certificates). Yet there are also cases where the certificates provided do not allow a decision to be made with ample certainty. One might imagine, for example, the situation that an intended husband shows the obvious influence of alien blood—for example, Negro blood—without any indication in his certificates of where this influence comes from. In these cases, as a rule, illegitimate birth would play a role, where the progenitor of these illegitimate children could not be established. In this context, one is reminded of the Negro bastards of the Rhineland occupation, where the establishment of the progenitor was greatly hindered by French law.¹⁴

These commentaries again show that the specific point of reference for a German population of African descent is the figure of the Rhineland Bastard. Despite the fact that Stuckart and Globke’s other references to “Negroes and their bastards [*Neger und ihre Bastarde*],” contain no specific mentions of the Rhineland children, this initial reference is implicitly cited.¹⁵ It becomes apparent that although Afro-Germans are not explicitly mentioned in the laws, the authors did in fact incorporate Black Germans in this way, making subsequent, more specific, racial legislation unnecessary. The status of Black Germans in the Third Reich affirms the protean nature of Nazi racial legislation through the versatility and mutability of its categories. As Burleigh

and Wippermann explain, Nazi racial legislation was formulated so elastically that it could be expanded to include and incorporate further groups of people into the regime’s categories of racialized social administration without necessitating the introduction of new laws.¹⁶ Thus, rather than emphasizing the creation of these categories as monolithic sites of power, the situation of Afro-Germans within this regime directs our attention to their flexibility as dynamic conduits through which power was exercised and configured in complex and differential ways. At the same time, this discussion of NS legal theory also illustrates the undeniable persistence of the figure of the Rhineland Bastard as the dominant image of an Afro-German population in this period.¹⁷ These important points notwithstanding, what is arguably most important for understanding Jansen’s account of the rejection of her postwar claim for *Wiedergutmachung* or compensation is the definition of the categories of persecution on which such claims were based. BEG paragraphs 1 and 3 defined the relevant categories as follows:

(1) Those entitled to compensation according to this law are individuals who, in the period from 30 January 1933 to 8 May 1945 (period of persecution), because of their political convictions against National Socialism, for reasons of race, religious beliefs, or philosophy of life (reasons for persecution), were persecuted through the violent measures of National Socialism, and for this reason, suffered injury to life, body, health, freedom, property, or wealth or suffered in professional or financial advancement (victim of persecution). . . .

(3) The violent measures of National Socialism are those measures that, on the orders or approval of an agency, functionary of the nation or state, or any other body, institution, or foundation of public law or the NSDAP or its organizations or affiliated associations were executed for reasons of persecution on the persecuted. It is presumed that such measures were directed against the persecuted if this individual belonged to a group of persons that the government or NSDAP intended through such members to exclude in its entirety from Germany’s cultural and economic life.¹⁸

The commentaries to the BEG specify further that in their references to victims of racial persecution, the use of the wording “for reasons of race [*aus Gründen der Rasse*]” was intended to be more expansive than the formulation persecution “because of one’s race [*wegen seiner Rasse*]” in that the former would include those who suffered discrimination based on their relationship to individuals belonging to racial groups specifically targeted by the Nazis (“eine vom NS bekämpfte angebliche Rasse”).¹⁹ What is most salient for assessing both Jansen’s narrative and the status of Black Germans who suffered persecution in the Third Reich is, as she explains, the fact that individuals of African descent were not recognized as a group targeted for racial persecution under NS law. This was the case in spite of the aforementioned explicit references to individuals of “mixed Black and white blood [*Negermischlinge*]” in the commentaries to the Nuremberg Laws. Because of the absence of an explicit and precisely defined category for Afro-Germans beyond the paradigm of the Rhineland children (some of whom, including Hauck, received some forms of compensation) both within the Reich and in the postwar period, Jansen was deemed ineligible for compensation under BEG paragraph 51. This specific clause addresses the issue of *Ausbildungsschäden* (compensation for damages to an individual’s career through the forced disruption of or exclusion from professional training).²⁰ Despite the obvious applicability of these stipulations to Jansen’s expulsion from the dance academy, she nevertheless did not fulfill the criteria set out in BEG Paragraphs 1 and 2 for entitlement to compensation under this clause and all others in the law—specifically, loss of life or damage to body, health, property, or wealth through persecution on the basis of race, political, or philosophical conviction, or religion.²¹

In his 1986 study of the Nazi persecution of Sinti and Roma, Wippermann argues that the polycratic nature of the NS state made the implementation of both racial ideology and racial legislation a complicated process in which numerous individual and state actors played a part in facilitating or hindering the goals of Nazi racial purity within the Reich.²² Wippermann’s arguments offer an important point of reference for explaining the complex positioning of Afro-Germans in the National Socialist state, particularly when viewed in relation to the insights of Zygmunt Bauman regarding the significance of the bureaucratic nature of the NS state and the centrality of the act of definition

within this regime. The issue of a Nazi policy toward Afro-Germans hinges on the questions of how and to what extent these individuals were *erfaßt* (registered) or defined within this system. These issues move us beyond the juridical definition of Aryan and non-Aryan subjects to the more pragmatic level of the bureaucracy—that is, the bureaucratic interpretation and implementation of the racial ideology set out in laws and directives within the Reich. Because Germans of African descent were not seen as a racial group specifically targeted by the Nazis, Jansen’s claim to compensation for being forced to give up her training as a dancer was also rejected. Yet, as both Hauck and Jansen’s narratives attest, although the active implementation of a consistent policy of persecution for Black Germans beyond the Rhineland paradigm is difficult to document, Afro-Germans were indeed objects of racial persecution, and the image that motivated this effort was that of the Rhineland Bastard. The enduring power of this image within Nazi racial policy was its ability to fuel the fantasy of and desire for the purity of the German body politic by justifying its defense when threatened.

**LIFE BETWEEN PERIPHERY AND CENTER:
LOCAL POLITICS OF RACIALIZED GENDER
AND GENDERED RACIALIZATION**

Jansen’s memories of her life in the National Socialist state paint a complex and uneven landscape of social interactions for individuals living in this regime, a picture that provokes a deeper engagement with the local and the local effects of Nazi racial politics. Indeed, the contours of local space(s) play a particularly important role in Jansen’s narrative, which is marked by the striking way in which she describes a series of very local sites of racialized social interactions. Jansen narrates these sites in richly textured and sedimented ways that reveal their deep analytical significance for reading the dynamics of race in Nazi Germany. The most important of these sites relates to events that followed her expulsion from dance school.

After leaving the dance academy, Jansen was required to labor as a cook for the female inmates of the Neuengamme concentration camp. In her narrative, she describes this in relation to the required year of service to the Reich, officially known as *Dienstverpflichtung*. Unlike the

so-called Aryan girls she emphasizes that it was “out of the question” for her to work in homes doing domestic service like other girls she knew. For her year of service, she was required to work for the camp.²³ What is most remarkable about her memories of this experience is the fact that Jansen was not interned in the camp itself; rather, she describes working in a kitchen barracks, located in a suburb of Hamburg called Rothenburgsort, where women inmates labored in an *Außenlager* of the Neuengamme camp. An ambivalent and contradictory recognition of Jansen as a German is implicit in Jansen’s obligation to work for the camp. What distinguishes her treatment from the more prevalent forms of persecution and marginalization deployed by the NS state to remove or disenfranchise those individuals deemed unacceptable for membership in the (Aryan) German collective is the fact that, despite being forced to labor under appalling conditions in close proximity to the regime’s abject, Jansen was nevertheless allowed to retain a form of subject status as a German, maintaining her status as a German citizen and not being deported. At the same time, she was not interned in the same way as, for example, German Jews, Sinti and Roma, or other groups of individuals (political prisoners or homosexuals, for example) seen as unfit for the mainstream of German society. Jansen’s narrative brings into clearer focus some of the ways race worked not only through bodies but also and quite profoundly through location and space by “placing” its subjects in particular social locations that inscribed differential meanings and, in equally substantial ways, often a lack of social value.

EXCERPT I

TC: What did you do after you couldn’t go [to dance school] any more?

FJ: That was really awful for me. I had to do service under the Nazis. There was a year of service, where all German girls had to do a year of service at the age of fourteen. That meant, before they were sent to work in families somewhere, to help out in families and do housework. For me that was out of the question. I ended up in a barracks in Hamburg, in a part of the city where there was almost nothing left standing, in Rothenburgsort, an area where they had put Jewish women from Poland.

TC: Where? In what part of town was that, again?

FJ: Rothenburgsort. I was required to work in the barracks kitchen. It was this little thing with a big stove, and I still don't quite grasp it even today, that four or five or six people had to sit in there. I was among war prisoners, French ones—well, prisoners. . . . I was among Ukrainians, among forced laborers from the east.

TC: Ukrainians.

FJ: Ukrainians and an Italian POW, a POW—I'll tell you about him later. So [I was] among all these men. And we, I was supposed to peel potatoes, but there was this stinking broth of stinking, rotten cabbage that came, that you could only throw a few leaves of cabbage into. The broth stank, and I had to take it to the women, the Jewish women, in buckets with a Ukrainian boy. They, it's interesting, these, these—but you want to hear about me and not about the Polish-Jewish women.

TC: No, I'd like to hear your impressions.

FJ: Well, I'll make it real short. I saw horrible things: women with their hair all cut off. I experienced how, in a few months, people can be turned into animals when you scarcely give them anything to eat. And when you then come by with some broth, how people go after one another just to get a little something in their stomachs. These Polish-Jewish women were all exterminated. None of them lived.

TC: Which camp was this?

FJ: Neuengamme.

TC: Neuengamme?

FJ: Yes, but the kitchen, the camp kitchen, the barracks, it was in Rothenburgsort. There where they had to work.

TC: And did you have to stay there?

FJ: I can, could go home. I could go home.

TC: Ah, you could.

FJ: I could go home.

TC: It was sort of like a job, you could say, but horribly enough, it wasn't that at all.

FJ: No, no. At the time, I was under the control of the women's supervisor, Frau Kappeler, from Rothenburgsort, NS women's supervisor. And she was in charge of me, she

checked whether I was there, how I worked, and more threatening things like, I would have to be sterilized soon. I got my period, you see. I got it, and of course they were afraid, because our Führer wants a white race and for God's sake, I was now at the age when boys would be interested in me, and I would be interested in men. But over and over again, there was a lot of solidarity. I had a school friend who came and in those difficult times brought me an egg. First of all we had . . . I don't know how, no one had an egg, you know. How did she get this egg? Her uncle had got it somewhere, that egg. And she brought it to me. And she's an eye-witness for me, she also says in the film, in the film you see her, she says "During the school assemblies, we stood there, like this: 'Heil Hitler,' and like that" and tells about how she, how she came to the kitchen barracks, how the people there — I don't know if you remember.

TC: I think I . . .

FJ: That was too much. There were always, you know, there were always people, Germans, white people who helped me.

TC: Hmm. And your contact with the women, the ones who were in the camp?

FJ: They were bombed. They were put on ships and, they, they, they were bombed. And the people who wanted to save themselves, the SS, they got boats, boats to catch them, right? They [the SS] rowed around and shot them in the water. There's a film about it.

TC: Mhm.

FJ: Yes.

TC: Were you there for the whole war? Can you . . . ?

FJ: No, I was only, I was only there for a year. That was enough for me.

TC: Yes. How did you get out?

FJ: Well, I could always go home.

TC: Aha.

FJ: But then I broke down at work and then someone helped me again. I was, well, I was doing poorly in the last month before I broke down. I told the woman that I couldn't take it anymore. It was cold, there was no [heat], only when we

were cooking—then the fire was put out. We sat there in the draft, we had no windowpanes. There was frost, and I collapsed a few times, and this woman just didn’t believe it. She said that then we’d have to treat me more severely. Then they took me from work to the hospital in a truck, and there I collapsed. They took me to a hospital, and there was a German woman doctor there. She, she understood the whole miserable situation right away and transferred me [to a hospital] outside of Hamburg. Then I was freed and only [thought], “My God, I hope they come for me.” You have to imagine that “Hopefully the Russians will come soon. Hopefully the Americans will come soon. For God’s sake, it has to be soon,” and so on. A tank meant something completely different for me then than after the war, as a pacifist.²⁴

In the preceding passage what engages my attention is the way in which gender and race shape Jansen’s descriptions of her experiences in Rothenburgsort. Jansen vividly describes the spaces and her interactions, yet these descriptions are saturated with the ways in which those interactions were structured by her race and gender and by what her blackness and femaleness were seen to mean within this regime. In Jansen’s memory narrative, reading race and gender cannot be restricted only to what Jansen says. In fact, it is crucial to engage that which she does not say—that is, the silences in her testimony—as well as how race and gender shape and construct the spaces of social interaction that she describes. As we know, race and gender structure not only the lives of people of color but social interactions in general through material, discursive, and spatial effects. Here Ruth Frankenberg’s notion of “racialized social geographies”—a concept that I elaborate to include both the gendering and sexualization of social interactions—is particularly helpful. Frankenberg defines social geographies as the physically and socially “peopled” landscapes of individual interactions in society and the social forms of perception and nonperception entailed in negotiating these landscapes. Racialized social geographies involve considering the racial and ethnic mapping of environments in both physical and social terms.²⁵ Thus, following Frankenberg’s instructive lead, mapping social and spatial geogra-

phies of race and gender in Jansen's narrated biography reveals how race and gender structured her interactions both in the Third Reich and beyond. Reading the following excerpt from her memory narrative together with excerpt I offers a particularly powerful illustration of these processes.

EXCERPT J

TC: And among yourselves, you who worked in the kitchen, how was it? Did you — Were you a group or something like that? What kind of relationship did you have to one another? Because you weren't prisoners of — you weren't, you were internees?

FJ: We were the outcasts.

TC: Yes.

FJ: Yes, when I think about it, we got along very well together, although when I went outside, and they, they—well, we had Italians who, who were interned, it was different with them. They got respectable food to eat and they just saw me as a woman. They weren't allowed to have relations with German women, so for that reason, I got grabbed a lot and that was really horrible for me. I never understood, you know, that they had to have that or had to touch someone and all that. That was a really uncomfortable situation. While the others [in the kitchen], where we were together, that kind of thing didn't happen with them—that I, that they only saw me as a woman. . . . Later, after the war was over, [at parties and celebrations, progressive] people, leftist men, would ask me to dance, you know. There were these little peace parties, and they'd say to me, "Listen, Fasia, that doesn't make any difference to me, you know, that you're dark." And then I'd say, "Listen, it doesn't make any difference to me that you're white." They were so out of it then. "You gotta understand me. I didn't mean it like that. You have to . . . I'm for real, you know me. You know? And I didn't want that." I didn't say anything, just looked at them calmly and they'd get angrier and angrier, you know. "Are you offended? Why are you offended? You know how 'interna-

tional’ I am.” And so on. You see, so what they [did or said] in anger—well. And I experienced over and over in such circles, even in pacifist circles, that they were used to, before I became, in quotation marks, “this famous singer,” I noticed that they were used to seeing people from Africa would come here from poorer situations and receive some little solidarity contribution or project or something, and [such phrases of assurance like], “We’re with you” and so on. And it always reminded me of a church or something—they would nod and say, “Thanks for the support,” and so on. That’s what they were used to. They weren’t, they weren’t at all used to—I think it’s still so today, people taking part in discussions and criticizing them politically or however, or saying, “Listen, what about this and that.” They can’t take that, right? They’re not used to that, right?²⁶

The opening lines of this excerpt reinvolve Jansen’s memories of her experiences in Rothenburgsort. She reflects on gender’s role in Rothenburgsort and on her life as a postwar activist in leftist circles, and in this way she problematizes the inextricability of race and gender in her experience as an Afro-German. The central question posed by this passage of Jansen’s memory narrative is what exactly Jansen is saying and is not saying when she comments that they “*just* saw me as a woman.” On the one hand, she emphasizes that in the camp, outside of the kitchen, she was treated as an available object, something to be touched. In this context, gender is constituted through race—her blackness—which constructed her availability as a racialized sexual object. As a Black woman and non-Aryan—a racialized gendered Other and threat to the purity of the Aryan race—Jansen was perceived by prisoners in the camp as an available sexual object according to the boundaries circumscribed by NS racial and sexual politics. This construction of her left her open to mistreatment and marginalization even among other non-Aryan prisoners. As a result, Jansen was grabbed or manhandled in the camp.

She implicitly comments on her status as a Black woman when she says “they *just* saw me as a woman.” The term *just* ironically emphasizes that which she does not say or does not find it necessary to say: “Black.” In the context of her remarks in this sequence, Jansen’s refer-

ence to herself as a “woman” contrasts with her subsequent reference to “German women” in the next sentence. “German women” were off-limits to internees. Yet Jansen is in fact a German woman, though as a German of African descent her access to this category as it was defined in the Third Reich is limited at best. Jansen’s distinction between herself and other “German” women reflects her status at that time in the NS regime, where her Black heritage mitigated her cultural identity because of the elision of Germanness with a racially based concept of national identity, Aryanness.

By contrast, Jansen recalls that within the confines of the barracks kitchen, just outside of the camp, her treatment was different. The other “outcasts” with whom she worked (a separate group of outsiders within the larger group of Others that constituted the camp’s population) did not “*only* [see] me as a woman.” Here, *only* functions as a paradox similar to that of *just* in the preceding sequence. To be seen only as a woman outside the kitchen meant to be seen as a Black woman and face abuse. To be seen as more than a woman in the kitchen seems to indicate that her blackness, if not also her gender and sexuality, was overlooked. Within the comparatively protected confines of the kitchen, Jansen seemed to regain the status of a human being. In the topography of Rothenburgsort, the marginality of the barracks kitchen appears to have served at least a doubly protective function in Jansen’s life: as an alternative to internment or sterilization (which she might otherwise have faced) and as a type of buffer zone in relation to the camp itself. Yet the protective dimensions of this space did not necessarily make it a “safe place.” In excerpt I, Jansen describes her interactions with the female NS overseer of the kitchen, who repeatedly remarked on Jansen’s adolescent sexual development. These comments were explicit threats aimed at emphasizing the fact that her sexuality as a Black, non-Aryan woman was perceived as a racial challenge to the purity to the NS regime, thereby necessitating her eventual sterilization. Jansen’s narrative makes an equally provocative statement regarding the simultaneity and inextricable production of gender and race in the Third Reich. Unlike Hauck, whose access to the category of Germanness (as Aryan) was enabled by the simultaneous privileging of particular forms of masculinity, Jansen’s access to Germanness was hindered by the gendering of this category.

For Jansen, femininity did not facilitate access to Germanness because her status as a woman was inextricably produced as Black, a construction diametrically opposed to the privileged racialized construction of white womanhood central to the National Socialist racial state.

In the map of labor in and around the camp that Jansen draws with her memories, an interesting topography emerges. On one level, as I stated earlier, the barracks in Rothenburgsort is situated as a place in the borderlands between the everyday life of the Third Reich and the no-man's-land (or absolute periphery) of Neuengamme. At another level, in the spatial relations of labor in and around the camp, the kitchen in Rothenburgsort functions as a sort of satellite in relation to the inmates and life in the camp, where Jansen's movements again take the form of shuttling back and forth not only between life at the center and the periphery but even within the margins, between the camp and the borderlands of Rothenburgsort. Jansen's memories of her life under the Nazi regime provoke us to rethink the notion of the margins as detached from the center. As her memory narrative demonstrates, even the marginal spaces to which she was supposed to be relegated were themselves porous locations characterized by both distance and distinction from the center while constituting that center through the thoroughly relative and relational interactions of movement and contact with it. Indeed, these spaces of marginality were also sites of complex social interaction.²⁷

Jansen's descriptions of her interactions in the camp contrast starkly with those of her work in the kitchen. Although both give a harsh picture of her experiences, her descriptions of the kitchen characterize it as a space of isolation and constrictedness, with an odd sense of intimacy arising from the closeness of these quarters. In this tiny, unheated wooden shack, barely big enough to hold the stove, Jansen, and her male coworkers, they prepared what she describes as a smelly broth for the inmates of the camp. Yet despite the tightness of this space, she describes her situation as protected in comparison to that of the camp. Her description of her interactions in the camp are, by contrast, characterized by openness and exposure, emphasizing her vulnerability because of her race and gender. In each of these spaces, race shapes both the perception of her gender and the sexuality attributed to her, while her gender sexualizes how her race is read and what it is seen to

mean. In this way, Jansen's memories of this social landscape powerfully document the inextricability of the racialization of gender and the gendered and sexualized ways that race acquires meaning.

Immediately following her statement that they "only saw me as a woman" occurs what I find to be perhaps the most fascinating narrative phenomenon in this passage. In what appears an almost seamless transition from one topic to the next, Jansen sets her experience with the male internees in the camp in relation to her experience as a woman among her leftist male colleagues following the war. In contrast to the "loud silences" that characterize her earlier narration of her experiences in the camp, expressing the effects of race in this context, her description of this incident in German leftist circles articulates this issue on a more explicit level. When describing her encounters as a Black German woman among leftist German men, she uses a type of narrative performance, mimicry, to communicate this. (Narrative performance will be the focus of detailed analysis in the final section of this chapter.) Through mimicry, Jansen acts out her memories of her and her male colleague's remarks in this encounter. In this way, she revives this situation in the present and conveys her experiences in detail. At the same time, setting this performative exchange in the context of her memories of Rothenburgsort, Jansen's narrative technique conveys the parallels and continuities of her perceptions of how she experienced the racialization of gender construction and the gendered construction of race in her interactions in both of these contexts. In the camp, while it might appear that gender was the overt issue she was confronting, race and sexuality implicitly shaped this confrontation. In the second instance, where race seemed to be foregrounded, gender and sexuality were also at stake, shaping and refracting this interaction in complicated ways.

As I argued in chapter 3, processes of memory and storytelling are seldom random. For this reason, I struggled with two perplexing questions in reading this excerpt. First, why did Jansen choose to set these two stories in relation to one another? Second, what is the significance of their juxtaposition in her narrative? As I attempted to map the social landscapes of this episode in Jansen's narrative, a graduate student pointed out the role of boundaries in these interactions.²⁸ In the scene that Jansen describes, expectations regarding the need for boundaries appear to be quite low. In a space such as she recounts—a "peace

party,” where Jansen is surrounded by her leftist political colleagues—the assumption of a safe space seems implicit. Yet in this context, at precisely the moment when the last boundary of social intimacy is about to be crossed—an invitation to dance—Jansen quite palpably encounters the effects of social constructions of race and gender that profoundly recall the earlier episodes in Rothenburgsort.

Through the initiation of a dance—an interaction of extreme intimacy and absolute proximity—Jansen is confronted with the resilience of a racialized gendered construction of herself as a Black German woman in the context of what seemed to her a quite familiar and protected space.²⁹ Interestingly, this occurs through an ironic formulation of this remark—that in fact, her race (referred to here as her “darkness”) does not matter. The irony of this remark is that not only does her race make a very big difference in how she is perceived even in this “progressive” context but also her own life history and particularly her experiences in the Third Reich show that this has been the case for some time. Moreover, because of the fact that the effects of race as well as those of gender will always have not only discursive but also material and political consequences, this will indeed continue to be the case. Jansen’s response to this remark plays off of this irony. When she retorts that her comrade’s whiteness similarly “doesn’t matter,” she effectively states the exact opposite: it in fact makes all the difference in his ability to make a remark that assumes from a position of privilege the prerogative of deciding the salience of race for those who are not white. Jansen’s brief remark and, perhaps even more emphatically, her continued silence in the face of her colleague’s protestations effectively call into question his energetically helpless attempts to assert the futile argument that “race makes no difference,” an argument that implicitly relies on an all-too-familiar liberal discourse of universal equality for all people, who, as we are assumed to know, “are the same under the skin.”

As we saw in Hauck’s memory narrative, silences often revealed the complex effects of race and gender in the lives of my interview partners. In fact, their articulations of these effects seemed most often to occur at points of resistance in their life histories. In Jansen’s case, this occurred when she was faced with racialized and/or gendered constructions of herself as a Black German woman. Jansen’s imitation or acting out of both her own and her male colleague’s remarks in this

encounter revives this situation in the present, vividly conveying her experience. At the same time, setting this performative exchange in the context of her past experience in Rothenburgsort, Jansen's narrative technique also conveys the parallels and continuities of how she experienced the racialization of gender construction in her interactions with men in both of these contexts.

I have emphasized elsewhere in this volume that the richest and most revealing interpretations of oral history texts are those that engage both speech and silence in their analyses. By the same token, the challenge of feminist analyses of such texts lies in reading effects of race and gender as simultaneous and mutually constitutive and locating these articulations in both the silences and utterances of oral texts as well as in the spaces that lie in between. In my informants' memory narratives, silence functions as interstitial space(s) between these individuals' words and statements, framing their articulations by outlining the effects of race and gender and setting them in stark relief. To reiterate my earlier discussion, interstices have been theorized most often as spaces of resistance, creativity, oppositional practice, and articulation. Similarly, in the narratives of Afro-Germans, silences are "loud" interstitial spaces of articulation where my interview partners were able to say that which they often had little capacity to explain.

Unlike Hauck, whose status as an Other within was characterized by his experience of marginalization at the center of NS society, Jansen's experiences as an Afro-German Other within in the Third Reich were characterized by a shuttling movement between periphery and center. On the one hand, as a non-Aryan, Jansen was the object of discrimination and marginalization. On the other hand, as a German she remained a part of NS society. Perhaps most interestingly, as a Black German, her status as both a non-Aryan and a German are rendered ambivalent: as we have seen, as a German of African descent—*Negermischling*, her status under NS law—was ambivalent because the specific legal guidelines for the treatment of Afro-Germans were restricted to marriage laws and school ordinances. Moreover, the experiences of other Afro-German contemporaries of Jansen and Hauck show that these two individuals' experiences cannot be seen as representative, except perhaps for their ever-present fear of persecution based on the ambiguity of their legal status.³⁰ Such persecution often came to pass, but in many cases it did not. The result was the creation

of another curious gap. Blackness was an identifiable basis for discrimination, marginalization, and/or persecution under National Socialism, yet despite the testimonies of both Hauck and Jansen, it is difficult to speak of the systematic persecution of Afro-Germans in the Third Reich.

Despite the fact that the concept of the Other within remains relevant as a metaphor for the situation of Afro-Germans in the Third Reich, it is still important to incorporate a critique of the limitations of the conceptual model of the Other and Otherness into our understanding of the complex processes of racialization and subject formation recounted in the narratives of Afro-Germans and other "marginalized" groups. Otherness implicitly positions individuals wholly on the margins of social interactions. To be Other is to be a subject situated on the periphery with little possibility of movement and minimal explanation of the processes through which one comes to inhabit this location. Similarly, the Other offers little if any conceptualization of the contradictions of such positionings, nor of subsequent changes of status, situation, or process. Indeed, the efficacious potential of Otherness/the Other as a conceptual model is in some ways truncated by its inability to account for the subjectivity of those in question. For this reason, rather than concentrating on sites and conditions of marginality, my approach to reading the history of Afro-Germans in the Third Reich has been to focus on examining the processes through which the marginality ascribed to Afro-Germans as the Other has been constructed and the extent to which both marginality and Otherness constitute not a single place or site to which individuals are confined. It is perhaps most instructive to explore how Otherness is inextricably bound up in processes of movement that are intricately linked to the norms of the center. As we have seen in the narratives of both Hauck and Jansen, such an analysis reveals the limitations of two-dimensional, dichotomous geographies of self/Other, margin/center, inside/outside, here/ there and does so in ways that yield a more complicated analysis of subject formation than most models of the Other can offer.

Hauck's and Jansen's narratives of the local politics of race share a description of life between two seemingly exclusive spheres: in Hauck's case, an interiority to the NS state and his simultaneous marginalization therein; in Jansen's case, her movement between an everyday life in the Third Reich and the borderland of labor as a kitchen worker in

Rothenburgsort. The mediation of center and periphery that characterizes Hauck and Jansen's memory narratives maps a topography of the local politics of race in the Third Reich that situates them in a sort of gray zone where the victimization each suffered was neither systematic nor necessarily coherent but rather ambivalent and contradictory.

**REJECTION WITH HONOR — *WIEDERGUTMACHUNG*
AND THE BUNDESVERDIENSTKREUZ**

Jansen's memories construct her position in the Third Reich as characterized by two fascinating tensions: (1) the internal contradiction of being required to labor in Rothenburgsort as a German yet also as an Afro-German (that is, not a "real" German), having to perform this service at the margins of German society without being forced to remain there; and (2) the sociospatial tensions resulting from Jansen's movement between this peripheral location in the barracks of Rothenburgsort and her home at the symbolic center of NS society. These tensions reflect a pattern in Jansen's biography that continues into her later life and is expressed indirectly through her reference to another central recurring theme in her narrative, compensation. This topic serves as an outlet through which Jansen articulates the ambivalence of her status as an Afro-German in the Third Reich. However, the full significance of this issue is discernible only in relation to Jansen's receipt in the late 1980s of the Bundesverdienstkreuz (the German Medal of Merit).

EXCERPT K

FJ: I received the Bundesverdienstkreuz for my work.

TC: I didn't know that.

FJ: Yes, yes. It was also pretty amazing, whether I should actually accept it, right, because I'm against every type of medal.

TC: For what work [did you receive the medal]? You've done so much work.

FJ: Yes it's incredible, right, for exactly the work for which I in principle was condemned. [*Laughter*]

TC: Which do you mean?

[*Laughter*]

FJ: You know, what I otherwise got nothing for, when I—well,

I did once have to get something for this, for peace work, for the fight for this, against the, against the, against the, against the closing of factories here, where I always sang and rallied the women with me and the men’s unions and such. [When I received the medal] it amazed everyone and would possibly have . . . although, although I was supposed to have received the award from Weizsäcker, and I wanted that. If at all . . . there were, there was a rally against the Gulf War. We marched in with flags, and at first there were speeches given and all that. But I still have reservations, and I’m considering whether I should give back this medal of honor.

TC: Why? For what reason?

FJ: I’m fighting for my compensation, and one can’t on the one hand reward me for my work and on the other hand prevent me, right, from being recognized as a victim of persecution. On the other hand, perhaps I could make that clearer with [the medal]. On the other hand, I haven’t used it. But I’ve heard that some people have done political work using these things. In certain institutions they can just say, “Here, I need this and need this for this and that.” But I think that I’ll manage it without that.³¹

Jansen received the Bundesverdienstkreuz for her work in the German peace movement from 1960 to 1980.³² She recounts that she became active in the peace movement directly following the war. Her involvement centered on her role as a singer-activist. Jansen states that she began singing in Rothenburgsort, together with other prisoners and internees. She started singing blues and *Brechtlieder* in 1945 with Holocaust survivors while still in a Hamburg hospital. In 1947, she joined a newly formed choir and began giving street performances in Hamburg of *Brechtlieder* and other socially critical music addressing the postwar political situation in the Federal Republic. In 1970, Jansen spent three months performing with the Brecht Ensemble in Berlin. In our interview, Jansen emphasizes the explosion of the atomic bombs in Japan as a strong motivation for the direction of her music career and for her growing engagement with the nascent German peace movement. Her parents’ background as what she calls *stadtbekannte Kommunisten* (locally known communists) was also decisive in her leftist political orientation. A self-defined *rote Schwarze* (Black Red), Fasia

Jansen's career as a singer spans three and a half decades, during which time she earned popular respect as an engaged singer-activist in the peace movement and later, in the labor struggles in the Ruhr valley, where she settled in 1970. Jansen was also active in the women's movement both in the Federal Republic and internationally. She appeared at countless demonstrations, marches, and festivals as well as on German television.

Both Jansen's activism in the peace and labor movements and her career as a singer must be seen in the context of her political orientation as a communist. This issue provides the background for her remark in excerpt K that she received the Bundesverdienstkreuz for precisely the type of work for which she had been condemned—that is, for what she considered peace organizing. For her activism in this area, she neither received nor expected any rewards or privileges. As she comments later, these were group projects involving collective effort and community organization. However, the experience of receiving one of the Federal Republic's highest honors for her activism as a Black Red seems in Jansen's mind to have been undermined by the rejection of her claim for compensation. The paradox that Jansen sees—receiving public recognition for her positive contribution to German society while the same society refused to acknowledge her negative experience as an Afro-German in National Socialist Germany—emphasizes the continuity of contradiction in Jansen's experience. Yet the contrast between the state's rejection of her experiences of persecution during the NS regime and its later affirmation of her work without acknowledgment of these earlier experiences illuminates the narrative of her life. In her memory narrative, this final context allows us to read the larger significance of this recurring pattern of continuity in contradiction, particularly by revealing a dialectic of recognition and rejection, acknowledgment and erasure, sight and oversight that defines the unavoidable presence of an Other situated in a precarious fissure. This Other cannot be completely overlooked but at the same time defies the constructions established to classify her by exceeding the limits of a popular imagination that cannot conceive of her.

CONCLUSION

Our primary association with Nazi Germany is the horrific crimes it perpetrated against humanity—specifically, the persecution and geno-

cide of millions of European Jews. We identify National Socialism with anti-Semitism as its primary motivating force. Yet looking at the effects of this regime on Germany’s small population of Black Germans gives us a broader picture of the Nazi state and helps us to understand that although anti-Semitism played a key role in Nazi ideology, it did so as part of a larger system of racism in which race served as the essential biological category that defined an individual’s social status and value. Nazi Germany was first and foremost a racial state—one structured around race as the organizing principle of social, political, and economic life in the Reich. As a racial state, the National Socialist regime was founded on its ability to produce specific racialized categories of legitimate and illegitimate subjects. In other words, subjecthood or recognized membership in society was defined in purely racial terms. Legitimate subjects were those who claimed to be of “pure” Aryan heritage and were healthy, productive members of German society. Illegitimate subjects—individuals who had no claim to the rights and privileges of membership in German society—were all those who were not “pure” (for example, Jews, Blacks, and those of mixed racial heritage), those who were “genetically unhealthy” or unproductive (individuals with physical or emotional disabilities, criminals, alcoholics, homosexuals, and epileptics), as well as others.

What is remarkable about the accounts of my Afro-German informants is the ways in which the opposition between and among the categories of race and nation that were fundamental to distinguishing legitimate from illegitimate German subjects in the Reich came to subvert their intended effects in interesting and provocative ways. In spite of the fact that the organizing principle of the Nazi regime aimed to leave no room for any but the pure Aryan German subject, because the racial essences and notions of national purity on which this legitimate German subject was posited were fantastic constructions, not only could they not sustain this system but in the case of some Afro-Germans, these ideas came to have unintended paradoxical effects. The social dynamics of the local are critical for understanding these effects. Afro-Germans’ memory narratives provide vivid accounts of the local politics of race in Nazi Germany. Using these accounts to construct a reading of the politics of race in the Third Reich reveals important contradictions among public discourse, state policy, and local social interaction in ways that are consistent with earlier German attempts to confront racial difference in the country’s midst. Indeed, attempts to

contain race within narrow categories of purity and impurity as a means of delineating privileged and disavowed subject status is a strategy of social management that has consistently had harrowing human consequences and repeatedly has ended in catastrophe. This fact notwithstanding, a critical reading of Afro-German accounts of the local politics of race in the Third Reich constructs a complex picture of why the production of legitimate and illegitimate social subjects in this regime is in fact far more complex than traditional models of exclusion and marginalization might lead us to believe. For although marginalization is usually identified as a phenomenon of the periphery, the narratives of my Afro-German informants urge us to consider the ways in which processes of marginalization in the Third Reich involved more than merely forms of peripheralization of individuals through systematic disenfranchisement and exclusionary practices. Perhaps even more striking are the ways in which these accounts demonstrate that such processes were features of this regime that characterized social interactions at the center as well as at its margins.

Hans Hauck's and Fasia Jansen's narratives of the local politics of race share a description of life in between two seemingly exclusive spheres: in Hauck's case, an interiority to the NS state and his simultaneous marginalization therein; in Fasia Jansen's case, her movement between periphery and center, between her everyday life in the Third Reich and the borderland of labor as a kitchen worker in Rothenburgsort. The mediation of center and periphery that characterized both Hauck's and Jansen's memory narratives maps a topography of the local politics of race in the Third Reich that situates them in a sort of gray zone, where the victimization each suffered was neither systematic nor necessarily coherent but rather ambivalent and contradictory. The memory narratives of Afro-Germans demonstrate that although race and racial difference served as the NS 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, inclusion, and *survival* of subjects deemed unworthy of membership in other social contexts.

These individuals' stories of their lives under this regime attest to the fact that even the most extensive attempts to reduce individuals to only their race and to exclude them from society were unable to account for

the essentially paradoxical nature of race—that ultimately, we are all always both far more and far less than our race. Although each of us is marked by our race and experience—the effects of what it means to be Black or white or raced in some way through our interactions in society—we are never only that. In other words, we are always far more than the positive and negative attributes and stereotypes of any racial characterization and at the same time far less than any of these representations by virtue of the fact that none of them can ever capture the complexity of any individual. Paradoxically, this conundrum in the end worked to both Hauck’s and Jansen’s advantage.

This very important paradox to some extent explains the complicated picture of the Third Reich that emerges from these individuals’ memory narratives. Because they were Black, they became objects of the regime’s attempts to neutralize the threat they were seen to pose because of their race. Nevertheless, because they were also much more than this and, perhaps most importantly, were Germans who were recognized as members of their local communities, it was possible for them to live within this regime in ways that radically challenged the assumptions of the “place” National Socialism intended him to take up within it—namely, nowhere.

Reading the stories of these two individuals through the lens of a feminist theoretical analysis focused on the minute workings of racialization and gendering allows us to connect the details of lives of ordinary Germans to the larger systems that shaped their lives. Hauck’s and Jansen’s memory narratives powerfully illustrate the fact that although the system itself was flawed, when it did work through race, race was always constituted through gender, and gender was always racialized through the meanings ascribed to it. Critical to understanding all of these processes are the social dynamics of the local. Being attentive to issues of the local in the stories and memories of ordinary people is a crucial mode of accessing these dynamics and an important site for broadening our understanding of the workings of larger political and social systems such as National Socialism. Only through an understanding of minutely individual effects can we grasp the colossal impact of such a monumental regime.