

BORED WITH BOREDOM: ENGAGING MODERNITY IN  
WILHELMINE *WANDERVOGEL* AND WEST GERMAN PUNK SUBCULTURES

By

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## ABSTRACT

### BORED WITH BOREDOM: ENGAGING MODERNITY IN WILHELMINE *WANDERVOGEL* AND WEST GERMAN PUNK SUBCULTURES

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This dissertation looks at two superficially dissimilar German youth cultures framing opposite ends of the twentieth century—the *Wandervogel* and West German punks—and proposes that they shared an important but unexplored commonality in their response to the subjective malaise of modern life, which has often been read through the discourse of boredom. Rather than define themselves through dominant societal and historical narratives, these groups of youth often instead oriented themselves to the future and attempted, through direct action and the recasting of their lives as unbound and autonomous, to move beyond the root causes of alienation that have led to the proliferation of modern boredom since the Enlightenment. For the *Wandervogel*, this direct action was expressed as *Selbsterziehung*—the belief that in order to discover and explore both their world and themselves, youth needed to teach themselves on their own terms. For punks in West Germany, the DIY (do-it-yourself) project at the core of punk led these youth to a participatory engagement in the same vein. This study further reads these projects through the related ideas of *Wandern*, a form of wandering that, for the *Wandervogel*, transcended a simple definition of aimlessly exploring nature and read in it instead a means of engagement with the world, and *Anderssein*, West German punks’ expression of experiential difference, a concept heavily rooted in their intense desire for originality, their expressions of autonomy and their desire for freedom.

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## INTRODUCTION: BORED WITH BOREDOM

This project began with a simple idea: to bring together two 20<sup>th</sup> century German youth subcultures which have rarely been mentioned in the same sentence – the *Wandervögel* and the punks – and inspect their similarities and differences. In a way the seed for this project was planted twenty years ago. I first discovered punk in 1994 when I was in middle school while reading through a friend's copy of *Thrasher*, the skateboarding magazine founded in the early 1980s which helped to repopularize the waning skateboarding subculture, combining it with elements of punk. My friend Ben and I bought a copy of a punk compilation put out by *Epitaph* records – *punk-o-rama* – at the supermarket while his mom was shopping. That summer we listened to that cd dozens of times. His parents, a doctor and a lawyer, were the only people I knew who had an internet connection, so we avidly read up on the wider punk scene in the comfort of their computer room between rounds of our video game de jour, *Sid Meier's Pirates!* For me, like for so many other youth since the mid-1970s, punk was a revelation. Punk was a whole new world in itself, but it also changed how I saw the world around me. Punk was edgy, confrontational, countercultural, loud, fast and a little scary. It was emotional but not sappy, intelligent but not pompous, informed but not preachy. It was intensely personal but held together by a sense of community and shared purpose. It was a way of living, experiencing and expressing which I had never encountered but viscerally *felt* I had known about my entire life. And branded across the entire thing was the message that I could join them. It was everything that 13-year-old me was looking for. Beneath the posturing and affected disengagement (which seemed so cool), punks came across as more honest, more feeling, more engaged and more adventurous than any other people I

had ever met. They seemed freer, less beholden to authority and less bored (and boring!) than the rest of society. My future as part of the mundane and predictable world of adulthood, which I had been increasingly dreading as the inexorable march of time and my seeming triviality within it dawned on me, seemed instantly less inevitable – the future much more open. Punk for me was a return to the excitement, adventure and novelty of childhood combined with an awareness of and engagement with the complexities of the world which opened up new ways of thinking, feeling, interpreting and understanding that will remain with me for the rest of my life.

So like the many punks who study punk, my experiences with it and as a part of it inflect (infect?) my work. I hope this is a good thing. I'm not blind to the sexist, racist, homophobic, xenophobic and misogynistic bastions of intolerance or the proudly uneducated and defiantly ignorant groups and individuals who have found a voice through punk. While some vehemently deny that these elements are part of it, in the end one of the greatest things about punk is that they are. Most (myself included) would prefer these elements didn't exist anywhere, but that they can exist as part of punk alongside their antitheses is testament to punk's openness and endless interpretability, the potency of its call to action, the potential still embedded in the type of direct participatory action at the core of punk and the sheer diversity of marginalized viewpoints that have been able and still need to express themselves through it. These marginalized groups, whether one agrees with them or not, are part of the testament to punk's continuing importance and necessity.

After encountering the *Wandervogel* in a graduate seminar on German youth culture, I was struck by the many superficial similarities they shared with punk. From

their contestation of the primacy of family, school and other bastions of authority, their privileging of the emotional (sometimes over the rational), their desire and attempts to create a voice for themselves, their efforts to remain apolitical and autonomous in their interactions with wider society (and the problems inherent in this decision), their turn to popular music as a means of expression, their utopian desire to change the world, their disillusionment when this turned out to be much more difficult than imagined, their development of unique styles – these two groups of youth separated by more than a half century of the most momentous and catastrophic events in modern history seemed to exhibit remarkable parallels. Further, the similarities in their often controversial and tumultuous receptions in Wilhelmine and Cold-War German societies suggested that the connection between them remained relevant. That none of these parallels had been examined in scholarship seemed a curious oversight.

Punk and *Wandervogel* transcended individual and collective demands to be heard and pointed the way to articulations of living life, engaging with the world and expressing oneself in ways that have become both possible and permissible, but which life in late modernity has not actively fostered or has actively opposed. To quote the post-punk band *Tocotronic*, “Die Idee ist gut, doch die Welt noch nicht bereit.” Their alternatives become most evident when inspecting their own words. Finding this voice, however, is not easy – many of the individual cultural productions of both *Wandervogel* and punk youth have been lost. This dissertation is therefore heavily indebted to material held only in archives, especially the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung* at Burg Ludwigstein, the *Wandervogelarchiv* in Berlin-Steglitz and the *Archiv der Jugendkulturen* in Berlin – much of it presented here for the first time. The many

publications of the various *Wandervogel* organizations that emerged throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> century provide a wealth of perspectives about the meaning and importance of the *Wandervogel* as these youth navigated a society often at odds with their motivations. Similarly, punk zines provide a look at West German punk from the front lines. Written by punks for their own communities, these documents often offer these youths' direct impressions of punk within West German society and the globalizing world which, when complementing the musical productions of punk, provide a rich picture of the emergent subculture.

This project inspects the disconnect between the aspirations of youth and their allies to create directly engaged subjects and the mechanisms of modern life which have often stood in the way of this desire's realization and contributed not to the development of complex subjects, but to the objectification of the modern person. It has often been the youth of a society – those who have not yet become indoctrinated in the social order – who have been at the vanguard of attempts not just to change modern society, but to change the modern person. This exploration of an engaged self is one of my chief goals for this project, inspecting its articulation by youth who implicitly recognized their alienation, formulating a new modern self capable of reconciling the disaffecting impact of life in the technological age with the desire and attempt to lead open, free, self-aware and meaningful (or at least fulfilling) lives. As I began to research the *Wandervogel* and punk in depth, the similarities between the two phenomena were reinforced by three deeper affinities. First, both of their attempts to “change the world” were not those of what we would consider modern social movements. While their philosophies have often overlapped with these movements to varying degrees, their activities were not oriented

towards specific goals as in the many progressive reformist projects which have emerged in modern societies such as women's rights and universal suffrage, homosexual and transgender rights, racial equality or environmental conservation. Nor were they steeped in the political motivations of the left or the right. Indeed, both the *Wandervogel* and punk encompassed a wide range of perspectives which have resisted one-dimensional readings and definitions (despite their repeated assertions by scholars in a variety of disciplines) and have revealed themselves to be incredibly complex and multifaceted. But behind all of their internal differences was a shared vision of fostering a sense of self-identity and engagement with the world that, on both the individual and collective level, they felt could change *their* world and *their* reality and make it possible to imagine a mass change to society from below. In this, they represented an avant-garde, not in the aesthetic sense of Dadaism, Situationism and the like (although punk and to a lesser extent the *Wandervogel* were certainly influenced by this aesthetic dimension), but one nevertheless at the vanguard of exploring ways of living both permitted by the liberating effects of modernity and impeded by its totalizing, leveling and rationalizing aspects as well.

This leads to the second affinity I see between these two youth cultures. Their confrontations with their respective modern societies were as complex as modernity itself. But in one important way, one that has remained largely unexplored, they shared a sense of dissatisfaction with life moved beyond concrete issues with society (although these certainly were manifest as well) and struck at a much less visible aspect of life in modernity: boredom. Boredom, a notoriously difficult concept to define, and one that straddles the line between the emotional and the intellectual, between affect and reason,

has since the Enlightenment proliferated to become a hallmark of existence in the modern world. Both *Wandervögel* and punks, in my reading, responded to elements of modern life which contributed to the rise of boredom. Further, these youth sought alternatives to these boredom-inducing modes of engagement which they hoped could open up new and engaging futures for both themselves and their wider societies.

Finally, these youth's responses to modern life both utilized emerging technological advances of their days as tools to gain autonomy in order to express themselves and to amplify their voices. For the *Wandervogel*, these technologies were largely centered on movement: the train, the post, hiking and camping gear. They also utilized their own periodicals and publishing houses to share news and hiking schedules, articulate their shared identities, spread music and discuss pressing issues. Through much more advanced media technologies and freedoms available in the mid-1970s, punks took independent publishing to another level and allowed anyone who wanted to express themselves to do so through a variety of media – print through zines (reproduced by photocopier), sound through cassettes and independent record companies and even film (although the costs of a video camera still put this out of the reach of most punk youth). Both groups utilized these available and (largely) new technologies to enhance autonomy, self-expression, differentiation and participation, exploring new uses and potentials for these advancements which stand in contrast to their dominant applications and receptions.

*Bored with Boredom* critically examines the concept of boredom and its proliferation in modernity and, more importantly, charts how these two German youth subcultures, punk and *Wandervogel*, attempted to move beyond boredom, exploring means to articulate themselves and producing futures which they found worthwhile. For

both the *Wandervogel* in the early twentieth century and the punks in the 1970s and early 1980s, their solutions to their boredom-inducing social realities took the form of direct action in the establishment of participatory cultures. In the *Wandervogel*, this orientation was embodied by the articulation of the project of *Selbsterziehung*, the conception that individuals should focus on *their* interests and passions and that they should do so on their own terms and by their own means. For punks, this direct participatory action manifested in the do-it-yourself ethic (DIY), which extended from the aesthetic realm of fashion, music and composition to the erection of parallel systems of production and channels of distribution.

Intimately related to the projects of *Selbsterziehung* and DIY were the desired results of their activities. While *Selbsterziehung* and DIY describe the how, the value placed on *Wandern* in the *Wandervogel* and on *Anderssein* in punk represented the why. Both *Wandern* and *Anderssein* expressed an emotional and self-aware engagement with the world that was formulated against the rational worldviews dominant in their societies. *Wandern* in the *Wandervogel* transcended a simple definition of aimlessly exploring nature and became the programmatic structure which held the *Wandervogel* together despite many sometimes bitter splits to emerge as an alternative way of living and approaching the world. The intent of *Wandern* is well-articulated in a 1911 article in the *Jung-Wandervogel Zeitschrift*, “Oh Wandern, o Wandern, du freie Burschenlust!” which reads in *Wandern* a way of living. “Das Wandern als Kunst zu veredeln, auf daß es uns – ungeachtet geringer Ausgaben – immer genuß-, erfahrungs- und erlebnisreicher werde” (67). This search through *Wandern*, the conception of it as an art and a continuous cultivation at both the individual and communal level stands in contrast to the

“Bureaukratismus” of modern life and the meaningless check-list travel of “Bädecker-Touristen” (67).<sup>1</sup> Finally, *Wandern* was about exploring and experiencing the diversity of life, eloquently articulated through a metaphor of the natural world: “Die Natur ist immer eigenartig schön, Tages- oder Nachtzeit, Sommers oder Winters, im Frühling wie im Herbst. Darum wandern wir nicht nur im steten Sonnenschein – das möchte bald langweilig werden – sondern auch bei Wind und Wetter, Regen und Windesbrausen” (67).

Similarly to *Wandern*, *Anderssein* was held up by punks as a means to experience and express oneself. Jeff Hayton provides a succinct definition in his 2013 *Culture From the Slums*:

The pursuit of *Anderssein* – to be different or the condition of being different – is the most important ideological reference point for understanding punk in the West German context. Underwritten by notions of authenticity, independence, individuality, and an intense desire for originality, *Anderssein* was an ideological attempt to mediate between mainstream conformity on the one hand, and the dogmatic strictures of the New Left on the other, both of which in the eyes of punks, represented attempts to stifle creativity and thus block meaningful life. In this sense, *Anderssein* was an expression of autonomy and a drive for freedom from

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<sup>1</sup> The Bädecker was the most popular travel guide at the time, marking must see attractions, the best hotels and the finest restaurants. For the *Wandervogel*, the Bädecker tourist became a favored depiction of the alternative to their mode of engagement and highlighted the differences between their seeking of experience and adventure with the predominant city-jumping and sightseeing of the rest of society, which itself was symptomatic of wider differences between the two. The conceptualization of the modern tourist within the *Wandervogel* forms a major section of Chapter Four.



the past and present in which difference was posited as the future of West Germany. (133)

*Anderssein* was explored in punk music, zines and extended to punk scholarship, such as in Hollow Skai's *Punk: Versuch der künstlerischen Realisierung einer neuen Lebenshaltung*. Skai's *Magisterarbeit*, published by *Sounds* magazine in 1981, asks the question of what the punk/*Neue deutsche Welle* (shortened to NDW) project was about. Was it taking expression to its extreme limits? If so, where was the originality in this? Was it a protest against and rejection of modern society? A return to a primitive lifestyle? A return to a childhood mentality? Was it a desire to shock through this regression to the visceral, "weil es uns nicht mehr möglich ist, dieses auf anderen (intellektuellen?) Ebenen zu tun, d.h. zu provozieren?" (Skai 3). It was all these things, of course. But most importantly, "Punk war immer auch ein Ausdruck von Stadterfahrung, modernen städtischen Lebens, eine Attitüde/Lebenshaltung" (3). Taken together, *Wandern* and *Anderssein* represent the quest for experience through engagement in an effort to create more meaningful lives for the self in modernity, which was only possible by creating distance, claiming autonomy and asserting agency through the projects of *Selbsterziehung* and DIY.

In focusing on experiences, creation and the cultivation of the self, both of these German youth subcultures created possibilities for themselves of futures filled with action, hope, adventure and passion rather than what they saw as an alternative of stagnation and listlessness. Their relationship with the technological highlighted uses which reinforced and amplified their autonomy and engagement instead of fostering the boredom they experienced in the coalescence of a consumption-driven mass culture. In

the pages that follow, I hope to supplement the history of both the *Wandervögel* and punks, giving a more complete view of the ways in which these youth, bored with the very notion of being bored, created subcultures in which they felt free, empowered, and engaged. In

This project is divided into four major chapters. Chapter One provides a theoretical background on boredom in modernity, tracing the origins of modern boredom from the Enlightenment into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Boredom, I suggest, represents an emotional detachment from experience and a disinterest in available lifestyles and dominant societal discourses which have proliferated in modernity and the rise of rational narratives that have contributed immensely to modern alienation. *Wandervögel* and punks, in their explorations into alternative lifestyles, formulated modes of engagement and communities dedicated to the creation and nurturing of their own interests while critically reading and situating themselves both within and apart from the societies from which they emerged. The importance of direct action, the foundation of *Selbsterziehung* and DIY, emerges as one of the key interventions shared by *Wandervogel* and punk youth. In understanding the rise of boredom in modernity and the importance of these youth phenomena in articulating an alternative, the chapter continues with an in-depth discussion of the dangers and opportunities of the technological. A discussion of Heidegger's thoughts on boredom in his 1928-29 lectures *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik* and his conceptualization of the technological in *Die Frage nach der Technik* is followed by a practical analysis of the redefinition of the participatory corresponding with the rise of the culture industry. Tying this back to the *Wandervogel* and punk, Chapter One closes with a look at the futures both *Wandervogel* and punk youth

envisioned, drawing on the ideas of adventure, hope and the urgency of action as key to overcoming and moving beyond boredom.

Chapter Two narrows the focus onto the *Wandervögel* themselves, situating the beginnings of the *Wandervogel* project within Wilhelmine Germany and tracing the history of the pre-war *Wandervogel* through a discussion of the major splits and reconciliations within the broader phenomenon from its origins until the outbreak of WWI. Arising from a greater degree of autonomy granted to (middle class) youth, the movement is read as a response to the perceived cultural crisis in a young nation state informed by a profoundly traditional social fabric. The chaotic and tumultuous growth of the *Wandervogel* within Germany epitomizes the navigation of new lifestyles and modes of experience which, I suggest, lie at the heart of the quest for non-boring engaged life among German youth in modernity. The second section of Chapter Two traces major discussions within *Wandervogel* studies, with a focus on the long-lasting and still prominent specter of National Socialism and the reading of the *Wandervogel* within this reading. In its own way, the scholarship on the *Wandervogel* often reinforces the rational narratives of modernity, focusing on reading the youth movement and its connections to early 20<sup>th</sup> century reform movements, the tumultuous political landscape of *Wilhelmine* Germany and the legacy of National Socialism at the expense of investigating what these youth themselves gained through their involvement. As part two of Chapter Two shows, this has often led to the vilification of the romantic – cipher for the emotional – and the perception that the romantic tradition, revitalized by the *Wandervogel*, contributed to the social landscape which comprised the *Sonderweg* to National Socialism. The chapter closes with a refutation of this criticism, reading it as another manifestation of rational

modernity that has led to far too one-sided readings of youth culture through the academy's own sometimes confining narratives and biases.

Chapter Three turns to West German punk and begins with an exploration of the participatory capacity of punk and what punk's legacy in the West German context has been. Then, after briefly tracing punk's roots in the United States and Great Britain, its spread to West Germany and the state of youth culture in the Federal Republic in the 1970s, I take a closer look at two major scenes – Düsseldorf and Hamburg – to illustrate the diversity and interpretability of punk in West Germany and as a representation of the major split between the hardcore scene situated around Hamburg (and their greater emphasis on maintaining punk as it initially emerged) and the more experimental bend evidenced in the Düsseldorf scene, which sought to explore the central values of DIY and the open participatory community of punk and apply these ideas outside of punk. The chapter closes with a contextualization of scholarship on punk within this project. Similar to scholarship on the *Wandervogel*, scholarship on punk has often fallen into well-explored narratives – in punk's case centered on aesthetics, politics, philosophy and economics. While all of these trajectories have provided valuable insights, they also confine the exploration of punk to those narratives at the expense of others and reinforce many of the leveling and organizing effects of modernity which many punks were engaged with contesting. In this reading, punk scholarship often does a disservice to its object of study by overlooking the highly subjective and personal elements that set punk apart and contributed to making it a worthwhile alternative for many youth in the first place. This present study attempts to overcome previous limitations by focusing instead

upon the endless interpretability of punk and the agency youth claimed through it to explore their worlds and express themselves on their own terms.

Chapter Four turns to an in-depth analysis of the cultural productions of *Wandervogel* and punk youth themselves to illustrate how they articulated their alternatives to modernity's boredom. Written expression in the form of print publications emerges as centrally important for both subcultures. Side-by-side readings of *Wandervogel* periodicals and punk zines – the two major sources of youth voices used throughout the chapter — reveal that, through their reappraisal of experience and engagement, these youth were able to counter the pervasive rationalistic conceptualization of the self that has flourished in modernity and given rise to boredom as a dominant reaction. The rest of the chapter is divided into two comparative sections. The first explores both groups' emphases on emotional experience and direct engagement in representing both themselves and their dominant social realities. The second section returns to the importance of the technological and a reappraisal of its potentials as applied to the projects of *Selbsterziehung* and DIY. Ultimately, in their adoption of technological innovations of their day, both groups were able to create the autonomy necessary to explore and expand their realities on their own terms. And through their receptive engagement with life, these youth posited hopeful visions for the future founded on adventure and exploration in a world once again filled with mystery and the unknown.

## CHAPTER ONE: BRENNENDE LANGEWEILE

*Die Jugend ist in dem Augenblick vorbei,  
in dem das Geheimnis unseres Lebens definiert wird.*

- Georg Simmel

*How can we live without the unknown before us?*

- René Char

These two quotes above serve as a sort of guiding principle for this project. The loss of the unknown in the regimented, compartmentalized and rational existence of life in modern societies has resulted in a world stripped of wonder and adventure for many and, as this chapter argues, led to the proliferation of boredom as a dominant response to this structured world. The prospect of a foreordained future and the perception that even in their school and family life youth were already being conditioned to accept their roles in a society created for them has resulted in youth attempts to formulate more engaging and personal communities and futures based on unsettling the fixedness of life in modernity and reclaiming a sense of autonomy and agency missing from the world as these youth see it. The *Wandervogel* of late-Wilhelmine Germany and the punks of late-1970s West Germany epitomize such attempts to unbind the fixed narratives that marked the end of the openness of childhood for Simmel and of worthwhile life for Char and imagine more open and engaging presents and futures<sup>3</sup>.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was largely the youth of the middle and upper classes in Germany and in other Western nations who had the free time and freedom to pursue other interests outside of school, work or familial obligation. This was especially true for the

*Wandervogel*. *Wandervogel* youth claimed a degree of freedom and free time, borrowing time that had previously been dedicated to academic pursuits, which many of these youth found uninteresting, irrelevant or excessively boring. This disillusionment with the educational system, evident in their criticisms of the institution, their often poor performance within it and their exploration of alternative methods of education points to an initial and important similarity between punks and *Wandervögel* that highlights their desire to create a different type of education on their own terms and points to a wider rejection of modern instruments of authority and social conditioning.

The *Wandervogel*, who have so often been viewed as a manifestation of an anti-modern, anti-technological and romantic conservative and escapist reaction to modernity and the punks, who have often been contemptuously dismissed as nihilistic and anarchistic, offering no alternatives to the structures they criticize, have been all too often read through narratives revolving around charges such as these. These characterizations of *Wandervogel* and punk are, to be sure, partially true. An increasingly strong conservative element within the *Wandervogel* would become especially salient in the months before the outbreak of WWI and again in the Weimar period of the youth *Bünde*. The same can be said of West German punk, which was quickly embraced by right-wing neo-Nazi and skinhead subcultures. What can be read as a liberal streak is also easily discernable in both. To take the most salient examples, this is evidenced by an avowed anti-militarism in many *Wandervogel* circles and the many reformist tendencies in the inclusion of girls (often in separate groups, but still unprecedented at the time), abstinence from drugs and alcohol, in practical fashion and body culture and in educational reform (especially the reciprocal influence of the *Wandervogel* on Gustav Wyneken's *Freie Schulgemeinde* and vice-versa). The most dominant strand of punk to emerge out of the 1970s

has embraced many liberal projects and is evident in everything from the seemingly standard issue “Halte deine Umwelt sauber” pins and patches of a swastika being discarded into a wastebasket to the many festivals such as Rock Against Racism. But attempting to characterize *Wandervogel* and punk youth and read their reactions to modern society in terms of political orientations or concrete goals is ultimately unsatisfying in that it reduces the phenomena to broad generalizations and oversimplifications while forcing a reading through discourses from which they were often actively attempting to distance themselves. This project departs from these ideologically-charged and focused readings of both *Wandervogel* and punk and instead studies their response to modern life through direct participation, as manifested through their cultural productions. What most of these youth in both the *Wandervogel* and punk took issue with, regardless of their individual beliefs both within each phenomenon and even larger differences between them, was the expected role of youth in Wilhelmine Germany and Cold War, globalizing West German society which conditioned them for what they saw as inadequate and unfulfilling futures in modern Germany.

### **The Banality of Banality**

*An irremediable flatness is coming over the world.*

*William James*

But what is modernity? By “modern life” or “modern society” one often simply means urban, industrial, economic and political transformations which began gaining speed during the Enlightenment. But these largely describe changes in conditions in the natural landscape, means of production, and government. What is modernity when applied to culture, or to the individual?



Here, modernity often means the privileging of reason, naturalism and “progress” over the emotional, idealistic and traditional. Habermas suggests modernity to be the pursuit of progress through rationality and the creation of hierarchical structures in public life and thought.

Meanwhile, American sociologist Alejandro Portes defines modernity at what he terms the structural, cultural, and individual levels:

Much confusion on the meaning of modernity stems from failure to specify the analytic level at which discussion takes place. Structurally, modernization is often employed as a synthetic term for urbanization, a democratic polity, industrialization, and overall economic development. As such, modernization lacks analytical interest, since its meaning is exhausted by more specific constructs. Culturally, modernity is portrayed as a consistent set of values and general orientations permeating a society (Inkeles 1969; Kahl 1968). Its content is perhaps best described in terms of the Parsonian pattern variables: a cultural that is universalistic rather than particularistic, defines roles in specific rather than diffuse terms, and allocates rewards on the basis of achievement and not ascription (Parsons 1951; Hoselitz 1960). At the individual level, this set of values is reflected in a coherent syndrome of psychosocial orientations characterized, intrinsically, by a certain mental flexibility in dealing with new situations and, extrinsically, by similarity to an ideal type of behaviors proper to urban-industrial societies (Portes, 16).

In terms of this project, then, one can understand modernity—and *Wandervogel* and punk reactions to it—in this way: modernity is the sum of the urban, industrial, economic and political structural changes within society, plus a cultural shift toward a “consistent set of values and

general orientations.” The individual’s place in this system is often compared to that of a cog in a machine, conforming to “an ideal type of behaviors proper to urban-industrial societies.” Life for many in modernity is, despite a rapid proliferation of entertaining distractions and an increasingly interconnected world, flat. It is little wonder that so many youth in the twentieth century, the *Wandervögel* and punks included, became dissatisfied with a modern culture and society that had become predicated on consistent values and the performance of ideal behaviors. The fluidity and adaptability at the individual level which have been made possible by the structural and cultural evolution from pre-modern to modern societies reveal new potentials for engaging with the world, but when applied to the modern condition have often had the effect of eroding individual difference and reducing the adaptive potential of the individual to aligning with those elements valued by modern societies such as one’s specific role and desire for achievement.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, this adaptability has often been subsumed by the processes of modernity, which have fostered the internalization of its structural and cultural elements at the individual level. For many youth in the 20<sup>th</sup> century who have not yet internalized these structures, the social and cultural confines of modern societies have been uninspiring, and the prospect of their futures in them distressing.

In practical terms, what is at stake here at the personal level is the conceptualization of self and of the role of the individual in modern societies. The structures and cultural phenomena that have become characterized as modernity have tended to force all readings through their own logic, with the result that modern life for many seems natural and eternal. For others, the

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<sup>1</sup> And post-/late-modern societies, if one wishes to differentiate the terms to denote the shift from a privileging of a linear, progressive focus in the project of modernity to the fragmentation and problematization of linear narratives in what is often called postmodernity or late-modernity.

“discontents of modernity,” this has not been the case.<sup>2</sup> The idea that everything must be knowable was deemed dull and the rational attempt to understand, categorize and organize all aspects of life—including themselves—even duller. Nietzsche wrote prolifically on the potentials of the liberating effects of modernity to usher in a new, more engaged and content human being but also attacked the sociocultural constellation which had emerged under its auspices for being fundamentally opposed to the creation of such a new person. In this project, I argue that the reactions of punk and *Wandervogel* youth to their respective societies can be seen as attempts to formulate new engagements with the modern world that, far from being anti-modern or escapist, should be viewed as attempts to salvage the potentially liberating aspects of modernity from its often alienating and objectifying consequences.<sup>3</sup> In short, this dissertation argues that these youth saw the types of people they were being conditioned to become and the available roles and futures open to them and found them lacking. And, precisely because of the freedom and free time they had gained, these youth were able to set out to search for something they found better. Whether they found what they were looking for or not is, for this project, largely immaterial. But the attempt and the search—the adventure—are not. Their utopian ambitions to create new spaces that valued individual expression and where exploration was encouraged did not play out as either group had hoped. But their efforts, in themselves, illustrate a potential way of living life which dispenses with many of the numbing effects of modern life and the root causes of boredom.

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<sup>2</sup> See James Marsh, John D. Caputo, and Merold Westphal’s *Modernity and Its Discontents*.

<sup>3</sup> I am not arguing that this is *all* punk and the *Wandervogel* were or that those who counted themselves as members all shared this vision. Rather, what I am suggesting is that both punks and *Wandervögel* encouraged and fostered lifestyles predicated upon active engagement (physical, emotional or intellectual), experience, expression and production which helped them to lead what they felt were more meaningful and purposive lives.

The great vision for many of these youth was “simply” a society where they could enjoy the freedom they currently enjoyed (or were attempting to create for themselves) in the future. This desire was often the focus of their cultural productions. While an analysis of these productions will be the focus of Chapter Four, one example which epitomizes the articulation of this desire will be helpful here. An issue 4 of the 1978 Hannover punk zine *Gegendarstellung* features a poem by the contributor Achim titled “Verwirrte Kinder” which articulates this desire for freedom and the difficulty in its realization in a complex assemblage. The poem closes with the lines:

Für die meisten Menschen existiere ich nicht,  
weil meine Freiheit von ihren Mustern nicht  
aufgenommen wird.

For the majority of his encounters with people, he feels his conceptualization and articulation of self results in a negation of his existence because others simply do not recognize themselves in his way of living. He adds a post-script, which reads “PS—Wo ist die Zukunft,/eine Zukunft,/in der ich meine jetzige Freiheit vollkommen erhalten kann!??” This line expresses both desire and frustration: desire for a future to live how he wants to and frustration with a society that does not seem to allow for this future. In an example of punk pastiche, the author adds a ripped-out quote below this post-script as a likely answer to the question. The quote, from Jean Améry, the Austrian author and Auschwitz survivor who had committed suicide in 1978, the year before this issue appeared, reads: “Der Tod ist unsere letzte Freiheit.”<sup>4</sup> This channeling of a writer who had experienced tremendous difficulty reconciling himself to his society (being a half-Jew, raised

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<sup>4</sup> Calling Améry Austrian should be qualified, as he expatriated to France after the end of the war and in an empowering gesture changed his name from Hans Mayer in a renunciation of his nationality and culture. He was only Austrian in the sense that he was born and grew up there.

Catholic who had married a Jewish woman, fled his homeland, later joining the resistance before being persecuted, tortured and interned in several concentration camps), draws a commonality between the societies who failed to understand or make room for those they did not understand.. While the struggles of the punks were not literally equivalent to those of Améry, especially in terms of persecution, Achim's symbolic appropriation of Améry illustrates the long-standing obstacles and their continuing power. Finally, he adds an afterthought in the form of Adorno's oft-cited quote from *Minima Moralia*: "Die fast unlösbare Aufgabe besteht darin, weder von der Macht der anderen, noch von der eigenen Ohnmacht sich dumm machen zu lassen. Es gibt kein richtiges Leben im falschen." This final remark acknowledges the difficulties, perhaps even impossibility, of living a life both autonomous and meaningful, but also marks it as one still worth undertaking. Taken as a whole, Achim's conclusion (or conclusions) to "Verwirrte Kinder" is at once pessimistic and the slightest bit hopeful, but his dedication to remaining an engaged subject in an objectifying and leveling society is revealed in both his words and action.

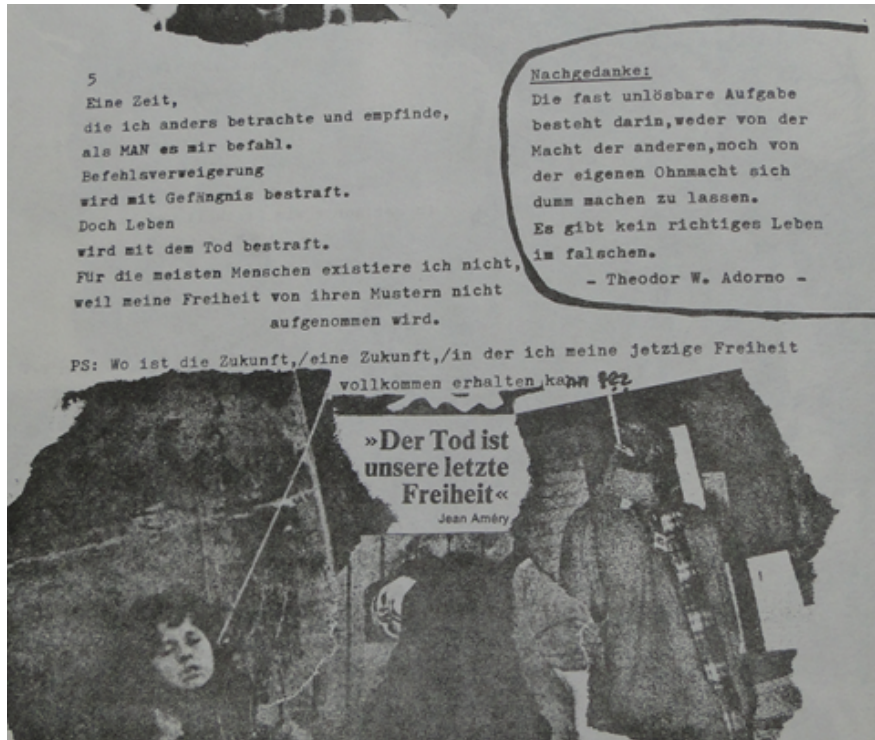


Figure 1: “*Verwirrte Kinder*,” image source: *Gegendarstellung #4*

But what effects of modern life were so abhorrent to many of these youth? Said slightly differently, what future did these youth see in their existing societies that motivated them to take action? I will focus on a response which I see as at the heart of youth motivations to reformulate both the self and the conditions in which the self is formed—an affective and intellectual reaction which has proliferated in modernity and is especially salient to youth: boredom. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to exploring what boredom is and, specifically, its relation to modern life. In the next section, I will first attempt to define boredom. As we will see, this is not as straightforward as one might think. Engaging with the work of several scholars who have written on boredom’s rapid rise to become, as Heidegger contended, the mood of the modern age, I will trace out a framework of the relationship between boredom and modernity. I will then focus on grounding *Wandervogel* and punk projects and (especially) their engagement with the

technological through a discussion of the reception of Heidegger's writing on boredom in the technological age and a focus on Adorno and Horkheimer's articulation of the culture industry and its effects on participatory culture.

## **The Bored Horde: Boredom and Modernity**

*Die größte Sünde ist die Langeweile.*

*- Johann Friedrich Herbart*

In "Modernity, Boredom, and War: A Suggestive Essay," Jorg Kustermans and Erik Ringmar define boredom as "a feeling of ennui associated with a loss of the ability to act" (Kustermans and Ringmar 1775). They tie the rise of boredom to processes of modernity and the loss of purposive action.<sup>5</sup> Boredom in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been intimately linked to processes of modernization since Georg Simmel, a connection which has remained a constant in research since. In her 2005 monograph *Experience without Qualities: Boredom and Modernity*, Elisabeth Goodstein writes that:

[t]he experience of boredom is not simply a symptom of the hypertrophy of the complex 'technologies' of modern life over the capacity of the individual to

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<sup>5</sup> Kustermans and Ringmar suggest that for many, war represents a way to reclaim a visceral engagement with the world lost to the modern individual. This is particularly interesting for *Wandervogel* and punk, where war has often been thematized. *Wandervogel* youth formulated a highly romanticized conceptualization of war, contributing to their willingness to enlist and volunteer for front-line positions, which led to their heavy and disproportionate losses in WWI. West-German punk youth problematized war and often articulated positions which acknowledged both an interest and ultimate rejection. They embraced military symbols, were often supportive and intrigued by RAF domestic terrorism and focused on the affective reaction to war in songs like ZK's "Banner." With the lines "Schön muss es sein nach einer Norm/ Soldat zu sein in Uniform!/ Und gehst du dann die Straße lang,/ sehen die schöne Mädchen an./ Doch im Krieg, da macht es BUMM/ und sie schießen schöne Mädchen um./ Schön muss es sein, nach einer Norm Soldat zu sein in Uniform!" In punks' thematization of violence and hate, which they held up to West German society as a confrontational mirror, they claimed the visceral individual engagement of war to reject its ultimate viability as a solution.

assimilate and make sense of them. The bored subject invokes a very particular language of reflection, one in which these very material effects of cultural modernization appear as grounds for a universalized skepticism. In boredom...skepticism about the value of particular possible ends easily extends to dubiousness about the very possibility of purposive action as such” (279).

The lack of a means to comprehend the complexities of modern life coupled with the lack of a register to express this inability and, critically, the erosion of belief in one’s own relevance and agency has resulted in the proliferation of boredom on a mass scale in modernity.<sup>6</sup>

Defining exactly what boredom is quickly becomes an exercise in frustration, with competing definitions in different fields and different types of boredom articulated for different situations. Psychological studies of boredom tend to focus upon the pathology of the emotion and the ways in which it strains and disrupts engagement (with life or, in a more mundane way, specific tasks or objectives). The many negative consequences of boredom have been the subject of numerous studies. John Watt and Jackie Ewing succinctly summarize these studies in a call for more research:

A greater understanding of boredom is warranted, given the myriad social and psychological issues with which this construct has been linked. For instance, boredom has been significantly related to depression, anxiety, hopelessness, loneliness, hostility, and impulsivity (see Farmer & Sundberg, 1986; Vodanovich, Verner, & Gilbride, 1991; Watt & Vodanovich, 1992b). Boredom has also been shown to be correlated with drug use (Samuels & Samuels, 1974), pathological

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<sup>6</sup> While she uses both terms, Goodstein prefers to use “subjective malaise” instead of “boredom” to situate the emotion within modernity, rather than to understand it as a universal and largely ahistorical human condition.



gambling (Blaszczynski, McConaghy, & Frankova, 1990), eating disorders (Abramson & Stinson, 1977; Ganley, 1989), job dissatisfaction (O'Hanlon, 1981), and engaging in unprotected sex (Arnett, 1990). (57)

Brissett and Snow ultimately attempt to define what boredom is by what it is not in their article "Boredom: Where the Future isn't." They arrive at the conclusion that the essence of what boredom *is not* "is an appreciation of uncertainty, possibility, and rhythm" (252). Others have noted that "research on boredom has spanned decades and has been approached from a variety of philosophical, sociological, and psychological perspectives...[t]he only apparent consensus is that boredom is a complex phenomenon" (Caldwell et al 103). This is, of course, somewhat of an exaggeration. But the incompatibility of different methodological approaches to boredom has long stymied consensus on what boredom is and how it should be viewed.

Sean Desmond Healy begins his classic examination of boredom in modernity, *Boredom, Self, and Culture*, saying:

There would at first glance seem to be no good reason for supposing that boredom, any more than any other mental or spiritual state, should have steadily and continuously increased in modern times. In fact, one might have supposed the opposite, given the vastly more numerous diversions and entertainments that have become available, the increase in time for play, the expansion of opportunities for finding and pursuing constructive interests (15).

But instead, "what was once a rare state of mind...has now become the property of the bored horde" (15). Healy maintains that boredom in modern society has "grown to pandemic proportions" and that this rapid spread of boredom throughout all levels of modern society is "one symptom of an advanced stage of an entire culture in irremediable disintegration" (11).

Far from viewing boredom as a trivial nuisance, Healy explores boredom's history and rise and arrives at the conclusion that boredom's rapid growth in modernity has coincided with the erosion of traditional lifestyles and systems that once instilled feelings of personal significance in the world. With the loss of empowerment brought by once unquestioned certainties (most fundamentally religion), accompanied (and fostered by) the ascension of an objective naturalism and the rise of complex and opaque bureaucratic structures, individuals have become lost, leading them to become emotionally detached from reality. This detachment Healy calls "hyperboredom": "Hyperboredom represents the emotional accompaniment of that 'withering away' of one's powers that, less dramatically, occurs in many classrooms and that powerfully contributes to the sense of isolation people experience in modern industrial society." (123). This leads to an "escalating apprehension of the void, the nihilism of the masses, the largely-unconscious, unacknowledged sense that the bottom has fallen out of the world" (Healy 93). In order to avoid this sensation, one detaches from reality. One becomes bored.

As touched on earlier, this boredom is ambiguous at best. This is evident in the difficulty in finding agreement about what boredom is—one of the foci of Goodstein's study. Goodstein suggests that what she calls the bifurcation of the discourse about boredom in modernity between a sociological, historically-situated approach and a philosophical, universal approach is ultimately the result of becoming trapped in an inadequate discourse about experience itself brought about by modernity. It is the internalization of boredom—the assumption that boredom is an eternal accompanier of human experience, combined with the paucity of language available to discuss subjective experience and the inadequacy of boredom as a construct to satisfactorily explain existence in the modern world that she identifies as one of the root causes of this difficulty in coming to agreement about what boredom is. The proliferation of numerous

disciplines, each concerned with interpreting boredom through its own methodological lens, has contributed to a breakdown of meaning that has come to be regarded as one of the hallmarks of life in modernity. Thus, the language surrounding boredom has become obsolete and fractured, and has not yet been replaced by another register through which to parse experience. In her discussion of boredom, Goodstein discusses Georg Simmel's concept of *Blasiertheit*—the blasé attitude—a defensive rationalism and subjective reaction against the onslaught of input in the accelerated cityscape of modern existence, and fuses it with Heidegger's 1927 lecture series *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt-Endlichkeit-Einsamkeit* and his contention that boredom has become the overarching mood of the technological age. She ultimately concludes that neither approach (Simmel exemplifying the sociological and Heidegger the philosophical) is satisfactory, although both are important and revealing in discussing how subjective experience is perceived and articulated in a modern existence characterized by existential crisis (for Heidegger) and the proliferation of an overabundance of input and discourses (Simmel). What she suggests is needed is a new vocabulary, through which to discuss subjective experience, that would unite the bifurcated discourse on boredom. Such a vocabulary, having a viable means to work through the complex issues surrounding the loss of meaning and meaningful registers to discuss this loss, is paramount in overcoming the intellectual legacy and internalization of boredom.

One of the most popularly brandished talking points in boredom studies is that the word “boredom” itself first came into use in the English-language context in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with Charles Dicken's *Bleak House*. This codification of the word into English during the height of England's modernizing processes is read as much more than coincidental—it points to a connection between the increasing pace of technological and societal change and a heightening

sense of shared ennui—the democratization of boredom. But how did boredom come to take main stage in the Western world? In “From Idleness to Boredom: On the Historical Development of Modern Boredom,” Isis Leslie suggests a basis for the emergence of boredom:

I want to suggest that the loss of a political ethic of private self-cultivation is the basis of the nineteenth-century emergence of boredom as a widespread, culturally recognizable phenomenon in the Western world. In this formulation, the phenomenon of boredom is the consequence of an externalization in Western culture of responsibility for self-management. Michel Foucault traces the externalization of responsibility for ‘self-care,’ also referred to as ‘the art of existence,’ from the early admonition, to ‘[s]pend your whole life learning how to live,’ that is consistently reiterated in the classical era by Stoics, Epicureans, Platonists and Aristotelians alike, to the Christian and finally modern era where no such injunction prevails. (Leslie 36)

In this reading, boredom does not lead to disengagement. Disengagement leads to boredom. Boredom straddles the boundaries between affective and rational reaction. As Elizabeth Goodstein writes, “As a discursively articulated phenomenon, then, boredom is at once objective and subjective, emotion and intellectualization—not just a response to the modern world but also an historically constituted strategy for coping with its discontents” (3). Boredom thus serves as a bulwark against modernity—both a rational and emotional response to a world that has lost traditional bastions of meaning. She calls boredom “experience without qualities,” implying in her exposition not only an internal emotional reaction (or failure to react) to external sociocultural components but also a definitional ambiguity paralleling the absence and stagnation of boredom itself. In her monograph on boredom and the historical narrative about boredom in

modernity, she calls boredom “an adaptation at once visceral and intellectual to life in a world where nothing stays put, to an era in which the idea of transcendent meaning seems hopelessly old-fashioned” (1-2).

While the contention that boredom proliferated dramatically throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is irrefutable, one of the earliest definitions of what we now regard as a modern phenomenon came from France in the early Enlightenment. Jean-Baptist Dubos’ 1719 *Réflexions critiques sur la Poésie et sur la Peinture* suggested that humanity was “eher durch die Kunst und die durch sie angeregten Gefühle zu bewegen als durch Vernunft und Wissenschaft” (Kessel 40). Martina Kessel notes that the first section of this work often appeared separated from the full treatise in German translation. This section, first translated in 1760 as “Von der Notwendigkeit, beschäftigt zu seyn, wenn man der verdrüßlichen langen Weile ausweichen will, und von dem Anzüglichen, welches die Erregung der Leidenschaften für die Menschen hat,” conceived of boredom as a lack of movement and of being moved—what Kessel summarizes as a “zentralen Problem, nicht bewegt zu sein, sich nicht lebendig zu fühlen, und um die Attraktivität der Leidenschaften” (40). It is not only fitting that boredom as a result of a rationalistic worldview was first proposed at the beginning of what is now regarded as the onset of the processes of modernity, it is evidence that the danger of this worldview was recognized even as it emerged.

In boredom I see a construct bridging the traditionally intellectual traditions through which *Wandervogel* and punk are often registered and the emotional and visceral qualities which were so central to these subcultures. The foundational role of boredom in the growth of both of these youth cultures (and youth culture in modernity generally) has been largely overshadowed in both punk and *Wandervogel* studies by more entrenched narratives. The *Wandervogel*, despite more recent attempts to free their historical contextualization from these well-ingrained paths,

continue to be read through familiar discourses such as discussions of nationalism versus patriotism, adolescent sexuality, the neo-Romantic return to nature and both conservative and liberal reformist movements. For punk, its clear debt to the avant-garde tradition has, since Hebdige, formed the most significant and fruitful trajectory of research—whether inspecting fashion, music, zines and their many interstices in punk cultural production and expression or as part of an analysis of political, social and cultural critique embedded in these activities. An argument for the inclusion of boredom into discussions of punk and *Wandervogel* studies in no way diminishes these existing discourses; however, the prevalence of these discourses has limited a more robust and differentiated historiography of these youth cultures.

Boredom, in the final analysis, is the result of both an individual incompatibility with the systemic changes of modern life and the muddled discourse on subjective malaise, which is itself the result of modern processes. This marks boredom as an at least partially discursively produced phenomenon. Part of being bored, then, is the result of the language of boredom being the dominant means of expressing subjective malaise. In a sense, this is what I see as one of the major issues at the heart of the *Wandervogel* and punk: the reappraisal of subjective experience in modernity—a reappraisal that had precedent in the earlier youth movement of the *Wandervogel*. Goodstein proposed the need for a reworking of the language of subjective malaise and found a possible corrective in a literary work, Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*. Goodstein's solution to resolve the issue surrounding the discourse about boredom pertains in the end to boredom itself as well—or at least to better understanding what it is. The language of boredom has been heavily influenced by the literary—most notably the romantic tradition—and finding the next Baudelaire capable of updating the discourse about subjective malaise for late modernity is a worthwhile pursuit. And there is much in Musil's work

to recommend itself. Goodstein notes that Musil's protagonist Ulrich was originally named "Anders" in Musil's early drafts—a word which translates to "different" in the sense of "other."

She explains that:

Musil's protagonist is in pursuit of a mode of relating to his experience appropriate to a world where traditional bases of meaning have dissolved. As a figure, he conjoins the impulses of Enlightenment and romanticism. The man without qualities is in search of a new understanding of the human soul that can make the fragmentation and impersonality of the modern self the basis for a new, self-consciously modern, yet spiritually integrated form of existence (350).

But *thinking* and *speaking* about boredom (or subjective malaise) might not be sufficient. She is doubtful in the end whether this language even exists, as "[i]t is not simply that since the inherited language of reflection fails to capture the subjective experience of modern existence, a new vocabulary is called for. Modernity has undermined the very conditions of possibility of reflection" (418). This, like much writing on boredom, ultimately offers a fairly dire prognosis. But in the confrontation with boredom, what is clear is that words are insufficient when the mechanics of modernity and the vocabulary of experience fail to allow for adequate expression. What is needed is action. And *Wandervogel* and punk provided examples of how experience can again be made meaningful through direct engagement.

The urgency of action was at the core of punk. Peter Hein, one of West Germany's earliest punks heavily involved in the Düsseldorf punk scene, lamented that, in the late-1970s, everything was boring.<sup>7</sup> School, family life, rock music and popular culture in general—all

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of Peter Hein, see Jürgen Teipel's *Verschwende Deine Jugend: Ein Doku-Roman über den Deutschen Punk und New Wave*.

followed the same predictable patterns and scripts. Punks believed they had found something *new* in the DIY ethos in their confrontation with this repetitive society—a way to end the cycle of waiting for the next thing by making it themselves. But they had ultimately rediscovered something quite old: participatory culture. In this, the *Wandervogel* are particularly relevant to punk in Germany—and indeed to punk and youth studies in general.

Ultimately, the DIY ethos provided the script to action that made punk possible. The same can be said of the *Wandervogel* project of *Selbsterziehung*. But the foundational motivational role of boredom in creating an alternative to this boring society has been neglected—despite boredom being pointed to by *Wandervögel* and punks alike time and again as the dominant mood of their existence prior to their engagement with the punk movement. Still, this omission is in a way unsurprising. Boredom as widespread cultural phenomenon, especially among youth, has historically gone unremarked upon. Youth complaining about being bored at home and in school is unlikely to arouse much astonishment—it is accepted as a given. Boredom exhibits a simultaneous pervasiveness in modern society and a seeming insignificance—what Sean Desmond Healy called the “trivial view of boredom,” which he defined as “the supposedly commonsense perception of [boredom] as a virtually unavoidable occupational hazard, disagreeable but harmless” (Healy 9). This perception, Healy maintains, adds to the difficulty of engaging with boredom and continues to misrepresent it as one of life’s constants. But if boredom is not a constant of human experience, where do its origins lie?

To this point, I have discussed boredom as the result of societal changes brought about by modernity. One major aspect of this shift has been humanity’s relationship with the technological. In the next section, I shift focus to this relationship, inspecting readings of



boredom through the technological with a focus on Heidegger's conceptualization of boredom as the mood of the modern age.

## **Boredom in the Technological Age**

*Der Begriff des Fortschritts ist in der Idee der Katastrophe zu fundieren. Daß es ›so weiter‹ geht, ist die Katastrophe.*

*Walter Benjamin*

The idea of the loss of a future—of stagnation on a personal and mass level, is one of the major commonalities in the works of those studying boredom. Boredom alters the perception of time for the individual—in a mundane example waiting out the last five minutes of an unengaging lecture. When conditions arise where such malaise is potentially experienced by large portions of society, the results can be much more severe. Boredom is empty time for the individual—an eternal present from which no fulfilling future can arise. Time passes, but nothing changes—there is no growth, there is no movement towards—there is only time stretching to eternity. This is the situation which Heidegger explored when he wrote of boredom's emergence as the predominant mood of the technological age—a symbiotic relationship between a new perception of humanity brought about by the emergence of a shifting understanding of and engagement with the technological leading to an endless cycle of innovation devoid of meaning in the pursuit of distraction—for Heidegger the very acting out of nihilism on a mass scale.

Like many thinkers on boredom, Heidegger differentiates between levels of boredom. In its most mundane form, he details boredom in relationship to empty time, with his favorite example being waiting for hours at a provincial train station. Graham Harman writes that “in this

first form of boredom, we are held in limbo to the station while also being left empty through our inability to make use of it...it is the world which bores us here—a system of interrelated things whose emptiness holds us in limbo” (86). The second encounter with boredom occurs even in the presence of distraction, for example at a dinner party which, while comfortable and familiar, fails to allow a subject to engage as themselves. The self which is presented in such interactions is potentially an alienated self, as the person one is required to be is not always the person one wants to be. The third form is the most serious—a recognition of our own being-in-the-world, and the boredom this inspires is caused by the mundaneness of our existence, “since it is the entire unified structure of being-in-the-world that leaves us empty” (Harman 88). The boredom with the world, boredom with our inability to be ourselves and boredom with ourselves have proliferated in modernity, which becomes more understandable when looking at Heidegger’s thought on the technological.

Boredom is embedded far deeper in modern society than as a response to specific instances which bore. Elizabeth Goodstein writes that in the modern present, “[t]he moment lived as meaningless eternity undermines faith in the optimistic trajectory of the historical whole” (5). Brissett and Snow see boredom as the result of a disruption of life’s rhythm resulting in a stagnated present which prohibits the self from finding a fulfilling future in a modern society that currently “provides little in the way of nurturing...nonboring experience” (252). Ben Anderson marks boredom as a malady of unreflective hopelessness—of a diminished temporality and spacial situatedness—resulting in an “*elongation* of the now-time of the present” (743).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> In themselves, the titles of these analyses of boredom demonstrate a shared conceptualization of the mood/emotion/state of being as being heavily influenced by ordered time.

This stopped-time of boredom was, for Heidegger, the mood of the technological age. Heidegger's technological age is characterized by a new engagement with the world brought on by an altered way of looking at it. The way in which the world is revealed through the technological mindset results in a world which ceases to hold mystery. While Heidegger's language and terminology is dense and extremely verbose, the fundamental ideas behind it are fairly simple. The essence of technology for Heidegger was enframing (*Gestell*)—the way technology reveals the world to humanity and turns everything into an object with certain qualities comprising its usefulness as standing reserve (*Bestand*). Broadly, this enframing is the same phenomenon responsible for the search for objective knowledge—Heidegger uses the field of physics as an example—of categorizing, valuing and rethinking the world: “Modern science's way of representing pursues and entraps nature as a calculable coherence of forces” (Heidegger 21). This is not necessarily a bad thing in moderation, but the modern sciences applied solely towards modern technology results in the “deceptive illusion...that modern technology is applied physical science” (23).

In *Die Frage nach der Technik* he uses multiple examples of how humanity's engagement with the world has shifted as the result of this new way of thinking the world through the technological. The most poignant of his examples is his symbolic discussion of the Rhine—a river rich in German mythology and history. In this long quote, he describes not only how the river has become wrapped into a new constellation of meaning, but how humanity itself threatens to be subsumed as well.

Das Wasserkraftwerk ist in den Rheinstrom gestellt. Es stellt ihn auf seinen Wasserdruck, der die Turbinen daraufhin stellt, sich zu drehen, welche Drehung diejenige Maschine umtreibt, deren Getriebe den elektrischen Strom herstellt, für

den die Überlandzentrale und ihr Stromnetz zur Strombeförderung bestellt sind. Im Bereich dieser ineinandergreifenden Folgen der Bestellung elektrischer Energie erscheint auch der Rheinstrom als etwas Bestelltes...Er ist, was er jetzt als Strom ist, nämlich Wasserdrucklieferant, aus dem Wesen des Kraftwerks. Achten wir doch, um das Ungeheure, das hier waltet, auch nur entfernt zu ermessen, für einen Augenblick auf den Gegensatz, der sich in den beiden Titeln ausspricht: "Der Rhein", verbaut in das *Kraftwerk*, und "Der Rhein", gesagt aus dem *Kunstwerk* der gleichnamigen Hymne Hölderlins. Aber der Rhein bleibt doch, wird man entgegen, Strom der Landschaft. Mag sein, aber wie? Nichts anders denn als bestellbares Objekt der Besichtigung durch eine Reisegesellschaft, die eine Urlaubsindustrie dorthin bestellt hat" (23-24)

The Rhine becomes a small part of a long chain (or chains) reduced to the sum of its usefulness as a source of power, transportation or tourism revenue. In similar ways a field reveals itself to be a coal source, a forest a lumber source—when the world and everything in it become conceived of as objects to be *challenged forth* and revealed as standing reserve, objects cease to have intrinsic value—they are only valuable *for* something.

This increasing enframing through technology is for Heidegger extremely dangerous. Most seriously, viewing the world as something to be used threatens to, in the end, cause humanity to view itself as standing reserve as well. In a fairly innocuous example, the tourist becomes a part of the same chain as the Rhine: as both *consumer* of the Rhine as scenery, history and culture and as *consumed* by a tourism industry which views the tourist as an object to be exploited. Further, the focus on this orientation is a trap which closes humanity to other

approaches and the search for a home in the world. This enframed world, carefully ordered and regimented, is intensely boring.

Indeed, the word “tourist” was seen as a derogatory term by *Wandervogel* youth for this exact reason. For example in an article in the March 1913 issue of the *Alt-Wandervogel Monatsschrift* entitled “Die Kultur und wir,” Dr. Konrad Wislicenus begins: “Ihr wißt, daß es zwei Arten von Menschen gibt, die sich die Ferne besehen wollen: die Reisenden oder auf deutsch ‘Touristen’ und die Wanderer. Der Reisende braucht vor allem zwei Dinge: das Kursbuch und den Bäderer. Er...eilt nun von Sehenswürdigkeit zu Sehenswürdigkeit, immer den ‘Sternen’ des Führers nach; immer mit dem Gefühl der Sorge, er könne etwas Wichtiges übersehen” (41-42). The tourist is tied to industrialized time, a strict schedule and consumes certain sites as if they were selections from a menu. This in comparison to the *Wandervogel* who concentrated not on the destination and a list of sights to be marked off a list, but on experiencing the journey. This journey, far from being a boring burden to be endured, was instead the most meaningful part of the trip. When the journey is the adventure and the goal, the conditions for boredom, it seems, evaporate.

Punks saw themselves as part of a similar split. The consumers of culture against whom punks oriented themselves were, like the tourists to the *Wandervogel*, tied to certain patterns. Like tourists, they picked and chose the songs, films and fashions presented to them as if choosing from a menu. They were part of a larger system and were only participants in so much as they were part of this system. A great deal of the excitement and energy in punk was due to the freedom of stepping outside of this enframed world—of interpreting reality not as what Heidegger would call standing reserve, but as a place of hidden meanings and potentials.

While for the *Wandervogel* the educational system represented many of the elements of modern society against which they had situated themselves, for punks, while having strikingly similar complaints about the focus of their formal education, the larger and more pervasive representative of modern society was the entertainment industry. Globalizing, consolidating and forcing artistic expression through its narratives and shaping this expression through their affirmation and attention, the massive culture industry had, since its beginnings around the turn of the century, redefined both the production of culture and what participating in this culture meant. The next section details a shift in cultural reception beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century through a discussion of Adorno and Horkheimer's conceptualization of the culture industry. I see this as a specific manifestation of what Heidegger had in mind with the ideas of standing reserve and technological enframing. While they spoke in different terms, the fundamental problem they were enunciating was similar. Heidegger's approach places humanity's engagement with the technological as the fundamental shift in modern society—or as he preferred—the technological age. Boredom, what Heidegger noted as the mood of the age, was a manifestation and natural consequence of this shift—an articulation that shifts the problem of boredom and modernity to this engagement with the technological itself. If life in the technological age is characterized by enframing and what Anderson calls “repeated socialspatial orderings” (Anderson 747), then a potential answer to the boredom such orderings engender might lie in a reappropriation of the technological to undo the problems it has been complicit in creating.

Heidegger's philosophy appears rather pessimistic, as his conceptualization of technology is problematic as an essentialist reading. David Tabachnick argues for various readings of Heidegger and takes issue with Andrew Feenberg's assertion that Heidegger's essentialist stance on technology amounts to technological determinism. But if technology has a fundamental

essence that is revealed to us, then where is the room for human agency in Heidegger's philosophy? Heidegger himself wrote: "Of course man is shaped by his society, as of course, he is shaped by his genes, but the very fact that the influence of both of these quite distinct forces has to be taken into account in man's development suggests a degree of plasticity and tension in man that opens up the possibility for an at least partly self-determined self" (120). Tabachnick calls this a "moderate essentialism" that recognizes the unavoidable risks of the technological while allowing individuals and groups an element of autonomy. In the next section I will inspect the shift in cultural production in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century through a reading based on Adorno and Horkheimer's conceptualization of the culture industry in *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, situating this shift through the rise of mass communication technologies.

### **Participation as Consumption: The Death of Participatory Culture?**

The Gramophone, the first viable mass medium for recorded sound, has been of enormous consequence to modern society. But the possible repercussions of the new technology caused some to immediately question its potential benefits. In 1906 John Phillip Sousa gave his opinion of the "talking machine" before the US Congress:

These talking machines are going to ruin the artistic development of music in this country. When I was a boy...in front of every house in the summer evenings, you would find young people together singing the songs of the day or the old songs. Today you hear these infernal machines going night and day. We will not have a vocal chord left. The vocal cord will be eliminated by a process of evolution, as was the tail of man when he came from the ape. (Lessig)

In his analysis of online participatory culture, legal scholar Lawrence Lessig argues that Sousa was decrying what he foresaw as a near future where music and the creation and dissemination of culture would transition from being a communal, multidirectional and participatory project to a one-way transmission by an elite few who dictated taste to a receptive, but ultimately non-participatory audience. The seemingly inevitable spread of recorded sound would create a barrier separating people from participating in the creation of music. The creative voice *of* the individual would be replaced with a created voice directed *to* the individual. In hindsight, it may be possible to argue with the aptness of Sousa's evolutionary metaphor, but it is difficult to argue with Sousa's prescience regarding the future of participatory culture for most of the 20th century.

The *Wandervogel* project of collecting, playing and reviving the German folk culture legacy of song and dance represents a very clear attempt to foster a German culture based not only on remembering and engaging with this past, but in privileging a popular culture both unique to Germany and approachable by all. Similarly, punks found a voice through another available cultural legacy—rock culture. They foregrounded its participatory, expressive and popular origins, which had been largely lost as rock became assimilated by the culture industry, which had leveled it in their opinion to a stale commodity to be consumed. The popular projects of punk and the *Wandervogel* have never been appreciated by all. Situated in direct opposition to Sousa's fear that the gramophone would erode a populist participatory cultural project was the interpretation of the gramophone given by a conservative contemporary German composer. A year before Sousa articulated his concerns before Congress, Engelbert Humperdinck, most known for his opera *Hänsel und Gretel*, shared his admiration of the new technology:

In 1905 the composer Engelbert Humperdinck expressed the hope that 'mechanized' *Hausmusik* would supercede the 'vain bungling' prevalent in most



households: ‘The great painting masterpieces are not there to be copied but to be viewed; could it not be the same with musical works?’ As for lay musicians, many found it difficult to ‘master an instrument to the point where one’s own playing can even remotely fulfil [sic] his own musical standards. One is eventually happy that the gramophone dispenses with the necessity of having to listen to oneself plonking away.’ (Ross 52- 53)

The value placed on “high” culture and the notion of Germany as *Kulturnation* are both at work in Humperdinck’s remarks above. That laypeople might enjoy the production of music in its own right, regardless of the level of proficiency, escaped Humperdinck’s reasoning. The amateur would (thankfully for Humperdinck) no longer need to fumble about in the cultural landscape of music and could instead simply listen.

While Humperdinck’s remarks espousing the superiority of “high” culture and eschewing the productive capacity of the amateur were well founded in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in the upper class, there is also a discernable strand of more populist thought that runs counter to this tradition. Twenty-seven years later, in a 1932 lecture on “*Der Rundfunk als Kommunikationsapparat*,” Bertolt Brecht posited:

Ein Vorschlag zur Umfunktionierung des Rundfunks: Der Rundfunk ist aus einem Distributionsapparat in einen Kommunikationsapparat zu verwandeln. Der Rundfunk wäre der denkbar großartigste Kommunikationsapparat des öffentlichen Lebens, ein ungeheures Kanalsystem, das heißt, er wäre es, wenn er es verstünde, nicht nur auszusenden, sondern auch zu empfangen, also den Zuhörer nicht nur hören, sondern auch sprechen zu machen und ihn nicht zu

isolieren, sondern ihn in Beziehung zu setzen. Der Rundfunk müsste demnach aus dem Lieferantentum herausgehen und den Hörer als Lieferanten organisieren.

(Brecht 129)

These anecdotes point towards a largely forgotten discourse on the meaning of participation in Western societies in the early 20th century. It was not then a foregone conclusion that communication technologies would lead to a one-way dissemination of culture, but by the 1970s this transmission of consumer culture went largely unquestioned by the masses. Brecht's hope that radio might play an inclusive role that could foster active participation resonates with Sousa's admiration of amateur cultural participation while moving beyond Sousa's pessimistic and Humperdinck's approving forecasts of a technologically-silenced public. The years immediately following Brecht's 1932 appeal for a more participatory medium would see these aspirations go unrealized in Germany and the rest of the world. Still, his desire to utilize technology to harness the creative power of citizens as opposed to turning them into simple receivers presaged a repressed desire for participation that, in the 1970s, would find fierce expression in the Punk movement.

The intervening decades between the beginnings of the *Wandervogel* and Sousa's warning at the birth of recorded sound and the rise of punk in the mid-1970s saw great refinement and expansion in the mass distribution of culture, from the gramophone to cinema, radio and television, and a tremendous increase in their popularity. The co-option of these technologies for nationalistic, corporate and other propagandistic uses gave rise to theories of the danger posed by them, as well as responses reassessing the culture industry's potential.

During their exile in the United States from National Socialist Germany in the 1940s, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer provided a description of the mechanisms of capitalist culture in their *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1947). One of the major limitations of Adorno and Horkheimer's theory was their insistence on the qualitative superiority of "high" culture and their relegation of anything else to a separate, inferior sphere. Adorno and Horkheimer would almost certainly, like the West German media, have dismissed the punk movement as degenerate non-culture. This does not mean, however, that their theory of the culture industry is irrelevant to an analysis of the punk movement.

Their depiction of the culture industry in the United States, which they conceived of as a highly differentiated but ultimately monolithic entity, offers a convincing theory of how mass media had been used to reinforce the values and faith in a capitalistic system while shaping and controlling the cultural sphere of the masses. By claiming that "[d]ie Standards seien ursprünglich aus den Bedürfnissen der Konsumenten hervorgegangen: daher würden sie so widerstandslos akzeptiert" (Adorno and Horkheimer 142), the culture industry masks the foundational role it played in creating this system by suggesting it to be the natural consequence of satisfying the needs of the millions. The ease with which this commodified mass culture was accepted is spun by the culture industry not in Gramscian hegemonic terms, but by suggesting that it sprang organically from the people and not from above them.

Technological innovations in mass communications made this system possible, and the framing of these technologies as one-way media by the culture industry obfuscates the potential of these media to serve other, more inclusive, democratic and participatory roles: "Verschwiegen wird dabei, dass der Boden, auf dem die Technik Macht über die Gesellschaft gewinnt, die Macht der ökonomisch Stärksten über die Gesellschaft ist. Technische Rationalität heute ist die

Rationalität der Herrschaft selbst” (Adorno and Horkheimer 142). Without an independent medium to turn to, new cultural phenomena are confined to operating within the culture industry in order to reach a broader audience.

The very idea of participation itself has been reconceived to fit within the discourse of the culture industry. “Die Teilnahme der Millionen” (Adorno and Horkheimer 142) is now linked to ideas of cultural participation in society espoused by Sousa without allowing for any role other than that of the participant as consumer. By redefining cultural participation as participation in consumption of cultural products, cultural production within the culture industry is misleadingly tied to a long-standing participatory popular tradition, not as a co-opting of that tradition that directs the creative forces of the population through familiar tropes and media by commercial industries with the ultimate goals of profit maximization and market security.

More optimistic responses to Horkheimer and Adorno focus on cultural populism and greater agency among consumers to infinitely interpret cultural products and to influence the form these products take. In progressive evolutionism, formulated among others by Edward Shils and Daniel Bell, the plurality of voices in a democratic society enriches the cultural lives of all consumers. Criticizing a romanticized view of the past based on notions of “high” culture within critical theory, progressive evolutionists suggest that “[c]onsumer capitalism, rather than creating a vast homogenous and culturally brutalized mass, generates different levels of taste, different audiences and consumers. Culture is stratified, its consumption differentiated” (Swingewood 20). Cultural populists do not seem to refute that there is a culture industry, but that, because all participate in it, albeit in a redefined way, and because it negotiates at some level with the masses to satisfy the demands of a heterogeneous population, its existence is to be tolerated, even lauded.

In the end, progressive evolutionism illustrates how fundamental and successful the shift from engaged production to engaged reception has become. The culture industry has without doubt made culture much more readily available to the masses, and cultural populism's critique of critical theory that consumers negotiate meaning and influence which products are produced is quite valid. But cultural populism fails to imagine a more democratic and participatory engagement with cultural production, and by looking for redemption from within the media as it is, it misses the potential of mass media technologies to play a role in breaking down the barriers to a more direct form of participation that these technologies were utilized to erect in the first place. The culture industry can be seen as a sort of microcosm of the alienating and disengaging effects of modern life in the technological age. In forcing artistic expression through its filters, the culture industry applies its own logic, redefining not only what it means to produce culture, but redefining participation through this logic to mean little more than consumption of the choices presented. Participation is reduced to affirming or rejecting what is offered and validating these offerings through their purchase. For many, this form of cultural participation is not enough.

The fact that *Wandervogel* youth were bored long before this new constellation of culture fully emerged points to a more fundamental origin to modern boredom. The culture industry is perhaps the most visible symptom of modernity, threatening to erase cultural expression and diversity through its internal logic and leveling of cultural production as commodity. Ultimately, the culture industry underscores the potentially alienating elements of modern technology. Both *Wandervögel* and punks, I argue, took issue with this orientation towards the technological and instead put it to uses more aligned with the potential Brecht saw in radio to foster discourse and diversity.

## **Hope and Adventure: Towards an Alternative**

In his article “Postmodernity and the Routinization of Novelty: Heidegger on Boredom and Technology,” Leslie Paul Thiele discusses these problems and the relationship between boredom and technology in Heidegger’s writing. He concludes that the attempt to escape boredom through technological innovation and consumption as practiced in the technological age “undermines the practice of philosophy and the inherently political human task of discovering a home in the world” (489). If caring (*Sorge*) is a prerequisite to an ontological being questioning existence, then boredom, as a side-effect of an enframed world, results in an inability to care about the world or one’s role in it. This manifests either in the inability to do anything or in a frenzied state of action without awareness of one’s own being in an attempt to escape it. This sort of frenzied activity is particularly at home in the technological age. It has, as Heidegger intones, become the mood of the age—the water through which all (often unwittingly) swim. Not all will be bored, but the conditions that give rise to boredom on a mass scale exist. Technological innovation threatens to become an end in itself as a false answer to humanity’s existence. The effort to ignore the discomfort of an engagement with humanity’s existential homelessness has, in the technological age, resulted in an expanding and endless spiral in which humans innovate and consume in order to escape a widening existential boredom that ultimately can only serve to remove humanity further from a lived reflective engagement with its own existence. This cycle of boredom temporarily chased away by technological innovation only to return in a heightened sense is, for Heidegger, nothing less than nihilism. There is no future in this chase. The flight from boredom only serves to prolong an existence in which time has become an enemy to be spent, filled, and defeated.

The boredom of a perceived pre-ordained life that the *Wandervogel* recognized and attempted to address in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and which had by the explosion of punk in the late-1970s accelerated and intensified with the development of a (then still) globalizing culture industry saw youth encountering a reversed situation. Both groups' application of technology was a response to the threat of the technological and the boredom that life in technological societies engendered. The *Wandervogel* utilized the technologies of their day to greatly enhance the range and scope of their activities. The democratized media technologies that proliferated in the 1970s—most importantly photocopying, cassettes and other cheap sound recording capabilities—offered punks a new opportunity to create and to be heard. Given the conditions for boredom that permeated modern society, how could youth create an authentic culture based upon something beyond the artificial foundation this society rested upon?

For Heidegger, neither ignoring the problem of technological enframing through escaping nor bowing to the power of enframing and accepting it as an inevitability was adequate—but neither was a valiant fight in the face of overwhelming odds of which exhaustion was the only guarantee. This unwinnable fight was one of the traps to which punk fell victim and by which it has been harshly judged. But the initial explosiveness of punk is often confused with the entire participatory punk project. Singer Campino (*née* Andreas Frege) of the Toten Hosen (and originally of early punk group ZK) said of punk that “Das war ‘ne Revolution. Das war ‘ne Explosion. Und so ‘ne Wut und so ‘ne Wucht und so ‘ne Leidenschaft. Das kannst du nicht auf Dauer konservieren. Das ist einfach eine Momentaufnahme. Aber sie hat viel ins Wackeln gebracht” (Galenza, 98). This initial moment of punk was its direct confrontation with boredom—a response to the stopped-time of the present and an exuberant invocation to action. This was precisely what Ben Anderson suggested when he wrote of boredom's dissipation:

For example, joy moves into rupture in those circumstances where a point of suspension, boredom, dissipates suddenly into new connections that transgress, or even destroy, the durable repeated socialspatial orderings that form boredom. This imperative was translated into genres of music, specifically punk, that worked with the explosiveness that follows the dead time of boredom (747).

But what comes after this initial rupture? Here again, I see the answer in the personal participatory engagement of punks and *Wandervögel* in their constructions of alternative and autonomous spheres. Anderson saw joy as fragile, brittle, or fleeting in the face of boredom, whereas, in simple hope, he perceived an answer to boredom, writing that “Hope is an affective supplement that begins from an embedded trust in/for the world” (751). This hope is risky because “hope, and the act of hoping, incorporate a break with the past that means hope is inevitably uncertain” (751). But the inherent hope that the one’s personal action can create the *possibility* of a fulfilling future is a potent emotion in the face of a disempowering and predictable society is powerful. In Musil’s *The Man without Qualities*, Goodstein sees Ulrich’s decision to live life as an experiment and the uncertainty of such an existence a small glimmer of hope. “In trying to imagine what it would mean to live for the sake of possibilities rather than realities, Musil’s novel strives to reconnect the philosophical and social-critical rhetorics of experience that were originally conjoined in the discourse on boredom” (417). Brissett & Snow, borrowing from Simmel, suggest a similar resolution: “Perhaps the best antidote for boredom is what Georg Simmel called ‘the adventure.’ For Simmel, the adventure is a social form and experience that maximizes uncertainty while anticipating resolution. In the adventure, an uncertain end becomes a quest for its own sake” (252). The quest for possibilities and alternatives and the hope of finding meaning or, at the very least, fulfillment might be the best answer to modernity and the



technological age. The participatory projects of the *Wandervogel* and punk rejected the dominant boredom-inducing engagement with technology. Still, neither group was anti-technological. Instead, both groups utilized technology in ways that created a necessary distance from the dominant engagement with technology and put these same technologies to new (or old) uses as tools to foster a *more* direct engagement with the world. For punks, the cassette, photocopier and recording equipment formed the most important of these new technologies. For the *Wandervogel*, it was transportation, camping and hiking gear and food. The world opened up by train travel and the potential of the mail system to deliver supplies along long hikes made possible the activities of the *Wandervogel*. And far from roughing it, these youth pioneered the use of cutting-edge gear. From reinforced hiking boots and alcohol-fueled aluminum camp stoves to lightweight tents, waterproof coats and battery-powered flashlights, the *Wandervogel* utilized many technologies that made these youth largely self-reliant and allowed them to remain on *Fahrt* for longer periods of time and more comfortably. Their use of industrialized foodstuffs such as *Maggi* bouillon capsules kept their weight light and allowed them to cook on their own as well. Finally—as the thousands of photos on record at the *Archiv der Jugendbewegung* at Burg Ludwigstein and the numerous photography clubs in *Wandervogel* groups (often with their own dark room) attest—the camera was put to prolific use in documenting their outings and in capturing the experience of going on *Fahrt*. Burg Ludwigstein holds dozens of photo albums compiled by youth on outings detailing everything from cooking, sleeping and hiking to attempts to capture traditional German country to expressionistic and impressionistic representations of natural beauty. Both punks and *Wandervogel* utilized technologies not to disengage and not to consume, but in the pursuit of expression, engagement and adventure.

## Towards the Future

Heidegger's view of the essence of technology has come under fire for being too essentialist—viewing technological enframing as a constant and leaving far too little room for human agency. But even he saw *some* room for hope, writing that “We can affirm the unavoidable use of technical devices, and also deny them the right to dominate us, and so to warp, confuse and lay waste our nature” (Heidegger 1966 54). For Martin Heidegger (and, I argue, for the *Wandervögel* and punks), the incessant parade of new technologies, new fads, new sights and new sounds that one is compelled to consume and then discard in the technological age led not to a state of perpetual amusement but to a deep-seated but inexpressible subjective malaise and discontent. Both the punks and the *Wandervögel* arose out of this confrontation with modernity and a technology-induced (or at least assisted) boredom. In their confrontations with this boredom, both the *Wandervögel* and punks implicitly showed that words were insufficient when the entire vocabulary of experience failed to allow for adequate expression. What was needed was action—a participatory culture that stood as an alternative to the cavalcade of new technology and consumer culture. Viewed this way, the *Wandervogel* ethic of *Selbsterziehung* (self-upbringing) and the punk adoption of DIY cultural production both arose to a large extent out of the desire to address the perceived insufficient opportunities, available futures, and methods of expression in their respective societies. *Wandervogel* and punk provided examples of how experience can again be made meaningful through action.<sup>9</sup> This urgency of action was at the core of both youth cultures.

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<sup>9</sup> “Meaningful” not in the sense of having an intrinsic meaning, but rather as the result of the various ways and methods of experiencing and interacting with the world that each group saw as worthwhile and exciting.

In this analysis of *Wandervogel* and punk through the lens of modernity, technology, and boredom, I argue that both *Wandervogel* and punk arose as a result of inadequate potentials for subjective expression and interpretation in the modern age—a dearth which had by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and increasingly throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries manifested in what became seen as an endemic boredom permeating German society (and with slightly altered chronology Western/globalized society more broadly)—a boredom which has been especially palpable and abhorrent to youth still uninitiated into society and still possessing a degree of idealism and hopefulness in an unwritten future. Ultimately, the growth of *Wandervogel* and punk both represented youth responses to and attempts to rewrite static presents offering these youth little hope in personally fulfilling futures.

In these projects in the face of unending innovation, both the *Wandervögel* and punks saw in the emerging technologies of their days not simply means for distraction (which Heidegger saw as laying the foundation for boredom) but tools to engage with a complex and changing world. The *Wandervogel* movement has often been accused of a backwards-oriented escapist trajectory. However, I would argue they were in many ways ahead of their time. And in their activities I see a precursor to the actions of punks near the end of the “century of youth.”

There is a great deal of the romantic in the *Wandervogel*, and more than a little in the punk movement as well. The *Wandervögel* were understood as part of the neoromantic revival of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and their adoption of outmoded fashion and medieval titles, their intense interest in folk music and traditional dances, their meandering search for meaning while on a *Fahrt* (days, weeks, or even months-long journey), their increasing patriotism and their affinity for nature all mark them as having been heavily influenced by the Romantic tradition. Ironically, punks formulated a similar sort of romanticism turned inwards to the urban—what the

introduction to *Keine Zukunft war gestern*, (No Future was Yesterday) called “Industrie-Romantik” and “Beton-Romantik.” While a large part of this punk romanticism manifested as “Subversion durch Affirmation” (IG Dreck auf Papier 13), the quest for finding deeper meaning in modern existence was central to punk. But instead of a search for meaning in nature, punks turned back to the urban (glorified in the SYPH punk classic “Zurück zum Beton”), searching through the decay and detritus of the last century for inspiration. I would argue, however, that both movements moved well beyond these backwards-looking and ultimately escapist foundations and, despite exhibiting very different aesthetics and engagements with society at opposing ends of tremendous upheavals in German history, both groups of youth revealed themselves to be engaged in the same urgent quest for a meaningful future in modernity.

Both groups found initial motivation not in the difficulties of their lives, but in the inadequacy of the comfortable predictability of this pre-scripted existence. Certainly futures existed. But they were *too* certain. The youth of the *Wandervogel* were expected to follow in their parents’ paths and take up their jobs as civil servants—taking up their roles as the next generation in a depersonalized and industrialized system. They hoped for something better. The punks saw the society left to them and were similarly unimpressed. The conditions that had inspired the *Wandervogel* to seek alternative ways of living had accelerated tremendously by the late 1970s. The culture industry dominated taste. Rock culture had emerged, grown and become stagnant and bloated. And no group had been able to effect a significant degree of change—that the 68ers who a decade before were protesting in the streets were now working unproblematically side-by-side with former Nazis was too much. In one of the most evocative passages in Teipel’s work, Franz Bielmeier characterized West German society in the 70s, saying: “Damals war Deutschland vom Gefühl her so eine gepolsterte Wohnzimmerwelt mit

dem fetten, zigarrerauchenden Altnazichef darin. Wenn du auf irgendeinem Teil gesessen bist, hast du gespürt, dass du auf Kunstleder sitzt, in dem Schaumgummi drin ist” (42). It wasn’t solely the unresolved engagement with National Socialism that Bielmeier was decrying. The fat, cigar-smoking Nazi was but one part of a system rationalized to its own existence. The entire nation was an “upholstered living-room world.” Whenever you found a place to situate yourself, it was revealed as artificial. It was comfortable, but this artificiality was also fundamentally uncomfortable. Life in such a room simply could not satisfy Bielmeier and those like him.

Youth are, it appears, much more susceptible to (or at least aware of) boredom, and this sensation of the approaching void, this nihilism, is for Healy most profoundly felt by young people. “[M]any in the younger generation...feel the form of consciousness of the civilization they inherit as a foreign object. Many do not yet see other forms with which to replace them. In the ensuing formlessness, they taste the experience of nothingness. Without an image by which to shape themselves, how do they know how to make sense of their experience, or who they are?” (Novak quoted in Healy 92). *Wandervogel* and punk youths’ intrinsic recognition and rejection of this type of existential boredom, of the taste of “the experience of nothingness,” was ultimately motivating. It pushed these youth to engage with their respective stagnant presents and insufficient futures and motivated them to search for something else. Both *Wandervogel* and punk youth attempted to create new realities that re-started the stopped-time of boredom, hoping to revivify their respective societies from the bottom up. Further, in this engaged search itself, boredom seems to dissipate.

Anderson’s notion of hopelessness is particularly important here, as in the context of the hyper-optimistic youth of the *Wandervogel* and the outwardly pessimistic but hopeful punks, it is this shared vision of and hope for a better future and personal involvement in nurturing this

potential that made these projects seem worthwhile to so many and allowed this suspension of boredom. Hope—the antithesis of boredom in Anderson’s opinion—was instrumental in inspiring these modern youth to imagine societies and ways of living fundamentally different from those in which they originated. The projects of *Selbsterziehung* and DIY were not only the result of a desire to be heard in societies that in different ways had silenced these youth. They also provided the means, with the aid of a re-articulation of the technological, for youth to pursue lifestyles and worldviews based on this action and the articulation of difference in the concepts of *Anderssein* and *Wandern* which could give rise to the hopeful belief that, through their efforts, meaningful futures could become possible.

Both groups’ application of technology was incorporated into their programs of *Selbsterziehung* and DIY as responses to the threat of the technological and the boredom that life in technological societies engendered. The greatest failures of both movements—the *Wandervogel* in their eventual reconciliation with conservative elements of Wilhelmine society just before WWI and their subsequent confrontation with the horrors of modern war, and punk’s absorption as yet another codified and, in its unpredictability, woefully predictable, safe, exploitable and salable trend are not evidence of the insufficiency of hope and the adventure for the creation of meaningful futures. Instead, they are proof of the veracity, power and threat of a technologically enframed world and peoples’ fear of it. Boredom remains a plague for many, but the original impulses behind both movements persist and point towards the possibility of a future beyond “no future.”

## CHAPTER TWO: “ALLES ZUVOR WAR OHNE GLANZ”<sup>1</sup>

Das ist neu, das ist neu! Hurra Hurra die Schule brennt!

- Extrabreit (1981)

The late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries saw Wilhelmine Germany rapidly modernizing. The *Wandervogel* are read as a reaction to modern German society, but generally as a rebellion from school, family, and militaristic nationalism against which they oriented themselves in the attempt to create a new, less restrictive society. The inspection of the *Wandervogel* through the lens of boredom is long overdue, because in creating an autonomous and engaged culture of direct action, the *Wandervogel* hit upon a means of approaching life which—in the eyes of its adherents—made it much more interesting and worthwhile. Similar to punk, as we will see in Chapter Three, the *Wandervogel* have been long read through discourses that obscure their larger critique and alternative to modern lifestyles.

The *Wandervogel* was the first youth subculture in the German nation, and it arose at a time of rapid societal transformation. This chapter traces the history of the *Wandervogel* from their beginnings in Steglitz to the outbreak of World War I, narrowing the focus from broader social trends, particularly boredom of and with modernity, down to the *Wandervogel* organization itself and its members’ struggles for autonomy and direct action. Their history is often complex, and unraveling the major events, personalities and, especially, the various organizations which would emerge, provides valuable insight into the diversity and often contentious nature of what is often approached with blanket statements and generalizations. Further, this history allows those without a firm understanding of the *Wandervogel* to quickly

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<sup>1</sup> From Mogge, Winfried. “Ihr Wandervögel in der Luft ...:” *Fundstücke zur Wanderung eines romantischen Bildes und zur Selbstinszenierung einer Jugendbewegung*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2009, page 9.

acquaint themselves with these major events and personalities. The chapter closes with a detailed inspection of the elephant in the room: the debate surrounding the *Wandervogel* and National Socialism, a debate that highlights several of the issues at the heart of this dissertation, especially when viewed as a conflict about the meaning of modernity.

While only adopting the name in 1901, the *Wandervogel* first began organizing around the stenography group at the Steglitz Gymnasium led by the university student Hermann Hoffmann-Fölkersamb in 1896. A predominantly middle class town on the outskirts of Berlin, Steglitz was home to many bureaucrats, teachers, doctors, lawyers and the other professionals who comprised the *Bildungsbürgertum* of German society. Around the turn of the century, Steglitz was on the verge of being absorbed into greater Berlin and its population was exploding. From a population of 17,244 in 1896, by 1914 it had swelled to 86,451.<sup>2</sup> It is fitting that Steglitz formed the birthplace of the *Wandervogel*, as the encroaching sprawl of greater Berlin, Germany's fastest growing city, crept ceaselessly closer to the small town. Steglitz was representative of the type of places in which the *Wandervogel* proliferated—the many reform-minded elements of the *Bildungsbürgertum* fostered an atmosphere much more conducive to allowing youth to experiment with alternative ways of living, the urban environment read as an alienating intrusion. As Günter Köhler writes:

So erscheint die Wandervogelbewegung in einer Gesellschaft wie der  
bürgerlichen von Steglitz und nicht nur dort als eine Befreiung, oder  
zurückhaltender ausgedrückt, als eine Möglichkeit für die Jugend, für sich eine

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<sup>2</sup> The growth of Steglitz is also evident in an analysis of its infrastructure (for a more complete picture of Steglitz and its growth around the turn of the century, see Juuta Eisenmenger, Gerhard Ille, and Günter Köhler's *Es Begann in Steglitz*). In 1891, 75 trains stopped in the town daily. By 1907, the number had reached 151. In 1896, the process of converting its streets from cobblestone to asphalt began. The landscape of Steglitz, most notably the Grunewald, Fichteberg and Jagdrevier still marked Steglitz as rich in natural beauty, although the construction of the Teltow canal in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century greatly changed the complexion of the town.



Alternative zur Welt der Eltern zu schaffen und damit reformerisch tätig zu sein. Da dies weitgehend gelang, kann mit Fug und Recht beim Wandervogel vom Anfang einer Jugendbewegung gesprochen werden. (Eisenmenger, Ille and Köhler 27)

This freedom to pursue their own agendas was ultimately the single greatest factor in making the *Wandervogel* a possibility and allowing it to proliferate across the young nation. The reasons for this openness lay in an increased emphasis on and interest in youth—a development referred to as the *Jugendkult*, a term credited to educational reformer Gustav Wyneken—which saw youth as the great hope for cultural rejuvenation in modern Germany.

The origins of the *Wandervogel* in Steglitz were heavily mythologized by later youth, with Hans Blüher's history cementing a romantic depiction of the earliest days of the *Wandervogel* that remains a valuable source of often rather subjective accounts of the early group.<sup>3</sup> On the night of 4 November 1901 in the Ratskeller of Steglitz a group of men and schoolboys had gathered for what was at that time a rather peculiar purpose—the establishment of an officially recognized organization founded around the idea of youth hiking. Through after-school stenography lessons in his apartment on the Schloßstraße in Steglitz, at the insistence of many of his students, including a particularly vocal young Karl Fischer, Hoffmann shared his love of hiking and the outdoors after some of these students had happened upon Hoffmann's notebook about his own experiences walking the countryside in his school days a few years prior. The activities of the group quickly broadened in scope from shorthand instruction to

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<sup>3</sup> Hans Blüher was an influential figure in the *Wandervogel*, especially its more radical circles. A member of the original Steglitz group, he went on to write the first history of the phenomenon, a three-volume anthology published throughout 1912. The third volume, *Die Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen*, would stir a great deal of controversy as will be seen later in this chapter.

include Sunday hiking excursions. From then on, increasing numbers of curious students from outside the study group began to join them—not in an official capacity as members of the stenography circle, but as interested kids who wanted to see what these outings were about. So while the hikes had begun in 1896 in an unofficial capacity, by the turn of the century, they were growing in both popularity and significance for the youth involved. A legal foundation became a necessity. The organization founded in Steglitz in 1901, the *Wandervogel, Ausschluß für Schulerfahrten* (hereafter shortened to AfS) was short-lived, dissolving due to internal power struggles in July of 1904. But the movement would continue to grow as new organizations emerged to take the AfS's place across Germany—each carrying the *Wandervogel* name. The initial modest excursions of perhaps a dozen schoolboys hiking the countryside around Berlin with Hoffmann comprised the first activities of what by 1910 became a national phenomenon of an estimated 25,000 young boys and girls in a movement that would stir a great deal of debate about the role of youth in late-Wilhelmine Germany.

It is important to differentiate between youth of the middle-class *Bürgertum* and the youth of the lower classes in Wilhelmine conceptualizations of youth—a discussion propagated by the educated circles of the *Bildungsbürgertum*. This educated milieu was extremely influential in shaping the major relevant discourses in German society, leading to the proliferation of reform movements and a focus upon youth. In a clear double-standard, middle-class youth were, as the existence of the *Wandervogel* makes clear, granted far greater permissions and autonomy to explore (within reason) alternative lifestyles and held aloft as the great hope for the future (although *Jugendpflege* groups would increasingly target middle-class youth as well). In contrast, as Wilfried Ferchhoff suggests in “Wandervogel, Jugend und Jugendkultur,” working-class youth were read against the background of “industrieller

Modernisierungsumbrüche sowie im Bezug auf ein ‘normatives Idealbildes von *Jugend*’ mindestens als *krisengefährdet* und *bedrohte* Opfer” (117). And while the *Wandervogel* talked a great deal about a unified and inclusive German youth, the reality was that the *Wandervogel* drew nearly all its members from the *Bildungsbürgertum* and were generally quite content with maintaining this exclusivity. Importantly, they also had a great deal more leisure time, which was of course a necessity when planning and undertaking, for example, a month-long trek across Germany or abroad.

The *Wandervogel* can therefore be situated within this increased societal focus on the role of youth, but they would never affiliate with the various reform groups courting their favor, and they likewise remained separate from the many much larger and ideologically-driven *Jugendpflege* organizations. Germany developed industrially in comparison with much of Western Europe at a relatively late date but extremely quickly—leading to a young nation which saw itself embroiled in a cultural and social crisis resulting from the need to confront the unsettling effects of modernization. There was never a unanimous vision of how this confrontation should be approached. Splinterings and reconciliations of *Wandervogel* organizations would become a mainstay in a movement ostensibly (and officially) based on the simple activity of hiking. At its heart, the *Wandervogel* became not about hiking itself, but rather about what hiking represented—which came to be embodied in the idea of *Wandern*—and about that there were interpretations to go around. While there were many interpretations of what *Wandern* meant, it had a lot to do with that notoriously vague concept of freedom. But freedom from what? And freedom to do what? To answer these questions the *Wandervogel* must first be situated in early-20th century German society. Peter Stachura suggest that “[t]he *Wandervogel* arose spontaneously as a movement of youthful protest against the stuffy and constricting

conventions of late Wilhelmine society. It reflected an acute boredom with contemporary society...caused by the failure of the technological age and urban culture to offer youth either emotional satisfaction or moral inspiration” (15). The Germany which existed for many *Wandervögel* was a world of boredom of and with modernity, of a struggle between autonomy and authority, and of many conflicting ideologies regarding class, education, sexuality, industrialization, militarism, nationalism, and race relations.

### **The Reform Movements and Youth as the Future**

The *Wandervogel* were widely discussed in pedagogical journals such as the *Monatsschrift für Höhere Schulen* in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, usually in tandem with discussions of educational reform and alternative forms of schooling such as the *Freie Schulgemeinde Wickersdorf* led by Gustav Wyneken, which stressed youth autonomy (the school located in the countryside to ensure this distance) in the aim of allowing youth the freedom to learn what interested them and the opportunity to develop a *Jugendkultur* (another term Wyneken is credited with popularizing) capable of rejuvenating the nation to lead Germany into the future.<sup>4</sup> These journals generally read a great deal of potential into the *Wandervogel* and articles were often written by those with close connections to them, such as Ludwig Gurlitt (who was instrumental in the beginnings of the *Wandervogel* in Steglitz and in obtaining state-sanctioned permission for the *Wandervogel*'s very existence from the Prussian Ministry of Culture) and of

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<sup>4</sup> There is a clear connection here to an articulation of German nationalism not towards proving military might, but in the merit of creating a cultural nation strong enough to withstand the rapid industrialization and urbanization which many in educated circles saw as a threat to a developing German identity. This is not to say that *Wandervogel* youth were not nationalistic or that some elements of the WV did not espouse such militaristic rhetoric, but when viewed in the context of Wilhelmine society, WV conceptions of the nation were much less overtly jingoistic than those of their elders.

course Gustav Wyneken (who would become at times one of the leading figures in the *Jugendbewegung* and at others marginalized for his liberal and often controversial views, especially in the nationalistic fervor leading up to WWI).

The *Wandervogel* served as a living and relatively autonomous model of youth *Selbsterziehung* and *Selbstbildung* which became the core of the educational reform movement surrounding Wyneken and, for a time, Gurlitt. As has been discussed at length in scholarship, an increasing discontent with the existing restrictive educational system was one of the major grievances of *Wandervogel* youth, and this dissatisfaction with school life was one of the initial impetuses for their desire to seek alternative, self-directed lifestyles. The school embodied many of the aspects of society which *Wandervogel* youth found abhorrent: a cold rationality, lack of warmth and caring, a disregard for the emotional, a demand for unquestioned obedience, outmoded tradition and a focus not upon allowing youth to explore their own interests, but rather upon forming the next carbon copy of the current generation.<sup>5</sup> Youth who were left disengaged and bored by their experiences with school and life in Wilhelmine Germany broadly found themselves in a position as a result of the *Jugendkultur* phenomenon to ask for more. If existing social structures were unable or obstinately opposed to providing the kinds of education and opportunity many of these youth craved, they were dedicated to creating these opportunities themselves (and dedicated to the goal of creating a society where youth demands for self-direction were fostered instead of repressed).

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<sup>5</sup> See Gerhard Ille's "Schülernot und Jugendkultur im deutschen Kaiserreich: Zur Situation der bürgerlichen Jugend um 1900" in *Es begann in Steglitz* and Detlev Gaus & Reinhard Uhle's "Pädagogik im erste Jahrzehnt. Zwischen Tradition und Moderne, zwischen Erstarrung und Aufbruch" in *Das erste Jahrzehnt* for more on both the existing pedagogical system and the increased reformist influences of the era.

There was a close symbiotic relationship between the *Wandervogel* and educational reformers, as it was only with their (often quite literal) rubber stamp that the *Wandervogel* were allowed to organize and expand. The *Wandervogel* represented a real-existing, multifaceted and constantly evolving example of the hands-off, autonomous and often nature-oriented model they advocated. The educational reformers were not the only group to see their interests align with the *Wandervogel*. The abstinence movement, *Freikörperkultur* and *Gesundheitsreform* (especially in realms of fitness and practical clothing) were all elements of the wide-reaching *Lebensreform* movements whose demands often paralleled the *Wandervogel*. Importantly, it must be noted that while there were often strong affinities between these groups and the *Wandervogel*, reform groups were intentionally kept at length by the *Wandervogel* subculture, at least in an official capacity. In the engagement with the public (adult) sphere, even where their interests aligned, *Wandervogel* youth were committed to autonomy and self-direction.<sup>6</sup>

This charge to remain autonomous went part and parcel with the *Wandervogel* program of *Selbsterziehung*. *Selbsterziehung* was the practical side of what is often condemned as a vague demand for “freedom.” The great strengths of *Wandervogel* self-direction and self-cultivation were its flexibility in interpretation (with groups and individuals internalizing and developing in directions towards which they were most drawn) and its hands-on, do-it-yourself philosophy. Both of these allowed for a relationship with modernity that encouraged engagement, experience and experimentation—three important elements they saw as sorely lacking in modern German society and which have since been posited as elements which dissolve the conditions for boredom. While the much larger *Jugendpflege* organizations indoctrinated youth with their

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<sup>6</sup> For a fuller picture of the connection between the various reform movements and the *Wandervogel*, see Kai Buchholz’ anthology *Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe zur Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst um 1900* and Sabine Weißler’s *Fokus Wandervogel. Der Wandervogel in seinen Beziehungen zu den Reformbewegungen vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg*.

particular agendas (political, religious, reformist, *völkisch*, etc.), the ultimate goal of the *Wandervogel* was not to push an existing ideology, but to create a new type of person free of indoctrination.<sup>7</sup> This orientation towards youth—of cultivating not an ideology but an approach to living openly and receptively—is one of the major contributions of the *Wandervogel* project. The idea of *Selbsterziehung* is critical here. As Otto Neuloh remarked: “Nur aus diesem Grundsatz der Selbsterziehung und Selbstbildung konnte der Wandervogel die buntscheckige Formenwelt seines Lebensstils entwickeln” (37). It is this foundational value, not in itself new but novel in its reception by youth themselves, which permitted *Wandervogel* across the German-speaking world the freedom to work through their own engagement with the world on their own and as part of a group of individuals engaged in the same project. When the many schisms of the *Wandervogel* are viewed in light of this *Selbsterziehung* project, the checkered and diverse nature of the multiple groups can be seen differently than the usual failure to unite youth into a cohesive movement. With thousands of individuals in hundreds of groups all working towards their own ideal of *Wandern*, the idea of a single “youth movement” holding all of these strands together seems absurd, and the fracturings of the *Wandervogel* an inevitability, not necessarily a failure. In working through the leveling effects of modern life, a monolithic youth movement cannot be expected to provide a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, the general worldview explored and expressed by *Wandervogel*, regardless of their specific group affiliation or ideological interpretation, held these youth loosely in a confederation of difference predicated upon a shared approach to life.

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<sup>7</sup> See “*Who Has the Youth, Has the Future*”: *The Campaign to Save Young Workers in Imperial Germany* by Derek Linton for a handling of the different *Jugendpflege* organizations as they engaged with working-class Germans as well as for more discussion on the *Jugendkultur* in early 20<sup>th</sup> century and for a detailed analysis of Germany’s increasing youth population, which Linton notes was growing much more quickly than the population as a whole.

The response from (a small portion of) middle-class youth in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in claiming autonomy to explore themselves and the world is very similar to those of a much wider segment of youth following 1945 (and especially during the 1960s, although subcultures such as the *Halbstarcken* certainly existed earlier), when youth leisure time began to become fully democratized and social barriers continued to give way. Only recently have the *Wandervogel* begun to be inspected as a modern youth subculture, opening the door for new readings in cultural studies. Viewing the *Wandervogel* as an early 20<sup>th</sup> century youth subculture, albeit one which had to fight much harder for recognition and accept many more concessions and boundaries in order to exist, allows for a much more direct comparison between it and those subcultures of the post-war era, including the punks.

### **Young Germans in Late Wilhelmine Germany: Between the Past and the Future**

The *Wandervogel* were considered by youth and adults alike as a novel, perhaps even rebellious phenomenon. Wilhelmine Germany was caught between two worlds. Rapidly industrializing and urbanizing, Germany was nevertheless still heavily guided by a conservative aristocracy and monarchy that exercised a great deal of influence and power. Ulrich Aufmuth notes that, from the founding of the *Reich* in 1871 and for about four decades after: “Deutschland erlebte einen Industrialisierungsschub, der in der Geschichte der alten Industrienationen einmalig dasteht” (Aufmuth 119).<sup>8</sup> The accompanying demographic and social shifts further mark this

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<sup>8</sup> Aufmuth compares German and English steel production between the year 1873, in which Germany produced only a third of England’s output and 1893, the year that Germany eclipsed England’s production. By 1900, Germany’s chemical and electrical production was the highest among all industrialized nations. Between 1870 and 1900, Germany’s rail network increased from 20,000 kilometers to 52,000, compared with a much more modest increase from 25,000 to 35,000 kilometers in England. While it is important to note that England, as a smaller but more developed nation, should be expected to experience slower growth in these areas, the speed and intensity of



forty year span from 1871 until around 1910 as a tumultuous and rapidly changing period of German history. As people flocked to the cities, the traditional agrarian existence that had characterized life for hundreds of years for millions was eroding. In its place among the lower classes was a rapidly expanding working class, taxing the infrastructures of large cities and redefining the social structure of the nation.

Between 1871 and 1910, the percentage of people living in towns of 5,000 or more doubled from 23.7% to 48.8%. Berlin, the birthplace of the *Jugendbewegung* and Germany's most rapidly growing urban center, saw its population increase from 970,000 to 1.6 million between 1875 and 1890—a figure which would swell to 2.1 million by 1910. In addition, urbanization in the Wilhelmine era outside Berlin was uneven, with the vast majority of population redistribution occurring in Westphalia, the Rheinland and in Saxony, not coincidentally the hotbeds of *Wandervogel* expansion pre-WWI.<sup>9</sup> The internal migration that resulted further unsettled traditional German society as Germans from across the country, who a generation or two before might never have spoken High German nor left their hometowns, now mixed freely in often quite distant cities. Further, this demographic shift was disproportionately composed of male adolescents, and by 1900 cities housed an estimated four million adolescent male workers.

In between the aristocracy and the lower classes of workers and farmers remained the traditional German middle classes - the *Bildungsbürgertum* of professionals which included lawyers, doctors, clergy, teachers, professors and civil servants as well as the steadily growing

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Germany's industrialization effort is nevertheless staggering. The parents, young professionals, and especially teachers who supported the *Wandervogel* effort were heavily influenced by their own experiences as the first generation born into this rapidly changing world. This is important to note as it certainly contributed to their willingness to allow their own children and pupils a degree of autonomy which they had not been given in their own youth.

<sup>9</sup> See Wolfgang Köllmann (1969) for more details.

*Wirtschaftsbürgertum* of merchants, bankers, entrepreneurs and other capitalists. It was from the ranks of this *Bürgertum*, and especially from the *Bildungsbürgertum*, that the *Wandervogel* originated and remained throughout its development.

In England, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland the erosion of aristocratic privilege precipitated much closer ties between their middle and upper classes and a great deal more popular influence. But in Germany the division between classes remained strong, with the nobility maintaining a highly influential role in guiding the direction of society after unification in 1871. As Walter Laqueur noted: “The official ideology of this society and its declared values were not those of individual freedom and the pursuit of happiness, but consisted of aristocratic Prussian ideas about loyalty and service to Kaiser and Reich” (Laqueur 4). It was a mixture of these Prussian ideas combined with the disengaging effects of modern life that middle class youth would find themselves butting up against and through which *Wandervögel* would navigate. Two institutions that perpetuated this Prussian worldview of loyalty and service, while serving as emblems of Germany’s struggles to come to grips with the effects of modern life, were particularly ubiquitous in youths’ lives: family and school.

### **Antiquated Expectations and a New Modernity: Family and School**

For middle-class youth, life remained in many ways remarkably unchanged from previous generations despite growing up in an era of rapid societal transformation. The traditional nuclear structure of the family, which had changed drastically with the largely youth fueled migration to the cities, remained largely intact within the *Bürgertum*. In *Teenage: The*

*Creation of Youth Culture*, Jon Savage discusses parenting in Germany in the early 20th century as still adhering to the model of 18th century King Frederick Wilhelm I:

The Prussian ideal of parenting was epitomized by the story of the eighteenth century Prince Frederick. Rebellious against his martinet father, King Frederick Wilhelm I, the aesthetically inclined young prince tried to run away but was betrayed and captured: his punishment was to watch the execution of his closest friend, Hans Hermann von Katte, who had escaped with him. Only through this severity did he mature to become the national legend, Frederick the Great of Prussia” (Savage, 2007, 103).

This ideal had certainly weakened by the early 1900s, especially in reform-minded households. Still, around the turn of the century, deviation by middle-class youth from the role set before them was, if not met with the brutal murder of one’s best friend, still most often likely to be punished by authoritarian fathers with the strap or cane.<sup>10</sup>

The situation was worse in the schools. The educational system drilled discipline into the youth of the middle classes, who were expected to transition into the university system before taking up the reins of civil service from the older generation. This state educational system stood both as a self-perpetuating institutional exercise of elite power as well as a microcosm of this power structure throughout Germany in the 19th and into the 20th century. Prussian ideals, along with the difficulties of maintaining tradition in the face of rapidly expanding numbers of students and a shifting complexion in the student population, marked the educational system in

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<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, in Neuloh and Zilius’ interviews with surviving *Wandervögel*, which appeared in 1982, many respondents noted that they had very close ties to their families, but that they realized others were not as fortunate. Their “rebellion” from family should therefore be seen as a more general recognition of their privileged role and their desire to allow others this same degree of autonomy and freedom.

the early 20th century. Jürgen Kocka describes the context of German education at the turn of the century:

“[R]eform from above” was a strong tradition in Prussia, Bavaria, Austria and other central European states. Absolutist rulers and their emerging bureaucracies had taken the lead in modernizing their societies for the sake of enhancing their power. In this context one has to understand the early emphasis on modernizing and expanding the state-run school systems in Prussia and other German states. Secondary schools based on Latin and classical studies (*Gymnasien*) and universities expanded remarkably; the latter were primarily intended to train young men for state service (Kocka 239).

Lessons in *Gymnasien* in the early 20th century kept the same form they had maintained throughout the 19th century. Lecture, drill, rote memorization and recitation in the classic disciplines formed a monotonous and boring routine: “In den Schulen waltete ein Geist der Erstickung alles jugendhaften Wesens. Das nackte Dasein als solches war langweilig, steril geworden” (Helwig 7). But by the late 1800s, this model was beginning to be questioned, and youth were granted the opportunity to seek alternatives. Whereas Kocka described reform from above in a general relaxing of tensions, the activities of the *Wandervogel* can be seen as a form of reform from below made possible by this newfound sanction. Despite their rather privileged positions as members of the educated middle-class, they were nevertheless subordinate citizens as a result of their age and the many restrictions this placed upon their activities.

As touched on earlier in this chapter, in other industrialized European nations, throughout Germany and particularly in the middle classes, a novel idea had gained currency: the notion of

the importance of adolescence as a unique period in life. “Young people between the ages of twelve and twenty allegedly possessed a unique physical and psychological identity that set them apart from both children and adults” (Williams 107). But if adolescence marked a time of great potential for growth, it also represented a tremendous threat if youth chose the wrong path which, given the numbers of young working-class men in cities, was especially salient in the minds of many adults in the Reich. Unsurprisingly for a society with such entrenched notions of the importance of discipline, the question quickly became how adults could best cultivate youth to become model citizens in adulthood, given the rapid transformations unsettling the social fabric of the young nation. Various *Jugendpflege* organizations sought to do just this.

The earliest of what might be termed a *Jugendpflege* organization arose through the Catholic church in the 1840s. These small groups attached to local parishes numbered at least six hundred by the foundation of the *Reichsverband der katholischen Jugend- und Jungmännervereine* in 1896 and “by 1914 there were over thirty-five hundred Catholic youth cultivation clubs with a membership of some 350,000 boys and 150,000 girls...primarily from the urban working class” (Williams 112). These groups’ interest in youth was, like most *Jugendpflege* organizations, largely inculcatory. For the church this meant primarily preserving youth involvement with Catholicism in the face of separation from family and their local parish. Other organizations were, as John Williams characterizes in his *Turning to Nature in Germany*, “organizationally divided into sectors that paralleled the ideological divisions in Wilhelmine Germany. The most significant of these domains were bourgeois-reformist, Catholic, Social Democratic, and conservative-militarist” (111). The *Jugendpflege* organizations of the early 20th century each had their own ideological agenda to indoctrinate into youth and were organized and generally run by members of the middle class. This is interesting to note because, before 1912,

they were targeted primarily at working-class youth who, distanced from their families and subject to the “allegedly natural irrationality of adolescents, combined with poor living and working conditions in the city,” were deprived of “orderliness, cleanliness, and patriotism. If these youth failed to reach a respectable and rational adulthood, a catastrophic breakdown of the social order would occur” (Williams 112). This perceived threat from below, which beyond the fear of millions of newly independent young men in urban centers falling into lives of vice and crime also couched a fear they might organize into revolutionary communist and socialist groups, saw cooperation between the middle class and the aristocratic upper class and Prussian government, who fashioned themselves as bulwarks of traditional German society and cooperated to maintain the conventional practice of reform from above.<sup>11</sup>

The youth of the *Bürgertum*, where school and family life still formed a system keeping youthful exuberance in check, were given a great deal more leeway. But all was not well in the middle class. Theodor Lessing wrote about his experiences in school in *Einmal und nicht wieder*: “sie war vor allem langweilig, langweilig bis zum Stumpfsinn...Nichts, nichts, nichts könnte je gutmachen, was diese fünfzehn Lebensjahre in mir zerstört haben” (qtd. in Ille and Köhler 30). This boredom, combined with stress and the expectation of maintaining strict discipline, led to often tragic outcomes. As Émile Durkheim discusses in the 1897 sociological work *Le Suicide*, suicide rates among German youth were the highest in Europe. Suicides were especially pronounced among *Gymnasiasten*—allegedly the result of “Examenfurcht, nicht bestandene Examen und Nichtversetzungen” (Ille and Köhler 37).

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<sup>11</sup> This combined concern led to the founding of the *Jungdeutschland-Bund* in 1911 by the *Kriegsministerium*, which, while rejected by most *Wandervogel* organizations for the overt militaristic overtones of the organization, was generally well-received for giving quarter to youth groups in barracks and other military quarters, which helped to reduce the costs of travel. The journals of the *Wandervogel* provide entertaining reading on the merits and (much more often) the problems of the *Jungdeutschland-Bund* which were heavily debated throughout 1911 and 1912.

In addition to the difficulties many pupils had in their studies, the *Gymnasium* had become, since the end of the Franco-Prussian war and the unification of Germany in 1871, increasingly the site of nationalistic and militaristic indoctrination—further increasing the stress of student life in the face of strict discipline and exacting moral standards. A rapidly increasing student population (in Prussia from 1867 to 1900, enrollment increased from 73,467 to 156,630, with 241,051 students by 1914) further taxed this system, as these secondary schools often evolved into industrialized educational factories with even less concern for individual students and the potential injustices committed against them.

Fortunately for many students in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, relief came through a relaxing of tensions that, in the spirit of what would be dubbed “Das Jahrhundert des Kindes” after the title of the popular 1900 work of the same name by Swedish reformer Ellen Key, sought to pattern education both in and out of schools on natural processes (and nature) as opposed to the artificial constraints of society. A series of works by educational reformers had begun to appear by the late-19<sup>th</sup> century that heavily influenced a new generation of educators. Foremost among these was August Julius Langbehn’s *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, first published in 1899, which became standard reading in the *Wandervogel* ranks and by millions of others as well, in particular those with an interest in educational reform, by the outbreak of the first World War. He opens his work with the line: “Es ist nachgerade zum öffentlichen Geheimnis geworden, daß das geistige Leben des deutschen Volkes sich gegenwärtig in einem Zustande des langsamen, einige meinen auch des rapiden Verfalls befindet” (Langbehn 1). Looking back to the seventeenth century, Dutch painter Rembrandt’s move away from the Baroque style that had dominated the artistic landscape of his age and towards an introspective and self-determined mode of expression was seen by Langbehn as a model that German youth could emulate in order

to cultivate their own individuality by exploring their own interests—it was these youth who were to complete the task he laid before them to rejuvenate the nation. In short, Langbehn suggested that youth should not be beholden to the culture that had been made for them. They should, rather, test their abilities in an environment unpolluted by the social institutions of the day. Langbehn closes: “Das neue geistige Leben der Deutschen ist keine Sache für Professoren; es ist eine Sache der deutschen Jugend, und zwar der unverdorbenen, unverbildeten, unbefangenen deutschen Jugend. Sie hat das Recht” (Langbehn 356). This was a message that the *Wandervogel* would take to heart. This work and others that followed led to a détente in the relations between (middle-class) youth and some in positions of academic authority fueled largely by a new generation of educators concerned with the failings of the existing system and willing to consider alternative educational practices and greater freedoms for students outside of school. Without the open-mindedness of such pedagogues and other adults in esteemed positions within the *Reich*, the *Wandervogel* would never have been possible given the social realities of the day.

One of the most respected and renowned of these reformers was Ludwig Gurlitt, who taught at the Steglitz *Gymnasium* and was instrumental in the establishment of the *Wandervogel* organization. Hans Blüher, the first chronicler of *Wandervogel* history and one of its earliest members, wrote on the importance of educational reformers like Gurlitt in opening up the opportunity for youth to develop their own identities early in the first volume of his *Wandervogel: Geschichte einer Jugendbewegung*, published in 1912. Blüher saw the differences between the existing educational system and the autonomy and exploration favored by educational reformers as a manifestation of two types of society:



Steglitz hat eine gewisse pädagogische Berühmtheit dadurch erfahren, daß es der Schauplatz der Kampfes wurde, den Ludwig Gurlitt gegen das Gymnasium ausfocht. Es war ein Kampf zweier Welten der Erziehung, ja zweier Welten überhaupt, der hier wie überall ausbrach, zweier Stimmungen dem Leben und den Menschen gegenüber, aus ihnen geboren zwei Urteile von denen jedes ein Todesurteil war.—Die eine Welt war die protestantische, die fromme, gehorsame, die andere war die protestierende, die Befreiung.

“Das Kind ist eine Persönlichkeit!” sagte Ludwig Gurlitt.

“Nein, das Kind ist keine Persönlichkeit!” sagte das System, “und wenn es eine ist, so hat es keine zu sein!” (17).<sup>12</sup>

It is no coincidence that the ideas at the center of the *Wandervogel* emerged in Steglitz—Gurlitt’s efforts to turn the Steglitz *Gymnasium* into a more open environment found resonance in the youth who passed through. His efforts were instrumental to the creation of the *Wandervogel* not just on paper as a legal organization, but also in inspiring youth to take control of their own education and imagine a society less boring. Blüher quotes an anecdote told by Gurlitt about his distaste for dinner parties which perfectly describes the social conventions against which the *Wandervogel* balked, which also hearken back to Heidegger’s conceptualization of boredom:

Da war ich auch mal eingeladen bei irgend einem Menschen. Ich sage Ihnen: stundenlang nichts weiter zu tun, als fortwährend fressen und das dümmste Zeug reden müssen, das kann kein anständiger Mensch vertragen. Dann wollte ich

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<sup>12</sup> While Blüher rightly recognizes the importance of Gurlitt, this passage also provides a portrait of Blüher’s romantic and often rather biased history.

gehen; man hatte mir den Hut versteckt. Ich mußte also bleiben und die ganze Nacht Sekt trinken, mir das Gequatsche von einem Dutzend langweiliger, hoher Beamter anhören, bis es endlich Morgen wurde, da kriegte ich meinen Hut wieder. (31-32)

The *Wandervogel* wanted nothing to do with this stilted adult world, and their articulation of *Selbsterziehung* was centered on creating individuals in a different cast focused on a direct and engagement with the world. In nature, they found the visceral engagement they demanded as well as the comparatively autonomous spaces they needed; the idea of *Selbsterziehung* and its internalization by *Wandervögel* throughout the nation were indebted to Ludwig Gurlitt and his pedagogical approach. The *Wandervogel* arose and were allowed to organize as a direct result of this new emphasis on the importance of youth. While sharing some similarities and often being grouped in with the *Jugendpflege* organizations arising around the same time, the *Wandervogel* were much more closely aligned with the ideology of the educational reformers who looked to Langbehn's model of a hands-off approach and gentle guidance rather than to the overtly agenda-driven and adult-led efforts of the *Jugendpflege* organizations, which many *Wandervögel* saw as unsatisfactorily linked to existing institutions and far too immersed in existing political, religious and military discourses.

*Wandervogel* youth ultimately distanced themselves not only from their parents, school and other bastions of authority, but also from the mannerisms of other youth, whom they saw as caught in a self-perpetuating cycle as generation replaced generation in a stagnant parade of cultural conformity. As Walter Hornstein notes of the younger generation *Jugend in ihrer Zeit*: “Der höchste Ehrgeiz war, sich in Kleidung, Haltung, Gewohnheit, Geschmack nach den Erwachsenen zu richten, die mit Stolz die Feststellung ‘ganz wie ein Alter’

machten...Zigarettenrauchen und Biertrinken und üble Witze erzählen galt als das sicherste Kennzeichen der Männlichkeit” (237). In an effort to redraw the cultural constellation of German society, *Wandervogel* youth turned to the emotional and toward reflective and engaged experience as an alternative to what many of these youth viewed as the beer-swilling, rationalistic, routine-driven and boring *Alltag* of life in Wilhelmine Germany. Drinking and smoking became for the *Wandervogel* symbols of conformity to avoid—false emotion that pacified youth as opposed to the unmediated engagement these youth sought not just in nature on *Fahrt*, but in their everyday interactions. Hermann Giesecke describes this orientation to experience, writing: “Das gemeinschaftstiftende Element ist vorwiegend emotionaler Art: das *Erlebnis* der Gemeinsamkeit, weniger die rationale Diskussion. Wo die intellektuelle Diskussion in Gruppen eine Rolle spielt, hat auch sie ihren Grund in der starken Emotionalität der Gruppenbeziehung und der gemeinsamen Erlebnisse” (38). While the rational intellect certainly had a role in group discussion for the *Wandervogel*, the role of emotional engagement was paramount. In the next section, the many *Wandervogel* splits and reconciliations in this emotionally charged and heatedly contested realm take center stage.

### **A Brief History of the *Wandervogel***

The creation of a space autonomous and open enough for all of the various perspectives and interpretations that were brought to the *Wandervogel* in a way that allowed them to (relatively) peacefully coexist—a space as necessarily turbulent and varied as youth itself—was one of the greatest achievements of the *Wandervogel*, especially given the societal obstacles with which they had to contend. But the development of the broadly defined *Wandervogel*

movement—that is, the history of the initial organization and those groups that broke off from or otherwise formed following the disintegration of the *Ausschuß für Schülerfahrten* in 1904—constitutes a complex and often contradictory whole. In this section I trace the growth of the movement and its major organizational divisions, how these divisions differed and, finally, how they were (largely) reunited in the *Einigungsbund* in 1913. Finally, I will discuss the moral panic revolving around the *Wandervogel* that gripped the nation in the months leading up to WWI that resulted in dramatic changes within the organization as its leaders went on the defensive. This history provides the reader a foundational knowledge of the organization and key terms, names and events that will be necessary for contextualizing the discussion in the following chapters.<sup>13</sup> The lack of a firm understanding of *Wandervogel* history and the differences between groups, over-reliance on the often highly subjective histories of its members and those with a clear agenda (such as the works produced during the National Socialist period) as well as a readiness to read into the youth movement the criticisms leveled against it by its detractors has led to a large amount of cherry-picking when discussing the movement, often distilled into a monolithic notion of the *Wandervogel*. As a result, they have been read as conservative, liberal, authoritarian, democratic, militaristically nationalist, anti-militaristic, culturally nationalist,

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<sup>13</sup> I hope this general history will be of value to other researchers, as no other basic historical outline has been published in the English language. Walter Laqueur provided a highly stylized history greatly lacking in detail in his 1962 *Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement*. This history was not greatly disambiguated by Peter Stachura in his 1981 *The German Youth Movement*, which relied heavily upon Laqueur's work. The bulk of this history have been adapted from many works, including Gerhard Ziemer and Hans Wolf's *Wandervogel und freideutsche Jugend* (1961) and *Wandervogel Bildatlas* (1963), Werner Kindt's *Dokumentation der Jugendbewegung*. Band II: *Die Wandervogelzeit. Quellenschriften zur deutschen Jugendbewegung 1896 bis 1919* (1968), Hans Blüher's *Wandervogel. Geschichte einer Jugendbewegung* (1976), Ulrich Aufmuth: *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung unter soziologischem Aspekt* (1979), Otto Neuloh and Wilhelm Zilius's *Die Wandervögel* (1982), Gerhard Ille and Günter Köhler's *Der Wandervogel – Es begann in Steglitz* (1987), Marion Ras's *Körper, Eros und weibliche Kultur. Mädchen im Wandervogel und der Bündischen Jugend 1900–1933* (1988), Sabine Weißler's *Fokus Wandervogel. Der Wandervogel in seinen Beziehungen zu den Reformbewegungen vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (2001), Ulrich Herrmann's *„Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit“ – Der Wandervogel in der deutschen Jugendbewegung* (2006) and John Alexander Williams *Turning to Nature in Germany: Hiking, Nudism and Conservation, 1900-1940* (2007).

homeroetic, overly masculine, overly feminine, inclusive of women, misogynistic, racist, racially tolerant and more. While all of these labels *can* be applied to different groups and individuals at different times and in different places, and while some can be applied more credibly than others to large sections of the movement as a whole, the end effect has been a tremendous amount of confusion in the literature that detracts from the major accomplishments of these youth.

This history of the *Wandervogel* roughly follows four phases.<sup>14</sup> The first phase encompasses the activities of Hermann Hoffmann and his successor Karl Fischer up to the founding of the *Ausschuß für Schülerfahrten* (AfS) in 1901. The second phase comprises the activities of the AfS until its dissolution in 1904. The long third phase, which I have broken into two temporally overlapping discussions, was characterized by further fracturing and the formation of new organizations and lasted until 1913 when the vast majority of groups reunited to form the *Wandervogel, eingetragener Verein* (shortened hereafter to the commonly followed abbreviation WVEV), which constitutes the fourth phase of the movement lasting until 1919, although I will be ending my analysis following the incidents of the Hohe Meißner<sup>15</sup> and the outbreak of WWI, which saw events drastically alter the complexion of the *Wandervogel*.

### **The First Phase: The Wandervogel Take Flight (1890-1901)**

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<sup>14</sup> These phases are discussed in Kindt's 1968 collection of primary documents of the Youth Movement, *Dokumentation der Jugendbewegung II: Die Wandervogelzeit*. The Kindt anthologies were the center of a scandal in 2013, when Christian Niemeyer revealed the extent of Kindt's omissions, ostensibly an attempt to distance the youth movement from allegations surrounding National Socialism. While the material presented is largely unbiased and contains the most complete handling of primary documents published to date, its newly revealed shortcomings must be noted. See the second major section of this chapter for a full analysis of the issues surrounding this contentious debate.

<sup>15</sup> In 1913, the first *Freideutsche Jugend* organized at the Hohe Meißner to stage a counter-program to the militaristic commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the October 1813 Battle of Leipzig.

For a movement that on the one side sought freedom from the constricting educational system of the age and on the other relied on staying in its good graces, it is perhaps only fitting that Hermann Hoffmann-Fölkersamb was inspired to begin hiking after a lecture during his own school days in Magdeburg:

Es war im Jahre 1890. Deutschstunde in der Untersekunda der Magdeburger Guerickeschule. Einer von uns las pflichtgemäß aus dem Lesebuch von Hopf und Paulsiek das fällige Lesestück vor. Es hieß: "Reise zu Fuß". Wir anderen hörten mit halbem Ohre zu oder lasen heimlich etwas Spannenderes oder machten eine Mathematikarbeit fertig. Plötzlich ein Faustschlag unseres Professors Sträter auf das Pult: "Jungens! Was seid ihr für Schlafmützen! Was Ihr da hört, ist Euch wohl ganz egal! Als wir Jungen waren, da sparten wir unsere Groschen zusammen, und zu Pfingsten oder in der großen Ferien, da ging das Wandern los... Das packte! Wenigstens einige von uns. In den nächsten Sommerferien wanderte ich mit meinem jüngeren Bruder und einem Klassenkameraden zum Magdeburger Tor hinaus, den Tournister auf dem Rücken—die Zeit der Rucksäcke war für Norddeutschland noch nicht gekommen. Wir wanderten in Tagesmärschen von vierzig Kilometern zum Harz, im Zickzack durch diesen und nach achtzehn Tagen heimwärts durch dasselbe Tor. (qtd. in Kindt 37)

Hoffmann's anecdote exemplifies the ambivalent relationship middle-class youth had with the educational system of the day. The distracted pupils had tuned out, but in his fiery reprimand of their disinterest, Hoffmann's professor incited some of them to engage with the subject in a much more direct manner (a hands-on approach that would become one of the central tenets of the movement). This passage also hearkens back to something older than Hoffmann—to a legacy

of youth hiking preceding the humble beginnings of the *Wandervogel*. Hiking as recreation had been a popular pastime in the lands that became the modern German state long before unification. Hoffmann's trips well could have remained isolated outings in the continuation of this tradition, had events during his years as a university student in Berlin not given these excursions greater importance.

Karl Fischer, one of the students who discovered Hoffmann's hiking journal during a stenography lesson, took an immediate interest in the idea of hiking and would go on to become a major influence. From 1896 until Hoffmann's departure for the foreign service in February 1900, Hoffmann took ever-increasing numbers of students (from Steglitz and, soon, other schools as well) on increasingly far-reaching hikes throughout Germany. These early outings of the pre-*Wandervogel* era evolved and took on dimensions that would become standard for all groups in later years. The early hikes were only one-day affairs, but the fall of 1896 saw the first two-day outing, which also marked the first trip involving cooking on alcohol-burning stoves such as the one pictured below—a hallmark of *Wandervogel* self-reliance, practical education and independence.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Their popularization of these stoves and other camping equipment innovations will be discussed in Chapter Four. As the *Wandervogel* grew, the *Hordentopf* – a communal, large pot in which the group's meals were prepared together – became increasingly popular.

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 Zusammengelegt  
 Eine hohe und eine flache Kasserolle, letztere als Bratpfanne verwendbar, mit abschraubbarem Holzgriff!  
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Figure 2: Advertisement for alcohol-fueled camp stoves, image source: Nordischer Wandervogel, June 1908

The summer of 1897 marked the first multi-week outing of the group, a two-week hike through the Harz Mountains, which also marked the first instance titles were given to participants, with new members being dubbed *Füchse* and more experienced members *Burschen*. In this vein, Hoffmann would take the title *Oberhäuptling* while Fischer would be given the rank of *Häuptling*—allusions to the wildly popular writings of Karl May, an author known for his tales of Native Americans and the American West and particularly for his fictional hero, *Winnetou*. While the titles changed, they became, like cooking on camp stoves and sleeping in barns, conventions in the youth movement as it evolved. The *Große Fahrt* the next summer



through the Harz and along the Rhine marked a further milestone as the first month-long trip of the group, and was followed the next summer with another four-week trip—the *Böhmerwaldfahrt*—starting on 7 July, the same day classes ended. This trip was notable not only as the final major event Hoffmann was involved in, but also as the first instance a large number of songs was printed that participants were to learn before departing. While singing had been common practice, this was the first time they were officially recorded and reinforced the importance of music in the evolving movement. This pamphlet would be followed by numerous song books in the years to come as the *Wandervogel* moved through styles (from drinking songs to fighting songs to folk songs), with the million-copy selling *Zupfgeigenhansl*, compiled by Hans Breuer, being the most prominent example.<sup>17</sup>

What was prominently absent from the early years of the group were the elements of cultural criticism and the *explicit* cultivation of a youth culture set in opposition to contemporary German society that would slowly evolve in *Wandervogel* ideology in the coming years. They hiked, by and large, simply because it was engaging, provided a sense of adventure sorely lacking in their lives and allowed them to be among themselves. This is not to say that youth in the early years of the movement were not interested in finding autonomy from social institutions and pressure to conform—far from it—but the organized articulation of dissent is something that grew out of the movement, not something that sprang fully formed from the beginning. However the most important element of the *Wandervogel*, and one that never changed, remained the focus on *Wandern* itself. As one of the early *Wandervogel* interviewed by Neuloh and Zilius

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<sup>17</sup> Breuer moved to Steglitz with his family in 1898 and in 1899 began to participate in the early group's hikes. His song book had an impact far beyond the *Wandervogel* and remains one of the great legacies of the movement. Sadly, he was killed at Verdun in 1918 (Malzacher and Daenschel 32). The *Zupfgeigenhansl*, however, would live on after his death as a massive success. Hermann Giesecke notes that it remained a bestseller, and that by 1933 it had been "über eine Million Mal verkauft" (19).

summarized: “Wandern wurde Selbstzweck und war nicht dazu da, einen Ort, ein Ziel zu erreichen. Wandern stand im Gegensatz zum Reisen...Daß man zu Fuß die Straße unter die Beine bekam und daß das ein neues Erlebnis, eine ganz neue Dimension war, das wurde entdeckt. Dort wurde auch entdeckt, wie man eine ganze Landschaft erfaßte, wie man sie sozusagen von innen erlebte” (74). The focus on experience and exploration over arriving at a goal, the hallmarks of the adventure that Simmel posited as a simple answer to boredom, were accidentally discovered by these youth, among themselves, before the *Wandervogel* was born.

The first phase of what would become the *Wandervogel* ended with Hoffmann’s departure. Before leaving in 1900, he invited Karl Fischer to meet with him on the *Fichtenberg* in Steglitz in what has become known as the *Fichtenberg Abrede*. Hoffmann went into the meeting hoping to convince Fischer to begin to expand the group’s activities across Germany: “Ich suchte Fischer für den Plan zu begeistern, diese Art des Jugendwanderns über Steglitz hinaus unter der deutschen Jugend zu verbreiten” (qtd. in Kindt 1968 39). Fischer needed no convincing and excitedly agreed to take over for Hoffmann. Fischer is a controversial figure whose leadership style could kindly be described as autocratic. He attempted to control all facets of the organization, which would directly lead to the splintering of the organization in 1904. But in the beginning, his dedicated leadership saw many necessary steps taken to legitimize the fledgling movement.

### **The Second Phase—Wandervogel, Ausschuß für Schülerfahrten (1901-1904)**

Who first brought forward the idea to restructure the group into an officially sanctioned organization will likely never be known. Many scholars give the credit to Fischer himself, and

Hoffmann never recalled having suggested such an organization to Fischer, as he thought such an endeavor too premature. But Walther Gerber suggests the idea came not from Fischer, but from two elder influences: the author and journalist Wolfgang Kirchbach (the father of one of the early Steglitz hikers Ernst Kirchbach) and Ludwig Gurlitt—the progressive teacher at the Steglitz Gymnasium. From Gerber:

Fischer ging in Hause Kirchbachs ein und aus und holte sich in allen Fragen bei dem Älteren und Erfahreneren Rat. Von Kirchbach stammte nachweislich die Idee der Organisation. Er und Gurlitt haben Fischer später zutreffend als ‘Mitgründer’ des A.f.S. bezeichnet; sie haben seinen Alleinanspruch damit abgewiesen. (Kindt 1968 40)

Kirchbach’s suggestion for the organization of the group was to form a partnership between older adults and the elder youth leaders of the group—what he termed a *Kartell*. Fischer understood the necessity of involving the adult element in the group, although as his later actions would show, he attempted to control as many of the organization’s activities as possible. This early concession to an adult influence on the organization has been interpreted by Gerber and others, including Winfried Mogge in *Ihr Wandervögel in der Luft*, as evidence that the movement was scripted by reform-minded parents and other interested adults from the beginning. Mogge writes: “Die Rede von einer spontanen, gar autonomen Bewegung der Jugend war schon damals Wunschdenken—oder Teil einer pädagogischen Strategie” (26). While others like Stachura put forward the spontaneous emergence of a youthful spirit, the reality likely falls in between these positions. Without adult sponsorship, there was simply no way the *Wandervogel* could have had the legal foundation to expand or the sometimes tenuous social acceptance that came with this adult sanction. Adults like Gurlitt and Kirchbach certainly had

ideas of what the *Wandervogel* should be, but the foundation built upon experience and exploration had emerged long before the institutionalization of the *Wandervogel* commenced. On 4 November 1901, in the Ratskeller of Steglitz, the *Ausschuß für Schülerfahrten* was founded. Presiding over the meeting was Kirchbach, who was accompanied by four other fathers of youth involved in the group. Also in attendance were the first *Führer* of the organization: Karl Fischer, Bruno Thiede, Ernst Kirchbach, Siegfried Coppalla and Wolfgang Meyen (who was a rare exception to the otherwise completely *bürgerlich* composition of the group, being an apprentice mechanic). In addition, several students from nearby schools attended the Ratskeller meeting as well. Wolfgang Meyen, who had noticed the inscription on a gravestone during a hike, suggested the name *Wandervogel*.<sup>18</sup> The newly organized *Wandervogel* adopted titles hearkening back to the itinerant scholars of the middle ages—a topic that Fischer and Meyen found fascinating. Fischer took the title *Oberbachant* while other youth leaders were given the title *Bachant*, with regular full members given the title *Scholar*.

With the legitimacy granted by the official adult sanction of the group, the *Wandervogel* began to expand. Fischer started an intense advertising campaign. A new group was begun by Wolfgang Meyen in nearby Groß-Lichterfelde as an extension of the Steglitz group, both of which grew rapidly. Respectable professionals (among them Dr. Heinrich Albrecht, Prof. Dr. Menadier and Prof. Dr. Albano Brand) were recruited to further cement the good name of the group. During Easter of 1903 Fischer travelled with the *Bachanten* of the group along with nearly 75 *Scholaren* on a *Fahrt* through Brandenburg, Lehnin, Ferch and Potsdam to spread

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<sup>18</sup> The grave was that of Kaethe Branco, a young woman just shy of her 26<sup>th</sup> birthday who had died in 1877. The inscription on the tombstone began “Wer hat euch Wandervögeln/ Die Wissenschaft geschenkt/ Dass ihr auf Land und Meeren/ Nie falsch den Flügel lenkt?” (Grünzweig 126-130) The word *Wandervogel* can be found earlier, most notably in Otto Roquette’s “Ihr Wandervogel in der Luft,” a lyrical poem which first appeared in his 1851 *Waldmeisters Brautfahrt*. The song would become a favorite within the *Wandervogel*, and as it remained a popular song around the turn of the century has been pointed to by scholars as another likely inspiration for the naming of the *Wandervogel*. (Mogge 53)

word of and recruit for the *Wandervogel* (an event that further alienated the *Bachanten* Thiede, Copalle and Weber). And on a hike later in October, Fischer founded a *Wandervogel* group in Posen, now part of Poland, under the leadership of Wilhelm Brunne.

This trajectory of growth and increasing dissatisfaction on the parts of Fischer's subordinates and many of the *Scholaren* characterized the years from 1901 to 1904. Fischer did a great deal to expand the movement, but did so while ignoring demands for a free and open exchange of opinions and the cultivation of an atmosphere of mutual respect, reciprocal learning and natural growth. In short, he attempted to restructure the *Wandervogel* in the image of the top-down social structures from which many *Wandervogel* were attempting to distance themselves. 1904 proved to be a turbulent year for the *Wandervogel*, with a rising sentiment against Fischer's leadership style taking center stage. The year began on a high note: the *Wandervogel Illustrierte Monatschrift*, the first periodical of the WV, began publication in March of 1904 under Fritz A. Meyen (with heavy input from Fischer).<sup>19</sup> The backlash against Fischer's leadership came to a head following a trip in the summer of 1903, which culminated with the first split in the *Wandervogel*. On the trip, *Bachant* Siegfried Copalle sent one of Fischer's favored *Scholaren*, Hans Blüher, home for inappropriate conduct. Fischer, while agreeing that Copalle had the right and obligation to maintain order and discipline, nevertheless overruled the decision to punish Blüher, causing Copalle to, in his estimation, lose face and his ability to control those under his responsibility.<sup>20</sup> This friction escalated further when Copalle

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<sup>19</sup> *Wandervogel* publishing will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

<sup>20</sup> Blüher would go on to become the first historian of the *Wandervogel*. His three-volume history, *Wandervogel, Geschichte einer Jugendbewegung*, published in 1912 was, by his own admission, a subjective account. It contained numerous inaccuracies and biases and mythologized the early years and figures of the movement – particularly his close friend Karl Fischer, who had sided with him against Copalle's judgment to dismiss him from the aforementioned hike. The third volume of his history, *Die Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen*, was a contributing factor to the moral panic surrounding the youth movement in 1913, which saw most *Wandervogel*

planned, with the approval of the elder council but without the approval of Fischer (who was, according to the group's bylaws, required to approve all hikes), an Easter *Fahrt*. In protest of what he felt to be (and was indeed intended to be) an act of defiance and disloyalty, Fischer abdicated his position as *Oberbachant*—with several of the *Bachanten* loyal to him following suit. Attempts by the elders to bring the two sides together were unsuccessful, and on June 29th in 1904 the *AfS* was dissolved.

### **Third Phase: Forks in the Road**

The two groups that emerged from the dissolution of the *AfS* were the *Steglitzer Wandervogel EV*, formed by those dissatisfied with Fischer's leadership and the *Alt-Wandervogel*, under the continued leadership of Fischer.<sup>21</sup> Early squabbles about the use of the *Wandervogel* name and which group represented the true continuation of the *Wandervogel* gave way to a relatively peaceful coexistence of the two organizations.

The *Steglitzer EV* would remain a small organization (advertising, recruiting and expanding were never as important for them as they were in other organizations) and went on to focus largely on operations within Berlin.<sup>22</sup> Still, the Posen group quickly joined their ranks and a few groups in Bavaria (where other organizations experienced difficulty making inroads due to the prevalence of Catholic youth groups) joined the organization as fully autonomous groups

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vociferously rejecting his theories and, ultimately, moving the movement towards a much more militaristic nationalism and non-confrontational position *vis-à-vis* society in an attempt to clear their name.

<sup>21</sup> Fischer had promised not to interfere with or obstruct the newly formed *Steglitzer EV*, but quickly rescinded on this promise by forming the *Alt-Wandervogel* – something that for a time further damaged relations between the groups.

<sup>22</sup> The *Steglitzer Wandervogel* were more academically oriented and saw college-age students as possessing greater experience and maturity while still belonging the general population of "youth." Reflecting this, they largely chose *Führer* who attended university.

sharing their rules and receiving their publications. The *Steglitzer EV* remained one of the smallest *Wandervogel* organizations until their assimilation into the united *Wandervogel e.V.*, *Bund für deutsches Jugendwandern* (WVEV or EV) at the beginning of 1913.

The *Alt-Wandervogel* (AWV) began its life as a lone group of about fifty youth centered around Fischer. In the early years of the AWV, Fischer continued his rigid leadership style, taking on now the new title of *Großbachant*. However Fischer would depart for China in 1906 as the organization grew and his influence diminished. The structure of the AWV quickly changed to a system comprised of a *Bundesleitung* of the *Eltern und Freundesrat* collaborating with the *Führerschaft* of older youth headed by a five-person elected body. The title of *Bachant* was retired and replaced with *Führer*. The AWV became by far the largest and most influential of the *Wandervogel* organizations with 15,000 *Scholaren* and 5,000 members of the *Eltern und Freundesrat* by 1913, when a majority of the AWV merged with the newly formed WVEV. The AWV were not particularly reform-minded and resisted the more radical elements that developed within the movement, as suggested by their autocratic leadership style (which would however become somewhat more inclusive after Fischer's departure), their opposition to abstinence from alcohol and tobacco and their reluctance to include girls in the organization. As youth took issue with various practices of the AWV, further splinter groups would branch off from them. While never the most progressive of the groups, they likewise never took their ideology to the extreme *völkisch* dimensions that some others would. Beyond the AWV and the *Steglitzer EV*, youth hiking was beginning to expand in popularity elsewhere. In 1902, the 17-year-old student Erich Wolfram independently founded a hiking group, the *Magdeburger Wanderriegen* at the *Realgymnasium* in Magdeburg. The group remained very small and isolated until Wolfram discovered the *Steglitzer EV* after moving to Berlin to begin his studies at the *Technische*

*Hochschule zu Charlottenburg*. After becoming involved in the group (eventually joining the *Führerschaft*) he began patterning the group in Magdeburg after that of the *Wandervogel* and maintained close ties with the *Steglitzer EV*.<sup>23</sup> Another group, a short-lived girls' group, was formed in 1905—the *Bund der Wanderschwestern*. However since neither the AWV nor the *Steglitzer EV* were willing to include girls at the time, they operated autonomously. While groups attached to the AWV and the *Steglitzer EV* were forming elsewhere, the founding of the *Bund der Wanderschwestern* and the *Magdeburger Wanderriegen* showed that the idea of *Wandern* had begun to take on a life of its own and could be appropriated by anyone with the time and interest to participate in the emerging youth culture.

As the AWV grew, so too did opinions about what the *Wandervogel* were about. In the AWV a culture revolving around romanticized conceptions of the itinerant scholar, the wandering journeyman and other poor and socially outcast *Fahrendes Volk* (travelling peoples) had developed. Many youth had begun acting, writing and dressing as they thought these migratory peoples from the Middle Ages might have done. Some groups began sporting dirty clothes and a gruffer demeanor along with occasional displays of machismo. A growing force in the movement, centered around the AWV group in Jena, took issue with what they considered a false romanticism and artificial culture that they felt detracted from (and endangered) youth's capacity to develop a meaningful and autonomous sphere for themselves. Instead of this increasingly prominent *Kunden- und Vagantentum*, the Jena group felt that the foundation of their activities should be hiking, self-reliance and self-development. In order to achieve this renewed focus on hiking and self-improvement and to make the AWV a more open organization,

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<sup>23</sup> The *Magdeburger Wanderriegen* would eventually become more reform-oriented and in 1911 would join the *Wandervogel Deutscher Bund*, which, as will be discussed later in this section, was the group most interested in questions of young women in the movement, abstinence from alcohol (and later tobacco) and, critically for the small Magdeburg group, in creating a reunified *Wandervogel* movement.



the Jena group introduced measures at the *Bundeshauptversammlung* on January 3rd, 1907 to forbid alcohol on trips and to open the groups up to girls. Both of these measures were quickly defeated, leading to the Jena group's departure from the AWW. On January 20<sup>th</sup> this group founded a new organization, the *Wandervogel, Deutscher Bund* (DB). Here again we see the navigation of difference, with the meaning of *Wandern* and the *Wandervogel* contested at the communal level resulting in diversification.

The founder of the DB, Ferdinand Vetter, was a girl's *Gymnasium* teacher in his late 20s heavily involved in the *Deutscher Bund abstinenter Studenten* (German League of Abstinent Students, DBaSt). The DBaSt, more than any other outside influence, was able to inject its doctrines into the otherwise forcefully independent *Wandervogel* with their cultivated *Programmlosigkeit*. Among the reasons for their success were similarities in their perspective on the necessity of youth autonomy and the formulation of a new lifestyle, the increasing involvement in student groups by *Wandervogel* now in college and the ties they established with reform-minded teachers in schools who welcomed their discussions of the dangers of alcohol. The establishment of the DB thus marks the beginning of increasing ties between school age youth and reform groups which, although they would never officially collaborate, nevertheless exerted a large degree of influence over the directions the *Wandervogel* would take.<sup>24</sup> Following its inception, the DB recruited new *Führer* (often from the DBaSt or teachers at local schools), opened up the group to girls, adopted a decentralized leadership structure ceding much more authority to individual groups and rapidly grew into the second largest *Wandervogel* organization

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<sup>24</sup> The increasing role of reform groups and teachers in the ranks of the *Wandervogel* was not always welcomed and was pointed to by the *Jungwandervogel* as one of the major issues in their decision to split from the AWW. The other issue, the scandal revolving around Wilhelm Jansen and alleged homosexuality and paedophilia, garnered much more attention.

after the AWW. By the end of the year, 16 groups had joined the DB and several influential elder personalities had joined their ranks, including Prof. Dr. Ludwig Gurlitt.

Hans Breuer, having joined the Steglitz group around 1899 and remaining heavily involved with the *Wandervogel* since, joined the DB shortly after its founding in 1907 and, along with close friend Hans Lißner (responsible for DB publications), would go on to lead the organization and become one of the most influential members of the *Wandervogel* movement until his death at Flanders in 1918. Breuer's collection of *Volkslieder*, the *Zupfgeigenhansl*, first published in 1909, was his most visible legacy—however his leadership saw the DB grow dramatically and reinvigorate the entire *Wandervogel* movement with its renewed focus on youth independence and self-improvement, an expanded autonomy for individual groups in the DB and, of course, a renewed focus on authentic folk music.

Many of these decisions were the result of discussions at the “alte Pachantey,” a cooperative house in Heidelberg in which many older and prominent *Wandervogel* youth lived together while at university (including, at the time, Breuer and Lißner). Their work towards making the *Wandervogel* (and not just the DB) more open and inclusive and emphasizing elements such as authentic folk music and a more introspective romanticism is a prominent but characteristic example of the continuing involvement many youth had in maintaining the movement after leaving for college and beyond. The *Füchse*, *Scholaren* or *Eingetragene* of one age often would go on to become the *Führer* and, later, adult advisory members of others. In this way the *Wandervogel* would build off of each subsequent cohort's experiences. While this had the effect of maintaining a continuing discourse and tradition and kept youth from becoming too rebellious, which would certainly have had catastrophic consequences for the *Wandervogel* as a whole given the social realities in which they existed (and the confusion that existed even then

among the general population about the differences between the various organizations), it also constrained individual expression and the diversity of perspectives that could exist harmoniously within the organization as leaders across several organizations began working towards a reunified *Einigungsbund*. This would itself have, perhaps inevitably, serious consequences for the *Wandervogel* and the *Jugendbewegung* in general, especially in months before WWI.

In 1910, Hans Breuer (now Dr. med.) was elected the *Bundesleiter* of the DB and Hans Lißner the *Zeitungsleiter*. In April of that year, the DB began attempts to create an umbrella organization of *Wandervogel* organizations with the cooperation of the majority of the AWW. At a meeting over Pentecost, the *Sachsenburgtagung*, attended by some 500 *Wandervogel* youth and 100 *Führer* from the AWW, DB and *Steglitzer EV*, the decision to create this organization was agreed upon and in early January 1911, the *Verband Deutscher Wandervögel* (VDW) was founded. Initially a confederation between the AWW and the DB, over the next two years most other organizations joined the VDW as well. This umbrella organization was to be the first stage in a more complete reunification of the various *Wandervogel* organizations into a single *Einigungsbund*—a move that was completed in early January of 1913 when the DB, the *Steglitzer EV* approximately two-thirds of the AWW and other smaller regional groups formally dissolved and merged into the WVEV.

### **More Forks in the Road**

Not all organizations saw reunification as a worthwhile project. While the 1907 split of the DB was conducted relatively amicably, the 1910 split of the *Jung-Wandervogel* (JWV) was anything but. Following Fischer's departure in 1906, the much older Wilhelm (Willie) Jansen

took over the title of *Großbachant* of the AWW, although shortly after his appointment, the position of *Großbachant* was eliminated. He was then promoted to lead the *Eltern- und Freundesrat* of a renovated dual chamber leadership structure comprised of the adult supervisory council and a five-person leadership board of the *Führerschaft*, the young adult leaders of the AWW.

The wealthy *Rittergutsbesitzer* Willie Jansen had encountered a *Horde* of *Wandervogel* on and rapidly became involved in their activities. He quickly won over the affection of many of the youth and became extremely popular within the organization. Already thirty-nine years old upon entering into the organization in 1905, questions were raised about his intentions becoming so directly involved in hiking and camping with *Wandervogel* youth, especially given increasingly credible rumors of his alleged homosexuality and his public encouragement of nudist culture. Jansen was a member of the *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre[s] Komitee*, the gay rights organization founded in 1897 by Magnus Hirschfeld dedicated to the repeal of Paragraph 175 of the *Strafgesetzbuch* outlawing homosexuality (grouped together in the eyes of reformers reprehensibly with bestiality). In 1903 Jansen helped to found the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*, another gay rights organization, to battle the oppressive official stance on homosexuality in Germany. While he would terminate his involvement with both groups by 1908, it was already too late to avoid controversy. The rest of Jansen's story is, unfortunately, all too predictable given the social realities in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Germany. On 30 March, 1908, Jansen stepped down from the *Eltern und Freundesrat* after a picture surfaced of him nude in the woods with two boys. The timing could not have been worse, coinciding with the much more well-known Eulenburg Affair, the scandal revolving around alleged homosexuality in the highest ranks of the Prussian military and aristocracy, the fallout of which precipitated nationwide homosexual witch

hunts, including within the *Wandervogel*.<sup>25</sup> The fear of homosexuality within the organization following Jansen's resignation in an already defensive AWW led to an internal witch hunt that treated boys deemed to be too friendly with suspicion—a phenomenon which would spread to other *Wandervogel* organizations as well, seriously threatening the close-knit groups as their relationships suddenly became the subject of scrutiny. For his part, Jansen had proven to be a charismatic and efficient leader (numbers more than doubled in his two years heading the AWW) and he remained involved with the AWW in various capacities until sometime shortly before his official 1910 expulsion from the organization, the result of comments he made supporting same-sex relationships in the *Wandervogel*. Without any accusations from youth and without any evidence that Jansen had acted inappropriately in his relationships with them, Jansen's expulsion by the AWW leadership was viewed by many adults and youth alike within the *Wandervogel* as the apex of an overzealous persecution of homosexuality caused by a nationwide moral panic that had no place in an organization purportedly committed to remaining free of outside influence.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Including Kaiser Wilhelm II himself. The Eulenburg scandal was essentially an exploitation of several Prussian officers' and aristocrats' sex lives, which had been covered up for years before the affair officially broke when the information became politically exploitable by those opposed to Wilhelm's expansionist foreign policy. The public distaste for homosexuality and love of a good scandal was a given, and the trials that resulted from the outings gripped the German nation and remained prevalent in public consciousness until the beginning of the war. While touched upon only briefly here, the Eulenburg affair was of great importance at the time, as it opened up a (mostly reactionary) public discourse about homosexuality that undid years of work by gay rights reformers. In the years to come, the fallout from the affair would help to fuel (largely false) accusations of the *Wandervogel* fostering a homoerotic culture. Indeed, there is no evidence to suggest that homosexuals were represented in any greater proportion in the WV than in Germany as a whole. See Richard Mills' "The German Youth Movement (Wandervogel)" in *Gay Roots: Twenty Tears of Gay Sunshine: An Anthology of Gay History, Sex, Politics and Culture* for a further discussion of homosexuality in the *Wandervogel*.

<sup>26</sup> While Jansen was never proven guilty of carrying on inappropriate physical relationships with youth, he did form what many both in the period and today would consider far too friendly romantic relationships with several boys. There is a great deal of confusion in the literature about Jansen, driven largely by the perspectives of those writing on him. He has been viewed as the misunderstood and mistreated gay-rights champion and proficient WV leader that many want him to be and as a predatory pedophile that saw in the WV the perfect cover for his activities. The facts point more towards the former than the latter; however, given the partisan nature of the entire affair, an unbiased account is nonexistent.

Jansen's expulsion and the debate surrounding it was one of the primary factors in the 1910 split within the AWW that resulted in two separate leadership bodies. The first, after a majority vote, saw the leadership relocated to Leipzig with the goal of reuniting with the DB and other organizations. As a result, a new leadership was elected in Berlin comprised largely of those supportive of Jansen and others that opposed this union. By the end of the year, both AWW organizations agreed to reunite; however those groups and individuals loyal to Jansen or dissatisfied with the actions of the AWW remained unconvinced. With Jansen's funding, these groups left the AWW and founded the *Jung-Wandervogel*. Like Fischer, Jansen was supposed to withdraw from the *Wandervogel* following his official departure. Like Fischer, he did not:

Nach einer Bemerkung Frieses<sup>27</sup> hatte sich Jansen bei seinem Ausschieden aus dem AWW verpflichtet, sich niemals mehr um den Wandervogel zu kümmern. Seine Anhänger aber gründeten am 15. Dezember 1910 in Hamburg den Jungwandervogel in bewußtem Gegensatz zum Altwandervogel...Jansens starker Einfluß blieb bestehen. Mit aller Kraft arbeitete er gegen eine Einigung der Bünde, die sie wieder mit dem verhaßten AWW zusammengeführt hätte. Für sie blieb Jansen der beliebte, weltgewandte, großzügige und persönlich lebenswürdige Rittergutsbesitzer und untadelhafte Freund (Kneip 83).

The JWV were established to be an elite organization—they were highly selective and their leadership largely suspicious of outside influence, the clear result of their past experiences. Correspondingly, of all the organizations, the JWV were also most outwardly dedicated to maintaining the autonomy of their youth given the danger they saw in such influence gaining control of their organization, as they felt it had the AWW and DB. The JWV saw the influx of

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<sup>27</sup> He refers here to Hermann Friese, another influential WV leader and close friend of Karl Fischer.

teachers into leadership positions in other organizations as evidence of a derailment of the project of youth autonomy. To this end, no *Führer* over 25 years old was admitted and JWV youth were given much more latitude in their activities (there was no prohibition on alcohol or tobacco on hikes, although they were still expected to uphold the good name of the JWV given these privileges). Homosexual relationships between youth, while rare, were tolerated under the guiding principle that “der Junge sollte nicht Sklave eines Prinzips sein, sondern die Freiheit des Entschlusses haben” (Kneip 84). While their perspective on youth freedom found resonance with many other German youth, their elitism and close-knit structure made expansion difficult. The groups were limited to forty youth or less. Still, by 1914, the JWV numbered nearly 1800 *Scholaren* and *Führer* in (intentionally small) groups across the Reich.

The JWV was not the only organization to be highly selective in its membership.<sup>28</sup> While many *Wandervogel* groups of the pre-war era generally espoused a cultural nationalism and largely eschewed what many saw as the mindless militaristic nationalism that was a hallmark of Prussian society, many others were much more engaged with the militaristic and *völkisch* rhetoric of the time. In 1910 the *Vaterländischer Jugendverband e.V.* was founded in Berlin comprised of youth and *Führer* that were particularly drawn to era’s “Stärkung des nationalen Gedankens” (Kindt 1968 372). In 1912, Georg Baensch and Willy Cichon officially founded the *Wandervogel, Vaterländischer Bund für Jugendwandern* (VB) within the *Vaterländischer Jugendverband*. Both of these groups remained relatively small, as the early 1913 excerpt from the VB’s periodical, the *Wandervogel-Warte*, shown below illustrates. Still, their numbers were clearly growing with 668 total participants on 78 mostly 1-day hikes with an average attendance

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<sup>28</sup> Most groups were selective with their membership to an extent, but the JWV, with their self-perception as the elite WV organization were much more so. Still, a prospective WV youth in any group would often go on a hike or two, and if he or she fit in with the community was accepted into their ranks.

of 8.6 per hike in 1912 (not individual participants—Edgar Hille for example would have been counted 28 times in this total).

**Aus der Bewegung.**

**Vaterländischer Jugend-Verband.** Leiter: Leutnant Behrmann, Steglitz, Schützenstraße 38.

**Wandervogel V. B.** Leiter: Willy Eichon, Berlin N. 39, Ravenstraße 6.

Die Entwicklung des Bundes veranschaulicht folgende Gegenüberstellung:

	im 1. Bundesjahr 1911	im 2. Bundesjahr 1912
Wanderfahrten	22	78
Wandertage	45	91
Gesamt-Teilnehmer	126	668
Teilnehmer im Durchschnitt	5,7	8,6

Die regsten Wanderer sind Gilly (29), Edgar Hille (28), Wilhelm von Woedtke (27), Erwin Ragermann (26), Hildegard Geisler (22) und Paul Steffin (21 Fahrten).

**Vaterländischer Jugend-Wanderbund.** Leiter: Wilhelm von Woedtke, Schmarzendorf, Zoppoter Straße 17.

**Völkischer Wanderverein Schöneberg.** Vorsitzender: Kurt Thiem, Berlin-Schöneberg, Bahnstr. 42a.

Figure 3: Youth hiking numbers for 1911 and 1912 in the Wandervogel, Vaterländischer Bund für Jugendwandern, image source: Wandervogel-Warte, January 1913

In addition to espousing a more militaristic outlook, the VB also only accepted members of German ethnicity and vocally promoted a *völkisch* ideology of racial purity.<sup>29</sup> It is important to note that while some other *Wandervogel* organizations had significant Jewish youth participation and while many groups and individuals supported their involvement, *völkisch* rhetoric was not confined to the VB—they were simply (at the time) the most vocal advocates of it. While still a minority voice within the *Wandervogel*, those espousing an agenda of racial purity nevertheless made their presence increasingly known. This, along with the alleged homosexuality within the movement (the result of the Jansen affair and Hans Blüher’s justification of Jansen’s actions through his interpretation of the *Führer*-youth relationship as a

<sup>29</sup> The VB tellingly changed its name in 1918 to the *Wandervogel, Völkischer Bund*.



homoerotic mentoring project in the third volume of his history), were to cause serious blowback as the *Wandervogel* expanded and entered more fully into public consciousness.

#### **Fourth Phase: The End of the Beginning**

The VDW, which was officially founded on 8 January 1911 following the path set forth at the May 1910 Sachsenburg meeting, made, despite an overwhelming mandate from both sides to reunite, few strides towards a reconciliation between the DB and AWV in 1911 and 1912 due to their inability to solve four key differences of opinion between these two largest *Wandervogel* organizations. The DB insisted on alcohol (and later nicotine) prohibitions during all activities, the inclusion of girls into the organization, opening their ranks up to younger students and a decentralized leadership structure that gave more strength to the individual and regional groups. The AWV still opposed all of these measures.<sup>30</sup>

The necessity of reaching a compromise was made even more salient as local and regional AWV and DB groups were merging together into the new umbrella group, the WVEV, independently of decisions made by their governing bodies. When the *Eufkrat* of the AWV again (narrowly) rejected an alcohol prohibition, a deluge of groups left the AWV and merged into the WVEV. This clear rejection by AWV youth of the increasingly domineering influence of the elder *Eufkrat* council left the AWV with only a third of its former membership—approximately 1500 youth—a loss from which it never recovered.

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<sup>30</sup> The AWV were not *pro*-alcohol and nicotine, but they felt that a prohibition was not the answer to the problem of alcohol and tobacco consumption.

The founding of the WVEV in June 1912 was the culmination of over two years of intense work and compromise. Ultimately, the question of alcohol and nicotine in the movement was left to individual groups to decide (although for all intents and purposes this resulted in prohibition), as were questions of youth under-14 participation. Girls were allowed into the movement; however, mixed hiking was only allowed with the permission of the leaders of the *Gau* to which the groups belonged (and many *Gaue* forbade it outright). The DB's mandate for a decentralized leadership structure, as evidenced by the great deal of latitude given to regional and local groups, won out and formed the structural backbone of the new WVEV. While these moves officially granted greater autonomy to the groups themselves, a shift in demographics resulted in a very different constellation of power within the individual *Wandervogel* groups themselves. Young teachers had often taken up positions in the *Führerschaft* in most *Wandervogel* organizations before the *Einigungsbund*, but by the beginning of 1914, teachers comprised well more than half of all *Führerschaft* positions in the movement. Their increasing numbers were one of the main reasons groups like the JWV instituted an age restriction—the presence of a teacher, no matter how sympathetic to the *Wandervogel* ideal, threatened the inner autonomy of the group: “Mancher Junge wurde dadurch vom Beitritt abgeschreckt, weil ein Lehrer die Leitung hatte. Andererseits strebten jetzt auch Jungen und Mädchen nur deshalb zum Wandervogel, weil dort ihr Lieblingslehrer das Zepter führte oder weil sie sich schulische Vorteile erhofften” (Kneip 108). The influx of students joining because of the *presence* of a teacher (and the hopes of ingratiating themselves to them) rather than because of a desire for liberation from scholastic authority was one symptom of *Wandervogel* growth. While the movement's numbers remained relatively low throughout the early 1900s, following the establishment of the WVEV numbers skyrocketed. The public presence of the *Wandervogel*

increased dramatically, and with this greater attention came increased pressure to conform to social expectations.

The increasing presence of teachers involved directly in *Wandervogel* activities cannot be read solely as a negative, as it also underscores the success of the educational reform movement, which from the inception of the *Wandervogel* had played an important, albeit largely hands-off role in their development. These teachers who led the new *Wandervogel* groups were not the teachers of the past—they were largely dedicated to a broader conception of education in the spirit of Langbehn, which also stood at the heart of the *Wandervogel* movement. The transition from predominantly youth-led hiking to predominantly teacher-led hiking therefore can be seen a continuation of the success of both the *Wandervogel* and educational reform movements in reaching a wider demographic (although still confined nearly exclusively to the *Bildungsbürgertum*) and of their continued symbiotic relationship to one another. Still, their increasingly widespread and hands-on involvement was one salient marker of a dramatic sea change in the *Wandervogel* that cemented the organization's ties to educational reform at the expense of their autonomy.

In light of the Jansen Affair and the third volume of Blüher's history: *Wandervogel als erotisches Phänomen* along with accusations of antisemitism, two major discussions took center stage within the WVEV: the question of Jewish membership and the specter of homoeroticism as a supposed guiding principle of the movement. As the movement further entered into public consciousness and as its membership became more representative of bourgeois society generally, the importance of addressing their official stance increased. The question of Jewish membership, which had by-and-large remained a non-issue, was forced after a 1912 incident in which a 13-year-old Jewish girl was denied entrance into the *Wandervogel* group in Zittau. The incident

became the catalyst for a public scandal, although it is unclear whether her denial was the result of her Jewish ancestry or because, as the group's official denial of admittance suggested, she did not get along well with the other members—a diplomatic wording concealing her rejection “wegen allzu deutlichen Interesses an kleineren Jungen” (Kindt 1968 730).<sup>31</sup> On 7 June, 1913, more than a year after the event, the *Berliner Tageblatt* ran an article titled “Jugendpflege und Antisemitismus” about the event painting the *Wandervogel* as an antisemitic *Jugendpflege* organization. The situation was intensified by an independent but influential periodical, the *Wandervogel-Führerzeitung* (officially unaffiliated with the *Wandervogel* but run by several of its more radical *völkisch* leaders including Friedrich Wilhelm Fulda), that proclaimed the *Wandervogel* were a nationalistic organization that had no place for non-Aryan elements. While leadership in the WVEV quickly condemned these articles and distanced themselves from the publication (even creating a separate periodical to discuss the issue), individual *Wandervögel* joined the discussion for and against Jewish exclusion and the scandal escalated until an official stance on the “*Judenfrage*” became essential. True to the WVEV's position of fostering a decentralized structure but publically regarded as an evasion of the question, the decision to allow Jewish entrance was left to the local groups.

In response to these developments, an impassioned article written by a Jewish *Wandervogel* who signed his name “Ratner,” and titled “Und wir Juden” in the January/February 1914 *Wandervogels Rundflug: Gaublatt der Wandervogel in Südwestdeutschland* appeared criticizing the *Führerzeitung* and Jülsch's article on the incompatibility of Jews with the

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<sup>31</sup> This event illustrates the continuing double-standard regarding female sexuality and continuing bourgeois discomfort with the idea of youth sexuality in general. It must be concluded that, while the girl in question was not denied entrance solely because of her Jewish heritage, especially as she went on multiple hikes with the group prior to the decision to deny her admission, the WV were not as tolerant or free from societal influence as they believed, nor as autonomous as they have often been portrayed in WV literature.

*Wandervogel*. In an eminently level-headed response urging *Wandervögel* to be careful not to let pure emotions on either side of the issue cloud their judgment, Ratner tendered his resignation. “Wenn ich gegen den Ausschluß der Juden schreibe, so geschieht das wirklich nicht nur wegen mir, denn ich bleibe sowieso nicht drin, auch wenn jetzt ein fauler Friede gemacht würde. Ich gehe ab, weil ich mir eine andere Erinnerung an den W.V. mitnehmen will” (403). He closes his plea for tolerance with the hauntingly poetic line “Jetzt gehen unsere Wege wohl auseinander. Deshalb zum letzten Mal—Heil!” (403).<sup>32</sup> Many groups continued to allow Jewish entrance, but many others immediately implemented a ban. Jewish *Wandervögel* like Ratner, feeling no longer welcome or indeed expelled, left the organization for the 1912 founded *Jüdischer Wanderbund Blau-Weiß*, a Zionist youth group patterned on the *Wandervogel* which had issued a statement urging Jewish youth to avoid the *Wandervogel* and join them. Ultimately, this decision by the WVEV showed how inextricably tied to the events of their time the *Wandervogel* were, despite the veneer of autonomy vis-à-vis political and social discourses and their mission to develop a new type of German citizen.<sup>33</sup>

By 1913, many of those who had moved through the *Wandervogel* ranks had gone on to university studies. The abstinence organizations, which along with their stance on alcohol and nicotine also often advocated vegetarianism, pacifism, school reform, chastity and socialism held a particular draw for former *Wandervogel* youth. Since the establishment of the DB, the activities of school-age and university students had begun to overlap, and many began to work towards a union of both age groups into an official umbrella organization of all like-minded youth. The

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<sup>32</sup> “Heil!” being the favorite salutation and valediction for any meeting of *Wandervögel*.

<sup>33</sup> As early as 1902, the WV were approached by right-wing pan-Germanic organizations. Many leaders, including Karl Fischer, were intrigued by their goals, however their attempts to bring the WV into their fold were resisted by the WV, which remained true to its mission of neutrality and detachment from the adult sphere. (see Stachura 29)

fruits of their labor would be the *Freideutsche Jugend*, officially established during the *Erster Freideutsche Jugendtag* in 1913.

The *Wandervogel* are rightly seen as the precursors of the growing youth movement in Germany at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But they would never officially join the collective *Freideutsche Jugend* that organized following the *Erster Freideutscher Jugendtag* on 11 and 12 October 1913. Shortly before the event, the WVEV revoked its official attendance with the justification that the presence of many reform organizations (both liberal and conservative) threatened their avowed autonomy and desire to remain free of outside influence. This exclusion of course held only for the youth themselves—*Führer* and older youth who had passed through the *Wandervogel* ranks attended in large numbers. The JWV attended, but only after expressing their continued dissatisfaction with the heavy influence of teachers and other reformers in the youth movement's ranks. This discontent ultimately led to their refusal to join the *Freideutsche Jugend* as well.

The *Erster Freideutscher Jugendtag* was planned as a response to the centennial celebrations of the *Völkerschlacht*, the Battle of Leipzig, which handed Napoleon his first defeat and led to his exile on Elba. A momentous event in German history, the battle's 100-year anniversary was to be commemorated throughout the German Empire with lavish celebrations, military parades and new memorials dedicated to the victory. In rebuttal to the militaristic overtones of the planned celebrations and of the “saber-rattling” nationalistic fervor leading up to the centennial, youth organizations planned to meet on the Meißner, a mountain southeast of Kassel in central Germany to demonstrate their unity and dedication to the establishment of a new youth culture.

The weather was miserable during the day prior to the festivities, leading to low morale among attendees who arrived on top of the mountain wet, cold and unsure of what the coming day would hold. But the weather cleared and the atmosphere changed accordingly. Friedrich Oldenburg cites a letter he received from Alfred Topfer, one of the last living participants of the *Jugendtag*, who described the event: “Gefordert wurde ein schlichter, natürlicher Lebensstil in Brüderlichkeit und Verpflichtung gegenüber der Allgemeinheit, eine kulturelle Erneuerung sowie Achtung und Friede gegenüber den übrigen Völkern. Er herrschte eine ungewöhnliche, jugendbewegte Hochstimmung” (Ille and Köhler 139). The congregated youth spent the day singing, dancing, talking, debating and listening to the speeches of several invited dignitaries, the highlight of which was the renowned educational reformer and director of the *Freie Schulgemeinde Wickersdorf* and a leading advocate for the importance of youth culture Gustav Wyneken’s call to action in which he called for careful reflection and deliberation in youth’s loyalties and their responsibilities in fighting for a better future.

Prüft, ob der Krieg schon heilig ist, den ihr führt. Ob euer Krieg zugleich ein Krieg ist für den Geist, ob er zugleich die ganze Menschheit weiterführt aus dem Dunklen ins Helle. Gerade der Jugend steht es an, über die Grenzen des Staatsinteresses und des völkischen Selbsterhaltungstriebes hinaus zu denken, der Jugend, die noch nicht in der heißen Arbeit des Tages steht. Ihr Vorrecht der Freiheit verpflichtet sie zur Freiheit. Ihr steht es an, immer und immer wieder nach dem Höchsten zu trachten, nach dem Unbedingten, nach dem, was der Erde letzter Sinn ist, was sein soll, unabhängig von den vorübergehenden Interessen der Völker und ihrer Parteien (Kindt 504).

Wyneken closed with a reworking of the tripartite motto of the French Revolution *Liberté, égalité, fraternité* calling instead for “Freiheit, Deutschheit, Jugendlichkeit.” In Wyneken’s speech is his recognition and wariness of the increasingly *völkisch* overtones he saw in the *Jugendbewegung*, but above all it was an unmistakable endorsement of support and a hopeful attempt to steer these youth away from those nationalistic and racist elements which threatened to undermine the openness of the youth project.

The Hohe Meißner is remembered as the highpoint of the German Youth Movement. But even during the event, a polarization of the youth movement was palpable. The more liberal element called for tolerance and inclusiveness; the conservative element for racial purity. There was to be no solution to this split. Still, one momentous proclamation came out of the weekend: the articulation of the *Meißner-Formel*, the declaration of youth autonomy formulated by Wyneken and the nearly 60-year-old poet Ferdinand Avenarius (who found the right words) and ratified by the fourteen participating youth organizations which took part in the event. The short declaration, which was amended at the insistence of the abstinence-oriented youth groups to include the all-important alcohol and nicotine prohibition and left purposely vague due to the many differences between the assembled youth (and in the spirit of the *Programmlosigkeit* that had been a staple of the *Wandervogel* since its inception), stated:

Die Freideutsche Jugend will nach eigener Bestimmung, vor eigener Verantwortung, in innerer Wahrhaftigkeit ihr Leben gestalten. Für diese innere Freiheit tritt sie unter allen Umständen geschlossen ein. Zur gegenseitigen Verständigung werden Freideutsche Jugendtage abgehalten. Alle gemeinsamen Veranstaltungen der Freideutschen Jugend sind alkohol- und nikotinfrei.



As revolutionary as the explicit formulation of the *Meißner-Formel* was (and in 1913 Germany it was seen as quite radical), the declaration simply put into an official announcement the project that these youth and their allies had been pursuing for years. The foundation of what the *Freideutsche Jugend* was had already been established in action in the late 1890s with their first aimless wanderings of the not-yet-*Wandervogel* around Brandenburg. The activities of the *Wandervogel* had not changed much in the fifteen years since the first hikes, and despite not knowing where they were headed, over time the repercussions of what they were doing became evident—both to themselves and to wider German society.

The *Meißner-Formel* was the declaration of a maturing youth movement directed to German society at large—the manifesto of a movement that had matured and developed the confidence to express its demand to be heard and recognized. But Wyneken and his supporters, even in their nebulous proclamation that youth demanded to take control of their own destiny, had overplayed their hand. In his capacity as editor of *Der Anfang*, a journal loosely associated with the *Freideutsche Jugend* that began publication in May 1913 (after an initial four volumes in 1911), Wyneken had allowed youth great latitude in their cultural criticism. The *Anfang* circle was highly contentious from the beginning, articulating their grievances in fiery articles that took issue with school and family life and the general tenor of societal controls restricting youth in Wilhelmine Germany and in Austria (Berlin and Vienna comprised the two centers of the circle, which would also set up *Sprechsäle* in these cities as well as in several other cities and university towns).

Ultimately the *Wandervogel*, while not officially members of the *Freideutsche Jugend*, were (correctly) grouped into the broader *Jugendbewegung* in the minds of those who began to take notice. In an effort to distance themselves from more outspoken critiques such as those of

the *Anfang*, a distancing which was influenced heavily by their desire to reconcile their name and prove their good intention, the *Wandervogel* adopted an overall much less radical and more culturally conservative demeanor in the months leading up to, during and following the war (when the *Wandervogel* would largely fracture into the various *Bünde*). In the end, they distanced themselves from Wyneken, and a more conservative element and tenor came to dominate the organization.<sup>34</sup>

Even within the *Freideutsche Jugend*, there was significant backpedaling following the proclamations on the Hohe Meißner. Critiques about the extent of youth dissatisfaction with German society became commonplace, and the *Freideutsche Jugend* attempted to pacify these exclamations. In the May 1914 *Der Führer: Mitteilungen für Wandervogel*, a JWV periodical, Carl Ludwig Johann Wilhelm blasts the FDJ for their mollifying attempts at appeasement. After an anonymous teacher in Bavaria published a brochure “*Jugendkultur*”, *Dokumente zur Beurteilung der “modernsten” Form “freier” Jugenderziehung*, FDJ representatives were sent to Munich in a “Protestversammlung.” Wilhelm summarizes the FDJ approach: “Ziemlich lahm wurden die Angriffe zurückgewiesen. ‘Tu uns nichts, wir sind ja so brav’...das wars, was allenthalben durchklang. Immer und immer wieder betonten die Vertreter, das weder die F.J. noch die einzelnen Bünde eine Empörung der Jugend gegen Schule, Elternhaus und ‘Religion’ sei” (17). Looking back at the *Meißner Formel*, Wilhelm is struck by the phrase “innere Wahrhaftigkeit.” He summarizes: “Neues wollen ist Empörung gegen das Alte. Warum war die F.J. in München zu—politisch, das auszusprechen? Innere Wahrhaftigkeit? Die F.J. hat bei

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<sup>34</sup> Following the war, Wyneken would again become heavily involved with many of the more liberal *Bündische Jugend* organizations. In a certain sense, the release from the longstanding attempts to reconcile the various strands of the *Jugendbewegung* was liberating. But in the context of Weimar Germany, this differentiation quickly took on a political dimension which paralleled the major combatants in the political arena, most problematically those on the far right and left.

diesem ersten ernstlichen Zusammenstoß mit den heute leitenden Mächten ihr begeistert aufgestelltes Programm schnöde verleugnet” (17). In the coming months, the last before the outbreak of war, this appeasement would become commonplace. While groups like the FDJ would remain dedicated to the cause of youth autonomy, the vast majority of *Wandervogel* groups, like the FDJ, attempted to calm their outspoken critics.

Following the declaration of war in July of 1914, *Wandervögel* of age were among the first to enlist. They, like most Germans, were caught up in the nationalism of their day. And although theirs was often a much more nuanced nationalism than that of their elders and peers, it nevertheless led to the same place. Many volunteered for front-line positions and were killed in droves. The reality of modern warfare was far from what their romantic notions of chivalry and honor had led them to believe. They also came into close contact with the working classes of Germans for the first time, who often revolted them with their coarse manners and crude and violent nature.<sup>35</sup> For all the talk of the dignity of the common man, their relationship to the working classes had remained superficial and highly romanticized. *Wandervogel* soldiers were often stolen from, given degrading jobs and were the butt of jokes and scorn by the predominantly working-class fighting men. The letters they sent back home are filled with disillusionment with the brutality of war and the nature of German society.

What then is the legacy of the early *Wandervogel*? The gradually developing agenda to unite German youth and rewrite society had failed, partially due to their own inability to defend it. The world they had created for themselves had been unmasked as a dream and the Germany

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<sup>35</sup> For discussions of *Wandervogel* in the war, see Gerhand Ille’s “Jugendbewegung und Erster Weltkrieg” in *Der Wandervogel: Es begann in Steglitz* and Laqueur’s *Young Germany*. For a discussion of *Wandervogel* conceptions of nationalism and a more in-depth analysis of *Wandervogel* wartime experiences, see Anna Mageras’ *Nesting the Nation: Youthful Conceptions of Nature, Culture, and Modernity in Wilhelmine Germany*.

that had existed before the war vanished in an instant. Looking back at the political, social, and economic developments of the 1920s and 1930s, the youth movement's ultimate goal of a united German youth bound with "deepest sincerity" to the creation of a better society was bound to fail from the beginning. Any earnest, emotional and outright critique of society, such as that of *Der Anfang*, was guaranteed to be met with acrimony and contempt and ultimately contributed to the socially conservative reaction against (and subsequently within) the broad *Jugendbewegung*, including the *Wandervogel*. But that the youth movement existed at all, that it found resonance with tens of thousands of middle-class boys and girls across the nation was testament to an emerging urgency of youth to confront the alienating and boring effects of modernity in an environment largely hostile to change. The systems that had constrained them were questioned and their boundaries tested for the first time. In claiming and living out their autonomy, *Wandervogel* youth created highly participatory spaces for youth to develop on their own terms. And in their embracing of adventure and hope for the future as well as in the project of *Selbsterziehung* and its focus on *Wandern*, they were for able to construct a way of living which counteracted the disengaging present and futures they saw for themselves in modernizing Germany which would stay with those who understood the message for the rest of their lives.

### **Reception of the Wandervogel**

Since WWII, the *Wandervogel* have been the subject of a tremendous amount of scholarship which, like the *Wandervögel* themselves, has sometimes stirred a great deal of debate. With well over a century of inquiry into the WV, there is a tremendous variety of scholarship that has shifted emphasis over time, especially in the immediate aftermath of WWII.

Among other topics, inspections of the *Wandervogel* in discussions of youth culture, relation to reform movements, abstinence from drugs and alcohol, education, nationalism, fashion, environmentalism, sexuality, gender, racism and moral panic. *Wandervogel* fashion and the development of a unique style, studies into the *Wandervogel* as a neo-romantic revival and (relatedly) inspecting the *Wandervogel* as a back-to-nature turn away from modern lifestyles form other tangents of scholarship.<sup>36</sup> Still others have written on the prolific *Wandervogel* compilation of German folk music and dance. The various *Wandervogel* groups have been inspected individually and discussed in their relation to each other and across time. Beyond these trajectories, the proper emphasis of analysis of the *Wandervogel* has been frequently and heatedly debated—especially regarding the question of interpreting their activities in light of National Socialism.

The role of *Wandervogel* fashion proves important in situating the project across from punks. *Wandervogel* stylistic and aesthetic practices, while often different in expression and form, served many of the same functions those of punk would in the 1970s. Discussions of *Wandervogel* style stretch back to its earliest years as a distinct fashion began to emerge. It was a mixture of practical clothing (still a controversial topic at the time for middle-class youth, when looking presentable still trumped concerns for comfort) suitable for hiking along with stylistic elements (which often referenced this practicality) that identified its wearer as belonging to the group. Ulrich Linse gives a quick summary of *Wandervögel Kluft* in his article “Lebensformen

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<sup>36</sup> In matters of fashion, the WV have even been discussed in the medical community as part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century turn towards rational clothing (the turn away from the corset most perhaps the most prominent example). Nike Breyer discussed the rise of “A new ‘lay practice’ and ‘do-it-yourself’-shoemaking” in Wilhelminian Germany, led by the WV, which “replaced former academic programs for new natural footwear” in the abstract for his article “No naturally shaped human foot would end in wedged-in, pointed toes” (Knud Ahlborn) – *Wandervogel, youth movement and movement for rational footwear* in *Medizin, Gesellschaft, und Geschichte: Jahrbuch des Instituts für Geschichte der Medizin* (2011).

der bürgerlichen und der proletarischen Jugend” in the 1978 *Jahrbuch des Archivs der Deutschen Jugendbewegung*. He notes that this ensemble consisted of a mixture of:

Stiefel, Schneeschuhe, Seppelhut, Gemaschen, Lodenpelerine, Lodenjoppe, Kletter- und Wanderhose und natürlich auch das Damenwanderkostüm... Diese Kluft wurde ergänzt durch Wanderstock, Dolch, Brotbeutel, Feldflasche, Rucksack, Horden- und Abkochtopf, Aluminium-Schnellkocher, Zelt samt Zubehör, Schlafdecke, ferner durch Rodel, Ski, Photoapparat und Fernglas (qtd. in Grob 30).<sup>37</sup>

In her 1985 study, *Das Kleidungsverhalten jugendlicher Protestgruppen in Deutschland im 20. Jahrhundert*, Marion Grob points out that the expense of many of these items also marks the *Wandervogel* as a middle-class phenomenon, and indeed it was. But ostentatious displays of wealth were discouraged, and several *Wandervogel* periodicals encouraged donating clothing that had been outgrown or which had been upgraded to younger members of the group or less-advantaged youth.<sup>38</sup> In 1971, René König read *Wandervogel* fashion as an expression of difference. In his *Macht und Reiz der Mode. Verständnissvolle Betrachtungen eines Soziologen*, König posits that choices such as long hair (as opposed to the short Prussian hairstyles in fashion at the time) served as an anti-fashion which implicitly critiqued Wilhelmine society.

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<sup>37</sup> Marion Grob notes that Linse’s description is not time specific, but that his inclusion of the *Damenwanderkostüm* (as dismissive of the stylistic choices of female *Wandervögel* as this broad term is) dates the focus of his analysis to sometime after 1907 when the first female *Wandervogel* groups emerged.

<sup>38</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter Four, throughout the early 1910s many *Wandervogel* youth began to become more concerned with their appearance and attempted to maintain immaculate and intricate garb, which resulted in frequent debates about the proper appearance of the youth and raised the question of whether their focus on appearance was perhaps too similar to that of bourgeois society and their conspicuous displays of wealth and privilege.

Grob greatly expands on König and provides one of the most complete treatments of *Wandervogel* fashion to date. Her approach reads the *Wandervogel* as a protest movement in the same vein as the 68er student protests, and her monograph sets up a comparison between these groups. She sees commonalities in how what she calls *Protestkleidung* were used by both groups, and that this style showed: “daß sie aus ihrem Protest gegen eine als erstarrt und für nicht mehr als zukunftsweisend empfundene Gesellschaft heraus auch bewußt ein äußerliches Zeichen für diese Abgrenzung setzten” (310). She also suggests that this style served a practical purpose as well that ties back to their specific engagements with society. Further, their articulation of style drew others with similar interests into conversation with these groups, and thus helped to draw new members. Finally, she sees in their rearrangement of found and repurposed items and outmoded styles expressions of bricolage: “Unter Nutzung bereits vorhandener Moden und Materialien entwerfen sie ihren Vorstellungen gemäß aktiv ihre eigene Kleidung (‘bricolage’), die in dieser Art zunächst einmalig und spezifisch für die Gruppe ist” (310). These outdated fashion elements, when combined with the various badges, pins and other symbology adopted by individual *Wandervögel*, juxtaposed with recent innovations in camping, hiking and photographic technologies, ultimately served to express *Wandervogel* values.<sup>39</sup> This fusion of the romantic with rationalist modernity in *Wandervogel* style corresponds to a similar trajectory in their construction of an identity not based on an anti-modern rejection of society but rather on creating a new personhood able to navigate modernity without becoming caught in the cycle of disengagement and boredom so many experience.

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<sup>39</sup> The *Wandervogel* used symbols heavily, from the oak leaf to Germanic runes. The most famous symbol, however, was the ubiquitous silhouette of a flying bird, known unsurprisingly as the “Wandervogel.” This bird in flight represented the greatest ideals of these youth: fostering a visceral engagement with the world and the freedom to wander and search unimpededly both through nature and life.

## **Plurality or Autocracy? *Wandervogel* Youth and Academic Reception**

As we will see in Chapter Three, punk scholarship has acknowledged the plurality of voices and opinions about what punk is—as a subculture which emerged piecemeal, it could be freely interpreted by any who came in contact with it, especially in Western nations such as the United States, Britain and West Germany, where youth had not only the motivation to seek alternative ways of living, but also the free-time and social climate to experiment. This has not precluded readings of punk as avant-garde, political, working-class, etc.—readings which have at times read these elements too broadly onto punk in an effort to view it as a cohesive whole. *Wandervogel* scholarship, with its much longer history, has suffered from even more leveling and ideologically fueled inspection, but has also begun to address the *Wandervogel* as the multifaceted subculture it was. This has allowed discourse to move past previous examinations which rather flatly defined the entire *Wandervogel* phenomenon as an anti-modern, neo-Romantic, escapist and often *völkisch* manifestation of bourgeois misgivings about German culture and society in rapidly modernizing Wilhelmine Germany or alternatively privileging a reading of the *Wandervogel* as a forerunner and flag bearer for the post-war Federal Republic.

The difficulty of reconciling the various ideological approaches to study of the *Wandervogel* and other youth movements has been long established. In 1936, American Zionist rabbi and educator Samuel Blumenfield wrote in “Can Youth Movements Save Us?” that:

Among the various expressions of social unrest in the last half century, the youth movement has been one of the most favored but least studied of subjects. The numerous volumes and articles that appeared on this question were written either



by leaders and participants of youth movements, or by sympathizers and opponents... The whole subject of youth movements has become a symbol to swear by or swear at. One looks in vain for an objective treatment which would describe and interpret the forces and the processes which enter into the making of this form of collective behavior (255).

This crisp and still relevant description of the fundamental problem of interpreting and confining youth movements to align with ideological agendas rarely espoused by these youth themselves and rarely inscribed into them at the time remains a critically undervalued and ignored aspect of research into not just the *Wandervogel*, but punks and many other youth cultures as well. The plurality, diversity and complexity of the various youth drawn to nebulously defined, intentionally open and endlessly interpretable youth subcultures is simply too multifaceted to force reductive readings through particular ideological prisms. That renderings of the *Wandervogel* can convincingly discuss the youth movement as a precursor to National Socialism, Zionism, the Green Movement and the 68er student movement should be evidence enough that such approaches are far too limited in scope to adequately describe these phenomena in their entirety. While each of these approaches illuminates particular aspects of the *Wandervogel*, they read far too much into them and apply far too rigid an interpretation to a movement which, at its core, attempted to retain its autonomy and avoid entanglements in the dominant social issues of their day. While one can (and should) discuss these affinities, careful attention must be paid not to overgeneralize or ignore other readings.

In his 1982 study, *Die Wandervögel*, Otto Neuloh suggests that scholarship must return to “die Grundwerte des *Wandervogels*...und ihre Wirkungen im Alltag, im Tun und Lassen, in den Dankweisen und Lebensvorstellungen der damaligen Jugend” in order to provide something that

can extend beyond the limitations of prior research, namely the “Dokumentation ohne System,” “wirklichkeitsferne Behandlung” and the “viele widersprüchliche Interpretationen der Entstehung und Entwicklung des Wandervogels” (13). Neuloh created a valuable series of models which attempt to describe the *Wandervogel* program through their principles and activities. He parses these around three core values: *Freiheit*, *Freizeit* and *Gemeinschaft*. Aligned with the value of freedom, he sees “Selbsterziehung, eigene Sozialisation, Andersartigkeit” and sees this play out in their pursuit of their own “Lebensform und Lebensstil” (20). Also ordered to the core value of freedom are self-responsibility, autonomy and inner freedom, self-sufficiency and independence. He sees these values as being expressed through their cultural productions, namely in folk music, dance, performance and literature. In *Gemeinschaft*, Neuloh sees a means to ground their ideal of freedom more firmly as a communal enterprise centered around the recognition of individual strengths and the importance of relationships in nurturing this collective individuality. Here he sees the creation of a community-wide consciousness fostered at the group (*Horde*) level focused on equality (between age groups and between boys and girls) and solidarity through social learning and a sense of the authentic self.

His model for leisure time is a bit less intuitive, but he attempted to break down their activities into broad categories of “eigene Raumplanung und Gestaltung,” “Natur, natürliches Leben,” “eigene Fahrtenplanung und –ausführung,” and “Abstinenz” (23). While Neuloh hits upon the major ideals of the *Wandervogel*, his models seem somewhat arbitrary and forced and too general to apply to all youth and groups. Still, his work, along with Zilius, provides a robust sociological portrait of the *Wandervogel* combined with interviews from former members of pre-WWI *Wandervogel* groups and remains an excellent source of information and first-hand accounts of the early years of the organization. His suggestion that scholarship should inspect the

*Wandervogel* through their values and activities instead of through the application of retrospective ideologies is especially important for this dissertation, and, while I find his models to be an unnecessary attempt to order and structure the various activities of the *Wandervogel* into some sort of rational whole, his focus on freedom and community as well as his recognition of the importance of free time is laudable and remains vitally important.

But Neuloh's attempt to redirect study to the youth themselves is bound up in the contentious discourse surrounding the *Wandervogel* and (what is often regarded as) their neo-romantic privileging of the visceral and the emotional as well as their construction of an idealized agrarian German past (and its role in fostering a new German identity) on the one side and a rationalist condemnation of this romantic worldview and suggestion that this orientation served as a proto-fascist, irrational precursor to National Socialism on the other. Neuloh, who was part of the post-war attempt to distance the *Jugendbewegung* from the discourse surrounding the rise of Nazism, sought to chart a change of course by shifting the emphasis of inspection to a focus upon the founding principles and modes of thought of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century *Jugendbewegung*.

While this orientation has emerged as the more influential today, this has not always been the case. One of the major themes of research following the end of the war in 1945 was the search for antecedents to Nazi Germany. This belief in a so-called *Sonderweg* of German history, which during the Nazi era was proposed in a positive sense by German historians to denote the special evolution of the German state which led to the rise of National Socialism, was reformulated following the end of the war into a search for answers to how Germany could have committed such atrocities. The *Wandervogel* have been caught squarely in this debate, and the perception that a line can be drawn between the *Wandervogel* and the *Hitlerjugend* and the rise

of Nazism has led to an extremely contentious debate that continues to this day. The floodgates opened with Walter Laqueur's 1962 *Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement* and Harry Pross' 1964 *Jugend, Eros, Politik*. Both works contended that the youth of the *Jugendbewegung* were emblematic of a catastrophic failure of bourgeois society to inculcate youth against the irrational rhetoric of political extremism and, in the neo-romantic privileging of the emotional, created generations of youth and adults easily susceptible to emotional appeals, extreme political ideologies and charismatic pied pipers.

Christian Niemeyer's 2013 book *Die dunklen Seiten der Jugendbewegung: Vom Wandervogel zur Hitlerjugend* has dredged up the specter of National Socialism once again—revisiting Pross and Laqueur, but also striking out on its own course. His work is not directed solely against the Youth Movement itself, but also against the preeminent scholars of the post-1945 era who worked to counter the attempts to trace their culpability into the *Sonderweg* hypothesis, especially Werner Kindt and those who collaborated with him in his foundational three-volume collection, published between 1963 and 1974, *Dokumentation der Jugendbewegung*. The Kindt volumes remain the most detailed collection of primary documents, dates and foundational writings on the Youth Movement available outside of an archive, beginning with the emergence in 1896 of the group around Herman Hoffmann-Volkersamb in Steglitz and the subsequent development of the *Wandervogel*. Kindt claimed to present a neutral and unbiased collection of documents, but as Niemeyer rather convincingly shows in his “detektivisch angelegte Arbeit,” the Kindt volumes appear to have systematically omitted materials in order to deter future debate about the culpability and failings of the Youth Movement, especially in the third and final volume, published in 1974, *Die deutsche Jugendbewegung 1920-1933*. Largely absent are documents which might cast the Youth

Movement in a contentious or negative light, particularly in the inter-war years.<sup>40</sup> Also absent are discussions of important figures who later joined the NSDAP. Niemeyer further suggests that historians and publishers have since favored scholarship which promotes a benevolent and progressive view while (potentially intentionally) neglecting to offer a corrective to Kindt's omissions.

Niemeyer's work is provocative—he begins and ends the work with Nietzsche's decree "Verschwiegene Wahrheiten werden giftig"—and in exposing what he sees as an intentional and systematic attempt to repress contentious narratives from scholarship, he has torn open a never-healed wound. The omissions in the Kindt anthology were meant to protect the *Jugendbewegung* from what Kindt and those around him saw as a witch hunt, but in their attempts to prevent a reading too focused upon "die dunklen Seiten," they ultimately fell prey to the same ideologically-driven shortcomings they were attempting to allay. Niemeyer's exposé is long overdue, and any engagement with the Kindt collection will unquestionably need to be prefaced with an acknowledgement of its incompleteness. But Niemeyer also greatly underplays the continued impact of Pross and Laqueur's readings on *Wandervogel* research and in lay *Wandervogel*. The increasingly partisan and political *Bünde* of the Weimar period are well-

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<sup>40</sup> The Kindt collection includes several hints that a *völkisch* element existed within the *Jugendbewegung* even in the Wilhelmine period – for example Gustav Wyneken's speech from the Hohe Meißner, in which he expresses being unsettled by certain nationalistic elements. The collection also does not omit descriptions of the existence of groups with a *völkisch* orientation, such as the *Wandervogel Vaterländischer Bund für Jugendwandern* (*Wandervogel V.B.*), which in 1912 emerged within the *Vaterländischen Jugendverband E.V.*, a confederation of youth groups founded in 1910. Still, the section on the *Wandervogel V.B.*, written by Kindt himself, does not state that they were openly *völkisch*, which a reading of their official periodical, the *Wandervogel Warte* makes clear. With its list of regulations, including specifically a prohibition against Jewish entrance (well before the question was addressed by the larger organizations, to which the *Wandervogel V.B.* did not belong), there is little doubt as to the ideological orientation of the V.B. Kindt instead writes on the V.B. that these youth felt particularly committed to the "Stärkung des nationalen Gedankens" and hoped "diese Absicht im Rahmen eines großen vaterländischen Verbandes besser erreichen zu können" (Kindt 1968 372-3). In light of Niemeyer's revelations, such an omission must now be seen as problematic, if not deceptive, especially given the intent of the volumes to provide a balanced collection of documents in order to foster future research.

documented, and the potential abuses of the emotional engagement with the world bound up in the romantic tradition and the critique of modern, rational, industrialized society are long-established.<sup>41</sup> For many even remotely acquainted with the *Wandervogel*, the connection to National Socialism remains one of the most often repeated narratives.

The post-war German reaction against everything that could be seen as inspirational to the Nazis thoroughly tainted the *Wandervogel*, and this conception has remained in the foreground of popular perception and literature on the *Wandervogel* since. Kurt Sontheimer's "Das Gift der Blauen Blume," a review of Pross' *Jugend, Eros, Politik* in the 23 September, 1964 issue of *der Spiegel* illustrates this guarded orientation:

Die Jugendbewegung ist, bei allen positiven Leistungen im einzelnen, eines der markantesten Symptome der Krankheit des deutschen bürgerlichen Bewußtseins im 20. Jahrhundert; sie ist ein beredter Ausdruck der mangelnden Angepaßtheit sozialer Formen an die Bedingungen der demokratisierten Industriegesellschaft. In ihr sind wie in einem Brennspeigel vor allem jene geistigen Tendenzen eines idealistisch verbrämten Irrationalismus zusammengefaßt, deren vulgäre Ausbeutung Hitlers Massenerfolg zweifellos gefördert hat (Sontheimer).

This has remained one of the most prevalent conceptions of the *Jugendbewegung* since, and it has colored their history brown back to 1896. Their critique of modern society and (supposed) embracing of an idealized past in an anti-modern critique takes on a sinister element of foreshadowed apocalypse and it becomes far too easy to see these youth as scapegoats. Scholars

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<sup>41</sup> The moral panic of 1913-1914 surrounding the *Wandervogel* shows, for example, that emotional appeals have long led to mass condemnation and coalescence around a perceived threat. To force onto *Wandervogel* youth an obligation to transcend emotion represents a fundamental misrepresentation and misunderstanding of their intent.

have attempted to recuperate the image of the *Jugendbewegung* since the ultimate failure of many of those involved with the *Jugendbewegung* to resist National Socialism remains ever present. In approaching the question of why the youth of pre-1933 Germany failed to resist the rise of the Nazis, the debate should not center upon the potential dangers of an idealistic romantic engagement with the world. Instead, we should seek to uncover why these youth were discontented with life in modernity in the first place. Again, this is where this project seeks to intervene. In the attempt to place blame on the “irrational” response to modernity that has characterized youth cultures from the *Wandervogel* to punk and beyond, the alienating effects of modern existence, of which the rationalist search for antecedents and influences to National Socialism can be seen as a manifestation, exonerate themselves of blame.

The debate surrounding the *Führerprinzip* in the *Wandervogel* is another example of this attempt to link the *Jugendbewegung* to National Socialism and has led to a tenuous connection being made between the important role of older youth leading the younger in *Wandervogel* groups and the blind obedience to authority cultivated under National Socialism. In *Die ideologischen und politischen Leitvorstellungen der Bündischen Jugend*, Dirk Brandes gives a description of the *Führer-Gefolgschafts-Prinzip* of the youth *Bünde*, the successors to the *Wandervogel* in the Weimar Republic: “Jede Ortsgruppe eines Bundes besaß einen Führer, der nicht auf formaldemokratisch regementierter Basis, sondern ebenfalls nach den Kriterien Sympathie und Charisma gewählt wurde und nach den Prinzipien der Freiheit und des Vertrauens jederzeit neu ernannt werden konnte” (10). This role was essentially unchanged from the *Wandervogel*, with the exception that the *Bünde* were often much more ideologically engaged with social issues and did not share the communal bond of the *Wandervogel*. The *Wandervogel* ideal was not to inculcate blind obedience to a specific dogma or leader, but rather

to provide a guide for younger youth in the methods of thoughtful reflection and modes of engagement (with nature, with the self, with each other, with German society, with the past, with the future). The debates surrounding the expulsion of one of the most influential members of the *Wandervogel*, Karl Fischer, one of the group's most engaged zealots but whose authoritarian leadership style clashed with the *Wandervogel* desire for autonomy and reciprocal learning, provides an example of the navigation of the desired role of a *Wandervogel Führer* in action. This ideal of leadership formed the foundation of the open and adaptable *Wandervogel* mission to become, as Laqueur writes, "integrated human beings...critical of a society that was not conducive to the development of such men and women" (5). Inspections of this attempt to become "integrated human beings" have been one of the predominant subjects of *Wandervogel* scholarship since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it was largely confined to pedagogical journals. Today, discussion continues in this path, and has benefitted greatly from the recognition that the *Wandervogel* were much more diverse and multifaceted than the romantic, nationalistic, conservative escapists as which they have often been remembered.

In the body of English-language scholarship, the *Jugendbewegung*-National Socialism connection has until recently remained especially prevalent, owing greatly to the aforementioned work of Walter Laqueur. Laqueur provided the first history of the *Wandervogel* in English and, he notes, only the second retrospective history anywhere, with the first being a study by Heinrich Ahrens in 1939, *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung von den Anfängen bis zum Weltkrieg*, which read the *Wandervogel* through a National Socialist interpretation. Laqueur's work remains heavily cited today, and his analysis of the *Wandervogel* is often nuanced and perceptive. But despite distancing himself from Ahrens, Laqueur's study still maintained a similar linear progression from the *Wandervogel* to the Nazis, although he carefully prefaced the work by



noting the complexity of the situation. Among the most problematic passages regarding the *Wandervogel* in my reading of Laqueur is the following:

If lack of interest in politics could provide an alibi from history the *Wandervogel* would leave the court without a stain on its character. However, it has been realized for a considerable time that lack of interest in public affairs is no civic virtue, and that an inability to think in political categories does not prevent people from getting involved in political disaster...and it was in this respect that the *Wandervogel* and even the *Freideutsche* completely failed. (48)

The suggestion that, by not entering into the contentious political debates of the day, *Wandervogel* youth became ill-equipped to oppose or even resist National Socialism decades later is far too damning a statement for an organization that, at its pre-WWI height in 1914, counted (at most) 25,000 youth members and—especially when compared with the millions of youth involved in the ideologically-engaged *Jugendpflege* organizations which ranged from communist to Catholic to overtly *völkisch* and anti-Semitic in outlook and agenda. While Laqueur's work begins to rehabilitate the image of the *Wandervogel* by foregrounding their attempts to create an autonomous sphere for youth to articulate their own vision for the future, he judges the *Wandervogel* for being something it never meant to be and, like Pross, applies an unfair retrospective demand upon the youth movement of what he believes it *should have been* as a group of influential middle-class Germans upholding a rationalist vision of progress.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Laqueur, writing in the early 1960s, is himself an interesting figure. A Jew whose parents perished in the Holocaust, his work on the *Jugendbewegung* is grounded in his own experience: "Since in this connection the author's approach and attitude could be relevant, a few personal remarks may be in order. My own origin is German-Jewish and I have recollections of the youth movement dating back to early boyhood. I was twelve when the *Bünde* were dissolved in 1933. I came to know at an early age and from the side lines something of the style of life developed by the movement and some of its leaders and members" (xvi). His respect for the *Jugendbewegung*

*Wandervogel* romanticism, idealism and nationalism have long been read as a neo-conservative reaction to and rejection of modernity. Peter Stachura, who in 1981 provided a history of the *Jugendbewegung* closely aligned with Laqueur's and suffering from many of the same limitations, writes that:

[T]he Wandervogel was a genuine social movement of profound idealism. It wanted to create a realm of youthful endeavor based on new forms of a better, more civilised, more humane society. It aimed to counter the sense of frustration, alienation, and loneliness which mass industrial society induced, and to re-establish the personal identity of individual man who had become a cog in a huge, bewildering machine age (17).

There is little to take issue with in Stachura's analysis here, which begins to recuperate the *Wandervogel* discourse in English-language research by more directly foregrounding this basic (if nebulous) goal of *Wandervogel* youth to formulate a "more humane society." This interpretation of the *Wandervogel* engagement with modernity forms one of the foundations of my project as well, but Stachura continues:

The Wandervogel is more recognisable as part of that amorphous but significant movement usually referred to as the Conservative Revolution. A neo-romantic

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shines through his study, and he places himself as carefully attempting to work through the muddle of perspectives which existed in the post-war era: "To its apologists, the youth movement had no responsibility whatsoever for the rise of the Third Reich...; whereas, according to some critics the German youth movement from the first, knowingly or unknowingly, paved the way for National Socialism. The writer believes that, although the truth is not necessarily at the half-way point between these extreme positions, it happens to be vastly more complicated" (xvii). The problems which have arisen from an over-reliance on Laqueur's work are ultimately the result of its reception at the time as much as his approach. While he was careful not to condemn the youth movement, his work and its reception were both influenced by the debates raging at the time, with the popularity of the *Sonderweg* hypothesis leading to a definite slant in the work's reception. The seeming lack of an agenda, especially for a man who had lost his parents in the Holocaust, combined with the lack of other available histories meant that his work, especially in English-language scholarship, remained (and continues to remain) influential. The result of this has been the perpetuation of his unintentionally biased reading.

phenomenon directed against the ideas of the eighteenth century Enlightenment and the French Revolution, the Conservative Revolution generally attracted middle-class people who were dissatisfied with industrial society and virtually everything associated with it, and who wanted to reconstruct society on traditionalist foundations...the Wandervogel sought solace and inspiration in the past, or, more specifically, in an idealised medieval Germany in which, it believed, the *Volk* was untainted by modern impurities...Unwilling or unable in its early stages to face its own time or the future, the Wandervogel consciously encouraged the cult of the past” (17-18).

While there is no question that the *Wandervogel* “sought solace and inspiration from the past” and constructed a largely fictive and idealized conception of German historical identity, the contention that the *Wandervogel* lived in this past and were “unwilling or unable” to engage with the present or future drastically oversimplifies the picture. It overlooks the extent to which the *Wandervogel* readily adopted and experimented with many modern technologies and the methods of self-education and self-cultivation (*Selbsterziehung*) through which they sought to engage with German society on their own terms. It also sets up a false dichotomy of rational progress in modernity versus irrational, romantic appeals to baser instincts and visceral rejections of modernity. Far from being, as the most common perception of the *Wandervogel* long held, escapists and daydreamers living in a fantasy world (or worse, as reactionary zealots standing in the way of the future), *Wandervogel* youth were foremost engaged in formulating ways of life which reconciled humanity and the individual with a highly rational and rationalizing modernity—*not* in escaping or dismantling technological society in a bid to return to the past.

John Williams has done a great deal to advance the *Wandervogel* image in English-language scholarship with his *Turning to Nature in Germany*, an analysis of naturist movements in Germany in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In reading the dramatic increase in urban Germans seeking experiences in nature, which he reads as a development of popular culture in modernity and not necessarily an environmentalist social movement, Williams shows how conceptualizations of and engagements with nature both proliferated across all levels of German society, especially in the Weimar era, and details how conceptualizations of nature became politicized across the entire political spectrum of German society. This engagement Williams labels *naturism*. He writes: “Although these movements differed in many ways, they were all galvanized by a new ideology that I call *naturism*. This is not to be confused with ecological thought. Although proponents of naturism were deeply concerned with the consequences of industrialization and urbanization, their main concern was not with pollution, natural diversity, or sustainability but with social and cultural crisis...Organized naturists attempted to reorient the German people toward nature, and they hoped thereby to find solutions to the problems of modern society” (2). Further, Williams importantly notes that, while this turn to nature was especially prominent in Germany as a result of the magnitude of the perceived cultural crisis and strength of the romantic tradition, it was by no means specific to the German condition and that, since the effects of modernization first began to be felt, a “deep-seated ambivalence toward industrialization and urbanization has been a powerful undercurrent in Western intellectual life” (3).

Williams quickly confronts the *Sonderweg* hypothesis in his work, rebuffing the notion that naturist groups, as he quotes George Mosse, attempted to “escape from reality into a dream world where time stood still, a world that pointed back to the past rather than forward to the

future” (4).<sup>43</sup> He rejects this, suggesting that the argument rests on a narrow reading of texts written by ideological elites not representative of German society as a whole, a dismissal of more moderate elements in German society, and a disproportionate focus on the far ideological right. Critically, he also calls out the bias in what he calls the “naturism to Nazism” argument and the contention embedded within it (which he sees as symptomatic of a long-standing confrontation between Enlightenment and romantic values) that “any critique of industrial capitalism and the burgeoning industrial metropolis was irrational” (5). In the attempt to read a rational, linear progression from agrarian societies to modern Western society, Williams sees a bias which clouds this analysis of the past and has often led to a blanket rejection of romanticism. Williams takes issue with the rationalist viewpoint that has become dominant in the post-war era, and offers a succinct rebuttal that aligns with the foundation of this dissertation’s inspection of youth subcultural engagements with boredom in modernity:

Originating early in the cold war, this normative model of social and political development offers an ideal narrative of progress from traditional agrarian society to modern industrial society. The avant-garde of progress in this theory is the capitalist middle-class working within the liberal-democratic state. Rationalism, in the form of science, industrial technology, and the domination of nature, is a key motor of modernization. These historians’ commitment to a specific capitalist model of progress creates a scholarly bias against any historical attempt to construct a different, less exploitative relationship between humanity and the

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<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, Mosse uses many elements of the language of boredom, discussed in Chapter One, to describe the *Wandervogel* project itself. Suggesting that the *Wandervogel* existed in a fantasy world where “time stood still” and that looked backwards and not into the future is, in my reading, exactly the opposite of what these youth were attempting to accomplish, which was to create the conditions to explore and engage with the world – not close it off and escape from it.

natural environment. It also leads them to underestimate how Nazism was, in its own way, committed to an ideology of progress that combined pseudoscientific rationalism, industrial technology, and the domination of nature. (6)

Rationalist assertions that equate any critique of modernity with a rejection of modernity create a closed system with its own internal logic that turns the exploration of alternative forms of engagement with the world into foreign and unwelcome intrusions. Again, I see the navigation of boredom as the site where this conflict between romantic and modern/Enlightenment values is contested at the individual level. Some will embrace one or the other, but others will seek to synthesize elements of both. It is this synthesis which I argue has formed the major contribution from both the *Wandervögel* and punks in articulating an engagement with the world that offers a life less boring.

### CHAPTER THREE: THERE'S NO ACTION<sup>1</sup>

*Halli, hallo, wir fahren, wir fahren in die Welt!*

*- Aus Grauer Städte Mauern (Wandervogel hiking song)*

In Chapter Two we saw how the *Wandervogel* slowly spread and how it shifted over time from its implicit rejection of Wilhelmine society in these youth's claiming of semi-autonomous spaces for themselves to a much more structured, codified and contested group of organizations by the outbreak of WWI. We also saw the lengths to which these youth went in order to maintain and maximize this tenuous freedom. *Wandervögel* walked a fine line and sought out spaces where they could be amongst themselves (whether on *Fahrt* or in the *Nest*), away from the prying eyes of a judgmental society which simultaneously held the keys to their freedom. In contrast, punk spread into public consciousness seemingly overnight and, in Britain as well as in West Germany, punks often intentionally sought to provoke ire while making their activities as visible as possible to broader society. Such a confrontational stance would have been unthinkable in Wilhelmine Germany, where, when youth did explicitly voice their dissatisfaction, as the *Anfang* circle did in 1913 or as the *Meißner-Formel* articulated, the condemnation could be swift and silencing.

Punk arose in West Germany in a time where youth enjoyed a great deal more individual freedom, but conditions in which the silencing effects of modern society, especially in the realm of cultural production and participation, had largely redefined this freedom. In West Germany, with a popular culture that had increasingly become dominated by imported Anglo-American

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<sup>1</sup> Cut-out text from Hollow Skai's *Magisterarbeit*. Page 70.

productions, the disconnect between this popular culture and the everyday concerns and experiences of West German youth had widened. With the growth of punk in West Germany, beginning near the end of 1976, punks took as a goal the establishment of a youth culture that they hoped, as had the *Wandervögel* at the advent of the century, would result in the establishment of an atmosphere of cultural production which would be free not only from the limitations of domestic West German society but could also contend with the increasing influence of a globalizing mass culture. In this, punk shared with the *Wandervogel* a similar articulation of an alternative cultural sphere that sought to ground itself in everyday encounters and experiences relevant to the lives of German youth in the face of entrenched cultural paradigms which discouraged this exploration.<sup>2</sup>

Defining punk in West Germany is a difficult proposition given the range of forms it took. Detlef Diederichsen who, along with his older brother Diedrich, wrote about punk and the *Neue deutsche Welle* for *Sounds* magazine in the late 1970s, attempts to define the events of the late 1970s and early 1980s in the compendium to the 2002 punk and new wave exhibition *Zurück zum Beton: Die Anfänge von Punk und New Wave in Deutschland 1977-'82* at the *Kunsthalle Düsseldorf*.<sup>3</sup>

“Es hat keinen Namen. ‘Punk in Deutschland’? Da denke ich an *Buttocks*,  
*Straßenjungs* oder *Big Balls*. Das war aber eine andere Welt. ‘Neue deutsche

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<sup>2</sup> The focus on the German language and an accompanying musical style and rhythms was an important element of West German punk. While many of the earliest punk groups such as *The Buttocks* sang in English, groups like *Male*, which formed in 1976 and is considered one of the first German punk groups, began experimenting with the German language in their music. This exploration of a German sound would come to dominate the West German punk scenes. The major exception is Hamburg, where the scene oriented itself more towards British punk sounds and styles and formed the most vocal opposition to the subsequent directions punk elsewhere in Germany would take.

<sup>3</sup> Along with Jürgen Teipel’s *Verschwende deine Jugend*, which appeared in 2001, the 2002 exhibition at the *Kunsthalle* marks the beginning of a resurgence of popular interest in representations of German punk and of inspecting its repercussions in German society that has been ongoing since, as evidenced by a remarkable increase in scholarship in the last decade.



Welle'? So hieß es mal, ganz kurz, Anfang '79. Heute denkt man dabei aber eher an Nena, Markus und *UKW*—eine völlig andere Welt. Vor einigen Jahren gab es einen Sampler mit dem Titel 'UntergruNDW'. Man konnte sich immerhin denken, was gemeint war. Aber ein schöner Name war das auch nicht. Bleiben wir lieber bei ES." (Diederichsen 111)

This "ES" is an acknowledgement of the proliferation of an undercurrent in punk which, while transmitted through it, transcended the subculture. This is especially evident in the blurred boundaries between punk and NDW.

The problem Diederichsen had in giving a name retrospectively to the explosion of a youth-driven participatory impulse in West Germany that emerged first with punk, then quickly transitioned into German New Wave before dispersing into various youth subcultures such as techno and hip-hop was a combination of two very different processes. The first was a co-opting of these subcultures by the mainstream that has altered their original meanings in popular memory. The second difficulty in pinning a name to this undercurrent stems from the fluidity of the idea itself. Punk, in a way, was dead as soon as it began—but its movement was just beginning.

Reading punk in West Germany through boredom offers an alternative account to supplement the dominant frames through which punk scholarship has viewed the phenomenon. While the *avant-garde* tradition, the rejuvenating impact of punk on a fetishized and decadent rock culture (and in West Germany the establishment of a prolific German-language scene and sound) as well as the politicization and radicalization of many youth are vitally important elements of the punk legacy, the scholarship in these areas has glossed over boredom, focusing

instead on other emotions such as shock, lust, disgust, paranoia and self-loathing, which were often more evident in punk cultural productions and formed the most visible part of their societal critique. The encounter with boredom is sometimes acknowledged as an instigating factor to these youth becoming involved with punk, but the exploration of this connection beyond a simple recognition that many punk youth expressed an intense boredom with their society has remained largely unexplored.

One of the main points of discussion at the 2012 German Studies Association panel on punk, in which I presented an earlier version of this project, was the proper approach to representing punk in scholarship. Among the most promising suggestions was that of Richard Langston, who suggested a focus on the emotional to be one aspect of punk that offered an approach that could distance punk studies from readings through overused theoretical foundations, especially those of the Frankfurt School. To this end he posited hate as a potential unifying affect through which to read punk. But as Mirko Hall rightly responded, hate was not a universal sentiment within the movement, as sub-scenes of punk such as German Fun-Punk and British punk pathétique were simply the most visible end codification of a growing divergence from the vitriolic posturing of the *Sex Pistols* that had been ongoing since punk's earliest days. Punk rapidly diversified, expanding its (non)meaning and showing its applicability in disparate cultures and social climates. Further, of the nations to which punk quickly spread, West Germany, perhaps more than any other, explored punk's participatory and creative potential in ways that quickly moved beyond the initial punk explosion of pent-up emotions and explored through punk a way of living which offered more habitable presents and the potential to build more compelling futures. Still, the importance of hate, disgust, shock, paranoia, self-loathing and other emotions in punk should not be ignored in the West German context, as many scenes, most

prevalently Hamburg, oriented themselves towards the early British punk groups and favored an aggressive, politically and emotionally charged approach which would lead to a lasting contestation of what punk in West Germany should be.<sup>4</sup> Many others, such as *Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft (DAF)* and the Berlin-based *Geniale Dilletanten* scene articulated these emotions in styles of music (largely electronic based or using found industrial remnants) which moved far beyond the sounds and aesthetics most commonly associated with punk.

Following its emergence in West Germany, punk retained much of its meaning but both gained and lost a great deal in translation. “Die Inhalte von Punk in dieser ganz frühen Zeit bleiben diffuse ; letztendlich bedeutete er fast jedem etwas anderes” (Archiv der Jugendkulturen 12). Hate was but one of the emotions at play (to various extents) within the punk scenes. So while hate is perhaps insufficient as a structural unifier for punk, as part of punk’s focus on negative affect and emotional response in general, it remains extremely important. Inspecting punk through the emotional, however, offers a promising new direction that supplements the paths punk scholarship generally follows. Still, emotions alone cannot (and certainly no single emotional state could possibly) capture the entirety of a culture as diverse as punk. But in punk’s reaction to society, I contend that the emotional should be given at least as much room as the intellectual traditions through which it is often read. In this I am not attempting to estrange the intellectual from the emotional, but rather to argue for a reading of punk, and by extension youth in modernity, that approaches productive participatory subcultures as engaging in a struggle for meaning and the importance of the subjective in modernity in its own right—a struggle ultimately tied to boredom.

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<sup>4</sup> Punk elsewhere in the FRG likewise embraced negative affect as an expressive potential. However, other scenes, most notably the other two major centers of punk, Düsseldorf and West Berlin, rapidly moved beyond these emotions in favor of exploring how to represent West German and globalizing existence through their cultural productions.

Alfred Hilsberg, through his position as a journalist at *Sounds* magazine and later as proprietor of his independent record labels *ZickZack* and *What's so funny about...* spoke of the state of youth culture in the late 70s: "Es gab damals in Deutschland keine Jugendkultur... nichts mehr, was noch irgendwas mit der Wirklichkeit von Jugendlichen zu tun hatte (Teipel 29). Without a viable youth culture and with little to speak to the everyday concerns of West German youth, and in what these youth saw as a profoundly boring environment, it is no surprise many youth were drawn to punk and its charge to take action. In the West German context, this boredom was, if anything, even more pronounced.

Viewing punk as a reaction to boredom in a society devoid of a relevant youth culture through which to articulate themselves can help to explain why punk spread so quickly through West Germany and why youth were motivated so strongly to create cultural spaces outside of the commercial cultural production of the recording, film, and news industries. While groups like *Ton Steine Scherben*, *Can* and *Kraftwerk* had found an audience in Germany, their influence was not particularly far-reaching and their intent was never the establishment of a participatory culture in the vein of punk. The vast majority of music was imported from England and the United States, with international groups such as *Abba* embracing English as the standard language of pop and rock music. This had the effect of adding yet another level of distance between West German youth engagement with dominant cultural products, making them still less relevant to their everyday experience (if their English was advanced enough to even understand the lyrics).

As we will see in the next section, one of the key instigating factors of punk in the US and Britain was a response to what was seen as a decadent and insular rock culture cut off from everyday experience. The scene around CBGBs in New York saw itself as working to eradicate

the distance between performer and audience, a dissolution which would become a defining characteristic of punk as it evolved and spread. In West Germany, this distance was even more pronounced, and one of the major projects actively fostered by many punks was to erase this distance through the establishment of structures and scenes which could create a domain for German youth to articulate themselves freely and without censure.

Seemingly ironically, the majority of West German youth first encountered punk through the mainstream media, through which punk spread like a virus. For many, it was a wake-up call. Youth, bored with waiting for the next thing, grasped that with punk they could make it themselves—or at least try. Following the spread of the punk message, initially through the teen pop magazine *Bravo* in 1976 and subsequently through increasing coverage by newspapers, magazines, radio and television programs, receptive youth began to recognize the potential of punk to confront a hateful, ugly, materialistic—and fundamentally boring—society.<sup>5</sup> Punk offered an alternative to this world through active participation. Franz Bielmeier expresses his immediate enthusiasm for punk, writing that “Bei mir zu Hause herrschte ja blanker Materialismus. Und ich war eben von Natur aus dagegen eingestellt. Deswegen war Punk genau meine Richtung. Und ich wollte das dann natürlich auch gleich selber machen. (Teipel 32).

The participatory element of punk allowed it to be open to interpretation and helps to explain the diversity of scenes, particularly in the West German context where different cities fostered markedly different interpretations of punk. Düsseldorf, Hamburg and Berlin each

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<sup>5</sup> Confronting the materialism of post-war West Germany was a major drive of punk. Zines, record shops, recording companies and concerts were (generally) seen within the scenes not as means to make a living, but as part of a communal effort to create autonomous structures upon which an alternative lifestyle could be pursued. The amateurism of punk was highly prized, and, as in other manifestations of punk, for example in the US and in Great Britain, the goal of mainstream success was often viewed as incompatible with the punk project and groups who pursued these goals (such as *Big Balls* and *Die Straßenjungs* of the late 1970s and *Die Toten Hosen* of the 1980s onwards) were often viewed with suspicion.

contained distinct punk scenes with different foci, and smaller scenes in Hannover, Munich, Frankfurt and elsewhere similarly evolved along their own lines. This openness also allowed punk to act as a springboard not just to explore punk, but to extend the punk DIY ethic into other domains and carry its potential to engage and explore beyond the punk sound and aesthetic.

The popular punk slogan “Punk is dead!”—which became a common trope among punks almost immediately after punk began—was more than just an empty nihilistic phrase. Since punk continued to evolve, an evolution which continues to this day, the trope could more accurately be written “Punk is dead. Long live punk.” This can be read in two ways. The first is that punk ceased to be punk the moment it became co-opted by the mainstream. In this reading, it lost the original authenticity it initially held and became itself an ordered world of signs and symbols with concrete interpretations. In this, “Punk is dead, Long live punk” can be seen as both the transition to a new, artificial and commercialized punk as well as serving as a memorial to the now lost original punk moment. This interpretation of “Punk is dead!” can be seen in Diederichsen’s discussion of punk and NDW in Germany being popularly remembered as commercial acts such as *Strassenjungs* and Nena.

The second interpretation is that punk represented a new moment that, by its nature, was meant to be utilized and discarded. One of punk’s many meanings is, after all, “trash.” In this reading “Punk is dead!” refers to this initial charge and provocation, which made thousands of bored and angry youth across the globe aware of their capacity to participate directly in the creation of cultural spaces of their own, having worn out its utility. “Long live punk!” then refers to how these youth (and those that came after them) carried on this punk ideal in their own way. The spark carried by punk, which was never meant in this reading to become an institutionalized and static culture, ignited a fire to explore and engage with the world in directions those involved

in the initial punk moment may have hoped for but, in the open nature of this exploration, could never have anticipated.

Both of these interpretations can be held simultaneously, and there is a degree of overlap in both directions. In the co-option of punk, it can be argued that it becomes another ordered product, but that youth have continued to find inspiration in the punk message promulgated by commercial punk acts as well through the network of scenes which are often dismissive of these groups as inauthentic. The spark remains a part of punk in its ability to inspire direct engagement—regardless of what direction those who discover this potential subsequently take it. Punk remains a starter culture, and one of its continuing contributions through its low barriers of entry combined with its insistence on getting involved has been to awaken in those who encounter it (predominantly, but not solely, youth) the realization that they have the capacity to participate in a fundamentally different way. A critical aspect of punk in both of these interpretations is this participatory impulse embedded in the punk moment, the continuation of which I see as something that can be called, if not the punk movement, then *punk's movement*. Combined with previous attempts to foster this open engagement with the world, which in this project we have explored through the *Wandervogel*, punk's movement can be seen as part of a project invested in fostering youth's movement in navigating through and articulating their place and futures in modern societies. This sense of movement also captures the alternative to the stasis of boredom.<sup>6</sup>

The next section explores how both of these manifestations of punk played out in West Germany in the late 1970s. I will begin with a brief excursion into punk's proliferation in the

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<sup>6</sup> This movement – movement in the sense of ceaseless exploration – is closely aligned with the idea of *Wandern* held dear by *Wandervögel*. Far more than simply a search for novelty and distraction, youths' movement in this sense becomes a search for means to compellingly engage with and explore the world.

United States, Britain, and its spread to Germany. This discussion will help to illustrate both the potential of punk to spread through mass communication channels (and its indebtedness to these same channels) as well as the many interpretations punk had already been subjected to by the time of its arrival in West Germany. Following this, I will detail the growth of the West German punk scenes through a discussion of two of the major punk centers of Düsseldorf and Hamburg. Using these scenes, I will discuss the activities and ambitions of early West German punks and their attempts to create a German iteration of punk more relevant to their own encounters with modern life in the Federal Republic. The relationship of these activities and ambitions to DIY and expression as combative measures against boredom will be explored throughout.

### **Punk International**

Histories of punk nearly always predictably begin, as this history predictably does, with the story of Malcolm McLaren meeting John Lydon (later dubbed “Johnny Rotten”) in London in 1975 at SEX—McLaren and Vivienne Westwood’s S&M-themed clothing boutique on King’s Road. This “origin” of punk, the story of the Sex Pistols, is as close to canon as punk is likely to get. Anyone even passingly familiar with punk music has heard of the band if not their music, and any punk or punk fan had best know their story.

The legend runs something like this: Once upon a time in England, there was a disenfranchised man by the name of Malcolm who longed to stir things up. He dabbled in music and fashion and had a thorough love for and understanding of Dadaism, Surrealism and Situationism. He cobbled a band together from customers in his shop, all with rudimentary musical skills. He outfitted them in outrageous clothing from the store and, through a keen



understanding of marketing and the music industry, released the Sex Pistols upon the world through the same channels that had traditionally been used to bring the masses the same old boring mainstream drivel that he hated so much. The Sex Pistols, of course, caused an immediate stir, just as this art movement aficionado had intended.

In 1979, before the dust kicked up by punk had fully settled, Dick Hebdige became the first scholar to tie punk to these European art movements in the seminal *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. Since then, the rendering of punk's origin as an "art-school" movement has become one of the most compelling and reiterated themes in punk scholarship. In 1989 Greil Marcus opened his "secret history of the twentieth-century," *Lipstick Traces*, with a detailed history of the Sex Pistols, tying McLaren's management of the band to this undercurrent of subversive thought beginning with German Dada, moving through Futurism, Lettrism and Situationism before arriving in the late-1970s and the punk moment. Reading punk as part of this long strand of history has had the effect of situating the movement as a part of a larger illustrious past, but it has perhaps had the unintentional consequence of situating it too comfortably in this narrative.

The Sex Pistols and Malcolm McLaren played an essential role in popularizing a punk style and demeanor that persists to the present day. And without the shock tactics of the Pistols and the national umbrage and scandal that their infamous two-and-a-half minute, unilaterally drunken interview with Bill Grundy caused, punk might never have received the spark necessary to catapult it to an international consciousness. But punk was not born when John Lydon walked into SEX sporting a Pink Floyd t-shirt with "I hate" written over the band's logo. Like the word "punk" itself, which has meant everything from trash, ashes, incense, prostitute, homosexual, and rowdy, the punk movement was influenced by and developed from many different sources. The

first bands to be labeled as “punk” by critics were US garage bands of the 1960s and early 1970s, with the term used largely disparagingly in the sense of “trash” referring to these groups’ general lack of musical and lyrical substance. One of the first zines about the new movement that would eventually label *itself* “punk” was the zine of the same name.<sup>7</sup> *Punk* was first published in January 1976 in New York and chronicled the burgeoning music scene centering around the Bowery club CBGBs, opened in 1973 by Hilly Crystal, where bands such as the *New York Dolls* (for whom McLaren briefly managed before being dumped and moving on to forming the *Sex Pistols*), *Television* (with front man Richard Hell, whose style—ripped-up clothing held together by safety pins, drawn-on t-shirts and spiked-up hair—would become heavily influential to the punk look), Patti Smith, *Blondie*, *Talking Heads* and, of course, the *Ramones* found enthusiastic audiences and a developing scene.

Unlike the impetus behind the *Wandervogel*, the triggering charge of punk was, for many, not a response to social conditions or western culture generally. Initially, it was a response to rock culture. “Punk was shock-Rock, but its inventors realized that Rock itself had become so insular that the whole mom & pop culture it had set out to dispel was now insignificant. Rock’s self-fulfilling prophecy was a *fait accompli*, in other words. Now it was Rock culture that needed puncturing” (Harrington 327). Punk rock was in this rendering a reaction to the overdeveloped and highly structured music being put out by the industry, personified by later Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin and perhaps best by the Beatle’s magnum opus *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* in 1967. Early punk music attempted to return to the more primitive and “the more subterranean aspects of Rock ‘n’ Roll” (Harrington 327). This return to the basics can be seen as the initial

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<sup>7</sup> As is the case with much of the early history of punk, whether the zine *Punk* was the direct link to the movement adopting the term remains shrouded in mystery and is still a contentious issue among some punks. At the very least, the zine was instrumental in forging an association between the music centering around New York’s Bowery district and the word, which would then be picked up in Britain and elsewhere.

impetus of punk. It was therefore highly appropriate that the punk movement repossessed and applied to itself the derogatory moniker used by critics to dismiss garage rock in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It was the prevalence of highly proficient, studio-perfected groups such as Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin that, despite the noise of garage bands, had silenced the nonprofessional element of the genre by the early 1970s.

The elevation of rock to the domain of the highly trained and proficient was not the only grievance forwarded by punks. The distance between the band and the public, made manifest by the physical elevation of the band on stage separated by a no-man's-land, spectacular special effects and security guards further turned fans into mere spectators and consumers of a spectacle. This was primarily the result of a star cult promulgated by marketing campaigns and a media obsessed with the star as untouchable and set apart from the rest of society—a society that gladly bought in to the pretense and bought millions of albums and concert tickets each year. This was not a new phenomenon—Benjamin had warned about the dangers of the star cult in cinema in the 1930s—but to see rock reenact the same story was more than many could stand. The relationship between band and fan was, in many respects, a microcosm for the relationship between the music industry and the public: raised up on stage, untouchable, removed and egotistical. Rock as a popular culture had disappeared for many—in its insular world, it no longer represented the public in any meaningful way other than mirroring the importance of consumer capitalism. Participation in the cultural realm now meant little more than consumption.

The desire to change the soundscape and culture of rock music, at its roots, was the longing to be heard. At its foundation punk was, and remains to be, dedicated to reclaiming participation. That this impulse to produce was considered subversive in itself testifies to the nature of the music industry and of a rapidly globalizing world in the mid-1970s. As Hilly

Crystal said of Patti Smith, a regular performer and at the club by 1975: she was “determined to make us kids, us fuck-ups, us ones who could never get a degree in college, whatever, have a family, or do regular stuff, prove that there’s a place for us” (Szatmary 222). In the beginning, this proving that “there’s a place for us” was the defining social charge of punk, a charge that would persist wherever it travelled in the world.

Regardless of exactly where and exactly when punk “began,” by the live airing of the notorious Bill Grundy interview on December 1st, 1976 a week after “Anarchy in the U.K.” was released, the lure of punk was already spreading out from the United States and Great Britain, and had already begun sowing seeds in Germany through imported records and news from abroad. Still, the Grundy interview marked the moment when the punk leapt, like a virus, from the underground to international prominence, wreaking havoc and riling up youth in conservative Britain and beyond. The Grundy interview was punctuated by a few choice “rude words” from Glen Matlock and Johnny Rotten, Grundy flirting with Siouxsie Sioux (of Siouxsie and the Banshees notoriety) before being called out as a “dirty old man,” “bastard” and “fucking rotter” by Steve Jones after being prompted by Grundy to “say something outrageous.” As the interview closed, the camera caught Bill Grundy mouthing “Oh shit” off mic as the full ramification of what he’d done dawned on him. The fallout of the interview saw Grundy suspended and punk concerts banned across the nation in a widespread moral panic that only served to draw more youth in.

Mainstream news coverage remained superficial and concentrated on the unexplained danger the movement posed to the nation and its impressionable youth. Sensationalized reports of punk concerts, clashes with police and out-of-control teenagers dominated headlines, with no attempt made to understand what, if anything, punks wanted. As became quickly apparent, in the

established media punk would never receive a fair trial. This reaction by the press and British society only served to underscore for many youth the importance of establishing an arena in which they *could* express themselves freely. The punk cry of “No Future” has often been interpreted in the negative sense of youth that, because of a lack of opportunity (although this point was often ignored), felt the need to revolt against all authority without thought for what was to come. Punks, especially in Britain, where punk was initially a predominantly working class phenomenon, were certainly prompted by a lack of viable options and punks certainly did revolt against the status quo. But the notion that punks gave no thought to creating a better future for themselves and society was largely propaganda promoted by both the media and, as a provocation, by punks themselves. The punk posture of acting out as publicly as possible the bleak and boring prospects of their social realities only served to reinforce the opinion that punk stood for nothing and existed only to destroy and mock.

But punk was, from its inception, creative. As a phenomenon that began with barely musically competent (at best) groups that just wanted to play and be heard, punk was nothing new.<sup>8</sup> What made punk different was a desire to go further into the realm of amateur cultural production forged by the consequences of highly polished, rapidly globalizing and consolidating media industries. That punk received the spark it needed to enter the mainstream from the very entities punks despised was, while seemingly one of the great ironies of the movement, unsurprising. Recording companies saw in punk an exploitable new gimmick—a new way to sell music to youth. Further, the prevailing thought among music executives was that punk bands required very little start-up to sign and would, compared to established acts, work for nothing. Despite the dangerous façade of punk (or more likely because of it), the music seemed the

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<sup>8</sup> The US garage bands denigrated as “punk” being a prime example of this.

perfect flash-in-the-pan fad to abuse and cash in on. That the monster they had helped unleash might actually have teeth and could turn against them was likely of little concern—after all, they were the only game in town.

If not for absolutely abysmal economic conditions in Britain, and drastically worse circumstances for working class youth in particular, Britain might well not have provided such fertile soil for the punk movement. The summer of 1975 saw unemployment reach heights not seen since immediately after WWII. The global economic doldrums, characterized by high unemployment combined with stagnant economic growth and rising inflation in the industrialized world (a phenomenon which gave rise to the infamous portmanteau “stagflation”) were made much worse by the 1973 oil crises, when OPEC constrained the supply of oil to importing nations, causing shortages across Europe and the Americas and demonstrating the potential pitfalls of an increasingly interconnected global economy. This interconnectedness manifested itself not only in economic conditions. A global culture industry in which US and British companies dominated the airwaves and movie screens was another reminder of where power resided. Punk quickly set itself in opposition to this culture industry that had created seemingly impenetrable barriers of entry through consolidation, efficient distribution channels, licensing agreements and increasingly sophisticated (and expensive) production equipment. It stood in opposition to this economic and cultural hegemony as it created, exposed and “took advantage of ruptures, ‘nichtreparierten Stellen,’ ... in order to fill a gap for youth” (Shahan 2013 5).

In West Germany, participatory youth culture had decayed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century since the collapse of the *Wandervogel* and of the *Bünde* under National Socialism and had become in the minds of those like Hilsberg a toothless distraction imported and imitated from

abroad. This collapse of youth culture coincided with the rise of hegemonic political and cultural power structures that left youth once again voiceless and participatory culture bereft of any cohesive philosophy.<sup>9</sup> The brief resurgence of a (highly political) youth movement with the 68ers itself collapsed with the failure of the Extraparliamentary Opposition (APO) and the rise of the domestic terrorism of the Red Army Faction. By the mid-1970s, many youth were disillusioned with society and, above all, bored. That yet another imported “fad” would contribute to a renaissance of youth and participatory culture in West Germany seems to be, like so much about punk, another paradox. In the next section, I will discuss the birth of punk in West Germany in relation to the political, social and cultural reality of the Federal Republic and the major similarities and differences between punk in Germany and in the English-speaking world. A brief inspection of two of West Germany’s major punk scenes, Düsseldorf and Hamburg, will explore the often violent contestation of what punk in the Federal Republic should mean.

### **Punk arrives in Germany**

In the introduction to this chapter we saw Alfred Hilsberg’s sad appraisal of youth culture in West Germany in the 1970s. Hilsberg, as much as any figure in West Germany, invested in creating an autonomous German popular culture which would provide German youth the opportunity not only to hear music and read about issues relevant to their lives, but also, and most critically, to create it themselves. Hilsberg, in his early 20s in the mid-1970s, was a few

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<sup>9</sup> The major exception here is the *Halbstarken* phenomenon of the 1950s, which shares many similarities with punk. Boredom with post-war West German life played a role in the riots and public posturing of these youth, and their invoking of American popular culture in their style is reminiscent of the punk aesthetic. One of the major differences between punks and the *Halbstarken*, however, was in the realm of cultural consumption. While punks sought to articulate a youth culture which focused upon exploration and creation, the *Halbstarken* underscored the increasing lure of the same Anglo-American cultural productions from which punks would attempt to distance themselves.

years older than the typical punk, but immediately saw in punk the catalyst he had been looking for. Hilsberg, a journalist at *Sounds* magazine (who eventually brought about a shift in its emphasis to punk and NDW from its former concentration on jazz, bluegrass, folk and prog rock), was in a rather unique position to work through the potentials of punk and to articulate his vision to a wide audience. This made him both loved and hated among the various punk scenes, as *Sounds* increasingly came to be a major site for discussing what punk and NDW should mean. His vision was not, by any means, universally shared. But in his efforts to create a thriving German popular culture open to all, Hilsberg exemplifies the type of direct engagement which can foster an alternative to boredom and served as an evangelist for this cause, attempting in both word and deed to create a more compelling and engaged future for himself and for West German youth.

Like in Britain and in the US, 60s counterculture was seen by the majority of West German punks as a failure, and many of those involved in it as hypocritical sellouts. But this irrational hatred of hippies belied their important contributions to punk. Jäki Eldorado, who regarded himself as Germany's first punk (he famously licked Iggy Pop's leg at a concert in 1977, a photo of which circulated widely in the media) discusses Hilsberg's contributions and desire to get involved in punk:

Hier bei uns war wirklich jeder, der was gemacht hat, Hippie. Alfred Hilsberg war der totale Hippie. Und der ist auch Hippie geblieben. Der hat sich ja nicht verändert. Aber er hatte genau das richtige Alter, um die Wucht und die Energie zu erkennen. Und um das dann auch umsetzen zu können. Der hatte dann wirklich sein Ding gefunden. (Teipel 28)



This should not be taken as an embracing of hippie culture by Eldorado or within punk, but it is a recognition of the importance of some individuals from this culture in punk's spread and of a significant overlap in their goals (if not their approaches).

However generally, in the West German context, punks rapidly oriented themselves against the 68er student movement and hippie culture. Many punks condemned the 68ers for buying into the capitalist, patriarchal system that they had initially opposed, doing little to actually implement the change they demanded and for responding to the violence, intolerance and hate endemic to this system with calls for love and peace—responses which many punks saw as escapist self-deception in the face of a very different and unignorable social reality. This can be seen in a comment by Franz Bielmeier, one of the co-founders of *The Ostrich*, Germany's first punk zine (as well as member of early punk/NDW groups *Charley's Girls*, *Mittagspause* and *Fehlfarben*). In an interview with Jürgen Teipel he articulates why he and many others in the first generation of German punks were highly critical of the 68er movement and instead saw more potential in exposing the darker, repressed aspects of society which they saw as more honest and authentic: “Das kam daher, dass die Hippies immer behauptet haben, die Welt wäre gut und alles wäre möglich. Wir waren davon überzeugt, dass die Welt schlecht ist. Dass aber auch von dieser Seite her viel Potenzial drinsteckt. So etwa: Die Welt nicht vom Glänzen her sehen, sondern dem, was darunter ist” (Teipel 38-39). This dismissal is well-articulated by Hollow Skai, who alongside his many other punk credentials, began his zine, *No Fun!*, in 1978 and started the independent recording company of the same name in 1980. In a 1980 interview with *Sounds* magazine Skai discusses his difficulties in distributing zines in bookstores run by the new German Left: “Die Leute hatten angefangen, Musik zu machen, das war sehr wichtig. Für mich war das die Zeit, mit meinem Fanzine Ernst zu machen. Denn ich wollte dadurch

mithelfen, daß die neuen Gruppen ihre Musik auch aufführen können. Denn auf die Musik haben die meisten Leute, vor allem die Linken, unheimlich panisch reagiert. Der alte Faschismusverdacht. Und gegen solche Mißverständnisse wollte ich angehen. Ich wollte all den linken Ignoranten klarmachen: das, was hier abläuft, ist im Grunde genommen das, wovon ihr immer brabbelt” (Skai 1980 49). Punks such as Skai and Bielmeier sought to ground their activities in the expression of everyday experience while simultaneously fostering a way of living (what Skai called a new *Lebenshaltung*) and establishing a foundation for this new engagement in the form of autonomous spaces where those who wished to could explore this potential in a supportive and creative atmosphere without the barriers to entry which, in West Germany, were especially pronounced.

While the emotional response against the 68ers and their hypocritical dismissal and misunderstanding of punk often appeared to be one, punk was not simply a spiteful rejection of society and embrace of nihilism, nor a simple rejection of past subcultures. The international cry of “No Future!” was not meant as an apathetic disavowal of action—it was far more a call to action—the recognition that society and the ways in which those living in it had been taught to interpret the world ultimately offered little that could lead to fulfilling and worthwhile futures. Those who had been drawn to 60s counterculture such as Hilsberg who understood punk as this call to action saw the potential of it to bring about many of the same changes in society they themselves had hoped for and quickly found their place within its communities.

While *Sounds* would prove to be the most influential magazine for working through the meaning of punk in West Germany (along with *Spex*, which has since emerged from its origins as a Cologne punk zine to become one of the leading periodicals on popular culture in Germany), it was not the first encounter for most youth with the emerging punk phenomenon. Punk came to

West Germany months after the British explosion and was initially largely imitative of the model set forth by punks overseas. Although some discovered punk abroad or received records from friends overseas, for the vast majority of youth in 1976, punk remained an unknown word. But as was the case in Britain, punk would receive a boost from an unlikely source in the established media. For youth in Germany, it was the teen magazine *Bravo* that in the summer of 1976 first spread news of the events in England. This has been an occasionally unsavory distinction for many punks, as the periodical would become in their minds the acme of pop sensationalism and fad chasing. “Das zweifelhafte Teenie-Magazin konnte schon damals niemand wirklich Ernst nehmen, es hatte zur rechten Zeit am rechten Ort einen eigenen Musikkorrespondenten, der sich zum Teil auch im Umfeld der neuen Bands aufhielt, so dass es auch in den folgenden Monaten und Jahren regelmässig Artikel über Punk-Bands in diesem Magazin gab” (IG Dreck auf Papier 9). The *Bravo* articles on punk, concentrating largely on the London scene, brought punk into the homes of West German youth for the first time. Mike Stanger and Stephane Larsson, the singer and drummer for *The Buttocks*, an early punk band out of Hamburg and whose first release, the self-titled “The Buttocks” 7” is regarded as the first political punk album to be released in Germany, gave an interview in 1981, part of which demonstrates the piecemeal arrival of punk in West Germany:

Mike: Zuerst wußte ich noch überhaupt nicht, was Punk ist. Da gab’s nur ‘Bay City Rollers’ und so zu hören. Un da hab’ ich dann von ‘nem Kollegen, der hatte ‘ne Schwester, und die hatte die ‘Bravo’ abonniert. Da in einer Ausgabe stand drin, wie Punks so aussehen. Zu der Zeit gab’s noch nicht viel zu hören, eher so Hardrock und Gefreake. ‘Ted Nugent’ und in der Richtung...Tja, und dann treff’

ich ‘nen Kollegen auf der Straße und der sagt: ‘Komm’ mit zu mir, Alter. Mußt du hören, tierische Scheibe.’ (Stark and Kurzawa 185)

The “tierische Scheibe” in question was *The Damned’s* first LP. Upon hearing the song “New Rose,” Mark remembers: “In dem Moment war der Fall klar” (185). Initial encounters with punk such as this are common in recounts by West Germany’s first punk generation. Combined with articles in *Bravo*, *Sounds* and elsewhere in the following months and along with increasing radio play of punk from Britain, the 1977 Wolfgang Büld documentary *Punk in London* further opened discourse on punk, although it too continued to view punk as an Anglo-American phenomenon. Punk in Germany, for the most part, remained underground throughout late-1976 and 1977 as scenes slowly emerged and began exploring what punk meant in the German context. The January 1978 *Spiegel* cover story “Kultur aus den Slums: brutal und häßlich” explored punk in Britain and the United States and, despite the sensational title and the over-the-top punk-stylized collage cover, attempted to portray what punk meant both inside and outside of the subculture while (for the most part) avoiding the scare tactics which would characterize its treatment in other publications like *Bild*. While the article concentrates to a large extent on punk as a reaction to rock culture and on economic factors—both the economic crises which helped to spawn punk as well as the commercial successes of groups like the *Sex Pistols*—it also explored what punks were attempting to express: “Äußerungen wie jene von Stanley Clark, 25, Mitglied der ‘Nervous Eaters’ in Boston, haben fast alle Punk-Rocker schon einmal gemacht: ‘Wir haben mit hübschen und weichen Sachen nichts am Hut, Mann. Wir haben's mit dem Leben zu tun, und das ist nun mal häßlich und gemein. Wir sind Straßenmusikanten, und wir machen Großstadtmusik, die an die primitivsten City-Instinkte appelliert’” (143). This acknowledgement that punks were ultimately engaged in representing the realities of their lives hit upon the irreducible shared

foundation punk was built upon. The article also brought punk to a wider audience, articulated its limitations and intent and cemented the phenomenon more firmly in West German discussions of youth culture.

Youth encounters in 1976 with the reportage from *Bravo* predated for many their encounters with punk music. Punk styles were imitated without any understanding of the intent behind them, although the provocation intended by these imitations was obvious despite a disconnect between the physical style and the musical forms of British punk. This raised issues of authenticity, with so-called posers adopting the punk look without an understanding of its intent. As Franz Bielmeier described the situation: “Es gab Leute, die wurden als Poseure bezeichnet. Als Poser. Die sahen wirklich gut aus. Die hatten teure Punkklamotten. Bondage-Hosen von der Kings Road. Das hatten wir nicht. Das wollten wir auch nicht. Wir wollten das nicht importieren wie irgendwelche Schwarzwaldandenken” (Teipel 75) The distinction between the authentic and the imitative has been a major battleground for punks worldwide, but in West Germany in the late-1970s, especially given punk’s spread through what these youth considered very inauthentic and exploitative youth media and punk’s initial foreignness, exploring punk and becoming personally involved was particularly important. The true litmus test of “punkness” therefore rested in participation—be it through participation in a band, a zine, an independent recording company or record store, in concert promotion or elsewhere. And in many West German punk scenes, while British and American groups and developments were appreciated and admired, the goal for them was not to imitate, but rather to take punk’s potential and apply it to their everyday reality. Looks and consumption alone never guaranteed entrance into the punk

community, and perhaps the only thing loathed by punks more than the mainstream and hippies was a poser.<sup>10</sup>

While punk in West Germany was less the result of economic concerns than it was in Britain, the economic and social climate in the FRG should not be dismissed as irrelevant. Communications and media scholar Werner Faulstich highlights three major trends and events in the West German economic history of the 1970s.<sup>11</sup> First, the oil crisis of 1973 saw OPEC constrain exports and the price of oil jump from \$1.50 to over \$10 a barrel. The crisis highlighted West German dependence on imported energy, compounded the economic stagflation already being felt in the nation, and contributed greatly to the recession that began in the fall of 1973. The second trend was rising unemployment. From near-record lows in the Federal Republic at the beginning of the decade, unemployment steadily rose throughout the first-half of the 1970s—from 0.4% in 1970 to over 5% in 1976.<sup>12</sup> From 100,000 unemployed in 1970, over 1.1 million were out of work by the end of 1975. Chief among the causes of this rising unemployment in West Germany was automation in manufacturing, which saw many jobs replaced by mechanical

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<sup>10</sup> The vitriol against the poser extended to early West German “punk” bands created by major labels CBS (Columbia Records - today Sony) and Teldec (the major German-owned recording company until its buyout by Warner in 1987), which many punks viewed as efforts meant only to exploit and cash in on the movement. The two major bands on these labels, *Straßenjungs* (CBS) and the slightly more successful but still oft-maligned *Big Balls and the Great White Idiot* (Teldec) exemplified the contested boundaries of authenticity. Detlev Diederichson suggests in *Zurück zum Beton* that the term “poser” was not part of the German punk lexicon at the time, but has since been applied retroactively to those who attempted to buy their way into the scene. In zines, terms like *Plastik-Punks*, *Wochenende-Punks* and *Möchtegern-Punks* are used to disparage those viewed by others in the punk community as inauthentic or trend-chasing.

<sup>11</sup> See “Gesellschaft und Kultur der siebziger Jahre: Einführung und Überblick” in (Faulstich 2004).

<sup>12</sup> In comparison, Great Britain saw rates rise from 3.5% at the beginning of the decade to near 6% by its close and the United States saw rates rise from 4% to 6% in the same time. All three nations saw a sharp spike in unemployment in 1975. By today’s standards an unemployment rate of 5% seems healthy, but represented a crisis in the 1970s. Since a brief improvement in the late 1970s into early 1980, unemployment in Germany has fluctuated greatly – but has never again dropped below 4% and has generally been much higher (although reunification has led to difficulties in viewing long-term trends post-*Wende*).

production. Not factoring in increasing sophistication of the machines, Faulstich reports a figure of 135 industrial robots in 1974 leaping to 1250 by 1980.<sup>13</sup>

The final major economic trend in 1970s West Germany was the increasing reach, power and importance of multinational corporations in the global (and domestic) economy—a trend Faulstich points to as the beginning of the processes that have come to be known as globalization. Jobs being moved overseas to income-poor nations further contributed to unemployment in West Germany. In addition, the actions of many firms abroad resulted in worldwide outrage over the excesses of corporate power, unfair trading practices and their meddling in international affairs. Already in the 1970s, multinationals were being accused of egregious acts abroad. Faulstich discusses two major events of the 1970s that underscored many German’s concerns about corporate overreach. The US telecommunications firm ITT (International Telephone & Telegraph), already embroiled in antitrust allegations after a scandal at the 1972 Republican National Convention, allegedly helped organize and stage the 11 September, 1973 Pinochet coup in Chile. Closer to home, the Swiss Nestlé corporation was under fire for their baby formula, which was pushed heavily (and often unethically) in less-developed countries as an alternative to breast-feeding and contributed to the deaths of nursing babies across the third world.

Economic concerns certainly played a role in youthful resentment of West German society in the mid-1970s, and explorations of the perceived exploitative relationship multinationals forced upon the world formed a common motif within punk music, zines and philosophy. With poor job prospects and decreased spending power, the economic future looked bleak. Yet while

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<sup>13</sup> Importantly, West German punk cultural productions often thematized the technological and addressed the social realities of life in the technological age in songs like *Abwärt’s* “Computerstaat.” This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

economic forces may have contributed to the malaise felt by youth at the time, there were more salient issues for kids to rail against beyond the somewhat dry and distant affairs of the economy. Much more tangible for 1970s youth in West Germany was the lack of any definable youth culture, their position at the front of the cold war, a continued need to create a new identity that moved beyond Germany's National Socialist past, and, of course, anger at those who had failed to do so.

The youth of the 1970s had missed the 68er movement. Any catharsis that was achieved from the 68ers' attempt to engage with the actions of the older generations during National Socialism was largely lost on them, as most who came of age when punk spread were small children at the time. In the sense of having missed the defining moments of their day due to being too young to comprehend their significance, they had something in common with their parents, who were themselves generally still very young as the war came to a close. But while their parents came of age in the immediate aftermath of Germany's atrocities and in the rubble of its cities in a culture of silence, youth in the 1970s grew up in a very different and much more open social climate. While the student movement of the late 60s had opened up a dialogue about Germany's Nazi past, in the eyes of many youth it hadn't in the end changed much. Jürgen Engler, who would become the lead singer and guitarist of *MALE*, one of Germany's first punk bands, discusses the fallout of his unconventional fashion sense:

Bei mir kam diese klare Wandlung, so mit Haare selber abgeschnitten—einfach mit der Schere rein und kurz schneiden—Anfang 77. Als ich zum ersten Mal mit dickem Verhängeschloss um den Hals in die Schule kam, war das schon nicht so *easy*. Aber wenn ich mit meinen abgeschnittenen Haaren und selber durchlöcherten Hosen durch die Altstadt gegangen bin: Ich bin angepöbelt



worden! Ich bin verprügelt worden! Und das waren Leute zwischen meinem Alter und 60-jährigen Alten, die mir hinterhergeschrien haben: “Unter Hitler wärste vergast worden.” Ich habe das oft erlebt. Das war normal. (Teipel 32-33)

This and many other accounts of intimidation and assault from across the nation illustrate the pervasiveness of a forced and often violent conformity sensed and experienced by 1970s youth. This is another striking parallel with the *Wandervogel*, who on occasion were also pelted with stones, food and insults by members of a traditional society offended by their expressions of difference. Franz Bielmeier provided a vivid metaphor for life in the 70s:

Damals war Deutschland vom Gefühl her so eine gepolsterte Wohnzimmerwelt mit dem fetten, zigarrerauchenden Altnazichef darin. Wenn du auf irgendeinem Teil gegessen bist, hast du gespürt, dass du auf Kunstleder sitzt, in dem Schaumgummi drin ist. Und wenn der Typ mit dir redet, hast du gespürt, dass in dem noch braune Grundsätze sind. Aber dass das genauso wenig durchkommt wie der Schaumgummi durchs Kunstleder. Das war die allgemeine Atmosphäre. Nicht nur von der Musik her, sondern vom ganzen Leben in Deutschland. (Teipel 42).

West Germany, complacent and conservative, was on the surface a comfortable enough place. But just under the (on closer inspection artificial) upholstery of this “living room world,” nothing had changed. For youth, this was especially visible in the schools. *Abwärts* drummer Axel Dill: “Ich hatte so viel Ärger in der Schule. Das machte ja damals null Spaß. Das war nur Drill. Die Lehrer, das waren die übrig gebliebenen Faschisten aus dem Krieg. Nur redete da keiner drüber. Richtig gemeine Säue. Und gegen die habe ich rebelliert. Bis ich das totale Feindbild für die war” (Teipel 15-16). Worse in the eyes of many youth, new teachers who a few years before had

participated in the student protest movement were now working side-by side with these relics of Germany's less-than-illustrious past, adopting an (in the youthful interpretation of many soon-to-be punk students, at least) inappropriately authoritarian and serious persona. Jäki Eldorado discussed the matter of 68er teachers in the schools and their often hypocritical and uncomprehending seriousness: "Wenn du ein Hakenkreuz in die Schulbank geschnitzt hast, hattest du prompt einen 68er-Lehrer an der Backe, der das völlig überinterpretiert hat und alles furchtbar unangenehm fand. Und da habe ich schon früh gemerkt, dass ich mit dieser humorlosen Ecke nichts anfangen kann" (Teipel 27). These new teachers, who had organized not a decade before (in part) to attempt to bridge a gap between their and the older generations, now seemed incapable of understanding those only a few years younger than them and the intent behind their provocative rearticulation of Nazi symbols. The overly serious, uncomprehending majority of 68ers were for many punks ultimately just another example of what not to become. Beyond providing subjects worthy of ridicule, neither extreme of the adult world—leftover fascist nor humorless 68er—offered anything of value in the eyes of many punk youth.

As we saw earlier in the chapter however, many individuals of this old guard embraced punk and served as some of its biggest proponents. The major issue punk youth had with the 68ers was ultimately not what they *had* done, but what many of them were now doing. The rigid, inflexible and, above all, deadly serious ideological complexion of the New Left was just another boring and well-explored path.<sup>14</sup>

Punk represented a direct, lived engagement that forced West German society to confront its own absurdities. As the most salient example, Nazi symbolism still held a great deal of power,

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<sup>14</sup> Hollow Skai's interview in *Sounds* on the difficulties of getting his zine *No Fun!* distributed through leftist bookstores epitomizes this disconnect between the two phenomena.

especially in Germany. The practice of bricolage,<sup>15</sup> the process in which items and symbols are repossessed and given new meanings in their new contexts, was a favorite method of punks that often led to misunderstandings by those still entrenched in the dominant discourses surrounding these items and symbols. The New Left was, for many punks, all show (as their engagement with punks in schools underscored). That the left tended to be among those most appalled by punk and were, for a supposedly open-minded group, surprisingly unwilling to attempt to understand it, was unforgivable. Instead of asking the question that punk bricolage demanded: “Why does this make me uncomfortable,” they instead seemed too eager to judge and condemn. Detractors of punk were, from punk’s point of view, unwittingly asking in their dismissal of the movement: “What’s wrong with me?”

For many punks, the answer to this question was their alienated relationship to life in the modern world. Cited in Hollow Skai’s thesis is a quote from Poly Styrene (who was herself a hippie before her discovery of punk) from the second issue of the Wuppertal punk zine *Undenk* from 1979: “Unsere Umgebung ist künstlich, deshalb schreibe ich darüber; es wäre verlogen, über die Natur zu schreiben” (Skai 1981 33).<sup>16</sup> Whether this interview actually occurred or whether it was, as was common practice in punk zines, completely fabricated (or altered in translation) to give the message more gravitas is, for this discussion, irrelevant.<sup>17</sup> It represented a

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<sup>15</sup> Bricolage was first introduced to punk scholarship by Hebdige, and in the punk context, it refers to the repossession of everyday objects such as toilet chains, Xerox shipping bands and safety pins as well as more culturally-charged symbols, as with the notorious appropriation of swastikas, RAF badges, Soviet symbols, etc. which are assembled together to subvert and rupture accepted meanings and allow new interpretations to become manifest.

<sup>16</sup> Poly Styrene (Marianne Joan Elliot-Said) formed the British punk band X-Ray Spex in 1976 after seeing the Sex Pistols in concert. Their 1977 “Oh Bondage Up Yours!” which famously began with the spoken verse “Some say little girls should be seen and not heard. I say... OH BONDAGE UP YOURS!” is a classic of the early scene. She remained a champion of punk until her death from breast cancer in 2011.

<sup>17</sup> While I have found no exact quote to attribute to this translation, it is certainly something Poly Styrene might have said given her articulation of alienation in an artificial world in songs like “Art-I-Ficial”, which opens with the lines “I know I’m artificial/ But don’t put the blame on me/ I was reared with appliances/ In a consumer society.”

common theme of early German punk—the importance of focusing on (and dissecting) the Western world’s new “natural” environment—the artificial city. In this, West German punks found their engagement with the world not through a political ideology, but through expressing their own encounters and conceptualizations of life in the Federal Republic.

### **Punk in West Germany: Düsseldorf and Hamburg**

While tales of the exploits of punks in London were eagerly digested by West German youth throughout the summer of 1976, it wasn’t until late 1976 and 1977 that the first punk scene began to crystallize in Germany. The city of Düsseldorf would be the unlikely first capital of West German punk. Although Düsseldorf had many art schools, a high concentration of youth and a friendly dive-bar that would soon become a punk mecca, the same could be said for any number of West German cities. That German punk was first put into practice in this seemingly unremarkable mid-sized city further illustrates the versatility of the movement, but also the continuing importance of a community of like-minded individuals in coalescing around an idea.

Of the major West German punk scenes, the Düsseldorf scene was regarded as the most middle-class. There is a risk in discussing scenes through their class composition, especially as the statistics on punk socioeconomic status are spotty at best (arrest records, discussed later in this chapter, comprised the most detailed records available) and because there was significant heterogeneity not just between scenes, but within them as well. Still, the perception that the Düsseldorf scene consisted of a greater proportion of middle-class youth is backed up by the number of art-school students in the scene and the number of other middle class youth in many

Düsseldorf bands, with groups such as *Charley's Girls* (and later *Mittagspause* and *Fehlfarben*) and *Male* falling into this category.

Early punks in the scene congregated around the *Ratinger Hof*, a dive bar in Düsseldorf with a clientele consisting of social misfits and students from the *Kunstakademie Düsseldorf* and served as a meeting point for Joseph Beuys and his students. The similarity of Beuys' performance art and desire to free cultural expression from the art world to punk's call to direct action is another example of shared purpose between some members of previous generations and punks, and it is no coincidence that the Düsseldorf scene became one of the major centers for cultural exploration in West German punk that sought to move beyond the initial limitations and confinements of the punk sound and aesthetic while foregrounding the individual and communal effort to create an environment conducive to this endeavor.<sup>18</sup>

The *Ratinger Hof*, located just outside of the *Kunstakademie Düsseldorf*, was the home of many of West Germany's earliest and most influential acts: *MALE*, *SYPH* (whose song *Zurück zum Beton* became an anthem of West German punk and an articulation of its concrete romanticism), Xaõ Seffcheque (who later wrote for *Sounds* and *SPEX*), *ZK* (*Zentralkomitee*, the precursor to *Die Toten Hosen*), *KFC* (*Kriminalitätsförderungsclub*) and *Charley's Girls* (named after the Lou Reed song and who existed for a time only in their minds and the stories put out by Franz Bielmeier along with friends Peter Hein, Ramon Louis and other contributors in their zine, the aforementioned *Ostrich*. As Martina Weith of *Östro 430* described: "Keiner konnte ein Instrument, aber jeder spielte mindestens in zwei Bands" (Skai 2009 37). This desire

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<sup>18</sup> Beuys' refusal to limit the size of his courses and his willingness to allow anyone interested to join his classes (which contributed to his dismissal from his position) highlights his attempt to encourage individuals to explore their own creative potential, as does his practice of omitting his own works in his courses in an attempt to keep his students' exploration and expression their own.

to express oneself and be a part of the scene despite a total lack of musical proficiency or any idea of how to begin characterized the early punk scene in West Germany.

The *Ratinger Hof* updated its interior to reflect its new appeal and function as a punk venue: the walls were painted white and covered in mirrors, brightly lit neon lighting was added and a stage was constructed composed of the bar's pool tables pushed together and covered. The basement was also repurposed as a practice space for local groups, purchases at the bar were entirely optional and an atmosphere was fostered which encouraged a heterogeneous mix of patrons.<sup>19</sup> As the arguable birthplace of West German punk, its hastily thrown together new look and multiple functions reflected the wider punk project of just going for it, even if (or especially because) the sympathetic proprietor Carmen Knoebel was initially just as clueless as to what to do as those who played and congregated there.<sup>20</sup> The *Ratinger Hof* both embodied and fostered the figure-it-out-as-we-go experimentation at the genesis of West German punk.

In this vein of full immersion and participation, numerous record labels were founded in Düsseldorf, often by members of the bands themselves, in order to spread their music, sign otherwise unsignable acts and to retain autonomy from recording labels (although at the time major labels were reticent to sign punk and NDW acts). Among the most successful was the label *Ata Tak*, initially established in nearby Wuppertal as *Warning Records*. *Ata Tak* was founded in 1979 by members of the various punk/NDW/early-electronica groups based around *Der Plan* and *DAF* (*Deutsch-Amerikanische Freundschaft*). *Ata Tak* was an adaptation of the art gallery/scene gathering spot *Art Attack*, founded by two of the label's founders, Moritz Reichelt

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<sup>19</sup> One punk remembered rubbing elbows with punks, art students, *RAF* sympathizers as well as skinheads (Hayton 114). As a common space, the *Hof* was open to all.

<sup>20</sup> In addition to providing the major punk venue and meeting point in Düsseldorf as well as offering the basement as a practice space for several of the area's emerging bands, Knoebel would also become directly involved in helping to finance records. Like Hilsberg, Knoebel is another example of an important older influence within West German punk.

and Frank Fenstermacher.<sup>21</sup> *Art Attack* opened in Wuppertal in the summer of 1978 and, as quoted by Skai, was “die erste New Wave-Galerie Deutschlands oder sogar der Welt” (52). The opening was kicked off by a concert and mock demonstration through Wuppertal with participants chanting, in a nod to fellow Wuppertaler Friedrich Engels, “Konsumenten aller Länder, vereinigt euch!” The gallery quickly became another important meeting point for punks in the greater Düsseldorf scene. *Ata Tak* went on to release albums from many of the now most famous punk and NDW bands. Aside from much of their own work, they released albums from *SYPH*, *Minus delta t*, *Die tödliche Doris*, *Fehlfarben* and, in their biggest and most surprising success, a song from 16-year-old *Andreas Dorau*, who in 1981 reached number 21 in the West German charts with the runaway hit *Fred vom Jupiter*.<sup>22</sup>

The incorporation of synthesizers, less stress on traditional rock instruments, a desire to experiment with new sounds and lyrical content and a penchant for exploring everyday experiences marked the Düsseldorf style. As they became more proficient and competent, their music became more complex and refined. In this way, many of the bands from the Düsseldorf scene exemplified an unrestricted direct engagement with exploring their world and their

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<sup>21</sup> Fenstermacher and Reichelt themselves became involved in the scene outside of their artwork as they began experimenting with a Korg MS-20 synthesizer (the legendary and first relatively affordable synthesizer which emerged in the late-1970s and which was rapidly incorporated into *many* punk/NDW groups’ sounds and styles) lent to them by *DAF*. After several name changes, they settled on *Der Plan* and experimented widely with sounds, eventually pursuing a synth-pop approach (what they called “elektronische Schlager”) of catchy beats and tongue-in-cheek, minimalistic lyrics. Their 1981 song, “Wir werden immer mehr” for example opens with the monotone recital of their artist statement (first in French, then in English and finally in German) “Der Plan will be the solution of all problems in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” before launching into an upbeat song which begins “Ich weiss das Leben ist manchmal schwer/ doch wir, wir werden wir werden immer mehr,” which then trails off with an increasingly quickly looped and distorted “und dann und dann und dann” which rises in pitch as the lyrics fuse with the synthesized beat. The friendly suggestion that, despite life’s difficulties, an alternative was growing is an example of the hopeful orientation to the future often evident in these participatory projects. *Der Plan*’s approach would help to define the emerging *Neue Deutsche Welle* sound, which will be revisited in Chapter Four.

<sup>22</sup> The song is sung in chorus predominantly by a group of girls from his school, *Die Marinas*, and chronicles their encounter with Fred, an alien who has landed on Earth after running out of fuel and who they contend is “der Traum aller Frauen.” The song closes with Fred (Andreas Dorau) expressing what a great time he had on Earth and that he is looking forward to a return trip.

individuality while rejecting the notion that punk had to be defined and protected. Through punk, a whole range of exploratory potentials were opened. This exploration carried into other media as well. Düsseldorf established a thriving zine scene, with *The Ostrich* being only the first of many. Other Düsseldorf zines, among them *Die neue Sachlichkeit*, *Preußen-Kurier*, *Spray*, *Heimatblatt*, *Die Falschmelder* and *Die Düsseldorfer Leere* would follow. Punk zines will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four, but it is important to note here that zines served both as a means of communication and synthesis about their creator's encounters with punk as well as provided an important organ through which to articulate and work through their emerging punk-inflected identities.

While the iteration of punk in Hamburg emerged as a very different animal, the scene there nevertheless thematized the same direct engagement that characterized Düsseldorf punk experimentation. The Hamburg scene and the Hannover scenes overlapped, with bands like *Rotzkotz* from Hannover being adopted by the Hamburg scene and groups like *Hans-a-plast* from Hannover often playing in Hamburg despite significant stylistic divergences. The *many* zines out of Hannover also often wrote on the Hamburg scene, and through some of these articles, the perceived differences can be seen between Hamburg and elsewhere in West Germany. The Hamburg scene proudly embraced a working class aesthetic, which partially explains their orientation towards the British model of punk and the emerging sound of Hamburg punk, which came to be labeled hardcore.<sup>23</sup> The Hamburg punk scene tended to favor harder, simpler and faster music that, in concerts, was accompanied by, if possible, even harder, faster and more violent "dancing." The pogo, which required at least a small amount of individual space in order

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<sup>23</sup> In addition, the legacy of British bands working in St. Pauli (*The Beatles* of course, but also many other bands and individuals including Ritchie Blackmore and Tony Sheridan) served as further elements cementing the connection between Hamburg and British influence.



to jump up and down and which maintained this space with the rigid, straight posture reminiscent of a pogo stick, developed into full-blown slam dancing as punks crashed into each other as violently as possible in the pit in front of the stage. It is perhaps for this reason that the Hamburg scene contained far fewer women, a phenomenon noted by many early punks in Jürgen Teipel's oral history *Verschwende Deine Jugend*. Hamburg punk concerts often evolved into exuberant brawls, which had the effect of turning off many who might have otherwise been interested in the scene. While women represented a minority in the punk subculture generally, in Hamburg this was especially pronounced. Still, women did become involved here as well, often proving themselves as violent as anybody else on the dance floor, as the following anecdote from Bettina Köster (Of *Din-a-Testbild*, *Malaria* and *Mania D*) describes. In 1979 at *In die Zukunft*, the second major punk festival at the *Markthalle* in Hamburg organized by Alfred Hilsberg, Köster saw first-hand the often violent nature of punk in Hamburg:

Ich war ja völlig schockiert. Ich bin da mit *Din-a-Testbild* aufgetreten. Ich war 18 oder 19—zum ersten Mal in meinem Leben auf der Bühne. Und die trugen schon die Leute mit blutigen Gesichtern aus der Halle, bevor das Konzert überhaupt anfang. Da gab es ein Mädels, die liefen mit einem Fleischerhaken durch die Leute. Den zog sie einem anderen Mädels durchs Gesicht. Das haben sie dann rausgeschleppt. Und andauernd flogen Sachen auf die Bühne. Ich wusste gar nicht, wie mir geschah. (Teipel 164)

In Hamburg, then, the articulation of identity took an extremely different form than that, for Köster and others coming from different punk communities, was superficially unrecognizable to their interpretation of punk. That Hamburg and Düsseldorf could both be contained within the concept of punk showcases the diversity of forms it could engender in different locations and different

communities. Similarly, Hamburg punk's privileging of their interpretation of punk and disgust with the experimental sounds coming out of other punk scenes in West Germany epitomizes the protectionism, narrow-mindedness and increasing ideological fracturing which marked punk's spread around the world.

The aptly named venue in Hamburg, *Krawall 2000*, embodied this Hamburg punk sensibility (or lack thereof). A small club which regularly packed hundreds into a room meant for perhaps a hundred, *Krawall 2000* was a place for Hamburg's punks to let loose and blow off steam.<sup>24</sup> Schorsch Kamerun describes how the bar *Kneipe zum Flohmarkt* was transformed on the weekend into *Krawall 2000*: "Das Krawall 2000 hieß eigentlich Kneipe zum Flohmarkt. Den Laden hat man sich irgendwie angeeignet. Nicht wir, sondern andere. Dann wurden dort am Wochenende Konzerte verangestaltet. Eigentlich schon etwas wie ein Club im Club" (Avantario et al 54). The Hannover zine *Gegendarstellung* included a description of the venue in 1978 in its first issue, noting the bar's small size and rather non-punk atmosphere, along with the possibility of an interesting and very punk death.

Ich hatte mir sonst was unter K 2000 vorgestellt, bloß nicht so'n kleinen Laden, der auch noch wie eine x-beliebige Sperrmüll-alternative-atom kraft-nein-danke-müslifresserkneipe aussieht. Die Punks hinter der Theke, die am Freitag die kneipe in eigener Regie machen..., haben auch schon reichlich Schwierigkeiten mit denen, nach denen es hier aussieht. Es ist wohl Geld abhanden gekommen und das wird zum Vorwand genommen, die Punks aus dem kneipen kollektiv rauszudrängen. Die K-2000 Leute suchen schon mal nach größeren Räumlichkeiten, den das Krawall ist vielleicht kein guten Laden, aber immerhin

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<sup>24</sup> Andreas Banaski in *Sounds*.

eine Auftrittsmöglichkeit, tROtZ der Bühne. Ein Pogo aud diesen Brettern und man ist wieder auf dem Boden der Tatsachen. Da ist echt ein schöner Tod drin:

“PUNK-HEILIGER VON EIGENER ANLAGE BEGRABEN.” [sic]

Much like in Düsseldorf, in the early days of punk in West Germany, any venue was better than none, even if it meant a hippie-ridden dive bar with a rickety stage.<sup>25</sup> Attending a Friday night concert in Hamburg at *Krawall 2000* or other venues such as *Easy* or the *Markthalle* was often a dangerous proposition which made the *Ratinger Hof* and the Düsseldorf scene look tame. The music, initially in English but eventually often embracing German as well, which was played by Hamburg-centered groups like *Rotzkotz*, *The Coroners* and *Buttocks*, adopted not only a harder sound—many bands also evolved a highly politicized program oriented against both the peace-seeking and lyrical music of the 60s as well as against consumerism and fascism.<sup>26</sup> And while the lyrical content of groups like *Mittagspause* and *Male* from Düsseldorf expressed similar sentiments, their differing aesthetic representation served to alienate them from many Hamburg punks, who remained fiercely loyal to their scene and sound.<sup>27</sup>

Alfred Hilsberg attempted on several occasions to unite the hardcore Hamburg scene and sound with the more experimental scenes in Düsseldorf, West Berlin, Hannover and elsewhere. In his capacity at *Sounds*, which was headquartered in Hamburg, he articulated his vision of what punk in Germany could be. In the influential three-part 1979 series of articles “Aus grauer Städte

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<sup>25</sup> That the Hamburg scene would evolve into the anti-capitalist, politically-aware capital of West German punk is yet another irony given the tempestuous relationship between these groups and the Hamburg punks’ propensity for violence, but it is yet another example of the fluid boundaries between punk and 68ers and the permeability of ideas across time, despite radically different articulations.

<sup>26</sup> This sometimes made recording through even independent record companies like *No Fun* difficult, as the anti-consumerist trajectory of some groups, similarly to *Crass* in England (who became popular in the Hamburg scene), stigmatized producing music through a commercial enterprise.

<sup>27</sup> Bands pursuing a harder sound did not solely come from Hamburg – the scene there was simply much more engaged with this style than elsewhere. *KFC* from Düsseldorf is an excellent example, with their rougher sound combined with a penchant for assaulting their audiences musically, lyrically, verbally and physically.

Mauern,” the title of which was taken from the popular *Wandervogel* hiking song from the teens and 1920s, he set forth an inclusive program he saw at the heart of the punk explosion in West Germany. The song, which decries the negative effects of urbanization, industrialization, and bourgeois convention, encourages the listener to fly free from gray cities’ walls, creating a binary opposition between city and country.

In the first article of the series, which appeared in the October 1979 issue of *Sounds* and was subtitled simply “Neue deutsche Welle” (which gave a name to the amorphous emerging music scenes), Hilsberg immediately sought to differentiate the proliferation of West German bands from the Anglo-American tradition that had inspired them. “Die ‘neue Welle’ ist schon lange nicht mehr Anhängsel der angloamerikanischen Rock-/Punk-Tradition. Die Auseinandersetzung mit sich selbst, mit dem Leben hier und heute, schafft neue Inhalte/Formen” (20). Along with their shared active involvement, this focus on new forms and content to explore life in West Germany was the unifying thread he saw between the various musical- and life-styles being pursued by youth across the nation.

In an effort to showcase the diversity of the West German NDW scene and this common desire to express their individuality and their engagement with life in the FRG, Hilsberg organized a series of concerts in 1979 at the *Markthalle* in Hamburg which, as Bettina Köster’s recounting of her experience at the second festival “In die Zukunft” suggests, were not free from problems.<sup>28</sup> The common theme among these three shows was to bring together bands from across the country. The first show was “Into the Future” and took place on February 24. Tickets

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<sup>28</sup> These shows also helped to promote Hilsberg’s new record company *ZickZack*, which produced many of the major albums of the NDW and beyond, including releases by *Frewillige Selbstkontrolle (FSK)*, *Abwärts*, *die Krupps*, and *die Zimmermänner* and by much more internationally recognized groups *Einstürzende Neubauten* and *Palais Schaumburg* (as well as some productions by *die Tödliche Doris* and Andreas Doraus).

for the show sold out quickly, and hundreds were denied admission at the door. The festival was a success, with punks from across the country mixing freely and relatively peacefully. The second show, retitled in a nod to the rapidly proliferating importance of the German language, “In die Zukunft,” was held a few months later on June 29. As Köster remarked, this show was much more violent. The grudging acceptance which had characterized the first show had evaporated, and Hamburg fans pelted more experimental acts like *Din-a-Testbild* with whatever they had on hand. In an attempt to bring the two sides together, Hilsberg organized a third show on the eve of the new decade. “Geräusche für die 80er,” which took place on December 29, was a debacle. As Mike Hentz of *Minus Delta t* remembered:

Die Punks haben dann in den Pausen zwischen den Stücken immer die Sänger verprügelt. Und zwar von wirklich allen so genannten Kunstbands, die vor uns spielten—*Salinos*, *Liebesgier* und *Tempo*...Dann waren die alle schon vorne und hatten Bier in der Hand, um es denen drüberzukuppen. Einer von *Tempo* hat sich dann unterstanden, jemandem den Stinkefinger zu zeigen. In der nächsten Pause sind fünf Berliner Punks auf die Bühne gestürmt, haben den einfach voll vermöbelt und ihm noch eine Flasche über den Kopf gezogen. Bevor wir überhaupt anfangen, wussten wir schon: Wir dürfen keine Pausen machen. (Teipel 213)

Again, the mixing of scenes and styles is evident in the Berlin punks who stormed the stage in Hamburg. But the idea of a punk community dedicated to respect for alternative articulations of experience and meaning-making was shown to be a much less universally shared ideal on the precipice of the 1980s. In this, punk evidences another commonality with the *Wandervogel*. The splits founded upon disagreements about what punk should be hearken back to the same

disagreements within the *Wandervogel*. And while many continued to pursue the goal of a united punk/NDW alternative community, the two dominant styles of punk—the hardcore style rooted in Hamburg and the experimental styles characteristic of many groups in Düsseldorf, West Berlin and Hannover—drifted increasingly further apart. While it may seem to be a failure, this diversification and articulation of difference, even within the punk subculture, was ultimately necessary. The utopian vision that the entire punk community could rally together around a set of commonly shared beliefs stood in stark contrast to their focus on individual expression and the gritty depiction of life in West Germany. The differences that arose, in their own (rather punk) way, evidence the maturation of local scenes in claiming their own identities and preferences. Where punk began with the intent of rupturing the social fabric, it is only fitting that it rupture itself along the way. Unfortunately, these splits in punk, like those of the *Wandervogel*, ultimately were not enough. As Hardcore and experimental NDW and later Fun Punk crystallized into defined genres, the capacity of these scenes to form a foundation based on difference was fundamentally eroded. Choosing which group to align with dramatically limited the potential for experimentation and adventure and, as Jeff Hayton insightfully notes, “in so making a choice, punks shut down the possibilities of *Anderssein*” (348).

While punk initially emerged as a reaction to the commercialization and over-production of rock and roll recordings, it, like the *Wandervogel*, developed into a vehicle for like-minded youth to react against social conditions of modernity that they found unsatisfactory. Both *Wandervogel* and punk evolved along trajectories that quickly lead to a diversification of the movements. For the *Wandervogel*, this occurred largely through splinter organizations and disagreements over issues such as the inclusion of women, homosexuality, and antisemitism. For punks in West Germany, divergence was primarily a function of the different cultures of

local, urban scenes, particularly in their make-up in terms of gender and class, the extent to which students and artists were involved in the scene, and their affinity (or lack thereof) for British punk.

### **Scholarly Reception of Punk**

“It began in the guts, a boiling knot of feelings and impulses so strong that they seemed to erupt out of nowhere: disgust at the state of contemporary pop culture, fury at the way that the promises of the 1960s had been reneged upon, and above all a boredom so all-consuming by 1975 that it pushed those who suffered it out of depression and lethargy into frenzied action. We hate everything, fuck you, let’s go” (Savage Aesthetic 146).

Scholarly inquiry into punk has, since the 1970s, been approached from numerous directions by disciplines ranging from musicology, popular culture studies and art history to sociology, social work and political science. The literature on punk has, like punk itself, expanded and diversified over the years, but punk is still all too often read through distinct narratives which ultimately, like the crystallization of punk scenes, has caused scholarship to fracture along ideological and thematic lines along the boundaries of the disciplines which find in it an object worthy of study. If punk represented a critique of modern life, its evaluation by disciplines which arose as a part of the rationalistic Enlightenment project must be viewed as potentially problematic. Hebdige noted this in 1979 when he suggested the subcultures he studied would likely not see themselves reflected in his work and remained fundamentally skeptical of its value to these youth. This is not to say that academic research on punk doesn’t

have a critical place in working through punk's legacy in raising questions about its meanings and potentials. With the tremendous amount of engaged scholarship that has been and continues to be written, there is no question of the value in refining current discourses on punk while maintaining a degree of distance and attempted objectivity. But punk scholarship should also constantly seek to free its object to look at it from fresh perspectives and through new interpretations. And since one of punk's chief critiques was oriented against the leveling, rationalizing and categorizing effects of modernity, it is only reasonable that the lifestyles they pursued in the attempt to create an alternative should be more fully explored in this spirit.

Not that punk lifestyles have not already been the subject of a great deal of research. However these studies often focus upon one of many elements in punk's modern critique: its problematization of the culture industry and consumer society, its challenge to fashion, its voiced political dissent, its aesthetic approach or its rejection of past subcultures among others. In the focus on these individual manifestations of a broader criticism against the banality of modern life, the major source of their alienation, a profound boredom with the internalization of modern structures in promulgating a shallow and disengaged lifestyle, is fractured and viewed through its localized expressions in style, politics, philosophy or its means of production.

This fracturing of the broader punk critique is evident in several trajectories of research, through which the phenomenon can be better illuminated. Among the most significant of these are punk philosophy—especially in terms of anti-consumerism, anarchism, liberalism and neo-Nazism—punk aesthetics, (foremost here, punk as manifestation of the avant-garde), punk's contextualization within rock and popular culture, and punk as response to major sociopolitical and economic conditions locally, nationally and globally. The overarching picture of punk that emerges from this research can be generally summarized along the lines of: punk marks the re-



emergence of an avant-garde, often popularized through the intentional creation of moral panics in socially conservative post-war nations, updated for and wryly subverting consumer culture, communist ideology and intrusion into private life, cold war politics, globalized power structures, religious fanaticism or whatever social issues are considered most pressing and in need of rupture while attempting to carve out independent niches in these societies.

The breadth and diversity of scholarship on punk illustrates that punk has proven to be eminently adaptable to the many social, cultural, religious, geographical, political, and economic contexts to which it has spread. The directions sketched above have been and continue to be productive lines of inquiry, although the macropolitical focus has, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, shifted away from the politics of MAD and towards issues of globalizing consumer culture.<sup>29</sup> I've selected the above four categories because each inspects an important part of the broader punk project. When taken together, the limitations of their individual emphases is largely overcome and the common themes of direct action, engagement/DIY and the advancing of individual difference as a communal unifier become evident.

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<sup>29</sup> Historical studies of punk continue to provide novel interpretations of punk's influence and meaning behind the Iron Curtain. Two valuable recent contributions in the East German context are William Seth Howes 2012 dissertation *Punk Avant-Gardes: Disengagement and the End of East Germany* and Jeff Hayton's 2013 dissertation, *Culture from the Slums: Punk Rock, Authenticity and Alternative Culture in East and West Germany*. Both projects provide detailed overviews of East German punk scenes and a wealth of information about punk's reception in the GDR. The 2005 anthology of essays on alternative music forms in East Germany, *Wir wollen immer artig sein: Punk, New Wave, Hip-hop und Independent-Szene in der DDR von 1980 bis 1990* also provides a diverse collection of scholarship on subcultural expression in the GDR through nearly 50 articles running the gamut from inspections of punk venues (often churches), Stasi infiltration, style, inspections of local scenes to punk's spread from urban centers to the countryside in addition to topics on other subcultures including hip-hop and electronica.

## The Punk Philosopher / The Punk Ideologue

Discussing punk philosophies and ideologies is anything but a straightforward process. It is here that the diversity of punk perspectives is most evident, and any analysis must situate itself within the particular relevant punk philosophies and ideologies at play in the specific contexts of the era, location and particular manifestations of punk under study. Punk ideologies are closely aligned with the numerous punk subgenres and scenes, and can vary extensively within these communities. To use an extreme example, Nazi punk, which embraces neo-Nazism, differs starkly from the liberal, anti-authoritarian stance of the majority of punk subcultures, especially the anarcho-punk community. Still, even they are tied together by several general tenets that have been the focus of a productive and longstanding trajectory of punk scholarship in both academic and lay punk scholarship.

Where the *Wandervogel* attempted to remain unaffiliated with agenda-driven groups and movements, this has often not been the case in punk. In “Subcultures, Pop Music and Politics: Skinheads and ‘Nazi Rock’ in England and Germany,” Timothy Brown traces the relationship of rock and later punk music in the history of right-wing youth movements, beginning with the skinheads in London in the 1960s (the so-called “hard mods,” influenced initially, rather ironically, by the Jamaican “rude boys” transplanted in London from the ghettos of Kingston) and culminating in the anti-Romani, anti-Turk politics of right-wing youth in Germany and elsewhere in Western Europe explored through lyrics such as *Störkraft*’s “We’re Germany’s real police, we’ll make the streets Turk-free” (Brown 171).<sup>30</sup> Brown summarized this history by

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<sup>30</sup> While *Störkraft* is a notorious example of *Rechtsrock*, this translation of their song “Deutschlands Polizei” utilizes the more extreme verse often substituted and screamed by skinheads in concert “Wir sind Deutschlands echte Polizei, wir machen die Straßen türkenfrei.” The actual line, while the intent is likely the same, is slightly less provocative: “Wir sind Deutschlands echte Polizei, wir machen die Straßen wirklich frei.”

noting that “[f]rom the Jamaican reggae prized by the original skinheads, to the ‘Oi! punk’ of the skinhead revival, to the ‘Nazi rock’ associated with skinhead violence in the nineties, popular music has been the site at which ideas of subcultural ‘cool’ and ‘authenticity,’ notions of race and ethnicity, and an increasingly radical politics come together and overlap” (172). Brown also notes that these areas—punk politics and punk aesthetics—are quite fluid.

While Timothy Brown investigated the far right within the British and German punk scenes, many more scholars have focused on punk as a means for left-wing action. While the majority of punks (and punk scholars) are today left-leaning, it should be remembered that issues of the political were unbound in the initial punk moment, which intended to provoke and offend both the left and right in equal measure. One of the results of the evolution of punk has been that the liberal elements of punk subculture appear overrepresented in the literature. This is part of a general neglect of those elements of punk that do not reflect positively upon the subculture (sexism, violence, crime, hate groups, etc). This likely has to do with many punk scholars emerging out of the left-leaning punk community, which results in a privileging of those elements which cast punk in its most positive light. In addition, this concentration on progressive, liberal elements of punk can be seen as an attempted corrective to the reactionary social and medial receptions in which punk has been all-too-often cast as worthless, degenerate and dangerous. But focusing too heavily upon the progressive, anti-corporate, anti-statist elements of punk today threatens to cement this discourse too strongly at the expense of other elements and alternate renderings of punk which are deserving of study. Looked at in light of this present study, punk ideologies often served as rallying cries around which like-minded individuals could rally. However in the fixedness of these ideologies and the uncompromising adoption of their tenets, ideological punks drastically limited the focus of their engagement

These ideological tangents into which punks often organized are all connected by punk's fundamental commonality: the do-it-yourself ethos. Jon Savage noted that "By the mid-1970s, the music industry promoted a state of passivity. In contrast, punk sought to erase the boundary between performer and audience, whether ideologically (anyone can do it) or physically... It was a self-starter culture, and as it developed it took in other areas of media practice: magazines, concerts, shops, graphics, record labels" (Savage 2012 147). Savage focuses in this passage (as in his work more broadly) on the effects of punk on mass and popular culture, but the DIY idea went far deeper than simply rejuvenating popular culture—DIY became interpreted across punkdom as a way of living in the broadest sense.<sup>31</sup> This DIY legacy inflected all aspects of punk—homebrewed fashion, cut-up and rearranged bricolage zines printed on photocopiers, music recorded on tape recorders or not recorded at all, the creation of record companies and distribution networks, punk squats, cooking and on and on. But the danger of too narrowly defining the direction of DIY, evident in the politicization and ideological fracturing of punk above, seriously limited its potential as an open and fluid lifestyle.

## **Punk Aesthetics**

A number of large-scale historiographies have been written that privilege punk artistic and stylistic practices as well as more focused studies such as those which inspect one area of punk cultural productions (zines, music, literature, fashion, collage, etc.). Punk aesthetics

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<sup>31</sup> This translation of DIY aesthetics to the erection of DIY (or DIO: do-it-ourselves) social, political and economic counter-institutions is also applicable to the West German context, and has been discussed by scholars on both sides of the Atlantic, with Hollow Skai's *Alles nur Geträumt*, Jeff Hayton's *Culture from the Slums* and Cyrus Shahan's *Punk Rock and German Crisis* all detailing in part the foundation of alternative centers of cultural, social, political or economic spaces.

generally eschew the traditional definition of aesthetics as a search for the beautiful in favor of a negative aesthetics built upon the ugly, deformed, decrepit, shocking, violent and ridiculous, with a focus on how punk aesthetic practices function within the subculture and in their larger societal contexts.

Punk aesthetics play out in many areas of punk expression from fashion, music and literature to language, dance and gesture (punk posing, gobbing (spitting), puking, defecating, etc). This range of expression is subsumed under the category of punk style, a wide-reaching category that is intimately connected with other discourses on punk, most notably its DIY legacy and social commentary. The exploration of aesthetic dimensions of punk was also one of the key means through which punks explored their individual and shared identity and formed a critical element of their engagement with the world and modern society. The internationally shared commonalities in punk fashion and artistic expression (leather, safety pins, dyed hair, etc.) were supplemented with national, local, scene-specific and individual accompaniments which often expressed difference as these levels, distinguishing a punk from Düsseldorf from one from London, Hamburg or other punks in the Düsseldorf scene.

The DIY charge to become directly engaged in one's life and to live as a subject and participant rather than as an objectified consumer permeated all levels of punk, and their aesthetic representation of this difference formed the most visible articulation of this participatory engagement. Tying this more closely to boredom, by taking fashion and art into their own hands, punks positioned themselves outside of the codified reception of these trends and, through the pastiche of assorted elements with which they chose to adorn themselves illustrated the inherent meaninglessness of these found objects and symbols—an example of the direct action which opened discourse on alternative modes of expression and engagement and, to

return to Anderson's conceptualization of boredom in modernity, undid the "durable repeated socialspatial orderings that form boredom" (747).

This relation between boredom and style has remained unexplored, but the ties between style and punk DIY have not. The direct engagement and circumvention and reinterpretation of established stylistic and artistic convention and institutions hearkens back to the various avant-garde art movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Punk aesthetics are heavily indebted to the avant-garde art movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century from Dadaism, Surrealism and Futurism in the early years of the century to the Letterist, Lettrist and Situationist Internationals which emerged following WWII.<sup>32</sup> Punk can be read as a popular and amateur radical avant-garde outside the conventional confines of the art community dedicated to the same ideals of provocation through negative aesthetics and the potential to re-contextualize and undermine the social, political and cultural. The contentious and incendiary punk engagement with society is reminiscent of the original martial connotations of the avant-garde as a self-appointed vanguard, and punk's focus not upon the intrinsic aesthetic value (and salability) of its creations but upon their effect upon society and the individual marks it as belonging closer to the original intent of Dada than the Pop Art that followed in the 1960s.

But many punks saw beauty in punk's negative aesthetics beyond the ability to shock and provoke. Still others have applied punk aesthetic practices to commercial art, and many bands, following the example of the *Sex Pistols*, pursued major label contracts. Many more adopted

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<sup>32</sup> The histories and philosophy of these groups is far too complex to fully elaborate upon here. For those seeking more information, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art* remains an influential reader on Dada history and philosophy, as does *The Dada Almanac*, both of which contain foundational writings on Dada. For a primer on the Situationist International, the *Situationist International Anthology* provides an English language translation of the most influential writings of its members, presented chronologically. The 2004 collection *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: texts and documents* focuses more upon the writings of the Situationist International's most influential contributor Guy Debord and interpretations of his work and philosophy by contemporary scholars.

punk style without understanding the ideology behind it (the so-called “poseur”). As with most things punk, the lines are blurred and arriving at a distilled essence of “punk” (and who can be called “punk”) remains elusive, if often hotly contested. Still, one of the key characterizations of punk around the globe, even if punks themselves have often been unaware of this legacy, has been the application of avant-garde expression and its potential to open up counter-narratives. Tricia Henry discussed the affinity of purpose in 1984 in “Punk and Avant-Garde Art”:

Punk and all avant-garde art reacts against established theories and techniques of art as well as against the society which produces them. Both prize the artist as revolutionary and project themselves toward the future to what they consider a more pertinent view of the world than that reflected by traditional values. They also create an artist’s world—a social strata specifically oriented toward the arts. ‘Avant-garde’ is comparable to the punk idea of the ‘new wave.’ Both describe active focus at the edge of change creating a new aesthetic. (Henry 30)<sup>33</sup>

Punk was rarely about formal elements of artistic expression (be it in areas of musical proficiency, lyric composition, painting, or collage), but rather art in the service of dilettantism, making a statement and experimenting with its ability to foster new ways of thinking and new modes of engagement with the world. As such, punks’ aesthetic articulation of these ideals form a major pillar of punk engagement as a counter to the disengagement and alienation they felt to be endemic to modern life. Punk aesthetics are therefore one of the most important elements in the punk attempt to reclaim the ability to act.

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<sup>33</sup> The punk conception of the “new wave” is related to the musical genre which emerged out of punk in the late-1970s, but distinct from the commercialized turn taken as New Wave groups found mainstream success. This distinction holds true for the West German punk and *Neue Deutsche Welle* as well, with distinctions drawn between later commercial acts like *Nena* and groups like *Abwärts*, *Andreas Dorau*, *Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft (DAF)* and *Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle (FSK)*. In the West German context, the original *Neue Deutsche Welle* project is often used synonymously with punk.

The importance of subcultural style and its relation to the social, cultural and political contexts of punk has been at the center of punk studies since the first scholarly monograph on the subject, Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. Writing as part of the Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), Hebdige was part of the turn away from viewing subcultures as a problem of youth deviants in need of rehabilitation and towards appreciating and understanding these subcultures as part of an ongoing societal response from the margins with their own demands for recognition, autonomy and agency. As Hebdige summarizes: "Subcultures are therefore expressive forms but what they express is, in the last instance, a fundamental tension between those in power and those condemned to subordinate positions and second-class lives. This tension is figuratively expressed in the form of subcultural style." (132). For Hebdige, subcultural style is a manifestation not only of class differences, but also of any group existing in the margins of society (such as youth, racial minorities, or immigrants).

## **Punk Rock**

Punk's influence in rock culture and within the music industry has been enormous, an influence which has been the subject of a large body of scholarship. Much of this scholarship reads punk through its role as part of the history of rock culture as well as investigates how punk diverged from this history. Of the many works published on punk in this vein, Jon Savage's *England's Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock and Beyond* provides one of the most enduring histories of punk and its fallout. In 1976 Savage began producing an early punk zine, *London's Outrage*, which led to him landing a job in 1977 for the British *Sounds* magazine,



where he rose to prominence for his detailed coverage of the punk scene. *England's Dreaming*, which he researched throughout the late 1980s, was the result of his years of experience at the epicenter of British punk and is enriched by countless interviews with some of punk's biggest players.<sup>34</sup> It remains the definitive work detailing UK punk's rise and fall and, in familiar fashion, takes as its beginning the creation of the *Sex Pistols* and ends with their final show. But Savage takes a somewhat different approach to his history—one that is founded on punk as an answer to music industry complacency and the intentional creation of a moral panic in order to restart a stagnant British youth culture. “When we first met John Lydon [later to become Johnny Rotten of the *Sex Pistols*],’ says Paul Cook [drummer for the *Pistols*], ‘I remember saying to him how nothing was happening in music and how this whole youth movement needed something to get them going again. After the Skinheads, Teds and Mods, everything had passed in a bit of a lull since 1970 and it was now 1975. Five years had passed.’ None of the *Sex Pistols* was an intellectual (neither was McLaren for that matter), but they didn't have to be: they were already immersed in this media/youth culture discourse and in the history of pop itself” (Savage 1992 165).

Punk is in many ways a victim of its own success. Punk utilized existing mass media distribution channels like a virus to spread its message. Shock and disgust were utilized as tools not only of self-expression, but also in order to garner attention and arouse curiosity. This potential was quickly sensed by the British major labels, who rapidly signed punk bands such as

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<sup>34</sup> The common practice of approaching punk studies through those most involved (for example the *Sex Pistols*, *The Clash* or *The Ramones*) has been critiqued for failing to adequately present a broader portrayal of the diversity and disparate manifestations of punk. By concentrating upon those who achieved commercial or popular success, punk studies that limit themselves to this approach in a way commit a grievous oversight (or at least severely limit themselves) by reading punk as those elements which popular culture has embraced and codified.

the *Sex Pistols* in anticipation of and in order to promote the new punk fad.<sup>35</sup> As punk grew, so did a backlash within many scenes against the major labels and their attempts to characterize, define, monetize and profit from the emerging subculture. This anti-corporate, anti-mass-media stance quickly manifested itself in punk productions—foremost in zines and lyrics—which circled around to the desire and need to erect autonomous, alternative structures to create platforms in order to be heard above the marginalizing and reductive definitions of punk churned out by tabloid publications and morning talk-shows.

Little about punk was new, but nothing would ever be the same after. *In the Fascist Bathroom* by Greil Marcus presents the reader with a pre-history of punk beginning with the death of the idealism of the 1960s with *The Rolling Stones*' 1969 album *Let It Bleed*, with songs like "Gimme Shelter" and "You Can't Always Get What You Want," and then chronicles punk until 1992, the year after Nirvana's *Nevermind*, sometimes referred to as the year punk broke. Marcus also notes that several pop and rock acts and albums, such as Fleetwood Mac and their album *Tusk*, while not punk themselves, simply *could not have existed* without punk. Jon Savage, re-emphasizing the importance of the punk project of the 1970s, despite its ephemeral quality, closes *England's Dreaming* with:

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<sup>35</sup> Precursors to punk within the context of the music industry abound. Bands such as Detroit's *MC5* (who in 1969 opened their fast and gritty "Kick out the Jams" with the screamed line "Kick out the jams motherfuckers!") and the *Stooges* (with their 1969 3-chord anthem to resignation and frustration "I wanna be your Dog") epitomized a sound and attitude that has come to be regarded as "proto-punk." Other influences included Lou Reed and John Cale's *Velvet Underground* (the house band of the Factory and managed by Andy Warhol), *Television* and *The New York Dolls*. Even bands like *The Rolling Stones* pushed the envelope of accepted social behavior and acceptable stage presence. Germany laced the broad base of musical acts of the US and Britain, but even here groups like *Ton Steine Scherben* and *Can* can be seen as highly influential on West German punk. Many of the pieces of punk were therefore well-established within the bounds of the music industry by the mid-1970s – what largely set punk apart was not the sound or the antics (although one could argue that punk differed in degree or intent), but rather the scope and the sheer number of groups that emerged out of the democratization of these possibilities and lifestyles for the dilettante and marginalized (or anyone with the interest to become involved).

Punk was beaten, but it had also won. If it had been the project of the Sex Pistols to destroy the music industry, then they had failed; but as they gave it new life, they allowed a myriad of new forms to become possible. When Punk entered the music and media industries, its vision of freedom was eventually swamped by New-Right power politics and the accompanying value systems, but its original, gleeful negation remains a beacon. History is made by those who say 'No' and Punk's utopian heresies remain its gift to the world (541).

This reinvigoration of the music industry—opening it up to those who historically had either not considered it a possibility or whose sound never would have been acceptable—is one of the major contributions pointed to by those who study punk's relationship with mass culture.

In the West German context the debates about how punk should be understood vis-à-vis the music industry and its fate as either a casualty of mass culture or re-invigorator of popular culture has been a longstanding object of discussion between punks themselves and, more recently, by scholars as well. Peter Tschmuck's 2003 *Kreativität und Innovation in der Musikindustrie* reads punk as part of an ongoing manipulation by a conservative but all-encompassing music industry to dictate taste. He suggests that while the music industry has allowed independent record companies to thrive (or created spin-off companies with the veneer of independence), they still are able to exert a tremendous amount of clout when it comes to which trends and sounds they will validate with mainstream approval and mass circulation. In this, bands signing even to independent labels will work within an atmosphere largely dictated from the music industry from above. His work complicates the picture of autonomy, reading the taste-defining music industry as penetrating even subcultural spaces by privileging certain sounds, looks and fads. His is a particularly bleak picture of the possibilities of artistic

expression in modernity—a commonality his work shares with many who see punk simply as another fad utilized, repackaged, refined and marketed by music executives.

Andreas Jakobs inspects punk improvisational aspects as contrived attempts to convey notions of authenticity and freedom, reading punk into a line of affected improvisation stretching back to composers of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century in his article “Der Gestus des Improvisatorischen und der Schein der Freiheit.” On punk, he writes: “im Punk wurde mangelnde Beherrschung musikalisch-technischen Handwerks geradezu als Kennzeichen besonderer Authentizität gelesen. Dass sich Gruppen wie die “Sex Pistols” in einer dezidierten Nicht-Handwerklichkeit inszenierten und Gründungsmythen bemüht wurden wie das “Herumhängen” in der von Vivienne Westwood und Malcolm McLaren betriebenen Boutique “SEX” bzw. (ab 1977) “Seditionaries”, diente als Ausgangspunkt einer Musik mit geringer harmonischer Komplexität, großer Knappheit, textinhaltlicher gesellschaftlicher Opposition und postulierter Verneinung des instrumentalen Könnens. Dieser Anspruch wird auf seltsame Weise konterkariert durch die sehr “sauber” produziert und gespielt wirkenden (und überdies recht erfolgreichen) Studio-Alben der Formation” (15). This characterization may hold somewhat for commercially successful groups, but, like many who inspect punk within the context of the music industry, completely omits those who did not achieve nor seek commercial success—which in punk is the vast majority. It also neglects aspects of punk outside of music. Again, we find ourselves in muddied water—punk was able contain both affected amateurism and the actual amateur—it was all a matter of choice and intent. While some punks *did* affect dilettantism, many more *were* dilettantes. That this fact was embraced, celebrated and represented in punk productions by youth in the emergent DIY culture should not be read (only) as an affectation—especially given the extremely limited means of production and the terribly low-quality of many recordings—but rather the result of a

huge influx of the newly-inspired but amateur and uninitiated into the realms of cultural production. This model for action, even if exaggerated, was certainly made much more salient by the sometimes affected dilettantism of major punk bands. As Lawrence Lessig noted in a talk on participatory culture when discussing the continuing importance of celebrating the amateur: “I don't mean amateurish culture, I mean culture where people produce for the love of what they're doing and not for the money. I mean the culture that your kids are producing all the time” (Lessig 2007). Punk was, in its popular reception by youth, both a call to action (with bands like *The Clash* and *The Ramones* from abroad or *Big Balls* and later groups like *Trio* in West Germany showing the simplicity of self-expression) as well as an answer to a sterile mass culture that instead celebrated the act of production itself.

This suggests that, while recording companies have manipulated and benefitted from punk in both recruiting popular bands to their labels and in repackaging the sound and aesthetics of punk to serve their goals of profit maximization and market control, punk has also manipulated and benefitted from the music industry. While certainly those groups which have pursued mainstream success have gained a great deal from the resources and channels available through a major label contract, punk as a whole likely never would have spread to the bored youth it reached had it not been for the far-reaching market saturation of the recording industry. Further, as Rombes suggests, punk dramatically influenced the structure and composition of the music industry, paving the way for groups which, while not punk themselves, could not have existed without it.

The role of punk in mainstream popular culture has been likened to a virus: it is spread through hosts (the music industry, news, moral panics) unaware, dismissive or indifferent to its potential and allows those who encounter it to work backwards to the marginalized elements

which were excluded or vilified to realize its latent call to action and become directly involved. In this, punk is able to exist in the culture industry simultaneously as both a consumable product in line with what Heidegger saw as standing reserve and also as a provocation for those who encounter it to take its latent potential for self-expression and engagement to heart.

### **The Punk Political**

Despite an initial aloofness from discussions of the social issues and political developments that punk criticized hippies and the counterculture of the 60s of talking to death, punk, like the *Wandervogel*, has always been intrinsically political.<sup>36</sup> From its in-your-face style to its in-your-face declarations (“I wanna destroy...passers-by!”), the initial punk provocation and demand for recognition quickly moved beyond a pseudo-anarchic notion of simply tearing down society into many disparate projects reflecting the desires, prejudices and perspectives of those drawn to punk’s openness. This can be seen in the proliferation of various sub-subcultures within the punk subculture itself following the splintering of the initial punk moment. The most researched of these is likely the liberal anarcho-punk element, which positions itself as a response not only to existing societal malaise, but also globalized corporatization and political corruption. In an effort to present concrete ideas that moved beyond the initial punk rupture, this trajectory of punk in many ways circled back to the previous student movements of the 1960s, but with a much more radical call for direct action and participation in effecting change. Instead of entering into society and reforming it from the inside, many punks began establishing parallel

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<sup>36</sup> These phenomena were political in the sense of their provocation for direct participation and implicit rejection of societal convention, not in any intrinsic political orientation, which as we will see is difficult to discern in the many conflicting ideologies at home within punk and *Wandervogel*.

institutions, distribution channels and even radical political parties, such as the Anarchistische Pogo-Partei Deutschlands.<sup>37</sup>

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw what many youth perceived as increasing militarism and cold war tensions after a period of relative *détente* in the 1960s and early 70s. The elections of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and Ronald Reagan in 1980, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua portended an era of heightened tension. The transition within British popular culture saw the rise of New Wave, which following punk's incursions shifted to more readily accessible sounds often combined with concern for social issues. Artists brought songs of Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) protest to top 40 radio, as with *Orchestral Maneuvers in the Dark* in their 1980 song "Enola Gay" and *Frankie Goes to Hollywood*, with their 1984 UK hit single "Two Tribes Go to War," "a pounding exegesis of the Cold War standoff replete with a video depicting Reagan and Chernenko wrestling in a bear pit" (Worley, 68).

As the West German punk scene gave rise to the *Neue Deutsche Welle*, similar mainstream successes arose, perhaps most famously *Nena* with the international anti-war single *99 Luftballons* and *Trio's* "da da da," an example of pop music stripped down to its absolute basics with a video accompanying the song showing the utter simplicity of the music. The backlash within the original punk/NDW scene was intense, with Hilsberg and others recommending boycotting the new NDW and the intrusion of commercial enterprise attempting to cash in on the musical style built as a labor of love by thousands of dedicated youth.

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<sup>37</sup> The APPD has, since its origins in 1981 as a tongue-in-cheek joke, actually developed a coherent set of political demands such as the legalization of all drugs, a youth pension (which they argue makes a great deal more sense than waiting until retirement, when one might be infirm or dead) and the abolition of compulsory education, police and other bastions of authority. These exist alongside classic punk provocations such as their demand that Germany be restored to its borders from 1237, combined with the call for the *ultimative und totale Rückverdummung* and *die Balkanisierung Deutschlands*.

Differentiating between the two camps is however utterly unsatisfying, as the co-option of the musical style pioneered by early NDW groups (once these groups had proven through independent record label sales that the sound could be economically viable) was ultimately, given the nature of the entertainment industry to absorb new directions, an inevitability.

Other songs, such as *Fehlfarben's* song *Militürk* (written by Gabi Delgado of *Deutsch Amerikanisch Freundschaft*) from their now-classic album *Monarchie und Alltag* irreverently fused cold war tensions with fears of cultural intrusion in lines like “Kebabträume in der Mauerstadt/ Türk-Kültür hinter Stacheldraht/ Neu-Izmir in der DDR/ Atatürk der neue Herr/ Miliyet für die Sowjetunion/ In jeder Imbißstube ein Spion/ Im ZK - Agent aus Türkei/ Deutschland, Deutschland/ Alles ist vorbei.” Many scholars have analyzed punk as a reaction to cold war politics and social unease, as in Matthew Worley’s essay, “One Nation Under the Bomb: The Cold War and British Punk to 1984.” In this study he explains the importance of cold war politics noting that “[p]unk was quick to pick up on the resurgent Cold War tensions of the early 1980s. The threat of a nuclear war was ‘the most important thing in our lives,’ *Discharge's* Bones said in a rare interview, and punk provided both a platform and a stimulus for those who wished to respond” (Worley, 69). In another interview cited by Worley, The Sex Pistols' Johnny Rotten matter-of-factly said, “If it offends you, stop it. You've got to or else you just become apathetic and complacent yourself. You end up with a mortgage watching TV with 2.4 kids out in suburbia—and that's disgusting” (Worley, 69).<sup>38</sup>

But punk proved itself to be adaptable to other social realities as well. Where the differences between the social critiques offered by punks in Britain and West Germany are

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<sup>38</sup> This interview originally appeared in Caroline Coon, "Sex Pistols: Rotten to the Core," *Melody Maker*, 19 November 1976.



relatively minor, the capacity of punk to problematize *whatever* social reality it found itself in is much more evident when encountering punk's reception in Germany's other cold-war half. Seth Howes' recent dissertation project, *Punk Avant-Gardes*, along with Jeff Hayton, provide to date the most complete handling of the why punk was seen as a threat to the established order by both East German youth and those in power. Howes reads punk disengagement as a counter-narrative to the overarching East German ideals of an engaged citizenry moving always into a better future. Through their aesthetic practices and simply by inhabiting public spaces, Howes suggests that from:

punks' transgressions of rules governing the uses (and usefulness) of bodies and spaces emerged a theory of punk and of the vulnerability of East German public spaces to punk's transgressive visuality. This theory's vehemence and sophistication offer more compelling testimony to punk's impact on the security of East Germany than any of the East German punks' own claims to represent a political danger ever could. Indeed, merely by asserting their presence in public—by producing punk spaces through the styling, positioning, and presentation of their own bodies—punks disengaged these spaces from the broader cityscapes in which they were emplaced, uncoupling punk sites from the ordered functioning of East German spaces and performing an inscrutable, unruly departure for their own benefit — and for the benefit of anybody who cared to look. (187)

I see a parallel between my project and Howes' final remarks that it was not punk proclamations about the threat they posed as an overt political danger, but rather simply their inhabiting of and visibility in public spaces in the GDR which marked punk's greatest impact upon East German society. Howes' conclusion on punk's potential to unsettle accepted social discourses and rupture

the socialspatial ordering of East German society evidences the importance of the engaged and unbound worldviews at the heart of phenomena such as *Wandervogel* and punk, regardless of the specific social conditions in which they swim.<sup>39</sup>

## **Towards a Synthesis**

For West German punks, their boredom rested upon not simply the result of a largely-imported and inaccessible mass culture, a lack of political agency or cold war tensions. This boredom also reached beyond school and family to all aspects of their lives which fostered their disengagement from society. Similarly, the writings on punk have been diverse, which reflects the incredible diversity of punk itself. Because of this complexity, inspecting a fragment of punk (for example fashion, zines, music, or politics) and limiting this discussion to a specific time, place and scene is often the only viable means of gaining a foothold on the topic. But this is not without its limitations.

One of the most persistent dilemmas of punk, and one that has carried over into punk scholarship, has been the tradeoff in defining punk and a punk identity with the fluidity and openness that has characterized the punk project from its inception.<sup>40</sup> Dick Hebdige recognized

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<sup>39</sup> That these socialspatial orderings lead to boredom for many has already been discussed, however it would make for a valuable study to investigate through the construct of boredom the specific iteration of participatory engagement in the face of modern alienation in the East German context.

<sup>40</sup> Punk scenes have of course also been exclusive – acceptance within a specific scene is earned through participation and involvement, not simply through dress or style (although these remain important markers of belonging). However the participatory ideals underpinning punk leave it open to anybody and to different interpretations, as evidenced by the various subgenres of punk which have emerged from and often coexist in overlapping circles with punk: glam punk, horror punk, *punk pathétique*, hardcore punk, oi!, riot grrrl, emo, ska punk, straight edge (the clear-mind, anti-drug and alcohol set), skate punk, Celtic punk, queercore, taqwacore (a portmanteau of *taqwa*, the Arabic word meaning something close to “pious,” and “hardcore” – taqwacore is a largely US based punk subculture of punk which promulgates a liberal and open interpretation of Islam), Christian

this tradeoff in 1979 when he wrote that “[i]t is highly unlikely...that any of the subcultures described in this book would recognize themselves reflected here. They are still less likely to welcome any efforts on our part to understand them. After all, we, the sociologists and interested straights, threaten to kill with kindness the forms we seek to elucidate” (139). Even when entered into with the best of intentions, scholarly inquiry into punk threatens to wear the ruts in the road a little deeper, and makes it that much more difficult to view punk as something outside of established discourses. Worse, in viewing punk through codified, institutionalized and leveling discourses, themselves largely the result of modern rational approaches to the study of the world, scholarship on punk threatens to turn its object of study into something it wasn’t. Punk risks becoming reduced to another identity, another ordered system amongst many others perpetuating its own narratives—one of the very things it sought to resolve. Critically for this project, such an iteration of punk does not disclose the potential to move beyond the root causes of modern boredom.

The codification of a punk aesthetic provides an excellent example of this compromise between inspecting its uniqueness and the drive to explain and order it. While the tools and trappings of the punk avant-garde remain, they have lost a great deal of their capacity to subvert and shock. The word “punk” conjures up images of outrageously dressed belligerent kids with brightly colored hair dancing violently to loud, fast-paced music played by equally outrageously dressed bands barely proficient with their instruments. To an extent, the establishment of a punk look and sound was inevitable and even necessary, as it allowed for those within the subculture

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punk, and Nazi punk – among *many* others. Punk’s legacy in the sheer number of subgenres that have emerged (and different scenes within these genres) is testament to its elasticity and the openness to interpretation of the punk DIY project. The punk model also heavily influenced those genres coming after it: specifically the various subculture of electronic music and hip-hop. The general idea is: If you don’t identify with an existing scene, start one yourself.

to mark their difference both for each other and everybody else and allowed punk youth to express their program and philosophy through their appearance. Hebdige recognized the great limitation of this form of resistance: the ease of its recuperation. Subcultural style only retains its power while relatively unknown by those on its outside. Once familiar, its capacity to outrage and motivate is diminished and subcultural style can be reappropriated, marketed and sold to the masses as a disarmed (if still edgy) fashion choice.

Through this process, what is understood as “punk” becomes enshrined as something that it was meant to be for only a moment. The extent to which even punks themselves have embraced this codification is evident in the earlier discussion of the Hamburg scene and is also one of the major foci of Monica Sklar’s 2013 *Punk Style*. On the role of the media in the popularization and codification of punk style, Sklar writes: “outsiders learned about punk primarily through the media, and the new converts had an aesthetic shaped by what was presented to them, thus creating a cyclical truth with the power to endure. The challenge with creating a costume dubbed in punk is that it does unify people to a set of ideas; however, it lacks some of its original intension of creativity, individuality, and antiauthority” (7).<sup>41</sup> This picture is further clouded when Sklar answers the question posed in the section’s title “Is Punk Style Still Extreme?”, noting that “In the 1970s, punk style was an affront to conventional society,” but that today “a debate rages over how edgy it remains now that the style has so vastly diversified and been adopted by high fashion and mainstream repeatedly” (146). She finds that, while the era of punk’s ability to nearly universally shock and disgust is over, it remains contextually extreme in

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<sup>41</sup> This is especially true for West German punk, where pictures and accounts of the London punk scene were first disseminated through youth magazines (especially *Bravo*, which provided many of those who would later identify as punk’s first encounter with the subculture) well before a vast majority had heard the music. Punk style existed for a time in a vacuum as a sort of unattached curiosity in the Federal Republic – clearly provocative, but out of its element and in unknown territory amongst youth who were unsure how it should be interpreted.

certain realms such as the workplace, school and those areas where punk never registered (for example in Iraq, where she mentions a recent trend where “emos” have been subjected to torture and killing because of their choices of style)—this, Sklar suggests, proves that “punk style remains controversial” (147). It certainly does, but not (as Sklar is careful to note) in the same capacity. While punk style has endured, it has done so at the inevitable cost of gaining new social definitions, meanings and acceptance. This element of punk—the reception of its style and the reciprocal influence of this popular reception on punk subculture itself—ultimately focuses upon an element of punk which has been largely reconciled to dominant societal discourses. Style remains extremely important, but in dwelling upon a codified and relatively static punk style, the dynamic and disposable element of punk is discarded without recognizing the call to direct action, discovery and innovation which inspired so many in the first place.

This focus is also evident in the other topics touched upon throughout this section. Viewing punk as a response to rock culture for example constrains its focus to its influence within this bubble. And punk ideologies reduce punk to a diverse but ultimately static system of sincerely held beliefs, the adoption of which fundamentally limits the punk project of exploring and expressing personal difference. As Hayton notes, it shuts down the potentials of *Anderssein*.

Punk scholarship has progressed from Hebdige in a variety of productive directions, inspecting punk from a variety of angles, but it has often done so at the cost of cementing the discourses used to define what punk was and is. Academic research into punk is all too often received by punks themselves as “steif, systematisch und langweilig,” to quote the forward of Berndt Hahn’s *PUNK: die zarteste Versuchung, seit es Schokolade gibt*.<sup>42</sup> As a review by Tobias

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<sup>42</sup> The academic medium will likely never be something which everybody will engage with. It suffers many of the same disengaging limitations endemic to modernity, especially in its foundational rational objectivity and mission

Schärtl for the 2008 *Archiv der Jugendkulturen* reprint of Hollow Skai's *Punk: Versuch der künstlerischen Realisierung einer neuen Lebenshaltung* began: "Wir brauchen keine Bücher über Punk. Wir brauchen Punk-Bücher." (Schärtl) These evaluations suggests an ongoing unease about scholarly inquiry into punk, an unease which Hebdige had already perceived in 1979.

This is one of the major goals of this dissertation: providing an alternate orientation of punk's place as part of a longstanding confrontation of German youth with life in modernity, specifically in the proliferation of ways of living which have fostered boredom. I hope that punks (and present-day *Wandervögel*) do see themselves reflected in this work. This project is specific to the (West) German context, but the prevalence with which boredom has been thematized by punks across the globe and the problematization of boredom in punk cultural productions ranging from music to zines to film across the world suggests that an in-depth inspection of boredom in these other contexts might be fruitful. And as this study inspects punk and *Wandervogel* youth reactions to boredom-inducing social realities which continue to exist for many today, it is my hope that this analysis will contribute to a discussion of a critical but understudied element of responses to the challenges of modern life. Viewing punk as a reaction to (but not necessarily always against) boredom brings a new perspective to understanding some of the reasons why punk spread where it did and why it and the ideas underpinning it have since

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to explain, categorize and understand. Writing about punk (and the *Wandervogel*) shares many similarities with writing on boredom in modernity: the same issues that gave rise to boredom, which I argue was one of the major impetuses which in turn gave rise to the *Wandervogel* and punk, exist within the language, structures and methods which have been institutionalized to discuss and understand these phenomena. Punks have attempted to establish a punk form of scholarship since the early 1980s, when Hollow Skai wrote his *Magisterarbeit*, titled *Punk: Versuch der künstlerischen Realisierung einer neuen Lebenshaltung*, which took the form of his zine *No Fun*. With its characteristic pastiche of cut-outs, collages, articles and comics mixed with a well-researched exploration of punk lifestyles and aesthetics, *Punk* remains an intriguing attempt to fuse punk aesthetics and the desire to constantly explore and push boundaries wherever they exist. Skai's work will be a major theme of chapter four of this dissertation. Bernd Hahn's *Punk: die zarteste Versuchung, seit es Schokolade gibt*, quoted above, is another attempt at this fusion, bringing together a study of the major groups, scenes and modes of thought in early West German punk, combining this exploration with cut-out zine fragments, newspaper articles and pictures in a synthesis which makes sense of both the academic and the aesthetic representation of punk.

proven so adaptable and remained so popular. In addition, this project also serves to illuminate an unstudied antecedent to punk in the *Wandervogel*, hopefully allowing punk to be contextualized in new ways.

While both the *Wandervogel* and punk should rightly be understood in the context of the major conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, my research into *Wandervogel* and punk youth cultures suggests that these youth subcultures also belong to and deserve to be inspected through a less evident discourse, one that is best characterized not by upheaval and disaster, but by profound and often distressing sameness: boredom. With the cataclysmic events of two modern wars, the systematic, industrialized murder of millions and the escalation of the cold war with its threat of Mutually Assured Destruction—and with Germany squarely involved with all of these developments—it is logical to view German youth as part of one of the most dynamic and tumultuous periods of human history on record. And the role of and response by youth in and to these events *should* be a major component of research. But there is also another important trajectory that, likely due to its seeming triviality, superficially mundane veneer and disruption by the disastrous events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which have become the prime lens through which to contextualize what has come after, has all too often has been lost in these political and social upheavals. Life for many has increasingly become an exercise in staving off what Elisabeth Goodstein marks as the “subjective malaise”—the boredom—of existence in modernity. A great deal of effort has gone into thinking through the meanings, relevant influences and lessons of the major historical events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—but this (often all-consuming) *thinking about* has done little to create more engaged and interested masses. Instead, a pronounced many have become *disengaged* and *disinterested* spectators to the monumental events of big history.

Ultimately, what was exposed in West German society with the arrival of punk was not only the power of the (here: punk) spectacle to shock and outrage, nor the subculture's capacity as a vehicle to express dissatisfaction and contempt, or even its power to reflect and subvert social norms by exposing their fixedness and arbitrariness in society—although all of these are certainly important. These lessons had been demonstrated many times over during the previous century, spanning from Dada to the Situationists. In the punk context, these all belonged to a very specific moment: the initial punk rupture.<sup>43</sup> While its style has of course remained part of punk's toolbox and identity, punk laid all its cards on the table with its emergence. In doing so, the punk rupture served as a catalyst that, aided extraordinarily by sensationalist media coverage, provided youth in a rapidly globalizing world with a blueprint to claim a repossessed agency to do it all themselves. DIY was born out of the necessity of those wishing to express themselves but not having a platform and illuminated not only a model to create such a platform, but also cast into stark relief (aided of course by punk aesthetic practices) how boring the alternative of globalized mass consumer culture, cold war politics and all the trappings of modern life were. After punk, for those who had understood the lesson, there was no going back. DIY could be applied anywhere, but in the creation of structures to explore and foster difference, its application towards *Anderssein*, which functioned explicitly against the leveling and homogenizing effects of modern life, DIY takes on an even greater importance.

Pete Shelley of *The Buzzcocks* put out a one-page zine in 1977 called *Plaything*. He articulated in his single-page manifesto in *Plaything NO 2* on the meaning of the new wave a synthesis of DIY, personal exploration and the political across boundaries, writing:

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<sup>43</sup> Or better: initial punk ruptures. As Sklar's anecdote about the torture and stoning of Iraqi "emo" youth makes clear, punk can inspire similar responses in any situation in which it is encountered. But again, this initial rupture also sets in motion a cycle of detournement and recuperation.



It [the New Wave] has succeeded and failed... The success is due to action—the failure due to apathy... One wave does not make much headway up the beach. If the tide is to turn then one wave must be followed by another and so on until the cliffs start to crumble. This is just the new wave of the turning tide... The NEW WAVE is not just about music. It is a challenge to Consider every thing you do, think , and feel. For some it has meant a change in fashion and in life style. But most of the fashion has become cliched and most of the groups have become boring old farts... Politics is people & people is YOU I'm not on about party politics not the NF or The Tories. I'm talking about PERSONAL politics. The way that you react to the people around you... The NEW WAVE is like a spring clean. You were prepared to throw out the rubbish in your wardrobe and your record collection. So why not chuck out all the prides & prejudices cluttering up your personality???? [sic].

This call for continued action and innovation reached beyond punk as a collective movement of youth and into personal, individual life. Shelley issued a final rejoinder to end his tirade, switching from typeset to scrawl in sharpie: “This is all I could think of. Keep the new wave NEW.” The social currents unleashed by punk were meant to endure and contribute to future waves of direct involvement once the punk wave had crashed. To continue Shelley’s metaphor, the major failure of punk in this sense was that many rode the wave to shore and clung to the debris it had brought with it instead of returning to the depths for another salvo.

This resting upon a past and tried forms of expression in punk was quickly problematized by several zine writers in West Germany as well, who would rally for exploration of DIY expression in other forms and directions and for the construction of more independent

institutions from video clubs to independent record stores to venues, labels and tape exchanges. Many, especially in the hardcore scene, saw punk as something sacred and defined. Others saw punk as a starting point—an eye-opening awakening which could lead to self-exploration and the search for personal meaning in a wide-open world. Punk had been a great adventure, but defining oneself by punk’s heyday in the late-1970s became, for many, just as boring as anything else. For punk to remain a living culture, in their minds it had continue to explore new modes of expression and seek out new adventures—to become something other than punk as it was.

In the West German context, Cyrus Shahan suggests that “[f]raming punk as part of the avant-garde makes understandable the internal logic behind punk’s unwavering devotion to rupturing representation and to its continuous self-fracturing: punk was never concerned with its own institutionalization, and its apocalyptic visions of the present sought explicitly to avoid steadfast oppositions (of authentic or co-opted) out of the scramble of codes structuring society” (Shahan 2013 6). Shahan goes on to critique German sociological research on youth and subcultures, especially that of the 1970s and 1980s, which tended to view punk and other youth subcultures as serving a relatively straightforward role as both trendsetters for mass consumer culture and as hopelessly bound to this mainstream. While these studies do largely move beyond viewing youth subcultures as a problem in need of rehabilitation, they force too narrow a view onto them. Shahan cites Rolf Schwendter’s 1971 *Theorie der Subkultur* and rightly criticizes the rigid methodological attempt to subject youth subcultures to strict categorization and his neglecting to see in youth subcultures like punk a site of “resistance or refusal...that was central to British subcultural theory” (Shahan 2013 14). Shahan continues that, since Schwendter, Dieter Baacke’s 1987 *Jugend und Jugendkulturen: Darstellung und Deutung* and Peter Ulrich Hein’s *Protestkultur und Jugend* acknowledge the importance of subcultural negotiation of the complex

sociocultural and political issues at work in modern consumer society, but continue to resign these subcultures to ultimate mainstream assimilation.

These studies serve to reduce youth subcultures to the workhorses of mass and popular culture and overlook the diversity of these subcultures, the intent of the individual and the selective assimilation and reinterpretation by their respective consumer mainstreams. In this, such studies focus on only the most visible and salable comfortably confrontational subcultural elements of these phenomena. They also ignore the inherent critique of mass consumer culture and attempts to foster new engagements with existence embedded in many of these subcultures and the foundational and motivational engagement with boredom which inspired so many youth to take action. Such an approach also fails to explain punk in other contexts—such as in GDR. Work in the vein of Baacke and Schwendter ultimately serves to describe only a small reconciled portion of subcultural expression and to confine rather than open up discourse.

Still, there have been studies in the German context which have inspected subculture with the broader net cast through the Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). Foremost among these is Thomas Lau's 1992 *Die heiligen Narren: Punk 1976-1986*. Lau's work was published as the inaugural monograph of Walter de Gruyter's *Materiale Soziologie* series, which sought to approach sociology through "konkrete kulturelle Lebensformen." The series was focused on presenting scholarship that aligned with the practical demand that "Beschreibung, Deutung und Theorie müssen sich am Material bewähren, an der soziologischen Rekonstruktion von Milieus, Stilen, kommunikativen Mustern, Handlungsfiguren und Sinnkonstruktionen des gesellschaftlichen Lebens" (Lau 1992 II). Lau's book, in line with this mission, attempted to treat punk in West Germany and Britain in its totality with a focus upon the individual

subcultures in their own right. Not simply viewing punk as a doomed-to-assimilation arm of mass culture, Lau introduced subcultural expression as the articulation of difference and dissent.

Lau identifies three questions as especially important in his analysis. “Worauf reagiert Punk? Wie ist eine Gesellschaft beschaffen, die derartige Reaktionen ermöglicht? Ist ‘Punk’ wirklich neu, oder besetzt ‘Punk’ nur eine freigewordene Nische?” (2). These questions are similar to those of the CCCS, especially the work of Hebdige. It is no surprise then that Hebdige is heavily cited and Lau’s book covers many of the same topics (a heavy focus on style) and British subcultures (mods, teds, skinheads, rastafarians, etc). But Lau also brings this inspection to the West German context. He valuably differentiates West German punk from its British cousin with a demographic analysis of West German punks. In inspecting arrest reports, he shows that West German punks came from a wide variety of backgrounds, not, as in Britain, prevalently from working-class homes. “In einer...Untersuchung der Berliner Polizei 1981 werden 114 straffällig gewordene Punks erfaßt. ‘Von den untersuchten Punkern waren 51 Schüler, 31 Lehrlinge, 13 Arbeiter, 18 Beruf und einer Student.’ ’79 Punker...stammten aus gutbürgerlichen Elternhäusern” (Lau 14).

These figures are fascinating, but likely do not provide an accurate assessment of the socioeconomic composition of punks in West Germany as they only account for those youth who put themselves in the position to be arrested and who were most identifiable and targeted as punks by police. In addition, West German punk scenes differed from one another substantially, so the demographics of the West Berlin punk scene may well not be representative of punk elsewhere. Still, the clear diversity of punks in these arrest records strongly suggests that a class-based reading of punk in West Germany is far less valid than it might have been in Britain when Hebdige wrote *The Meaning of Style*. As Cyrus Shahan writes: “Punk in Britain was about the

historical legacies of British class stratification; punk in the Federal Republic was about historical legacies of German fascism” (Shahan 2013 16). I would amend both of those declarations to read “partially about,” as while these broad statements do capture part of the distinctiveness of these two incarnations of punk, British punk was about far more than an expression of class and West German punk was about much more than a confrontation with National Socialism.

Finally and most importantly for this project, in Lau’s discussion of punk precursors, he draws a connection between the *Wandervogel* and punk which has remained unstudied since. While he notes that “Eigene Druckerzeugnisse, gleichzeitige Präsenz von männlichen und weiblichen Teilnehmern..., gemeinsames Wandern (häufig auch nach Geschlechtern getrennt!), gemeinsame Feste mit Tanz und Musik, (versuchte) Distanzierung von der Elterngeneration, szenespezifische Ausstattungspraktiken, künstlerische Aktivitäten (hauptsächlich im graphischen, weniger im literarischen Bereich), verhältnismäßig geringe Personalstärke: die Parallelen zu Punk sind groß” (Lau 123). It is then somewhat surprising that Lau then parrots the dominant discourse of *Wandervogel* isolation and escapism to dismiss this connection in the next sentence, writing “*Wandervogel* zieht sich aber—im Gegensatz zu Punk—vor einer Konfrontation mit den gewählten Gegnern zurück und wählt die Isolation: als Gruppe flüchtet man hinaus in die Natur, als Einzelner in sich selbst” (123). Reducing the *Wandervogel* to escapists is the equivalent of reducing punks to anarchists and criminals—it serves only to reinforce the dominant rationalist modernist discourses that have dismissed subcultures such as the *Wandervogel* and punk as wild manifestations of irrational, base emotion offering no alternatives for the future. Strangely, he also contends that the *Wandervogel* role of *Führer*, the slightly older youth who led younger *Wandervögel* on excursions and guided their activities, did

not exist in punk. While punks often proclaimed “No heroes,” to deny that they did not have charismatic leaders and trendsetters (whether in music, philosophy, style, zines, etc.) that greatly influenced the evolution of the various scenes is, to put it mildly, wishful thinking. The tumultuous landscape of the *Wandervogel Führer* (as seen in Chapter Two) shares many similarities with the various punk scenes and their many squabbles, well-documented in their zines and captured in Jürgen Teipel’s oral history of West German punk *Verschwende deine Jugend*.

Lau is instrumental in shifting focus to the articulation of difference through punk while also noting the importance of communication technologies in creating a voice. But again, the role of boredom with modern life broadly is left unarticulated in favor of discussing the specific issues punks took with the manifestations of modern life. In this we see a similarity with *Wandervogel* research, which has tended to focus on the rejection of school and family life, alcohol consumption, militarism and Prussian bureaucratic structure among others. The next chapter seeks to step back and view these youth cultures through a unifying construct—their lifestyles and their emotional articulation of difference, working from this level down to its manifestation in their cultural productions.

## CHAPTER FOUR: BOREDOM: THE DESIRE FOR DESIRES<sup>1</sup>

As was suggested in Chapter One, youth efforts to create autonomous realms of cultural and personal development and to assert their visions for the future in Imperial German and in Cold War West German societies were at once fostered by a freedom to explore and hampered by rationalizing, objectifying, depersonalizing and leveling effects, both processes which largely correlate with wider changes brought about by the effects of modernization. *Wandervogel* and punk youth's recognition of what they felt to be artificial, sterile and increasingly commoditized and technologized societies resulted in their awareness of a deep-seated subjective malaise permeating these societies. But the freedom and free time won by youth through the same changes wrought by modernity also provided them the opportunity to explore ways of living which they found more engaging and which, many of them hoped, could supplant the existing cultural stagnation and in particular their lack of viable participatory forms of expression with a dynamic, multifaceted, affectively-driven alternative.

For both groups, this alternative was rooted in and conveyed through individual expression navigated at the group level in their respective cultural productions and in everyday interactions. For the *Wandervogel*, this meant imagining a synthesis of the modern city and technological development with the natural world in a fusion that worked to counter the alienation, disengagement and boredom of life in Wilhelmine Germany. For punks, it meant directly exploring the potentials of urban life and articulating this world as they saw it in a fusion that worked to combat the same effects in the Federal Republic. One of the major differences here between the two might be expressed as a shift from seeking outside inspiration and exploring a largely forgotten engagement with the natural world in the *Wandervogel* to a turning

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<sup>1</sup> From Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1877).

inwards towards the urban in punk in an effort to explore, confront and disarm the sources of modern alienation and boredom at play in cold war West Germany. This difference in focus is well-captured in Alfred Hilsberg's reworking of the hiking song "Aus grauer Städte Mauern" for the title of his series in *Sounds* on West German punk and NDW. For the *Wandervogel*, the title alluded to exploring the world beyond the artificial confines of the urban environment. For punk, the "aus" changes meaning "outside of" to "out from," shifting focus to inspecting life and the self from within the artificial (but now perceived as natural) confines of this environment, with an emphasis on the sounds and other cultural productions emerging out of the grey cityscape. In both, probing the boundaries of their lifestyle and the potentials of personal engagement formed the core of their cultures. Both developed cultures built around direct action to achieve these ends—a hands-on, participatory engagement with the world best captured by their projects of *Selbsterziehung* and DIY—as a means to claim agency, explore the world and the self, articulate their difference and create structures and communities which could point the way towards more humane and engaged futures. In this, I suggest that both were implicitly engaged in exploring a way of living that moved beyond boredom and, contrary to readings of the *Wandervogel* as escapist and noncommittal and the punks as nihilistic, with a concomitant misunderstanding of expressions such as "No Future," these groups were innately hopeful and oriented towards the future. While these youth may have had strongly held opinions about specific agendas, the futures made possible by *Wandervogel* and punk were not ultimately built around tangible goals like world peace, the eradication of alcohol (or the legalization of drugs), the equality of all people, the creation of a just government or the destruction of the culture industry. This lack of a concrete political focus has contributed to the belief that in failing to articulate concrete solutions to specific issues, they failed to offer compelling alternative visions of the future. Rather, punk



and *Wandervogel* permitted and indeed encouraged exploration in any of these areas, evidenced by the diversity of individuals drawn to both and the many interpretations they have engendered in both popular and scholarly reception. But inseparable from these pursuits was a conceptualization of the future that was selflessly selfish in the risk and reward that this expression posed in expressing the potential of fostering the individual freedom to explore, reflect and create in a world viewed as full of mystery and potential personal meaning—a mode of experience which could be spread by example to others to create a much more interesting future for everyone. By refusing to see themselves as engaged in an atomized fight against injustice in particular instances, *Wandervogel* and punk struck at what many consider the source of modern alienation: an endemic rationalistic conceptualization of the self and world that compartmentalized and ordered, diminishing for many of these youth the possibilities for livable presents and engaging futures.

Chapters Two and Three inspected the social and historical contexts of both groups, traced their origins and discussed relevant scholarship that has tended to view these phenomena through ideological narratives and narrow discourses which mask the underlying apolitical projects these youth were engaged in and have overshadowed the foundational role of boredom with and in modern lifestyles which made these pursuits of alternative lifestyles worthwhile for these youth in the first place. The current chapter brings punk and *Wandervogel* back together with a focus on the articulation of their conception of their respective societies, of themselves and of their futures through an inspection of their cultural productions. Based on extensive archival research conducted at the *Archiv der Jugendkulturen* in Berlin, the *Wandervogel-Archiv* housed in the Ingeborg-Drewitz library in Berlin-Steglitz and the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung* at Burg Ludwigstein, the primary focus of this inspection will be on their

written productions. For the *Wandervogel*, this analysis covers the period from 1904, when the *Wandervogel Illustrierte* appeared, until 1914 and the outbreak of WWI. The major sources researched were (generally-)monthly periodicals published by the various organizations (AfS, AVW, Steglitzer Wandervogel, DB, JWV, VB and the WVEV) and smaller *Gaublätter* from regional groups. For punks, the major source on their writing being their zines, for this project those spanning from 1977 when the first issue of the *Ostrich* appeared until just after 1980 and the *Geräuche für die 80er* concert.<sup>2</sup> Examples from their musical repertoires form an additional repository, especially for punks, who forcefully articulated their critique of modern society and demonstrated the potential of direct action both in and through their music—but also for the *Wandervogel*, who, while less forceful in their critiques, nevertheless sought to awaken a love of folk music as an alternative popular cultural force, although importantly one predicated on recovering a cultivated past.

Following an excursion into the world of the print medium as utilized by both groups, this chapter is divided into two major comparative sections, each focusing upon a different aspect of these youths' self-articulation. The first section documents the representations of their respective societies and themselves as embodied in their cultural productions, illustrating how *Wandervögel* and punks perceived and represented their respective mainstream societies and expressed themselves, focusing on their application of DIY and *Selbsterziehung* towards an emphasis on emotional experience and engagement embodied by the ideas of *Wandern* and *Anderssein*. The second section focuses on the technologies of both groups of youth and how they utilized these to voice themselves and create autonomous spaces. Picking up where the

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<sup>2</sup> Working with well over 15,000 pages of archival material, I have selected texts which I feel best exemplify the *Wandervogel* and punk reactions to society, their conceptualizations of themselves and their activities and those pieces which best portray their orientation towards a desirably unknown future.

discussion of the print medium leaves off, this section inspects their conception and implementation of the technological in their projects of *Selbsterziehung* and DIY more broadly. Both of these approaches take up the issue of boredom differently. In the first section, their cultural productions provide examples of how their engagement with the world was constructed in ways that maximized personal involvement and how these lifestyles were formulated against dominant forms of engagement in their respective societies. In the second section, the analysis of their engagement with the technological underscores how their understanding of the world and incorporation of technologies differed from the relationship Heidegger explored in the concepts of enframing and standing reserve in the technological age and point the way to an alternative engagement with the world that hurdles the cycle of endless distraction through technology by redefining it and prizing its potential to explore all facets of existence, including the affective. A short epilogue following this chapter considers the future towards which these two movements of youth worked, with a focus on their orientations to the possibilities of narrativity. Ultimately, I argue that their focus on personal experience, the exploration of the self and on a hopeful vision of a future society in which the individual could comfortably live for and explore possibilities, formed a bulwark against the disengaging effects of modernity which produced millions of bleak, depersonalized presents which I suggest have greatly contributed to the modern mass iteration of boredom.

### **Creating a Voice: The Democratization of Print**

The hands-on, participatory engagement with print was an integral part of both the *Selbsterziehung* project of the *Wandervogel* and the DIY charge of punk. The democratization of

the printed word was of enormous importance to both youth groups. Both utilized the means available to them to amplify their voice, work through meaning, reflect on their lives and communicate. The possibilities open to them both in terms of technology and in matters of social control were undeniably different, but their incorporation of the medium served very similar roles. This is evident in both their readiness and desire to utilize print as well as in their emphasis in these productions on the importance of doing and experiencing in the wider context of their engagement with the world. It is also an example of these youths' willingness and desire to adopt technological innovations and explore the possibilities of self-expression embedded in the medium, which had long been guarded by various gatekeepers, whether through censure, monopoly or prohibitive cost.

Print media were extremely important to both *Wandervogel* and punk. In addition to serving as the major means of recording and spreading the folk music they encountered or created, the medium also allowed *Wandervogel* to publish their own periodicals, although as we will see not without limitations that restricted their expressive potential. *Wandervogel* periodicals provide a wealth of information about the important debates within the organization at any time and clearly express the *Wandervogel* worldview. They also often serve as a site of the sometimes contentious disagreements between groups and individuals. Issues like the inclusion of girls, appropriate attire and gear, proper behavior, the influence of reform movements within their ranks, the use of nicotine and alcohol and more personal squabbles between youth all found expression in their periodicals.

It is important to note that these publications were not meant solely for *Wandervogel* youth themselves, but were beholden also to the adult supervisory committees and were read by parents, teachers and other interested observers. Periodicals were available through individual

*Wandervogel* groups, through the publishing houses which produced them and, often, in local bookstores. Select titles were also sometimes advertised in other *Wandervogel* periodicals as well, further opening up the potential for wider distribution.<sup>3</sup> The social control exerted by the adult sphere had to be respected not only in the publications of the organizations, but also in their general comportment and in interactions with the public. Aufmuth notes that:

Im historischen Vergleich von Jugendgenerationen ist festzustellen, daß die Eltern der Wandervögel noch weit zahlreichere und wirksamere Kontrollmittel besaßen als die Eltern heutiger bürgerlicher Jugendlicher; der Faktorenkomplex ‘soziale Kontrolle’ besitzt daher für Jugendbewegungen der Jahrhundertwende noch eine weit größere Bedeutung als für gegenwärtige Jugendbewegungen (178).

Due to the public nature and permanence of the medium, the self-censure necessitated by these factors curtailed the possibilities of expression in printed publications to an even greater degree than in personal interactions with society or when amongst themselves. When this self-censure was ignored, as by *Der Anfang*, the condemnation of public reaction quickly revealed itself as a powerful force.

Further limiting the capacity of youth themselves to communicate through these journals was, of course, the editing process and the simple reality that printing everything sent to them was impractical both in terms of space and finances. The limitations of *Wandervogel* periodicals in fostering an unmediated discourse among youth themselves is (inadvertently) well-articulated

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<sup>3</sup> Punk printing was distributed through similar channels, and reflections by zine makers often showcased the difficulty of finding bookstores, record shops and other establishments willing to sell their self-produced publications. Mail order, distributing to friends and others in the scenes and selling at concerts served as major means for punk distribution.

by Dr. Konrad Wislicenus, who wrote a sort of call to action in the January 1913 issue of the *Alt-Wandervogel Monatsschrift für Jugendwandern*:

Also auf! Ihr Wandervogel! Helft uns bei unserer Arbeit. Sendet uns, was Ihr habt. Doch bedenket einiges dabei. Nicht alles, was Ihr schickt, kann brauchbar sein. Wir müssen das Recht haben, auszusuchen und auszuwählen. Legt Ihr das Porto bei, so senden wir zurück, was uns nicht geeignet schien. Wir schreiben Euch freundlich dazu; eine Beleidigung ist eine höfliche Rücksendung niemals. Bedenkt, dass auch die Erwachsenen stets damit rechnen müssen. Manches aber, was Ihr schickt, ist vielleicht an sich gut, aber nicht gerade in der Form, in die Ihr es gebracht hat. Ihr wollt doch meist noch lernen und habt noch viel zu lernen. Benutzt die Gelegenheit dazu und seid nicht “empört”, wenn wir ein wenig feilen und umgestalten. Erwachsenen sendet man solche Sachen zurück mit der Bitte um Umarbeitung. Wohin sollen wir kommen, wenn wir es ebens bei Euch machen wollten? Ein Recht, gedrückt zu werden gibt es ja zudem nicht. (2)

Calls such as this for greater participation by youth themselves, be it through stories, travel narratives, poems, sketches, photographs or other productions by *Wandervogel* youth while also reserving the right to edit and alter these productions was, for the time, an honest attempt to encourage greater participation. It was also a bit of catch-up on the part of the AWV, whose advisory council was considered overbearing by many members and who had to contend with a drastic drop in numbers after many *Ortsgruppen* across the country had defected to the WVEV, often citing exactly this concern, a concern shared with other groups, such as the JWV, who cited the oppressive elder influence with the AWV years earlier as one of the major factors in their split. Compared to the AWV, as shown in Chapter Two, the WVEV adopted a decentralized

structure giving greater autonomy to *Ortsgruppen* to determine the direction of their development. Still, the last line in the quote above summarizes the limitations of publishing in Wilhelmine Germany: “Ein Recht, gedrückt zu werden gibt es ja zudem nicht.” This is perhaps the most important difference in inspecting the cultural productions of the *Wandervogel* and punk—the conditions youth in Wilhelmine Germany were forced to contend with in order to voice themselves were far more restrictive than those of the 1970s. Regardless of these limitations, *Wandervogel* youth did express themselves through their publications and their critiques and self-conceptualizations can be seen embedded in everything from discussions of travel and temperance to artwork composed on and personal reflections about their many explorations.

In addition to articles written by *Führer* and *Wandervogel* youth themselves, their journals often also included articles by those in the advisory boards. While early examples of this in the *Wandervogel Illustrierte* often took the form of gentle chastisements about not ignoring schoolwork or making time to include church visits on Sunday hikes, the majority of these contributions were meant to foster reflection upon the activities of the youth themselves and what *Wandern* and the *Wandervogel* meant.<sup>4</sup> This guidance by sympathetic adults can be regarded as evidence of the limits of youth autonomy. But as with punk, it also points to the dedication of not just youth in cultivating the desired lifestyles, institutions and modes of experience which could provide an alternative, but to the dedication of many individuals from older generations as well, who hoped to provide a theoretical foundation for the movement and

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<sup>4</sup> See for example the January 1905 issue of the *Wandervogel Illustrierte Monatsheft*, which includes a call for attending church services while on Sunday hikes (the most common and convenient time for shorter excursions). “Ein Sonntag ohne Teilnahme am Gottesdienste ist ein verlorener Sonntag. Ist der Ausflug so ausgedehnt, das der ganze Tag dadurch in Anspruch genommen wird, so muss der Leiter den Plan so machen, dass als erstes Ziel ein Gotteshaus ins Auge gefasst wird, wo die jungen Waldvögel auch für ihre Seele Erquickung und Stärkung suchen” (17). As the movement embraced its mission of *Programmlosigkeit* and independence from outside influence, intrusions such as this largely disappeared.

guide these youth through their own accumulated experiences, wisdom and aspirations for what a less alienated and more engaged society could look like. Youth formed in many ways the battleground where debates about the future of German society played out, which drew and encouraged others to get involved. In this capacity, the supervisory boards of the *Wandervogel* evidenced themselves to be both a check preventing youth from overstepping existing boundaries of social control, and also as a critical element in guiding youth to think through the deeper meanings and possibilities of *Wandern* as an alternative engagement with the world.<sup>5</sup>

Several different types of publications were put out by the *Wandervogel*. First and foremost were the national-level periodicals, among them the *Wandervogel Illustrierte* (AfS), the *Nachrichtenblatt des "Wandervogel" eingetragener Verein zu Steglitz bei Berlin* (Steglitzer EV), the *Wandervogel Zeitschrift des Bundes für Jugendwanderungen "Alt-Wandervogel"* (AWV), the *Wandervogel: Monatsschrift des "Wandervogel," deutschen Bundes für Jugendwanderungen* (DB), the *Jung Wandervogel: Zeitschrift des Bundes für Jugendwandern "Jung-Wandervogel"* (JWV), the *Wandervogel-Warte: Zeitschrift des "Wandervogel" vaterländischer Bund für Jugendwandern* (VB) and the *Wandervogel Monatschrift für deutsches Jugendwandern*. This last publication, colloquially called the *Gelbe Zeitung* due to its yellow cover, was a sort of nondenominational periodical that served to discuss broader issues across organizational barriers and became the central organ of the united VDW and later WVEV. The largest of the

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<sup>5</sup> The efforts of advisory board members in maintaining an autonomous *Programmlosigkeit* can be productively contrasted with the efforts by reformist, political and other ideological groups to insert their aims and agendas into the *Wandervogel*. The difference in approach is evident, for example, in this passage from Dr. Ludwig Gurlitt's article in the September 1905 *Nachrichtenblatt des "Wandervogel" Eingetragener Verein zu Steglitz bei Berlin*, in which he writes: "Es ist unser Wunsch und soll unser Wunsch bleiben, dass die Wandervögel ein so grosses Mass von Freiheit und Selbststimmung geniessen, als nur überhaupt mit dem Bestande eines solches Organismus vereinbar ist. Dass Zucht und Ordnung herrschen muss, sieht selbst der Neuling aus der Quinta ein. Darüber ist kein Wort mehr zu verlieren. Die kleinste Turnriege fällt sogleich auseinander, wenn jedes Mitglied nur seinem eigenen Kopfe folgen will" (49). This passage evidences the attempt to allot youth as much freedom of exploration as possible while grounding this freedom in a communal project that demanded a level of restraint.



periodicals, by 1914 it reported a circulation of 25,000 copies. In addition to these publications, many more periodicals emerged at the regional and local level to serve the various *Gaue* and *Ortsgruppen*. Sometimes as simple as a two to four page schedule of hikes and sometimes rivaling the length and breadth of content in the national-level *Wandervogel* publications, and with print runs from a few hundred to a few thousand, periodicals like the *Wandervogel Gaublatt für Sachsen*, the *Wandervogel Gaublatt für Schlesien und Posen*, the *Wandervogel Liegnitz Fahrtenblatt* and *Wandervogel in Hessen und am Rhein* and many others often worked through the sometimes esoteric debates about the meaning of the *Wandervogel* that appeared in the larger periodicals in ways more relevant and immediate to those communities they were made by.

Finally, there were periodicals meant for the *Führerschaft*. Among these was the *Wandervogel Führerzeitung*, which was initially meant as a journal for *Wandervogel Führer* to discuss the direction of the movement. But through the efforts of men like Friedrich Wilhelm Fulda, it became increasingly antisemitic and began to attempt to spread its vision of the *Wandervogel* as a purely Germanic movement. While leadership in the WVEV, JWV and elsewhere immediately distanced themselves from the publication, declaring it to be unaffiliated, the *Führerzeitung* demonstrates the lack of a monopoly on the *Wandervogel* name and the relative ease with which ideologically extreme elements could insert themselves into the *Wandervogel* discourse.<sup>6</sup> In a strange way, the *Führerzeitung* and its efforts to indoctrinate a

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<sup>6</sup> One example of this distancing from the *Führerzeitung* is the periodical, *Die Pachantei: Meinungs Austausch der Wandervögel*, which was created in response to the *Führerzeitung*, advertising in the *Gelbe Zeitung* and elsewhere. In their March 1914 issue they responded to the *Führerzeitung*, expressing a hope that the *Wandervogel* could remain an open movement and cited a petition passed around at the Hohe Meißner, writing: "Die Empörung über das unverantwortliche Heft 11 der Fuldaschen Führerzeitung veranlaßte mich zu folgender Erklärung, die ich dann auf dem hohen Meißner herumgehen ließ: 'Wir Unterzeichneten wollen hierdurch weitere Kreise darauf aufmerksam machen, daß die im Verlage von J. Matthes-Leipzig erscheinende Führerzeitung in keiner Weise ein offizielles Organ des Wandervogels, sondern eine rein private Unternehmung F.W. Fuldas ist. Wir wenden uns gegen die Versuche der Führerzeitung, ihr nur aus Einzelfällen gewonnenes Urteil als Urteil des Wandervogels

*völkisch* element into the organizations also demonstrates the openness of the *Wandervogel* project in a way that mirrors the fracturing of the initial AfS into the diverse and complex web of *Wandervogel* organizations that followed. The meaning of the *Wandervogel* was open to interpretation, and the utilization of mass media to amplify one's interpretation was shown to be both a powerful and sometimes a divisive tool.

Like with other relatively small-scale periodicals of the time, these various publications relied on regional printing presses that had proliferated throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. While *Wandervogel* often critiqued the industrialization and urbanization of German society, they also took advantage of the developments to emerge from this process—the print media was no exception: “In denselben Zusammenhang der Industrialisierung des 19. Jahrhunderts fällt auch die Industrialisierung der Medien. So entstand eine Massenpresse und die Möglichkeit Bücher und Broschüren zu produzieren” (Moser 1). This freedom to publish greatly enhanced the ability of the *Wandervogel* to organize across the *Reich* and to share ideas and news while allowing local groups to publish their own periodicals tailored more towards their individual realities.

While the content of these publications varied from organization to organization and from *Gau* to *Gau*, they generally followed a similar layout. A title page with a short introduction and a headline article was followed with a wide-range of articles, poems, artwork, itineraries and travel narratives. Anything from camping gear, night hiking, discussions of recent or upcoming splits or mergers, opinions about the role of alcohol in the *Wandervogel*, discussions of girls in the groups, histories of the “early days” of the *Wandervogel*, the role of music, calls to action, news

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überhaupt hinzustellen” (4-5). Again, we see the plurality of voices within the *Wandervogel* and the utilization of the press as a vehicle of expression and for working through important issues within the organization.

of upcoming major trips, hiking schedules, linocuts and silhouette cuts, sketches and woodblocks, passages and poems from Romantic authors, discussions of philosophy, how to properly take pictures—the breadth of content was extremely wide. Unfortunately, as was the case with punk zines, attributing authorship to articles is often difficult or impossible, as authors often wrote anonymously, under a pseudonym (often their nickname within their group) or included only their first or last name.

The vast majority of periodicals relied on advertisements to supplement the costs of printing.<sup>7</sup> These ads provide an intriguing portrait of the products popular among *Wandervogel* youth as well as point to the burgeoning industries that tailored their products to these youths' needs and desires. Youth were encouraged to support the shops and companies that advertised in their journals, but woe be to a shop that attempted to exploit the *Wandervogel* name or supply low-quality merchandise. Critiques of merchants attempting to cash in on the *Wandervogel* could also make their way into their periodicals as shops and brands to avoid.

In contrast to the realities of *Wandervogel* publishing, punk publications were largely beholden only to themselves. The full-fledged democratization of print in West Germany made it possible for anyone to walk down to a copy shop and print off a run of zines without any regard for censorship. The first German fanzine, *The Ostrich*, appeared in 1977, the year following the first zines in the United States (*Punk*) and England (*Sniffin' Glue*). Essentially a magazine made for punks by punks utilizing various stylistic nuances such as offset printing on photocopiers, the zine served as a major communication artery of the punk movement locally, nationally and internationally. Hundreds of other zines followed *The Ostrich* in West Germany in the next few

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<sup>7</sup> The JwV tended to include fewer advertisements, again likely due to their desire to remain as autonomous as possible. But even they included ads for staples like Maggi bouillon capsules and hiking gear.

years, with a wide variety of colorful titles such as *Attraktive preiswerte allgemeine Volksverarschung*, *Dreck*, *Fuck Erzbischoff Ratzinger*, *Langweil*, *Spargel*, and *Xerox chic*. Nearly all relied upon the photocopier and various copy shops that sprung up throughout West Germany in the 1970s.



Figure 4: Examples of early West German punk fanzines housed at the Archiv der Jugendkulturen. Photograph by Matthew Sikarskie, image courtesy of the Archiv der Jugendkulturen

The costs of producing a zine were manageable and, compared to setting up a dedicated printing press, miniscule. Still, these costs were not insignificant, especially for the often impoverished punk. In order to inspire others to begin their own zines, Paul Ott, creator of the Swiss/German zine *Punk Rules*, broke down the cost of producing 500 copies of a zine in a 1982 article: “Hier möchte ich noch aufzeigen, dass es neben etwas Mut und wenig Geld eigentlich nichts braucht, um eine eigene Zeitschrift zu machen. Wenn auch die hohe Zeit der Fanzines vorbei ist, so hat doch oft einer etwas zu sagen ohne etablierte Publikationsmöglichkeit. Die Antwort darauf ist Eigendruck” (Ott and Skai 15). Ott arrives at a final cost of 420 DM (adjusted for inflation in 2014 dollars, this is approximately \$460), suggesting that “[u]ngefähr 80% der Zeitschriften müßten also bei einem Verkaufspreis von 1,- SFr./DM abgesetzt werden, sollte sie selbsttragend sein” (15). As evident here and elsewhere in punk productions, the goal of profit was often rejected as part of the lifestyle they were resisting.<sup>8</sup> Instead, punks attempted to use their voices to show others how to use theirs.

They also often used advertisements to offset printing costs, with ads for upcoming shows, newly released records, copy shops, tape distributors and exchanges, musical instruments (including synthesizers), independent record companies, new venues and more gracing their pages. Many zine authors also incorporated ads from major brands such as *Persil*, *Coca-Cola*, *Burger King*, *Disney* and many others in collages and other critiques on West German consumer society. An example from the Berlin zine *T4* displays the repurposing of corporate advertising. An article on the fattest people in the world (all American) is pasted over with images of obese

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<sup>8</sup> This was paralleled in the music scenes as well. While some groups aspired to musical success, the majority of bands played for themselves and their communities in their free time. Many never played before a crowd, although they might record a tape to exchange with other groups.

individuals juxtaposed with candy bar logos and “MODERNE ERNAEHRUNG” written in pen. This critique of modern foodways and their effects on the individual, a critique which has only become more relevant since the zine appeared in 1978, shows in its seemingly oblique topic the breadth of the critique against modern lifestyles punks engaged in.

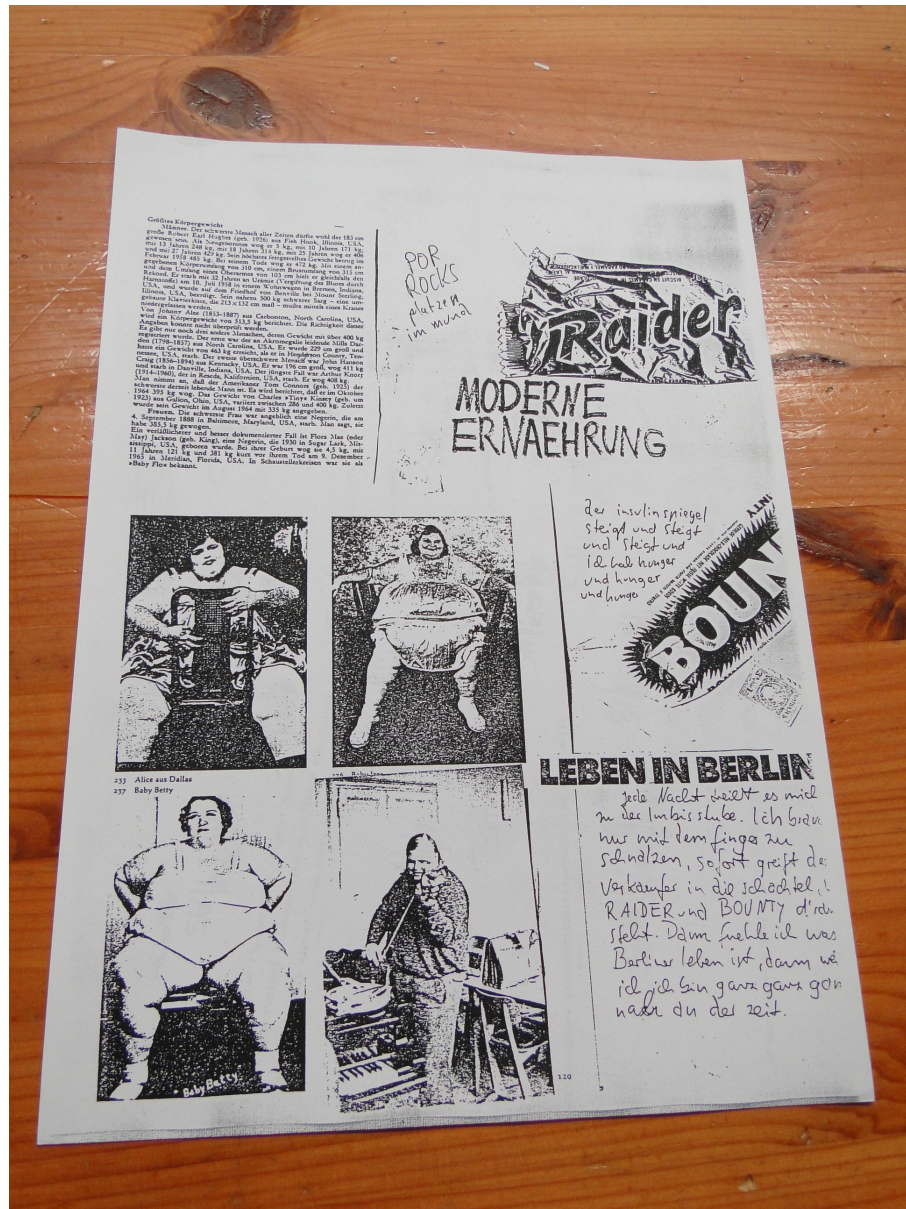


Figure 5: “Moderne Ernährung,” image source T4, 1978, image courtesy of the Archiv der Jugendkulturen

Leaving such highly satirical collage practices aside, it remains important to note the several similarities between *Wandervogel* and punk advertising. Both focused heavily on technological advances which enabled both groups to more easily create autonomous spaces for themselves. For the *Wandervogel*, this largely revolved around gaining physical distance from dominant social discourses as well as fostering playing music, taking photographs and enabling youth to be self-sufficient while on *Fahrt*. For punks, there was also an emphasis on music, but instead of gaining physical distance, the advertisements in punk zines often affirmed the desire to gain creative distance in other ways (namely reclaiming and working towards building sites of autonomous participatory potential) while remaining within and exploring their local environment.

The appearance of the punk zine was supposed to conjure a sense of “urgency and immediacy, of a paper produced in indecent haste, of memos from the front line” (Hebdige 111). But the intentionally clumsy appearance of the zine belied the amount of work that actually went into its creation. Peter Hein, co-creator of *The Ostrich* and then employee for Xerox describes the production process:

Damals waren die Kopierer noch geil, weil die nicht so gut waren, sondern teilweise machten, was sie wollten...Der Horror war aber das Heften, denn die Auflage von etwa 300 wurde unsortiert ausgespuckt, 60 Stapel á 300 Blatt. Die Stapel mussten auf Händen und Knien im ganzen Betrieb ausgelegt und geheftet werden. Das war eher Strafdienst. Wir waren ja nur drei Mann. (Teipel 39)

It is easy to forget how difficult creating an individual or communal voice was prior to the arrival of the internet, where creating a community around shared views has become not only

instantaneous and free, but also simple and mundane. And while the punks had far greater and less restricted access to print than *Wandervögel*, it still required a great deal of effort. The fact that hundreds across West Germany found it worthwhile to undertake the effort to create zines underscores the extent of their belief that, through their labors, the invisible barriers that limited the potential of the masses to fully participate in their society could be illuminated and, ultimately, torn down.

The zines themselves were largely composed of interviews, song reviews and concert recaps along with other news relevant to the punk scene presented in a collage style with cut-out pictures, photos, drawings and symbols such as the swastika, RAF insignia, hammer and sickle and the anarchy 'A'. Much has been written on zine aesthetics by Dick Hebdige (as a British example) and Hollow Skai (as a German example), among many others, and certainly there is a great deal to learn from the ways that punks reinterpreted objects to create their own meanings.<sup>9</sup> But for our focus, the zine served other important functions beyond the formation of a punk aesthetic.

Especially for punks living outside of the major punk scenes of West Berlin, Düsseldorf and Hamburg, the zine was a vital means of spreading the message and keeping those located away from the action connected.<sup>10</sup> In addition to keeping the community informed of recent events in the various scenes, punk zines also served as a nexus for the cross-referencing of other zines along with information about local independent recording companies, stores, clubs and

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<sup>9</sup> Zine aesthetics were an extension of punk fashion. The same pastiche evident in the free mixing of symbols in punk attire was reflected in punk publications (zines, concert posters, album cover art, etc).

<sup>10</sup> Importantly, many zines were created for the immediate friends and scenes where they originated. But through zine exchanges, buying a copy at a record store or being given a copy from a friend from one of the punk centers, many youth outside of major punk scenes were able to remain up to date, and, as evidenced by the many zines that appeared outside of Düsseldorf, West Berlin, Hamburg, Hannover and other large cities, they also inspired others to get involved as well.



other hangouts. Along with where to find the scene locally, from one zine bought at a local record store or concert, a reader could find information on several other local, regional and national zines: “[F]ür den interessierten Leser reicht meistens schon der Kauf eines einzigen Zines, um sich in das Verteilsystem einzuschleusen, da fast in jedem Fanzine andere Zines besprochen werden, meist akkurat mit Hinweisen auf Preis und Umfang, nebst der Angabe der Bezugsquelle” (Lau 103). An example from the Augsburg zine *ANTZ*:

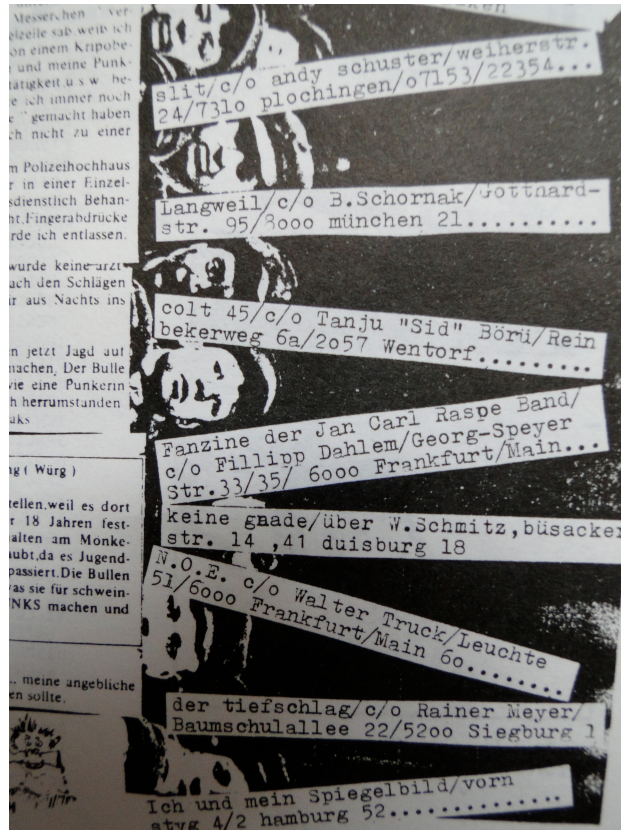


Figure 6: *An example of fanzine cross-referencing, image source: Antz 1980, image courtesy of the Archiv der Jugendkulturen*

This usually reciprocal advertisement between these various publications fostered a greater sense of community within and between local scenes which, through the zine, formed a broader web of linkages in a system similar to the cross-referencing of related websites through hyperlinks in the internet. It was a simple gesture, but one that helped to greatly amplify and connect the voices of punk throughout West Germany and to open up often emotional discussions of what punk meant.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the zine also served as a platform through which not just to explore punk as it existed, but to explore its potential and express the self in all areas of life. While the creation of a shared punk philosophy that took the idea of “do-it-yourself”

further to a group meaning of “do-it-*ourselves*” was an important function of the zine and part of the effort of building a punk community, the potential that this community could become too attached to a specific articulation of “punk” a real concern. There was a palpable fear that a punk scene where everyone did the same things, believed the same things and acted the same way would simply mirror mainstream social conformity and lead to a hegemonic group within the punk scene. While certainly some form of group identity was necessary, what many aimed for was a community of individuality, perhaps nowhere more forcefully argued for than in the zines.

Written publications formed a significant means of communicating and amplifying the expressive potential of both punks and *Wandervögel*. For small subcultures of limited means, the ability to reach each other, articulate themselves and work through the potentials of their activities, the capability to self-publish was incredibly important. Combined with their music, their written publications are also the richest source for studying these youth cultures through their own words in an immediate way, unmediated by the passing of time and the careful reflection of retrospective writing and oral histories. The alienating potential of modern technologies and of technological society, however, was largely undone in the direct involvement of youth in articulating their difference. Their implementation of technology in the aid of more directly engaging with the world around them and in expressing themselves resulted in a less alienated but more aware relationship with the technological, turning disengaged reception into engaged creation.

## The Boredom of Modernity and the Modernity of Boredom

The reconception of the technological formed one element in *Wandervogel* and punk rejection of boredom, but as evident in the previous section, the technological formed only one of the many elements of their exploration. The technological interpreted as potential instead of reserve, as an enabling tool instead of ordered system, was both a symptom of a worldview predicated on direct action as well as a tool to enhance this worldview.

How did the *Wandervogel* conceive of and react to Wilhelmine society? Simply noting that they rebelled against home and school and as well as against urban *Blasiertheit*, militaristic nationalism, alcohol-fueled social interactions and many other conventional aspects of the society (fashion, entertainment, travel, industry, commerce, etc) in which they lived fails to capture the quintessence of what *Wandervogel* meant with their critique. This ultimately turns inspecting, contextualizing and understanding their alternative into a sort of checklist of how they responded to individual aspects of the world they lived in. While many *Wandervogel* did take issue with these elements and more, they did so as part of a larger critique of the mode of experience valued by their society which they saw as disempowering and depersonalizing and as forming the foundation of modern boredom.

Though West German punks exhibit a few key differences from the *Wandervogel*, their sense of disenfranchisement is shared. While a general focus on negative affect, a less restrictive conceptualization of sex, drugs and alcohol complemented by a focused engagement with and exploration of the urban sets it apart from the *Wandervogel* in application, their underlying critique was similar in that it was not oriented against *specific* manifestations of alienated modern life (the culture industry, school, politics, war) but rather against an all-encompassing

way of living that both responded to and was complicit in maintaining this alienation. Returning to the discussion of modernity in Chapter One, especially Heidegger's critique of life in the technological age, this assertion can be theoretically grounded as a response to humanity in modernity, coming to view the world and itself in a capacity that devalues mystery, personal exploration and emotion. This internalization of a rationalistic and (in the Heideggerian sense) technologized worldview is largely responsible for the phenomenon of modern boredom and it is against this experiential reference that *Wandervogel* and punk formulated their alternatives.

Wolfgang Thiel, writing about the motives of groups who pursue alternative modern lifestyles helps to ground this orientation against leveling modern processes and towards the embracing of personal involvement and direct engagement. And while he does not explicitly discuss boredom as a consequence of the "expansiver zivilisatorischer Entwicklungsprozeß" or these groups emerging as a reaction to boring presents and futures, his description of these groups' reactions aligns neatly with both the major causes of modern boredom and to proposed alternatives suggested in Chapter One:

Das Bewußtsein und der Alltag der Mitarbeiter alternativer Projekte sind von Prinzipien eine Lebensführung geprägt, die als praktische und moralistische Kritik am expansiven zivilisatorischen Entwicklungsprozeß unserer hochindustrialisierten Gesellschaft verstanden werden können. Die Alternativen sehen die Industriegesellschaft geprägt von einem inhumanen Leistungsprinzip, einer entfremdenden Sachorientierung und einer Ohnmachtsgefühle hervorrufenden hierarchischen Struktur...Die zukünftige Entwicklung der Industriegesellschaft wird ausgesprochen pessimistisch beurteilt. Im Unterschied dazu wird die eigene Perspektive eher positiv gesehen. Es existiert ein

ausgeprägtes Selbstvertrauen in die eigene Kraft, sich von destruktiven  
Entwicklungen freizumachen und zu praktikablen, lebenswerten Alternativen zu  
gelangen. (Bock 43)

The vague critique of industrial society by those seeking an alternative as inhumane, alienated and fostering a sense of powerlessness combined with a pessimistic outlook regarding the future as it appeared to present itself harkens back to the words of Dubos in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and to the root causes suggested in contemporary literature on modern boredom. From *Wandervogel* folk music played while hiking, around the campfire or to an audience in a city to a packed, dingy barroom punk show, a home-brewed recording of a few songs on a cheap tape player to appraisals of society and of themselves in the periodicals of the *Wandervogel* or in the zines of punk—the sum total points inextricably to a search for a more authentic engagement with the world and with the self that operates against the root causes of boredom in rationalistic societies.

The *Wandervogel* rarely used the words *Langeweile* or *langweilig* to describe Wilhelmine society in their publications. Instead, they often highlighted the differences between their mode of experience and their conception of the majority of society implicitly through their lifestyle. Writing on the green, red and gold colors Karl Fischer introduced into the *Wandervogel* in its early years, Rudolf Raash notes: “Die Farben *Grün-Rot-Gold* symbolisierten den revolutionären Geist des Wandervogels. Es war ein antibürgerlicher Geist. Das wurde mehr gelebt als geredet” (38). While the *Wandervogel* lifestyle was based on experience above all, it was expressed throughout many elements of their journals as well, often unintentionally, as the self-reflective worldview these youth espoused manifested itself both in the desire to write and through their writing itself. They can be seen in explicit articles on industry, tourism, drinking and hiking to representations in sketches, lino- and wood-cuts, poetry and photography as well as in heartfelt

articulations of *Wandern* and calls for other youth to get involved. Punks were much more forceful and public in voicing and acting out their “antibürgerlicher Geist.” Their overall dissatisfaction and boredom with everyday life often erupted into angry emotional outbursts and impassioned calls to resist the mindlessness of modern West German society in both their music and zines. Punks tossed around the word “Langeweile” and “langweilig” a lot in zines—the boredom of society often seemed poised to suffocate them.

If *Selbsterziehung* and DIY represented the “how” in advocating a worldview that held hands-on participation and direct action to be more effective than passive reception, then *Wandern* and *Anderssein* contained the “what” that *Wandervögel* and punks worked towards. Both were projects without destinations and were expressions of their alternatives to the societies and lifestyles they resisted. In a way, they were attempts to work through how the projects of *Selbsterziehung* and DIY could be codified in ways that preserved their dynamic and explorative potentials—replacing tried systems and channels with the idea that stepping off of these well-trodden trails opened up the potential for adventure and a more engaging existence. These were not anti-modern projects, but rather attempts to think through the potentials that life in modernity provided.

### ***Wandern* and *Anderssein*: Exploring Difference**

Two excerpts from *Wandervogel* publications ground the idea of *Wandern* in the words of *Wandervögel* themselves. Hermann Friese provides a poem in answer to the title question of “Was ist ein Wandervogel?” in the December 1904 issue of the *Wandervogel Illustrierte* which grounds the conception of *Wandern* as it existed at the time. A sometimes heavy-handed and

forced lyrical style nevertheless presents an image of the *Wandervogel* as an autonomous, engaged and adventurous individual. The last line “Zur Schule des Lebens abgehendes...Individuum,” ties the entire poem, a list of specific examples of *Wandervogel* engagement, to the articulation of individuality and the wider project of *Selbsterziehung*:



Figure 7: “*Was ist ein Wandervogel?*,” image source: *Wandervogel Illustrierte*, image courtesy of the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung*

The litany of characteristics of a *Wandervogel*, beginning with a is oriented around the ideas of freedom, self-sufficiency, the desire to learn, the desire to experience and the willingness to experience and endure difficulties. The final word—“Individuum”—retroactively completes each line, situating what a *Wandervogel* is, and what *Wandern* is about, within the self.



Another description of the *Wandervogel*, written four years later, eloquently describes the continuing *Wandervogel* project and articulates extended metaphors for *Wandern*:

Alles Unsere tragen wir bei uns; jeder hat einen Löffel und eine Nähnadel, eine Wurst...und einen Stock...Dem Stock gehört die Welt...Wir sind unsere eigenen Kellner und Köche, Sänger und Photographen, Schriftsteller und Waschermädeln. Wir sind auch unsere eigenen Sonnenuhren, und wenn der Schatten der Nase auf den Mund zeigt, so lagern wir uns am Zaune... Wer uns da findet, könnte sich im lyrischen Feldlager des trefflichen Lucullus oder im Zigeunerrancho glauben, aber unsere weisen Gespräche würden ihn belehren, daß wir einen Bildungsgrad genossen haben, und das unsere ramponierten Sohlen außer auf der Schurre und steinernen Renne auch auf dem Asphalt und Parkett sich anmutig zu bewegen wissen... Wer neue Freuden entdecken will, setzt dazu keinen Zylinder auf. Und wir sind solche Abenteurer: Städter, die das Land entdecken. (155) (9569 in DB folder)

In this reading, *Wandern* for the *Wandervogel* is depicted as a cultivated mixture of a mythical and Romanticized past as a lens through which to explore the world without losing sense of the self—in this instance (“Städter, die das Land entdecken.”) *Wandern* here also transcends an orientation towards nature. The well-worn soles of their boots are equally at home in the most remote areas of the country, in the asphalt streets of the city and in the refined halls of the cultured elite. Both examples read *Wandern* as an opportunity to learn, discover, experience, develop and above all find adventure in the world through their own engagement in any situation. These two descriptions, however, also differ. *Wandern* meant something different to every *Wandervogel*—it can be seen as an individual internalization, learned through the ongoing

process of *Selbsterziehung*, directed towards one's own interests and interpretations. But underpinning these interpretations was an openness to the world and to experience that linked *Wandervögel* across the German nation.

*Anderssein* in punk demanded a similar engagement with the world in order to articulate individuality and difference. Hayton contends that *Anderssein* represents the most critical element in understanding what punk meant in West Germany. Everything that emerged out of punk's reception in West Germany—even the ultimately commercialized and co-opted NDW project and the thousands of punk squatters sitting around in city centers panhandling and drinking their days away—originated in and is an extension of the ideal of *Anderssein* taken to its extremes. The exploration of difference pervades punks' cultural productions. While it was often much more radically and violently expressed than *Wandern*, it rested on the same elements of engagement with the world. The DIY project taken up by punks could be extended anywhere and in particular in the exploration of the self, and *Anderssein* as a concept captures this well.

In an attempt to help Uwe Ramdohr, who had helped to found the Hannover zine *Gegendarstellung* with Klaus Abelmann under the moniker "Face the Bass," and who was facing between one and ten years in prison for his alleged involvement in breaking into at least nine day care centers, stealing food and setting one building on fire, the zine released a special issue as a fund-raiser. While the zine doesn't excuse his actions nor those of the others involved, it does articulate a definition of *Anderssein* which, even in this extreme context, grounds the punk project perfectly as an opposition to conformity and a brutalizing existence within existing West German society.

WIDERSTAND ZU LEISTEN HEIßT WEDER PUNK NOCH  
ALTERNATIVER ZUSEIN/SONDERN ANDERS ZU SEIN/ ES HEIßT NICHT  
ZU REDEN/ DENN VERÄNDERUNGEN FINDEN NICHT IM KOPF /  
SONDERN IN DER REALTITÄT STATT/ VERÄNDERUNGEN  
ERSCHÖPFEN SICH NICHT IM ÄUßERLICHEN/ SONDERN WIE MENSCH  
SICH VERHÄLT (*Gegendarstellung* #3 unpaginated)

Punk was but one way of expressing one's difference, and in expressing difference one was implicitly resisting society. But in order to effect any real change, whether it be social, political or, as this project proposes, change towards a new lifestyle, punks had to be willing to act and engage with the world as it existed. The reality of the lives of the many punks in West Germany who embraced lives of radical and violent political and social opposition is often glossed over in an effort to present punk as a positive force for change, which it certainly was, but like the attempt to gloss over the *völkisch* element in parts of the *Wandervogel*, this ultimately does more harm than good. In exactly the same way dismissing punk as a crass and violent rejection of society or the *Wandervogel* as racist precursor to National Socialism, disregarding or (worse still) attempting to conceal the full range of interpretations *Wandern* and *Anderssein* elicited erases the potential that it held and continues to hold to provide a way of imagining, thinking, and working towards a more sincere and humane society.

Like *Wandern*, *Anderssein* is at first glance a simple idea—simply be open to the world and engaged in life while striking off on one's own path. Perhaps the best means of understanding these two projects is through an inspection of their conceptions and articulations of society—conceptions and articulations which often take the form of critiques which, in their negative image, parallel the major pursuits of *Wandervogel* and punk. Both *Wandervogel* and

punks explored these lifestyles in relation to their dominant societies and the manifestations of the worldview they rejected. *Wandern* and *Anderssein* were oriented against superficial consumption and were instead invested in direct engagement and discovery. For the *Wandervogel*, the idea of *Wandern* fittingly found its inverse in the modern mode of travel and the modern traveler—tourism and the tourist. For West German punks, the focus on creating an autonomous and democratized space through the establishment of their own free media was often contrasted with their view of a society saturated and obsessed with the limited and confining offerings of entertainment media. *Anderssein* was often posited against what was perceived as the phoniness and insincerity of popular music, television, tabloids, advertising and a host of other leveling and alienating products. This next section transitions to the words of *Wandervögel* and punks themselves.

### **Tourists and TV: Representing Modern Alienation**

Following the split of the AfS, the Steglitzer EV began publishing their own periodical. The first issue, in September of 1904, featured an article written by the author “a” titled “Unser Kochtopf,” which provides a glimpse of the conceptualization of the tourist. “Es gibt zweierlei Wandern: ‘mit Kochtopf’ heisst ‘als Wandervogel’; ‘ohne Kochtopf’ heisst ‘als Tourist.’ Die ganze Lebensführung krempelt er um” (11). Here, the *Kochtopf* serves as a metaphor for modes of experience. “Mit Kochtopf” demands an openness as to what can go into the meal as well as a willingness to cook it. The pot is empty until whatever is discovered can be combined with whatever they already have. “Ohne Kochtopf” limits movement to destinations which can provide a meal. There is perhaps a choice in what restaurant to visit and what to order, but this

freedom is already a freedom limited by the mode of travel. The metaphor is explored again four years later in July, 1908 in another article from the *Nachrichtenblatt des Wandervogel*: *Eingetragener Verein zu Steglitz bei Berlin (Steglitzer EV)*, “Oratio pro domo.” It begins with by cribbing from the 1904 article” “Es gibt zweierlei Wandern: als ‘Tourist’ und als ‘Wandervogel’.

Das stand uns seit jeher fest, und mit Recht wurde auch einmal gesagt, das hiesse: “mit Kochtopf” wandern oder “ohne Kochtopf”; die ganze Lebensführung kremple das um” (37). The (anonymous) author of this piece, however, explores the meaning of this distinction much more thoroughly.

Tourist ist, wer mit sportmässigen, ästhetischen und anderen Ansprüchen an sein Gebiet herantritt, wer als Kenner auswählt und zu seinem Zwecke ausnutzt...Der Tourist geht sozusagen stets auf einem schmalen Bergrücken, rechts und links weisses unbekanntes Land, das sich nicht lohnt...Sein Weg ist durch Führer und Gasthöfe bestimmt, er will gutes Wetter, Aussicht, gute Bahnverbindung haben, er will in seiner schlimmen Abart den Sonnenuntergang auf dem dazu bestimmten Berge sehen. Wir unsererseits können und wollen behaupten: das brauchen wir nicht. Das blosse Wandern gibt uns das höchste Hochgefühl des freien Menschen.

(SEV July 1908 37)

Travel here becomes a microcosm of life and how one experiences it. The desire to reach a destination efficiently, experience good weather, carefully plan an itinerary revolving around which towns to visit and in which hotels to stay while ignoring the infinite possibilities that present themselves along the way is to reduce travel to another commodity and to situate oneself

into this well-trodden path. The author turns towards the words of a young Hermann Hesse for further clarity:<sup>11</sup>

Ich kenne niemanden der feinfühlicher ausgedrückt hat, was es sich uns handelt, als Hermann Hesse: “Ebenso wie eine Freundschaft oder Liebe, die man pflegt und der man Opfer bringt, wie ein Buch, das man mit Bedacht auswählt und kauft und liest, ebenso muss jede Vergnügungs- oder Studienreise ein Liebhaben, Lernenwollen, Sichhingeben bedeuten. Sie muss den Zweck haben, ein Land und Volk, eine Stadt oder Landschaft dem Wanderer zum seelischen Besitze zu machen, er muss mit Liebe und Hingabe das Fremde belauschen und sich mit Ausdauer um das Geheimnis seines Wesens bemühen.” (36)

Hesse’s call for an internalization of experience—to love, learn and devote oneself to an open engagement with the unknown—is a charming articulation of the lifestyle encoded in the *Wandervogel* notion of *Wandern*. The activity is, in itself, devoid of meaning; it is up to the individual to create this meaning. The author, quoting Hesse’s proclamation that “Reisen sollte stets erleben bedeuten,” goes on to qualify the possibility of finding experience anywhere:

“Selbst wenn ich die Eisenbahn benutze, kenne ich doch ihren Weg und verfolge ihn; die dient

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<sup>11</sup> Laqueur notes that “[t]he *Wandervogel* had no great literary ambitions, but under the influence of students of the *Freideutsche* youth, the leading writers and poets of the younger generation gradually became known among the youth movement: Stefan George and Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, Rilke and Hermann Hesse, Spitteler and Trakl” (48). While Laqueur suggests that it was the influence of the university-aged elements in the *Freideutsche Jugend* following 1913 that led to greater literary pretensions among *Wandervogel* youth, *Wandervogel* writing often displays a familiarity with these authors as well as occasional stylistic affinities with the avant-garde authors of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century well before the supposed widespread popularization of these authors within the youth movement during and following the war. Taken as a whole, *Wandervogel* writing was clearly far more indebted to the Romantic tradition, but sometimes a piece such as this points to emerging influences that suggest a blanket critique such as Laqueur’s might be too limited. *Wandervogel* could explore anywhere and anything, and to level a charge that these youth were uninterested in the literary realm is another example of the often regimented nature of *Wandervogel* scholarship in exploring only its own well-trodden paths in a privileging of the *Wandervogel* engagement with nature and Romanticism at the expense of viewing the *Wandervogel* project as a much more complex and individualistic enterprise.

mir nur so lange, als ich es will, sie fährt eigentlich meinen Weg” (38). The activity of riding on a train itself offers possibilities to experience; however, the anticipation and focus of the destination destroys a great portion of this potential. The author’s neighbors on a train passing through Görlitz ask whether they’re finally approaching the city: “Je nun, sie hatten recht, Görlitz das hiess für sie ein Bahnsteigschild und ein Seidel Bier” (38). The self-imposed limitations on their interactions with the world shut down the capability of engagement. But the boredom of the train ride (returning to Heidegger), manifested in impatiently waiting for the next city and then the next until reaching the final destination, dissipates when the experience is received and internalized as a part of an ongoing journey: “Der Tourist kann vielleicht aus dem Wandern die Technik abziehen, die er mit der gleichen Miene überall in der internationalen Welt pflegen kann. Wir suchen und gehen unsern Weg mit innerem Anteil, forschendem und liebendem” (38). The juxtaposition of these two orientations towards life reveals two contrary poles of engagement. In the tourist, we see a way of living which is diminished by the internalization of a pervasive rationalistic modernity—the positioning of the self within this system as consumer and consumed. In the *Wandervogel*, we see a way of living which remains open, internalizing experience and cultivating a deeper and highly emotional relationship with the world.

The tourist became a sort of generic placeholder for alienated life in modernity—a simple way of comparing experience that most certainly oversimplified and reduced the vast majority of people to broad caricatures for added effect. But it also illustrates the root causes of boredom in exposing the ease of simply following along in the ruts in the road leading to some hoped-for destination. The Baedeker travel guide came to epitomize this mode of existence: nose down in a book while waiting to arrive at a highly recommended attraction, where one stood next to

dozens of other tourists alternately looking around and reading about what they were seeing. The foreordained and bounded nature of this closed system is startlingly similar to the critique made by punks seventy years later.

The spirit of *Wandern* is evident in the travel narratives youth contributed to their periodicals upon returning from *Fahrt*. A particularly poignant example that evokes the questing and open engagement of *Wandern* comes from the inaugural 1912 issue of the *Wandervogel in Hessen und bei Rhein*—a local *Gaublatt*. The short one-page retrospective “Maifahrt in die Bulau” by a *Wandervogel* using the pseudonym “Lila,” which chronicles a day-trip to the Bulau woods as spring is blossoming along the Obergermanisch-Raetischer Limes, the now UNESCO-protected path that once marked the division between the Roman provinces of Raetia and Germania Superior.

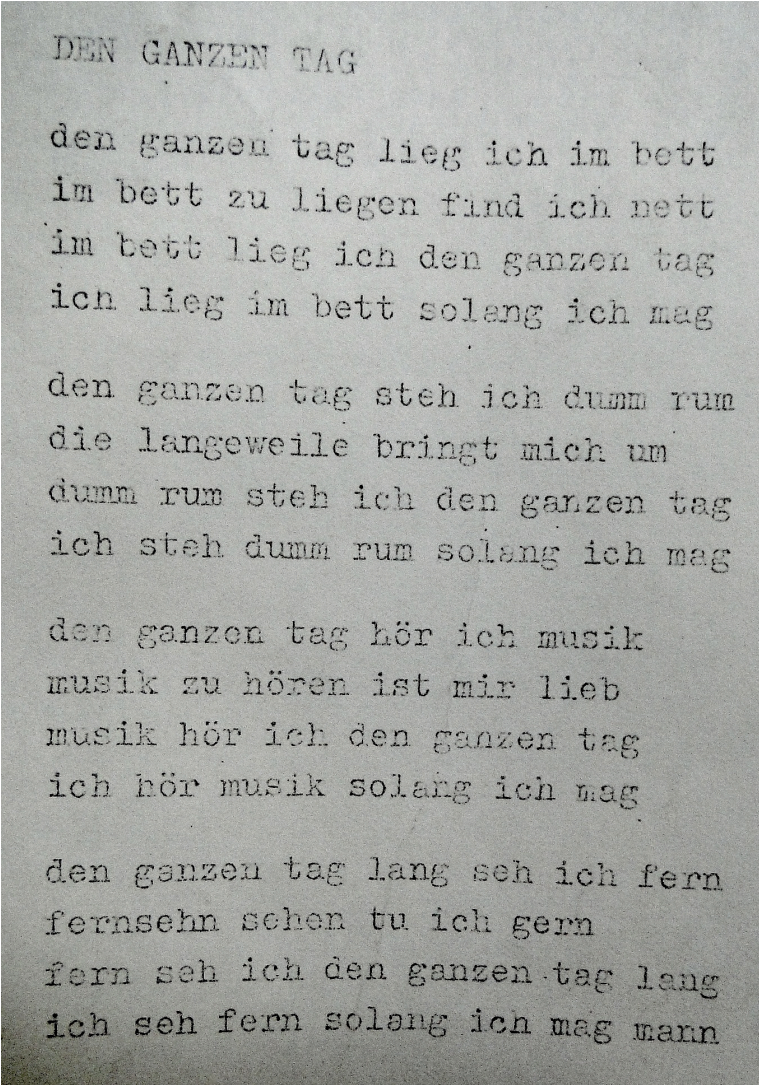
Es ist ein wundervoller Maitag. Wir sind dem Limes entlang gezogen, haben an einer Stelle gefrühstückt, wo einst ein römisches Kastell lag, und halten nun Mittagsrast im Schatten der alten Klosterruine von St. Wolfgang. Wir liegen auf dem Rücken im Grase und sahen hinauf in das grüne Blättergewirr. Wie fein sich jedes einzelne Blättchen gegen den hell leuchtenden Himmel abzeichnet! Keins rührt sich. Es ist ganz still. Nur von Zeit zu Zeit fegt ein Windstoß daher, wirbelt alles durcheinander und überschüttet uns mit einem Regen durchsichtiger, goldbrauner Blättchen. Es sind die Knospenhüllen, die die zarten Blattkeime im Winter vorm Erfrieren geschützt haben. Jetzt ist es Mai, da haben sie das nimmer nötig. Über uns kommt frohe Frühlingsstimmung; wir singen ein paar feine Lieder. Aber die Freude in uns wird immer mächtiger, sie verlangt noch Bestätigung. Wir wollen tanzen!” (4)



Nature's awakening inspires a similar awakening in this *Horde of Wandervogel*. Sadly, the writer goes on, they are too few to dance but, in a true *Wandervogelglück*, they meet some local *Bauernkinder* who, once having overcome their shyness, join in with the group and dance and sing away the afternoon. These were the moments of synthesis that marked the high points for youth on *Wandervogel* expeditions. When nature awakens their emotions, they break out in song and dance, having prodigiously found camaraderie with the carefree children of local farmers. This embodies the receptiveness and emotional engagement characteristic of the *Wandervogel* conception of *Wandern*.

Publishing flowery and evocative prose on their travels and their exploration the beauty of the world was a means through which *Wandervögel* exposed, in an albeit polite fashion, the meaninglessness of the modern outlook; for punks it was often precisely the ugliness of modern society they were most interested in engaging. From their style to the content of their music and zines, punks worked through the cultural manifestations of their society, often reveling in the uproar it caused—but also, in acting out an engagement from the perspective of one caught in its embrace, revealing the disempowering and disengaging nature of everyday modern life. The adoption and caricature of the modern persona—a generic, passive, unthinking, trapped consumer—was a favorite method of West German punks in working through their own individuality and difference, but also in relating and exposing the violence done to the self through this modern lifestyle. The effect of this encounter with a pared-down and depersonalized modern self, similar to the *Wandervogel*, was largely emotional. But where *Wandervogel* focused on the alternative, punks often dwelled upon and lamented this meaningless modern lifestyle. The emotions West German society evoked for punks were largely negative: anger, hopelessness, fear, paranoia, sorrow, hate and above all boredom at the repetitious pattern life

had become. Through this association with and embodiment of the modern self, punks illustrated the lack of hope, adventure and future in this life and an inherent rejection of this mode of disengagement. A particularly evocative example of this is a poem in the zine *Propaganda* titled “DEN GANZEN TAG.”



DEN GANZEN TAG

den ganzen tag lieg ich im bett  
im bett zu liegen fand ich nett  
im bett lieg ich den ganzen tag  
ich lieg im bett solang ich mag

den ganzen tag steh ich dumm rum  
die langeweile bringt mich um  
dumm rum steh ich den ganzen tag  
ich steh dumm rum solang ich mag

den ganzen tag hör ich musik  
musik zu hören ist mir lieb  
musik hör ich den ganzen tag  
ich hör musik solang ich mag

den ganzen tag lang seh ich fern  
fernsehn sehen tu ich gern  
fern seh ich den ganzen tag lang  
ich seh fern solang ich mag mann

Figure 8: “DEN GANZEN TAG,” image source: *Propaganda*, September 1980, image courtesy of the *Archiv der Jugendkulturen*

There is a freedom expressed in the poem—the lyrical subject stays in bed, stands around, listens to music and watches television as long as desired—but this freedom is so paradoxically restrictive to the point that it can hardly be seen as freedom at all. It is a freedom that, in its extreme confinement, diminishes the potential of life and choice to a list of activities which lead hopelessly to boredom: “den ganzen tag steh ich dumm rum / die langeweile bringt mich um.” The repetition and reordering of words parallel the repetition and reordering of the limited stimuli the author saw available in modern life—the freedom in West German society to choose what show to watch or how long to lay in bed is disclosed as illusory—the modern subject is essentially an animal in a cage with a host of entertaining distractions.

The limiting confines and monotony of modern life are explored in depth in punk music as well. *Mittagspause*'s song *Testbild* works through the same repetitious pattern, but singer Peter Hein's inflections disclose various emotional reactions to this repetition. An excerpt:

“Sonntags morgens um halb zehn / Habe ich das Testbild gesehen  
Montags morgens um halb zehn / Durfte ich das Testbild sehen.”

Sung against a simple, slow drum beat and a cacophony of guitar, Hein alternately sings, chants, shouts or softly recites the lines, improvising alterations in both lyrics and delivery in live shows.<sup>12</sup> The first minute or so of the song is just the drum beat and random strums of guitar; Hein only delivers the lyrical content of the song at its close, two minutes and two seconds into a two minute and sixteen second song. These few brief lyrics only come once the superficially

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<sup>12</sup> A live recording of “Testbild,” described on YouTube as from their December 26, 1978 appearance at the Dreiecksstube in Düsseldorf, is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inw2JklGIM>.

chaotic monotony, underpinned by the slow, steady beat of the drums has drawn the listener into its internal logic. Hein breaks this monotony in the last line: “Freitags morgens um halb zehn / Schon wieder das Scheiß testbild sehen!” closing the song in an emotional rejection. The drums and guitar stop abruptly with the last syllable, and the song ends.

*KFC*’s “Wie lange noch” similarly plays with monotony, with the subject asking the title question again and again in refrains throughout the song. Above all, there is a sense of waiting and, in this waiting for *something*, a disengagement from life so strong that everything presents itself as the same—time simply passes.

“Ich bin nicht dumm / Ich bin nicht schlau / Die Zeit geht an mir vorbei / und wartet nicht auf mich / Ich bin nicht stumm / Ich bin nicht laut / Ich fühle mich / und mir ist alles gleich / Wie lange noch? / Ich warte immer noch.” (KFC)

There is a sense of loss and hoped-for meaning that the “Ich” of the song desires, but has no means of finding.

“Und ich frage mich / warum ich tue nichts / ich fühle nichts / ich denke nichts / und ich bleibe stumm.”

Modern life has here resulted in paralysis—the stripping of all desire, thought and emotion. Nothing is left but waiting, and waiting is impossibly inadequate. There is no redemption at the end of the song, closing with the subject continuing to wait. But in the act of writing the poem and of publishing it in a zine or in forming a band and working through these issues, these punks implicitly articulate an alternative to the damaging and boring lifestyles they perceive around them.

Together, the *Wandervogel* and punk characterizations of the alienated modern self reveal the elements of modern life they found repugnant. For both, the modern self had given away its

autonomy and, either willingly or unknowingly, subjugated itself to opaque systems and superficial distractions while discarding any significant engagement with the world outside of the comfortable limitations provided. The next sub-section considers these youths' specific articulations of engagement with modern life itself.

### **Engaging Modernity**

The problematization of the urban environment was commonplace in *Wandervogel* publications, but the conceptualization of the industrial and technological within the *Wandervogel* was not always as simple as dismissive contempt. Shortly after becoming the new AWV periodical following the split of the AfS into the *Steglitzer EV* and the AWV in 1904, the *Wandervogel Illustrierte* includes its first article on a “technische Wanderung.” The *Wanderung* along the Teltow Canal, in which a large group of 45 *Wandervögel* participated led by Karl Fischer, explored the construction of the canal, experiencing for themselves the development of the modern marvel being built in their own backyard.<sup>13</sup> The article presents the canal in a positive light, noting the important role it will play in opening up a dedicated route south of Berlin and a description of its passage through the “Tal der Bäke,” which is cited as one of the “am meisten photographierte Bäche Norddeutschlands” (88). The author describes the beauty of the scene, but nowhere is there an indication that the canal has diminished this splendor: “Die stattlichen Erlenbüschen, durch die sie dahinfloss, deren feinste Verästelungen das stille Wasser

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<sup>13</sup> Fischer is not named directly, but only by the abbreviation “G.Bt.”—“Gross Bachant,” an indication of the leading role he took for himself in the *Wandervogel* which had led to their first major split. As one of the founders and editors of the *Wandervogel Illustrierte*, he took the periodical with him into the new AWV. Since the article mentions that the other editor, Fritz Meyen, was sick and unable to lead the group, it is likely that it was written or at least edited by Fischer himself.

wiederspielte, die seitwärts einfallenden Lichter, eine zierliche Brücke in der Ferne und ganz am Ende ein Ausschnitt sonniger Landschaft gaben ein Bild von malerischem Reiz” (Fischer 88-89). The short article includes two photographs as well, not of the scenic beauty of the valley, but of a steam pump at work and of a steel bridge. The overall tenor of the article is one of experiencing the canal as it presents itself: as a fusion of the natural and the technological. Due to a suggested lack of space, the article ends with a short overview of the trip:

Leider mangelt es uns an Raum, um eine eingehende Schilderung unserer Wanderung zu geben; es sei nur noch erwähnt, dass wir von Teltow (bezw. Schönow) aus über Klein-Machnow, wo die Schleuse besichtigt wurde, bis zum Griebnitz-See gingen, und dass diese eigentlich erste ‘technische Wanderung’, Dank der grossen Beteiligung bei allen Teilnehmern, in dauernder Erinnerung bleiben wird. (89)

The trip to the Teltow canal illustrates the broad nature of *Wandervogel* exploration, even in its earliest years, and the openness to experience inherent in their conceptualization of *Wandern*. Another example of the continuing openness of the idea comes from an October 1913 article in the *Wandervogel Gaublatt für Schlesien*, “Die Industrie und wir.”<sup>14</sup> The author, F. Theile, wrote on the aesthetic and experiential potential even in the industrial that moves beyond a simple rejection of this environment:

Die Zeiten sind glücklich vorbei, in denen man es für seine Pflicht hielt, über jeden Schornstein in der Natur zu schimpfen, in jedem Gebäude auf dem Lande,

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<sup>14</sup> Silesia was seized by Prussia in the War for Austrian Succession in 1742, was incorporated into the Reich in 1871 and, following a narrow vote in Silesia after WWI organized by the League of Nations, chose to remain a part of Germany until the Silesian uprising ended with the eastern, predominantly Polish areas of Upper Silesia defecting. Following WWII, the border of Germany was of course redrawn and today the vast majority of Silesia belongs to Poland.

das nicht gerade Wohnhaus oder Scheune war, eine Verschandelung der Gegend zu sehen. Wir wissen es jetzt: es kann auch eine Ziegelei mit einem großen roten Schornstein mitten in einem grünen Waldtal sehr hübsch aussehen. (85)

For those who see in the *Wandervogel* a rejection of modern society and an escapist trajectory only towards nature, this concession may seem extraordinary. But the critique *Wandervögel* were engaged in was not a wholesale rejection of modern life, but rather its effect on the self. They certainly believed that urban existence could serve to alienate the self from an engagement with the world and that through the reaffirmation of the natural and emotional a less complicated and more organic relationship with their reality could develop, but in the end their intent was not, to adapt a favorite punk maxim, to tear the modern project down and start again. Instead, the ideal emerged to apply this reflective engagement to all aspects of life. What they *did* want to tear down was the boredom-inducing tediousness of the way of living fostered by modernity; in their wanderings they sought to find a clarity and reciprocal engagement with the world that could replace the alienated engagement they saw as dominating their society with an engaged approach to all aspects of life as an adventure. This engagement was both communal and individual, as shared experience fused a sense of togetherness and shared purpose, but it was ultimately up to the individual to internalize the meaning of *Wandern* for the self.

While punks explored an engagement with the urban landscape in much greater depth, the *Wandervogel* could and did turn their explorations here as well. Theile, in his article, goes on to suggest: “Wir Wandervögel sollten viel mehr in diese sogenannten öden Fabrikgegenden wandern, einmal auf frische Waldtäler und erhabene Berge verzichten und umher schauen, ob nicht doch auch auf Gemüter, die durch andre Naturgenüsse verwöhnt sind, dieser einfache und zugleich mächtige Rhythmus einer arbeitenden Fabrik Eindruck macht” (86).

While romantic depictions of the countryside, woodlands, small villages and other picturesque visions of uncomplicated life (such as that of Lila in the previous section) also evidence their relationship and interactions with the world, it is in the infrequent articles where *Wandervögel* describe their engagement with industrial modern life where these differences are most striking. Following Theile's suggestion that *Wandervögel* should receptively experience industrial areas for themselves, the next article in this issue of *Wandervogel Gaublatt für Schlesien und Posen*, "Oberschlesien," a travel narrative of two *Wandervögel*, does just that. The author, D. Schindler, and his friend Schnauzl demonstrate the *Selbsterziehung* project in action, taking it upon themselves to explore the world beyond the confines of their town, certainly, but also beyond the typical bucolic world most favored by the *Wandervogel*, bringing their engaged worldview to bear on the industrial district outside of their city center while further reflecting upon the experience in their *Gaublatt*.

"Du, wir solln was fürs Gaublatt schreiben über Oberschlesien, seine Industrie und...Na, Du weißt schon, was ich meine."

"Ja, das ist 'ne faule Sache. Wovon sollen wir erzählen?"

"Sehr einfach. Wir machen eine Fahrt durch den Industriebezirk, da, wo die Schornsteine am dicksten stehn."

Sonnabends, sofort nach der Schule, brechen wir auf, Schauzl und ich. Bald sind wir mitten drin in der Gruben- und Hüttenlandschaft. Ihr eigenartiger Reiz umfängt uns. (87)

There is a certain stylistic affinity with punk zines in this piece, written by a school-age *Wandervogel*, with its immediacy, intimacy and informality in the service of conveying experience directly. The turning of the *Fahrt* towards the industrial in order not just to



experience their immediate environment for themselves, but also to describe it for others, exemplifies *Selbsterziehung* and participatory engagement in action. With open minds (or, as *Wandervögel* were much more apt to say, “mit offenen Augen und Herzen”), the pair took off. The conventional notion that the *Wandervögel* found beauty only in unspoiled nature and applied an anachronistic and judgmental lens to their engagement with modern society is wonderfully punctured by passages such as this: “Hohe Hallen aus Eisen und Stein mit Wellblechdächern, dunkle Mauern der Gebäude, dazwischen der Turm des Zechenhauses, Eisenbahnwagen, Eisengerät, Kippwagen, eine Drahtseilbahn mitten hindurch, daneben große Kohlenhalden - - - ein Durcheinander von Eisen, Stein, Kohle und wieder Eisen. Und trotzdem bildet alles ein geschlossenes Ganzes” (87). The environment might be different from the natural world the *Wandervogel* are most remembered for exploring, but their approach is the same: allowing the landscape to present itself and be felt through them. The travelogue closes simply: “Lange schauen wir hinab ins Land der Arbeit und konnten uns nicht satt sehen. Langsam treten wir den Heimweg an” (89). No rush to leave, no judgments of the unpleasantness of the environment—just a slow walk home.

Articles focused on the industrial such as these are admittedly a rarity in *Wandervogel* publications, as the focus of their activities was most certainly oriented towards nature, an orientation reflected in their periodicals. But the existence of such narratives in their publications provides a glimpse at the broader worldview embraced by many of these youth and illustrates that for many, their engaged exploration did not stop when they returned from *Fahrt*. If engaged *Wandern* could be applied to an industrial area, it could be applied anywhere. These two *Wandervögel*, on their own initiative and independently of any organized outing, applied the worldview fostered by the *Wandervogel* to their own experiences, pointing to an internalization

of the value placed on emotional reception and openness to experience, two of the keys to confronting boredom. Further, they found adventure where others (including perhaps other *Wandervögel* who held different interests) might have overlooked the possibility as a mundane or ugly symbol of industrialization. Much like the many splits within the *Wandervogel*, the decision to explore new environments, expanding the range of their exploration, demonstrates the evolving and interpretable nature of *Wandern*. In this, they evidence a commonality with punks, who applied the same emotional engagement embedded in *Wandern* in their explorations of their immediate environments and to their own conceptualizations of punk.

While punks often problematized modern life as well, they did so with a far greater focus on the urban, though there were many punks in the countryside as well. Rocko Shamoni's autobiographical novel *Dorfpunks* details a fictionalized account of his youth in Schmalenstedt an der Ostsee in the late 1970s: "Fünftausend Einwohner, CDU-regiert, nächste größere Stadt: Kiel. Viel Wald, Bäche, Seen, Hügel, eine Endmoränenlandschaft, geformt in der Eiszeit. Man nennt es die Holsteinische Schweiz, idyllisch, relative unberührte Natur, das meiste Land in Adelshand. Und totaler Totentanz" (9). The fictionalized reimagining of his hometown of Lütjenburg, Schmalenstedt would have been a natural destination for the *Wandervogel*. But for Schamoni, this outlet didn't exist. For him, Lütjenburg was simply boring and inertia producing. What eventually arrived was punk, and through punk he was inspired to do something. Introducing the novel, Schamoni writes:

Ich war Roddy Dangerblood. Bis ich 19 war. Dann wurde ich zu Rocko Schamoni...Ich komme von der Ostsee, ich war SH-Punk. SH steht für Schleswig-Holstein. Dies ist eine Geschichte von Ufern. An die Wellen schlugen. Sie kamen aus England, breiteten sich dort sehr schnell aus, sprangen aufs

Festland über, setzten die Großstädte unter Wasser und flossen von dort aus weiter, um später in der Provinz zu verebben. Jahre später. 1975 in England ausgebrochen, 1981 bei uns verebbt. Ein Jugendsunami. (7).

Punk registered across Germany, resonating with life in its own way wherever it was received and understood. One could be punk, be different, anywhere—all that mattered was doing it. So where *Wandervögel* left the city to find themselves in nature, punks in small towns and in the countryside adventured into the city to experience punk in its “natural” environment. These experiences inspired many to bring punk back to their hometowns. The zine *Antz* out of Augsburg—not exactly a small city but never a punk mecca—provides an example of a dedicated zine that brought punk news to their small scene.

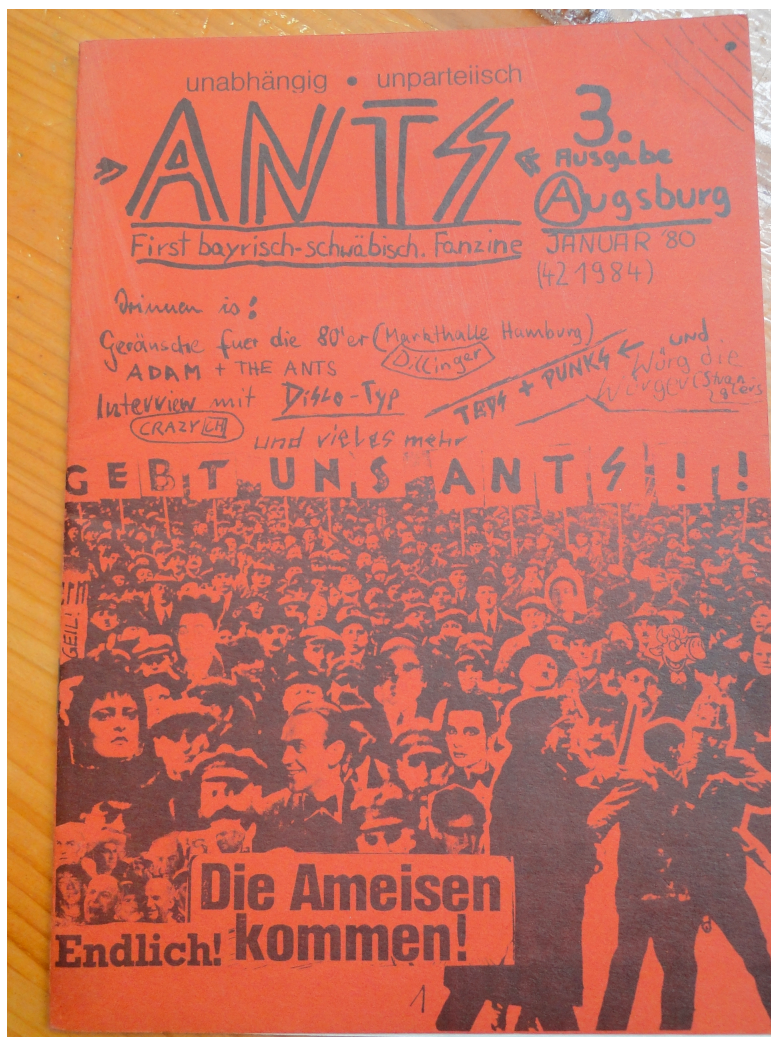


Figure 9: Cover of *Antz* #3, the self-proclaimed “First bayrisch-schwäbisch Fanzine,” image courtesy of the *Archiv der Jugendkulturen*

Calling itself the “First bayrisch-schwäbisch Fanzine,” *Antz*, provided news of upcoming concerts across West Germany and Switzerland and provided frequent reports about concerts and scenes across the nation. Other zines such as *Der aktuelle Mülleimer* out of Böblingen, *Alles tot* from Rinseln, *Marionett* in Regensburg and dozens of others from small or remote towns and cities across West Germany in the late 1970s and into the 1980s testify to the reception of punk outside of its major centers and the resonance it found across the nation.

While punk was concentrated in the city, its major source of inspiration in working through modern alienation and boredom, it wasn't oriented *against* the city *per se*, but rather against an artificiality internalized in the self which the artificiality of the city, as a cipher for modernity, fostered. An embracing of the artificial and the effort to find inspiration in the man-made became one of the greatest unifiers of the punk project. One of the most famous punk anthems, "Zurück zum Beton" by SYPH, reworks Romanticism towards the artificial:

"Ich glaub, ich träume / Ich seh nur Bäume / Wälder überall / Ich merk auf einem Mal / Ich bin ein Tier hier / Ein scheiß Tier hier! / Da bleibt mir nur eins: / Zurück zum Beton / Zurück zum Beton / Zurück zur U-Bahn / Zurück zum Beton / Da ist der Mensch noch Mensch / Da gibts noch Liebe und Glück / Zurück zum Beton / Zurück zum Beton."

Reworking Rousseau, SYPH calls for a return the natural environment of modern life: concrete. Similar to Poly Styrene's supposed proclamation that "Unsere Umgebung ist künstlich, deshalb schreibe ich darüber, es wäre verlogen, über die Natur zu schreiben,"<sup>15</sup> SYPH articulated the focus of punk in a two-minute tirade that quickly became a punk anthem. In the city, the modern self is admittedly alienated from nature, but in this new environment, the same potentials for engagement and expression present themselves; it is up to the individual to find them.

"Ekel, Ekel, Natur, Natur / Ich will Beton pur! / Blauer Himmel, blaue See / Hoch lebe die Betonfee! / Keine Vögel, Fische, Pflanzen / Ich will nur im Beton tanzen!"

The act of dancing in their concrete surroundings—of exploring the possibilities of the environment at hand—can be read as a turning of the *Wandervogel* project inwards. Where *Wandervögel* found far greater potential to experience and work through their freedom outside of

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<sup>15</sup> Cited from *Undenk* in Hollow Skai's *Magisterarbeit*.

the socially restrictive confines of the city, West German society allowed youth the freedom to explore this environment as well, although not without limitations. Where *Wandervögel* contributed thoughtful poems about their engagement with nature, descriptions of *Fahrten* and reflections on the meaning of *Wandern*, punks spoke of their engagement with police, aggressive or mindless passersby and the need for others to get involved in doing their own thing, whether it be a band, a zine, performance art, founding a label, opening a record shop or venue—anything but meaningless consumption or imitation.

What is the action taken to counteract boredom? Publishing zines was one avenue toward direct action, and indeed the first issues of zines often explore why the creators are undertaking the process of publishing. Many hoped that their zines would provide emotional uplift for readers, or inspire readers to participate in the punk lifestyle themselves. The first issue of *Gegendarstellung* in 1978 provides such an example on the inside of the cover, scrawled upside down in felt-tip pen by “Face the Bass” (whom we saw earlier in this chapter in prison for alleged arson):

Nu ja, vor ein paar Wochen hatten wir den Klaus und ich eine andere Idee: Ein Fanzin zu machen mit allen möglichen Leuten Leuten jeder sollte etwas schreiben oder sonst was machen was wir dann zusammen fassen und drucken wollten. Daraus ist nichts geworden weil die die wir ausgesprochen hatten zu faul waren/ zu blöde waren irgendwas zustande zu bringen! JAH Machen wir endgültig unser eigenes Fänzine!



Christian, Gitarre und Claudius, Schlagzeug. Ich kann mich einfach nicht erinnern mehr daran was LSD [Alice Dee] da am Poesie(ürgs) vorgelesen hat es hat mich aber fast vom Hocker gerissen, auf jedenfall so begeistert, das ich nach dem 2. oder 3. Gedicht nicht mehr aus dem Beifall klatschen herausgekommen bin.” The (unnamed) author focuses not on the meaning of the text, but rather on the emotional and inspirational effect it had. This emotional effect and the hope to inspire others to explore this lifestyle themselves and to help grow the scene is at the heart of many zines.

Concentrating here on the Hannover scene, the growth of punk and the various directions individuals pursued as part of it is well-articulated in the first issue of *Musak*. In the issue is an introduction to the 1980s beginning: “Wer, oder was ist das, die 80er Jahre?” It is presented as a sort of coming-of-age:

ich war auch schon immer der meinung, daß die zeit in sprungen verläuft, also nicht stetig/kontinuierlich, das ist etwa so wie mit dem 18. geburtstag: plötzlich bist du intelligent, kannst deine meinung sagen, kannst sogar deine stimme für jemanden abgeben, aber nur einen tag vorher, da warst du nur der kleine junge, der noch zur Schule gehen muß und fleisig lerned [sic] und maul halten und artig sein und so weiter, aber dann, am tage der volljährigwerdung, da biste plötzlich wer...wers glaubt wird seelig!

Following this introduction, the author thanks all those in the Hannover scene, describing their contributions individually, but summarizing the punk project into the 1980s with three evocative lines: “fanz to alle leute, die the gut fanden / fanz to alle leute, die the schlecht fanden / fanz to alle leute, die zu spät kamen.” The ongoing punk project is summed up in the contributions of its



individual parts. The search for a worthwhile life is viewed in itself as worthwhile, and the dedication and involvement of those who had made the Hannover scene what it had become were sincerely thanked.

The hope to keep the punk movement a dynamic and individually articulated open movement was, from its inception, one of the greatest ambitions of many punks. Along with critiques of West German society, the culture industry, consumerism, school, politics, representations of punk in the media, representations of other punks, representations of the self and whatever else the author chose to write about, punk zines are filled with calls to explore punk outside of its accepted borders—calls to apply *Anderssein* everywhere, even, and perhaps especially, to punk itself—otherwise, like only hiking in summer, it would itself quickly become boring. As suggested by the excerpt “Verwirrte Kinder” from *Gegendarstellung* presented in Chapter One, this expression of difference was not easy and the toll it took to pursue one’s own vision in the face of an uncomprehending majority could easily lead to resignation. In spite (or perhaps because of) the difficulty, the fight for alternative visions of West German society and the future were deemed by punks as worthwhile, and working through the potentials of this alternative formed one of the most binding commonalities shared among punks, whether they agreed with each other or not.

In this call to action from *The Ostrich*, “gray” (dory ann gray) argues for a continuing reappraisal of punk oriented around the self-expression, exploration and a do-it-yourself participation in creating an open punk society.

hier ist nr. 5. nun sitz nicht  
 da rum und glotz blöd, sonder  
 n mach auch was, fanzines, clu  
 bs, shops, bands!  
 kauf keine zeitung, die übe  
 r 5000 stück auflage haben, k  
 eine platten von superstars  
 wie stones, rollers, beatlas, g  
 enesis etc. steckt den reiche  
 n wixern nicht noch mehr gel  
 d in den arsch! THE POWER IS  
 IN OUR HANDS !kauft keine kl  
 amotten über 20 mark, am best  
 überhaupt keine! (bei euch gi  
 bts bestimmt auch eine altkl  
 eidersammlung, da gibts besti  
 mmt was gutes! kriecht keinem  
 in den arsch! gestaltet eure  
 klamotten selbst! habt eigene  
 ideen! macht was IHR wollt, la  
 sst euch nicht herumkommandi  
 eren!! SAGT eure meinung. glau  
 bt nicht, was die clash, chels  
 ea, charley's girls, saints un  
 d die anderen können, das kön  
 nt ihr nicht, macht bands. sch  
 ickt tapes an kleine labels!  
 gebt free concerts! schickt a  
 uch eure kritiken, berichte e  
 tc. an zeitung. (z. b. ostrich  
 ) DON'T BE THE PROBLEM- BE THE  
 SOLUTION!  
 says gray

Figure 11: "sitz nicht rum und glotz blöd," image source: *Wir waren Helden für einen Tag*

Appearing in 1977, early in West German punk's history, the emotional plea in gray's article to escape the boring confines of West German conformity and the plea for active participation and individuality are pushed further than simply getting involved with the punk scene as it exists. Instead, gray calls for involvement that moves beyond the static culture punk threatened to become: "macht was IHR wollt, last euch nicht herumkommandieren!! SAGT eure meinung, glaubt nicht, was die clash, charley's girls, saints und die anderen können, das könnt ihr nicht." *Anderssein* meant more than creating and maintaining the same difference. A rejection of and anger at those in power ("den reichen wixern"), this manifesto puts into basic terms the ultimate

aspirations punks to win a hard-fought independence from social conventions and pressures, calling for resistance to conformity from wherever it might spring.<sup>16</sup>

The search for the clarity *Wandervogel* youth were attempting to find was built around personal engagement and the reappraisal of life in German society across the board as well. They found this potential maximized in the *Programmlosigkeit* of *Wandern*, where keeping an open and unclouded receptiveness was cultivated as an alternative to the conformity and stagnation of modern Wilhelmine society. In this light, the question concerning alcohol and the *Wandervogel* tendency towards abstinence becomes much more understandable. Hans Blüher, whom we briefly encountered in Chapter Two as the author of the first *Wandervogel* history, remains to this day a controversial and complex figure. While it might be imagined that his defense of homoerotic relationships between youth marked him as belonging among the most progressive elements of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reich, his antisemitism and reluctance to allow girls into the *Wandervogel* muddle the picture.<sup>17 18</sup>

But in the January 1912 issue of *Jung-Wandervogel*, Blüher contributed a retrospective on a New Year's celebration he attended with a group of *Wandervögel* titled "Der Silversterpunsch." Looking back at the night, he tied the role of alcohol in German society to the

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<sup>16</sup> This excerpt also illustrates the difficulties of separating punk style from punk philosophy and from the media in which punk was disseminated. Although it was not universal, *Kleinschreibung* was often incorporated into zines. Combined with often intentional, or at least intentionally uncorrected grammatical mistakes and a widespread adoption of English loan-words, the refusal to abide by conventional rules of orthography mirrored the general refusal of unquestioned authority by West German punks and formed a further articulation of their difference.

<sup>17</sup> Like Karl Fischer before him (who was one of Blüher's heroes), he believed that allowing boys and girls to intermingle led to gender confusion and an inevitable feminizing of the boys and masculinizing of the girls.

<sup>18</sup> Having joined the AfS in Steglitz in 1902, shortly after the official birth of the *Wandervogel*, he was at the center of the earliest controversy surrounding the group as well, when Siegfried Copalle sent him home after an alleged relationship with another *Wandervogel* came to light—the fallout from which contributed to the dissolution of the AfS into the *Steglitzer Wandervogel* and the AWV. He remained heavily involved with the *Wandervogel*, especially with the JWV following their split from the AWV in 1910. Their more vocal and radical critique of Wilhelmine society suited Blüher—then in his early 20s—perfectly, and he frequently helped to articulate this critique in the organization's main journal, the *Jung Wandervogel: Zeitschrift des Bundes für Jugendwandern "Jung-Wandervogel."*

larger issue of a stagnant and backwards-looking culture while suggesting that those in the abstinence movement, with their insistence on their own agenda based on rational science and moral righteousness, were not the answer either. Celebrating the New Year in a “mussiges Massenquartier” surrounded by wet clothing from the day’s trek and surrounding a large cauldron of alcoholic punch, Blüher situates the *Wandervogel* between two groups of people—“die Durchsehenden” who see in alcohol “ganz bestimmte nicht zu unterschätzende Werte” and the abstinence movement. Answering the question he poses himself, “ist der Wein etwas Wert oder nicht?,” Blüher sees in a focus on alcohol a part of an outdated way of living. He writes: “Es hat eine Zeit gegeben, wo es selbstverständlich war, daß man trank” (3). This time, he suggested, had passed. The *Burschenschaften* and others who clung to the drink gained nothing from it, and were trapped in a past which held little promise for a better tomorrow. In this, alcohol served as much as a means of escape as it did a communal activity. But in the abstinence movement, he saw an equal danger in their moral quest combined with their “eisiger Logik und abweisbarer Treffsicherheit,” suggesting that “[e]s gibt keine moderne Geistesrichtung, die mit so klaren, wissenschaftlich scharf begründeten Werkzeugen zu arbeiten imstande ist, wie die Abstinenzbewegung” (2). But neither their cold logic nor moral arguments for prohibition offered a better vision. Blüher, naturally, situated the *Wandervogel* between these two extremes:

Ich denke an den braunen dumm plumpen Punschtopf zurück, der in der Silversternacht in unserer Mitte war und in dem noch am Morgen ein ziemlich tiefer Rest des dünnen kalten Gebräues stand. Wir waren so kraftvoll diese Nacht, daß wir ihn nicht einmal ausgetrunken haben. Wir brauchten ihn gar nicht! Keiner von uns war abstinent, und niemals ist der Alkohol wohl besser “historisch überwunden” worden als damals...Kaum schreib ich diese Worte, da sehe ich

auch schon die kleinen fanatischen Abstinenzgeister vor mir erstehen, mit ihren gewählten Paradorien auf dem Gesicht und dem ausgesuchtesten Wohlgefallen daran, den größten Teil der Kulturmenschheit bei ihren gemächlichen Freuden als unmoralisch abzustempeln.” (3-4)

In Blüher’s view, neither seeking escape through and building a culture around alcohol nor forcing a moralizing judgment on it justified by objective scientific findings was a proper means of engaging with the issue. Far better to approach the question responsibly and openly, recognizing both the cultural and historical importance of alcohol and the dangers implicit in the decision to drink and then to decide one’s position individually. This mixture of appreciation for individual experience with a respect for empirical evidence, (even in an issue like alcohol, which the majority of *Wandervögel* agreed should be avoided), captures succinctly the engagement with all aspects of the world which formed the foundation of the *Wandervogel* lifestyle. In the June 1911 issue of the *Jung-Wandervogel*, Hans Falk engaged with the problem:

Viele fassen die Frage der Alkoholenthaltsamkeit als eine Frage der Weltanschauung, betrachten ihre Weltanschauung natürlich als die bessere und die übrige Menschheit je nachdem als unheilbar Entartete oder als Rohstoffe der Bekehrung: “Prophetennaturen.” Diese Sorte Leute kamen auch in den Wandervogel und prägten folgerichtig den Kampftruf: Durch den Wandervogel zur Abstinenz. Selbst der Deutsche Bund Wandervogel hat erkannt, daß diese Leute den Wandervogel zu ihren Zwecken—es gibt keinen andern Ausdruck—mißbraucht haben, mochte ihr Streben sonst auch groß und vortrefflich sein; und jener Bund hat dementsprechend geredet und gehandelt. Der Wandervogel ist keine Vorschule für irgendwelche Reformbestrebungen, sondern hat eigene Ziele,

die allerdings in vielen Absichten der Enthaltensamkeitsbewegung verwandt sind.

(101)

These related goals were part of the larger reconceptualization of the self in the *Wandervogel*—the belief that through *Selbsterziehung* and personal engagement, youth could come to appreciate the world and their role in it more authentically, individually and purposively. Demanding conformity and setting rigid moral standards, no matter how in-line with the majority of *Wandervögel* beliefs those standards may be, was seen as a dead end in groups like the JWV that, because of its parallels to the regimented adult world, ultimately resulted in the same boring monotony which they felt already existed in Wilhelmine society. The increasing attempts of the abstinence movement to use the *Wandervogel* as an extension of their own agenda, especially in the DB and later the unified WVEV, was pointed to by the JWV as one example of the attempted (and sometimes successful) hijacking of the *Wandervogelbewegung* by those with a clear ideological agenda.<sup>19</sup>

In reaching for an understanding of modern society that moved beyond a rationalistic understanding holding reason and logical analysis as a dominating structure, both *Wandervögel* and punks turned towards the emotional impact of their interactions with technological society. In their efforts to arrive at a more visceral and reflective engagement with the world, both groups often expressed an understanding of the sublime—the effect of the immensity and incomprehensibility of the world on the individual. For *Wandervögel*, it was a natural sublime that often inspired them and aided in their understanding of themselves and their relationship to

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<sup>19</sup> Another example which JWV pointed to was the increasing age of the *Führer* and the predominance of teachers in their ranks of these other branches. As discussed in Chapter Two, the JWV sought to maintain the vision of youth autonomy against *anybody* who attempted to force their own ideologies onto vulnerable youth and, more than any of the other groups, sought to maintain the focus on individual experience and development which the *Wandervogel* had been built upon.

the world. But they also occasionally worked through the effects of an industrial sublime. For punks, it was this industrial sublime which often came to the surface in their cultural productions—along with a post-industrial sublime that focused on the ruins of modern society. The industrial sublime is an adaptation of the natural sublime, the search for transcendent beauty or awe at the power of the natural world, which the *Wandervogel* carefully cultivated. Both can be seen as part of the broader romantic project and the larger romantic sublime (which is often used synonymously with the natural sublime).<sup>20</sup> Both cover a range of emotional response from delight to terror, and in this focus on emotional affect in its full range as a mode of engagement, *Wandervögel* and punks were able to ground experience and exploration in ways that made their lives more meaningful, or at least much more interesting. In the search for the sublime, the mundane modern world became fractured and existence revealed itself in new and exciting ways. The industrial sublime can be seen in both word and image, such as this woodcut from the December 1914 issue of the *Wandervogel Westfalengau*, with its depiction of modern industry with a smoke-spewing factory foregrounded before a barren and monotonous hillscape, titled with a provocative nod to expression through song, a juxtaposition against the impassioned and emotional music the *Wandervogel* collected, wrote and played.

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<sup>20</sup> See William Vaughn's *Romanticism and Art* (1994).



Figure 12: “*Ein Lied der Arbeit*,” image source: *Wandervogel Westfalengau*, December 1914, image courtesy of the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung*

The article that the illustration accompanied, “*Industriebilder aus dem Siegerland*,” vividly describes the production of iron as a fight between raw metal, man and machine. The author, Schatzki, focuses on the experience from a block of iron’s perspective. Among the more descriptive passages is the following:



Bald danach kam unser Block wieder heraus, jetzt in hellster Glut, um auf eine lange Rollbahn geschoben zu werden. Zwei wuchtige Walzen ergriffen ihn und quetschten ihn zwischen sich durch. Dort das neue Walzenpaar nahm ihn recht derb in die Arme und preßte ihn nach Herzenslust. Schon war der Block bedeutend zierlicher geworden, doch nicht genug des grausamen Spiels. Er näherte sich einem neuen Ungetüm, das schon bedrohlich die Zähne knirschte, als freue es sich auf den Fraß. Dem Block schien es unheimlich zu werden, er sträubte sich, aber es half ihm nichts. Das Ungetüm zerbiß ihn mit solcher Kraft, daß er seine stämmige Form völlig verlor...dann sah er sich ängstlich um, ob nicht wieder neue Feinde auf ihn lauerten. (447)

There were, of course, several more enemies that shaped the poor piece of iron into its final usable form. After the block of iron had met its final fate, Schatzki returns to the machines: “In der Halle aber rasselten, knarrten und brüllten die Maschinen weiter” (447). The author never judges the process explicitly, however this description is contrasted with another factory visit. In this other visit, Schatzki is accompanied by the *Hochofenmeister*, a “prächtigen, alten [sic] Siegerländer” (446). The iron, in its fight with the worker, is left to meet a similar fate. After being poured into a form, the iron begins to cool: “Allmähig kühlte sich der Zorn des Eisens. Sein eben noch blitzendes Gesicht verlor immer mehr den wilden Ausdruck...Jetzt wird es wohl einige Tage Ruhe haben, bis der grausame Mensch es von neuem zwingt, sich seinem Willen zu beugen” (446). Looking back on Heidegger’s conception of enframing (*Gestell*), the roles of the iron, the worker and the machine can all be seen as part of the same process of standing reserve. Each has its function as part of a larger whole, and this factory represents only a small part in a long chain from unmined ore to whatever product it ends up as a part of.

But Schatzki has not described the process in rational terms; in Schatzki's depiction, it seems that he ultimately has more in common with the block of iron than he does with the machines and men that process it. Instead, he has inverted the roles, anthropomorphizing the iron and expressionistically reading the process through its imagined emotional reactions to man and machine, both of which he tellingly describes as *grausam*. In this gesture, he reveals a way of viewing and describing the world that stands in sharp contrast to both readings of technological progress and sociological depictions *and* rational critiques of industrialization that focus on negative consequences such as pollution, health hazards or the exploitation of the worker. In foregrounding the emotional experience, even in something as seemingly emotionless as the fabrication of iron rods, and in the complete absence of any discussion about the merits or dangers of the technological, the author ties the experiential perspective to all aspects of existence in a highly expressionistic, emotionally-driven style.

The punk song "Risikofaktor 1:x" by MALE expresses a similar vision of an industrialized world brutalizing humanity. In an interview in Alfred Hilsberg's first installment of "Aus grauer Städte Mauern" in *Sounds*, MALE member Jürgen Engler describes the inspiration for the song: "Der Song 'Risikofaktor 1:x' ist entstanden, als wir im Kaufhaus eine Frau gesehen haben, die umgekippt ist und mit den Haaren inner Rolltreppe hängenblieb" (23). Witnessing the senseless brutality of a woman helplessly caught in an escalator gave birth to one of West German punk's defining songs. The short song that they wrote about the experience is only six lines, but it evinces uncanny similarities with Schatzki's impression of an iron block moving along a conveyor belt:

Rolltreppe, Rolltreppe, Eisen und Stahl

Rolltreppe, Rolltreppe sinnlos brutal!

Hochofen, Hochofen, Hitze und Glut

Hochofen, Hochofen, Schweiß und Blut!

Risikofaktor 1:x

Die neue Zeit kommt gewiß!

Sung in a cheery refrain that belies the critique of the costs of industrialized life, “Risikofaktor 1:x” explores the industrial sublime in a similar way to the image of the block of iron inescapably caught and shaped by malevolent, anthropomorphized machines in Schatzki’s factory visit. The style of MALE’s expression, however, reflects a detachment while Schatzki’s style reflects an engagement with the expressionistic style emerging in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This points to aesthetics in both *Wandervogel* and punk as operating in the service of expression and as another point of exploration in their direct engagement with their respective societies.

The characterization of humanity as stuck in a technological trap, beholden to opaque and meaningless systems is a fairly dire condemnation of society. Although this interpretation of modernity was often disheartening, the alternative of taking action and asserting one’s own vision worked to provide hope for the future along with an interesting and engaging open road to this more humane society. The unmade path into these futures was exactly what made them worthwhile.

These youth created an engagement with the world that was critical of the social, commercial and industrial effects of modern life, but they were also enthusiastic adopters of many of the products brought about by technological innovation. Putting these technologies to work in the service of voicing their difference and in gaining autonomy, punk and *Wandervogel* youth created spaces allowing them to move beyond the boredom of a rationalistic,

technologized worldview to imagine and work towards more humane, diverse and open futures. In interpreting the technological as an enabling tool for adventure, autonomy and self-expression instead of as a restrictive and limiting ordering of existence and the world, the *Wandervogel* and punks explored the potential of modernity to foster diversity, self-development, creativity and an open engagement with the world.

### **Reclaiming Engagement: The Redefinition of the Technological**

Earlier in this chapter we saw the importance of the print medium to both *Wandervögel* and punks. But their engagement and autonomy was also aided by technology in other areas. For the *Wandervogel*, innovations which allowed them to gain physical distance from the city—the site and symbol of their alienation, limited agency and boredom—were embraced as means to facilitate their freedom and alternative worldview, encoded in the meaning *Wandern* took on. These technologies had to do, in one way or another, with movement. Vital for a group that sought to experience as much of the world as possible was the train. It linked not only major metropolitan areas to each other, the regional networks allowed *Wandervögel* to reach remote areas across Germany and sometimes beyond. It is telling that Hans Blüher, following a detailed discussion of the particularities of Steglitz, its surroundings and the influence of Ludwig Gurlitt, introduces the *Wandervogel* in his history with the depiction of a group of *Wandervögel* waiting at the train station on a Sunday morning:

“Des Sonntags, morgens um sieben Uhr, sah man in Steglitz gewöhnlich nur ein paar Gendarmen auf und ab gehen, oder Milchjungen und Semmelfrauen frostig von Tür zu Tür laufen...Aber noch etwas: am Bahnhof versammelte sich eine

bunte und merkwürdige Schar. Man hörte einen einzelnen von weit her durch die totenstillen Straßen stampfen, dann ein Pfiff, der sich öfters wiederholte” (40).

The meeting point in this sleeping city, the train station, was the site which delivered these “vom Alter gekränkte Jugend” (40) from their confines.

The train was the single most important and symbolic technology in giving the *Wandervogel* the freedom to explore. The physical distance put between the city and the far-flung woodlands, meadows and villages *Wandervögel* most favored was symbolic of the freedom they gained from the institutions and lifestyles they were leaving behind, oriented towards an open world waiting to be experienced where the goal was not the destination but the journey. That the rail system—one of the most powerful manifestations of the efficiently organized space and time characteristic of modern society, running in set paths at set times—could also make possible these youths’ aimless exploration of the world is one of the least appreciated and a manifestation of one of the most important factors in understanding and contextualizing the *Wandervogel* project in modernity. Critically, the rail system’s implementation of standardized time zones to replace the local time kept by the movement of the sun was instrumental in creating a standardized conception of time around the world. Central European time (Mittleuropäische Zeit) was adopted by railroads in 1890 and officially in German states throughout the *Reich* by 1893. The relationship towards time and the organization of society based around it has been one of the hallmarks of modern life. The ideal of *Wandern* as an aimless and leisurely pursuit worked both through and against this conceptualization of time in a similar way to their engagement with other manifestations of modern life.

Far from a rejection of modernity, the *Wandervogel* engaged in a reworking of modernity, and a critical element of this reworking of modernity was a reworking of their engagement with the technological. In enabling the physical manifestation of the *Programmlosigkeit* of the *Wandervogel*, the train was received by *Wandervogel* youth in a way that helped to move beyond boredom. Heidegger's illustration of a form of boredom in waiting for a train finds a striking literal affinity in the *Wandervogel*. With them, the dead time of "waiting for" the train was replaced with anticipation of and an appreciation for the prospect of adventure and discovery that the rail network made possible. As a microcosm of the lifestyle they rejected and the lifestyle they embraced—waiting for a train and waiting to arrive at a destination versus anticipating possibilities and moving constantly into the open and unknown—their engagement with the rail system is a near perfect example.

In their reception of other technologies, the *Wandervogel* exhibited the same orientation, putting everything from the postal system to bouillon capsules in the service of their exploration and as objects to explore and experiment with in their own right. The postal system was often used to send supplies ahead to remote and ill-equipped villages on long hikes, making month-long trips possible and more comfortable. While physical activity and health were extremely important and highly prized, grueling marches with heavy pack as tests of endurance were not usually the ideal of the *Fahrt*. The ideal of *Wandern* was to aimlessly explore, to discover, learn and create a meaningful engagement with the world.<sup>21</sup> Thus, keeping a light pack-weight was extremely important—it is much more difficult to enjoy the camaraderie of friends or be inspired by a red-lit meadow at sunset when lugging around 40 pounds of gear. So (usually) they didn't.

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<sup>21</sup> Some *Führer* and groups were more interested in miles marched than others. Karl Fischer increasingly pushed groups on *Fahrt*, yet another grievance many other *Führer* such as Copalle had with his vision of the *Wandervogel*. *Wandern* emerged as an engaged and cultivated aimlessness, not a test of physical ability.

Sending food, fuel and even dropping dirty laundry at a cleaner to be sent ahead when possible meant less baggage, and less baggage meant experiencing the world in a different way. Still, testing endurance could be an interesting experience as well—the feeling of making camp after a long, shared hike could be as fulfilling as a directionless day hike with nothing but a packed lunch and some water.

Food was another important consideration. When out for multiple days at a time, living off the land wasn't practical or, depending on the season, even possible. Expecting a farmer whose barn they were sleeping in for the night to have the capability to feed a dozen or more hungry adolescents was absurd. Picking berries, buying some apples or potatoes from a farmer's orchard or garden or getting a slab of pork from a butcher were causes to celebrate, but on their own were inadequate and incomplete. Many *Wandervögel* brought alcohol-fueled, single burner stoves with them on multi-day hikes, although these were often replaced by or supplemented with the *Kochtopf*, a large pot brought along in which a stew of available ingredients was concocted. In addition to whatever was available on hand, *Wandervögel* relied on long-tested foods like dried beans, chocolate, grains, spices, smoked and cured *Wurst* and other meats that were lightweight and relatively shelf-stable, but they also explored the possibilities of industrialized foods, with dehydrated powders, bouillon capsules and vitamin tablets providing maximum flavor and nutritional value with the lightest weight. Companies like Maggi pioneered industrialized food production. Julius Maggi began experimenting with mechanically and chemically separated legume extracts in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, bringing his *Suppenmehl* to Swiss families and ushering in a revolution in foodways. Maggi relocated and opened a factory in Singen in 1897, entering the German market. The plant-based derivatives, offering a rich flavor

similar to meat at a fraction of the price, provided convenience, nutrition and value.<sup>22</sup> For the *Wandervogel*, they also offered autonomy and freedom. Making food was an experience, and although fending for oneself off the land might be interesting for a day or two, the ability to easily and consistently experiment with local ingredients supplemented with nutritionally complete, processed food was highly valued and unproblematically embraced by *Wandervögel*.

In the first issue of the first *Wandervogel* publication, the AfS *Wandervogel Illustrierte*, the Dr. Volkmar Klopfer Nahrungsmittelfabrik ran an ad for their *Suppentafeln* and *Erbswürste*. *Erbswurst* was one of the first industrial manufactured foodstuffs, emerging around the founding of the German nation state. The tablets, which when mixed with water and heated produced a nutritious and quick meal, were quickly integrated into military rations and household pantries alike. Of the many different products advertised in *Wandervogel* publications, industrial foodstuffs were among the most represented. A few examples from various publications are reproduced here:

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<sup>22</sup> For information about the history of the Maggi company, see their compendium *Magginalien von A bis Z. 100 Jahre* (1996).





Figure 13: “Maggis Suppen sind der beste Proviant für Wandervögel!,” image source: *Wandervogel Illustrierte*, March 1914, image courtesy of the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung*



Figure 14: “Türk & Pabst's,” image source: *Wandervogel Monatsschrift*, December 1913, image courtesy of the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung*



Figure 15: “Appels Delikatessen,” image source: *Wandervogel Monatschrift*, December 1913, image courtesy of the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung*

Mark 5.75

Preisliste portofrei!

**F. KIEL<sup>S</sup>**

**Fleisch-Ersatz**

Warum ein teures Fleischgericht?  
Viel nahrhafter, gesünder u. billiger  
ist F. Kiels Fleischersatz! Noch dazu  
viel leichter mitzuführen, weil trocken  
und unverderblich. Vollendet feiner  
Fleischgeschmack. Wandervogel, ihr  
Verlangt Proben!

werdet staunen. (½ Pfund = 40 Pfg., reicht für 8 Personen!)  
Genußfertig („Fleisch“ oder „Wurst“) 40 Pfg., roh  
30 Pfg. gegen Marken postfrei. Ausführl. Druckschriften.

Allein-Hersteller:  
**F. KIEL, Oranienburg (Mark) Nr. 47**  
Preisgekrönt auf der Internat. Hygiene-Ausstellung Dresden 1911

**„Gesunde  
Kraft“**

Figure 16: “F. Kiels Fleisch=Ersatz,” image source: *Wandervogel Monatschrift*, December 1913, image courtesy of the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung*



Figure 17: “In jeden Rucksack,” *Wandervogel Monatschrift*, June 1914, image courtesy of the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung*

Everything from *Erbswurst* to tubes of meat and cheese to powdered coffee was purveyed through *Wandervogel* publications and enthusiastically adopted as practical, affordable and nutritious means of fostering their exploration of the world. But even their relationship with nonprocessed foods was grounded in scientific analysis. For example, in the August 1904 issue of the *Wandervogel Illustrierte*, a short unattributed piece titled “Obst als Durststiller” urged *Wandervogel* to replace when possible drinking water with eating fruit, noting that “es sind nur wenige Dinge, die vor den strengen Augen eines modernen Hygienikers volle Gnade finden; zu diesen gehört aber in erster Linie frisches Obst. Die chemische Untersuchung zeigt..., dass die saftigen Früchte eigentlich keinen grossen Nährwert besitzen, weil sie aus wenig mehr bestehen

als aus Zellstoff und einer Lösung von Zucker” (67). Following a list of the sugar contents of various fruits, the author praises their high water content and delicious taste.

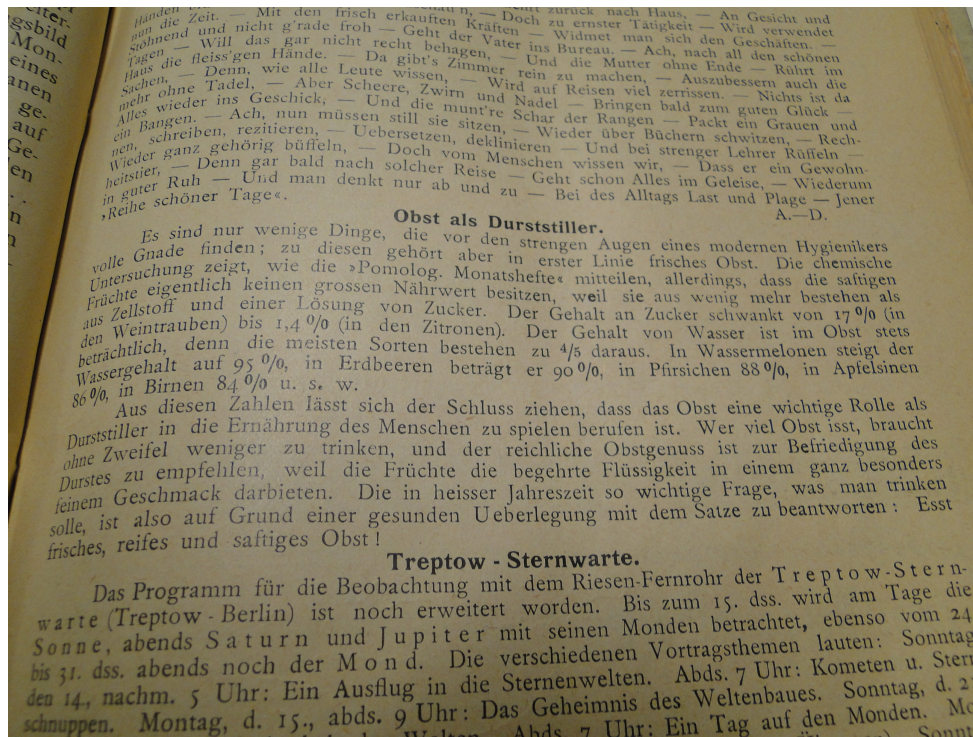


Figure 18: “Obst als Durststiller,” image source: *Wandervogel Illustrierte*, August 1904, image courtesy of the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung*

The discussion of food through the language of nutritional analysis and the popularity of chemically and mechanically produced products marks yet another instance of *Wandervogel* adoption of modern innovations in the name of autonomy and freedom. The reception of modern foodstuffs was also, like the train, oriented towards the experience. Wolfgang Meyen, the *Wandervogel* who first suggested the name of the organization, now a *Bachant* (the earlier title

of what later became the *Führer*) in the AWW, contributed an article in the November 1904 issue of the *Wandervogel Illustrierte*, “Ein Abkochen im Regen,” which details an episode of *Wandervogel* culinary experimentation, from the retrieving of water to the attempt to prepare a simple *Erbswurst* in a downpour. It reads as a sort of recipe, however in an informal, lighthearted and typical *Wandervogel* articulation, the ingredient list of this recipe is rather a list of experiences:

Also zuerst mal Wasser geholt zu einer kräftigen Erbsuppe! Das Wasser scheint zwar durch den Regen etwas aufgerührt und trübe zu sein, aber das macht weiter nichts. Also einen tüchtigen Topf voll mitgenommen! Nachdem man unterwegs über einen Maulwurfhügel gestolpert und gegen einige Bäume gelaufen ist, kommt man mit dem halbgefüllten Topfe am Platze an. So, nun kann endlich die Kocherei losgehen. Beim Einbrocken der Erbswurst bemerken wir zu unserem Entsetzen einen schönen grossen Wasserkäfer munter auf unserer Suppe umherschwimmen. Nach Entfernung des Eindringlings warten wir einige Zeit ebenso geduldig wie vergeblich auf das Kochen der Suppe. Daes aber inzwischen aufgehört hat sachte zu regnen, heisst es erstens eine Zuflucht vor unfreiwilliger Verdünnung der Suppe suchen. Schell packen wir unsere Siebensachen wieder zusammen, verbrennen uns vorher erst noch die Finger und suchen dann unter den Bäumen Schutz. (101)

The adventure of cooking in a downpour, replete with collecting and spilling water, fishing out a stowaway beetle and burning fingers in an attempt to escape the rain takes on a new dimension of meaning. Other *Wandervögel* experience similar difficulties, including one youth who has complicated matters by adding salt instead of sugar to his *rote Grütze*. Another has issues with

pine needles and dried leaves finding their way into his *Eierkuchen*, which has naturally also been watered down by the rain. Despite all of these setbacks, or more likely precisely because of them, the *Horde* emerged in high spirits: “Aber trotz alledem schön war es noch—das Abkochen im Regen” (103). The challenges to be overcome and the lessons learned are a superb and unassuming example of the project of *Selbsterziehung* in action. In the trial and error approach to cooking, the same engaged amateurism which characterized the lifestyles of both *Wandervogel* and punks is emphasized—in any activity there existed the potential for exploration and adventure, and in viewing even the most mundane tasks as something to be experienced, the world the *Wandervogel* made for themselves emerged as much less boring.

In this mission, technologies were incorporated unproblematically as a supportive tool, further evident in the hiking and camping gear used by *Wandervogel* youth. In addition to the *Spirituskocher*, the single-burner compact stove, a wide variety of gear and clothing was adopted by *Wandervogel*. On the occasion of the publication of Blüher’s second volume of his *Wandervogel* history, the *Jung-Wandervogel Zeitung* published a piece in March 1913 by Ludwig Gurlitt. In “Sollen wir unsere Kinder am Wandervogel teilnehmen lassen?” Gurlitt reflects on the meaning of the *Wandervogel* more than ten years after its founding. Gurlitt at one point turns his eye to *Wandervogel* gear and fashion: “Zunächst eine stilvolle Tracht. Stilvoll, das heißt: dem Bedürfnisse angepaßt. Eine Anlehnung an die mittelalterlichen fahrenden Schüler und Benutzung aller technischen Fortschritte in Kleidung und Gerät” (42). The style of the *Wandervogel*, as discussed in Chapter Two, can be seen to express the fusion of old and new that *Wandervogel* youth brought to all aspects of their engagement with the world. The *Selbsterziehung* project was marked by a synthesis of their respect for the traveling cultures of Germany’s past and an appreciation for the advances that opened the world up to them in

unprecedented ways in the present. Even more so than in the realm of food, advertisements in *Wandervogel* publications relating to the multitude of watertight clothing, reinforced hiking boots, backpacks, sleeping bags, utility knives, pedometers, lanterns, first aid kits and even battery-powered flashlights dominated. *Wandervogel* pioneered the use of outdoor recreational technologies, although they most certainly would have objected to the use of the word “recreational,” as these items and others were incorporated into a way of life that sought to view life as a totality, not as compartmentalized realms of work, family and leisure. From hundreds of ads printed in periodicals from 1904 to 1914, here a few representative examples:

Deutschlands Jugend trägt

Patentamtlich geschützte

Wander

Unübertroffen in ihren Vorzügen

Hervorragende Neuheit

Wandervogel

Brust- & Rückenschutz

Spezialfabrikat für Sportbekleidung

Einfach in Form, Praktisch im Gebrauch, Das Zweckmassigste für jeden Sport.

Nur echt mit dieser Fabrikmarke

Loden-Spezial-Fabrikate

Vogel

Bester Schutz gegen Wind und Wetter

Zu haben in allen größeren Herren-Modengeschäften  
 Wo nicht erhältlich, wende man sich **direkt** an die

**Kleiderfabrik Augsburg S. Pflaunlacher**

Figure 19: “Deutschlands Jugend trägt,” image source: *Wandervogel Monatsschrift*, December 1913, image courtesy of the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung*

# Wandervogel-Messer

$\frac{1}{2}$  natürliche  
Größe



$\frac{1}{2}$  natürliche  
Größe

mit Kette zum Anhängen und Schild für den Namen

enthält:

Starke Klinge, Schraubenzieher mit Flaschenverschlußöffner, Konservendosenöffner, Leder oder Holzlocher, welcher mit einem langen Loch versehen ist, um als Segelnadel oder als Bandaufwickler an Sardinenbüchsen dienen zu können

**In garantiert erstklassiger Ausführung**

Zusendung franko gegen Einsendung von Mk. **2.50** durch den Fabrikanten (Eufrater)

## Daniel Peres, Solingen

Figure 20: “Wandervogel-Messer,” image source: *Wandervogel Monatschrift*, December 1913, image courtesy of the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung*



**Porös-wasserdichte, wetterfeste**

**LODEN** aus verbürgt reiner Schafwolle  
 erstklassiger Herstellung o o  
 Mk. 6 — bis 15.—

Anzugstoffe in Kammgarn und Cheviot, Ueberzieher-, Ulster- und Hosenstoffe, Gehrocktuche,  
 Kostüm- und Jackenkleiderstoffe, Damentuche.

**———— Gesundheits-Unterkleidung ————**

Reise-, Wander- und Sportkleidung nach Maß ohne Anprobe unter Garantie.  
 Wer Wert auf gute, preiswerte und ruhig-vornehme Bekleidung legt und Freude an schönen Farben hat,  
 lasse sich die Muster ohne Kaufverpflichtung (Rückporto liegt bei) kommen. Angabe d. Art u. Preisl. erb.

**Deutsche Tuchindustrie, Joh. Wilh. Busse, Nördlingen (Bayern) 40.**  
 ————— Günstige Bedingungen. —————

Figure 21: “Porös-wasserdichte, wetterfeste Loden,” *Wandervogel im Hessen und am Rhein*, November 1913. Image courtesy of the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung*



Schutzmarke.

## Ventilations - Wäsche

ist nicht nur die beste Unterkleidung für Damen und Herren, sondern die Stoffe sind wegen ihrer rein weißen, leichten, weichen Beschaffenheit auch zu Unter- und Oberkleider für Kinder sehr zu empfehlen. Weil bestes Zwirngewebe, sehr haltbar, kühlen nicht, ventilieren vorzüglich und entsprechen den höchsten hygienischen Anforderungen. Stoffproben und Kataloge durch den alleinigen Fabrikanten

### Dick & Schreiter, Schoeneck i. V.

(Sachsen)

Gesetzlich geschützt durch D. R. G. M. 64928 und D. R. G. M. 123835.

Figure 22: “Ventilations-Wäsche,” *Wandervogel Monatsschrift*, December 1913, image courtesy of the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung*

**Argus** Touristenglas mit guter klarer Optik, solide Gesamtausführung 38 mm Objektivgröße mit Etui, Umhängekordel und Tragriemen Mk. 12.50.

**Rob. Fehrmann, Optische Anstalt**  
**ZITTAU i.S.** Preislisten gratis und franko.

Figure 23: “Argus Touristenglas,” image source: *Gaublatt für Sachsen*, March 1911, image courtesy of the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung*

**Carl Gustav Nowack in Leipzig, Neumarkt Nr. 12**  
 Postscheck-Konto 5812, Amt Leipzig, mithin Zahlungen kostenlos  
**Billigste Bezugsquelle für Wander-Ausrüstungen!**  
 Nur beste, bewährte Erzeugnisse  
 Verlangen Sie neuerschienene Liste B

**Hordenkessel**, staunend billig! Schwere, gediegene Ausführung! Gefälligste Form, genau den Angaben Walter Fischers entsprechend

Nr. 20	Inhalt:	5	7	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	Liter
	Mk.	3.25	3.50	4.30	4.75	
Deckel mit Klapph.		.85	1.05	1.15	1.30	

**Rucksäcke, Spaten, Beile, Gamaschen, Kartenhüllen, Dosen**  
**Wassertragsäcke** von 8–10 Liter Mk. 1.80, 20 Liter Mk. 4.—  
**Militärtrinkbecher**,  $\frac{3}{4}$  Liter Mk. —.50 — **Feldflaschen** mit Filzbezug, Riemen, Karabinerhaken, Korte mit Riemchen,  $\frac{3}{4}$  Liter Inhalt Mk. 2.60

**Schlafsack „Wandervogel“**  
 Glänzende Anerkennungen  
 Ia Ausführung  
 Gewicht nur 1200 g  
 D. R. G. M.  
 73 × 200 cm M. **7.25**

Figure 24: “Carl Gustav Nowack in Leipzig,” image source: *Wandervogel Monatschrift*, July 1913, image courtesy of the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung*

Discussions of gear were extremely common in articles as well. The inaugural April 1907 issue of the DB's publication ("Blätter für den Wandervogel, Deutscher Bund für Jugendwanderungen") about the importance of equipment: "Für alle Wanderfahrten, kleinere wie größere, ist es von der größten Wichtigkeit, daß die Ausrüstung eine möglichst praktische und zweckdienliche ist. Eine falsche gewählte, unpraktische Ausrüstung kann leicht dazu dienen, dem Wanderer das Wandern zu erschweren, ja völlig zu verleiden" (3). The practical questions of hiking were of enormous concern for *Wandervogel* youth, and working through the best equipment for specific outings was frequently explored on *Fahrt* and described in their periodicals. While an open-collared shirt (the *Schillerkragen*) and shorts along with a hat, a pair of hiking boots and a spare pair of *Turnschuhe* were ideal for summer hikes, hiking in other seasons, especially winter, required special consideration. But nearly as important as the practical element of *Wandervogel* gear was its expressive element. As the *Wandervogel* grew, many groups began cultivating a sense of style that ran counter to what others felt its aims should be. The dirty kid in patched-pants and a grass-stained shirt, the ideal of Karl Fischer and many others of the first generation gave way to a cleaner and more practical style. But as the movement grew, the outfits of the *Wandervogel* became increasingly refined and youth took increasing amounts of pride in their garb. This led to occasional discussions of whether, in the attempt to one-up each other and maintain a pristine wardrobe, some *Wandervogel* groups might be betraying the very ideals of the *Wandervogel*. If the *Wandervogel* aesthetic—the ready-for-adventure *fahrender Scholar* combined with the cutting-edge of technological innovation—reflected the *Wandervogel* ideal embedded in *Wandern*, the carefully manicured and painfully overwrought peacocking of some youth reflected a very different rearticulation. In some groups, this preening and careful maintenance became so predominant that the issue was taken up in

their periodical. The September 1911 issue of the *Gau-Blatt für Niedersachsen und Westfalen* earnestly asked the question of “Darf der Anzug geflickt sein?” In it the author questions the motives for the insistence on clean, never patched clothing:

Alles soll heute tadellos sein: Halskragen in der Stadt, Kniee bedeckt, Anzug nie geflickt und vor jedem Bauernkotten gebürstet. Einige haben sogar Angst vor Zwölflitertöpfen...Steckt nicht etwas sozialer Hochmut in dieser Sucht, sich immer an der Kleidung durch lächerlichen Zwang als den Vertreter “besserer” Stände kenntlich zu machen? ... Trage lieber ruhig Eure fünfmalgeflickte Hose auf, wenn Euch der Vater keine bessere zur Fahrt bewilligt. Am Benehmen erkennt man in erster Linie den anständigen Wandervogel, nicht am Alter der Hose.” (87)

The style of the *Wandervogel* as representative of its meaning is illustrated plainly in this text. The fear of getting dirty was tantamount to a fear of engagement and, perhaps worse for many, a manifestation of the high-brow society from which they were supposedly attempting to distance themselves. Further, the talk of self-sufficiency and autonomy was symbolically undermined when youth, who were prohibited from holding jobs and were beholden to their parents for spending money, hiked through a village wearing immaculate, ostentatious and expensive outfits.

This demonstrates another parallel to punk, where youth who imported their fashion from London to look as punk as possible ended up being viewed as inauthentic, leading to their being rejected as poseurs. Both styles emerged organically and conveyed the inner meanings of their lifestyles. This expression was certainly very different, except for footwear, which both groups prized (although while *Wandervogel* youth were interested in sturdy and comfortable footwear

for long hikes, many punks were more interested in the ability to make a quick escape and not to break their toes at a concert). But ultimately both styles communicated the critiques of modern society. Fittingly, both styles met where the boot hit the ground, evidencing a similar practicality and desire to represent oneself. Style therefore represented a very personal visual articulation of these youths' engagement with the world wrapped up in ideas of *Selbsterziehung* and DIY and oriented towards expressing their postulated difference embodied in the ideals of *Wandern* and *Anderssein*. Of course, the *Wandervogel* who refused to wear patched pants or get dirty or the punk who imported a bondage suit from King's Road were expressing themselves as well, but what they were in the end expressing to other *Wandervögel* and punks was that they didn't understand what these cultures were about.

There was an element of the appearance of disengagement (or, perhaps better, misengagement) in each group. For the *Wandervogel*, this largely occurred when concern for appearance took precedence over enthusiasm for hiking through a thorny field or cooking a potentially sloppy meal. For punk, the limit was reached when style trumped content as well—when buying a certain look or copying a popular trend became the focus of engagement rather than an expression of it. Both were dependent largely on affective reaction and communal interpretation, underscoring the extremely subjective nature of their respective projects of *Wandern* and *Anderssein*—a subjective and emotional reaction which was reflected, but did not originate in, their style. So while style is certainly the most visible aspect of subcultural expression, in the end it should be seen as only a small part and perhaps even a largely unimportant aspect of their overall projects of engagement. Lewin and Williams decry the overemphasis on subcultural style in research:

Research on subcultural authenticity has focused primarily on style and stylistic preference. Overemphasizing style fetishizes material culture and its consumption as indispensable dimensions of youth subculture...Alas, subcultural style, so salient and intriguing to the sociological eye, has become the most commonly analyzed dimension of subculture studies. Scholars have framed, interpreted, and defined subcultures through the lens of style, despite claiming to have overcome their homological heritage. (68)

While style can often reflect the inner motives and desires of these youth and thus provides evidence of the larger ideals underpinning the engagement of both youth groups, it proves confining when used as a primary lens through which to analyze punk and *Wandervogel*. Style is still valuable as an object of study within the scope of this project, however, because both groups used style as a means of in-group identification and differentiation from mainstream adult society. One of the aims of this project, then, is to rehabilitate the place of style within scholarship of youth cultures, reading style as critical to youth's self-expression while at the same time recognizing that style is not their *raison d'être* or sole means of expression.

Where *Wandervogel* engagement with the technological highlighted and encouraged physical movement in the pursuit of *Wandern*, punk engagement with the technological, to a much greater extent, emphasized the role of communication technologies in pursuit of *Anderssein* as a critique of modern West German society. The importance of autonomous and direct communication had, by the 1970s, become a much greater issue as the disengaging and leveling effects of mass culture were broadcast across the world, threatening to erase national, regional, community and individual forms of engagement and expression not just in the city. So while *Wandervogel* youth utilized their access to technological innovations to create distance

from their contemporary center of modern disengagement and boredom—the city—punks implemented technological innovations to create distance from a disengaged boredom diffused throughout modern society through radio, records, television and cinema. The critiques made by both *Wandervogel* and punks reflected these different foci and locations of disengaged life, with *Wandervogel* often problematizing disengagement in movement (travel) while punks often articulated this disengagement through mass media (popular music and television).

While the debt to the democratization of technology has been explored in punk to a greater extent than in the *Wandervogel* by several scholars,<sup>23</sup> a brief inspection of the West German punk scene reveals several parallels to the *Wandervogel* relationship with the technological. While we have already discussed the importance of the photocopier in Chapter One, four other significant developments help to ground the participatory engagement of punks through the technological. First, the cassette represented a major advancement in the democratization of recording technologies. The compact cassette and cassette players, which exploded in popularity in the late 1970s, had been introduced in Europe in 1962 and were initially marketed to children. Early tapes and recorders were of low quality and were barely adequate for simple dictation, due to the amount of magnetic interference (‘hiss’). The technology to make musical recordings viable on cassette first arrived in 1970 with Dolby’s noise-reduction system, when “the cassette truly began its transition from a toy to a serious high-fidelity instrument” (Morton 163). The compact cassette medium, “which emphasized simplicity, low cost, and ease of use” (Morton 162), was, like the photocopier, an ideal technology for punks to utilize in their efforts for autonomous production and exploration.

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<sup>23</sup> See Simon Frith’s “Art versus technology: the strange case of popular music” and Rubén Ramirez’ “From Zines to MySpace: A Case Study of Media Infrastructures and Counter-power in the Puerto Rican Underground Punk Scene” and Frank Apunkt Schneider’s *Als die Welt noch Unterging*.



Figure 25: “Hören und gehört werden,” image source: *Fuchstrott* 1980, image courtesy of the *Archiv der Jugendkulturen*

Cassette exchanges and an independent cassette scene emerged in full force in the early 1980s, but punks had begun experimenting with the medium as early as 1977. Discussing the growth of the burgeoning cassette culture of the 1980s, Frank Schneider remarks on their earlier reception: “Im *The Ostrich*-Fanzine wurden bereits im Frühjahr 1977 Kassetten von CHARLEY’S GIRLS angeboten. In Hannover startete im Sommer 1979 auf Anregung von Hollow Skai das Projekt ‘Jedem seinen eigenen Radiosender’” (130). The simplicity and openness of the medium are reflected in the “Jedem seinen eigenen Radiosender” project—anyone could do it. It was also affordable and immediate. In contrast to the sustained costs and production time of creating a record, cassettes could be recorded anywhere and copied in runs as small or large as needed. Punk zines began including advertisements for cassette exchanges and calls for groups and individuals to send in their recordings. The versatility of the cassette meant it could be taken into spaces other media couldn’t. For example *Einstürzende Neubauten*, pioneers in the *Geniale Dilletanten* scene in West Berlin that often explored found industrial sounds, also explored the potential of the cassette, recording their first album in a small underground space under a busy



road.<sup>24</sup> The name and methods of the *Geniale Dilletanten* sum up the punk DIY project—anyone with anything to say could, regardless of proficiency and now regardless of connections or costs. Where the *Wandervogel* played music while on *Fahrt* or gave impromptu performances in a village or in the city, punks brought their music to the site of *their* freedom and autonomy—now the city itself. With the cassette, they were further able to explore and easily share music recordings, where the shared music of the *Wandervogel* was limited to personal contact when one group encountered another, through musical notation and in print periodicals to share music across groups. The cassette opened up the possibilities of the recorded media for all, and the same sense of adventure and exploration evident in *Wandervogel* explorations of the natural world was given a new outlet through which to engage with and express themselves. In bringing the cassette into the urban environment directly, some groups and individuals even used the medium as a sort of aural camera and recorded to listen, exploring the effects of the environment on the acoustic and creative atmosphere evoked by these spaces.

Independent record labels served as another important development in creating an alternative voice and another avenue to explore. Cassettes were traded across West Germany, but independent record companies like *ZickZack*, *No Fun* and *Ata Tak* created the possibility to be heard and recognized by a much larger population and helped to create an autonomous space and channels within West Germany in which those who wished to explore could. While those who created independent labels were, from a practical perspective, working towards the creation of autonomous production channels which allowed for the scenes to thrive and produce autonomously, like producing a tape or a zine, running a recording company was also an adventure in its own right.

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<sup>24</sup> See Wolfgang Müller and Blixa Bargeld's *Geniale Dilletanten* for a discussion of the scene and its approach to musical production.

Finally, the exploration of new instruments and new sounds allowed punks to explore the realm of rock and popular culture in new ways. While the familiar guitar, bass and drum setup of rock provided one direction to explore, experimenting with electronic or industrial sounds formed another. While the *Wandervogel* repopularized the guitar as an expressive medium at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, punk youth explored the potentials of the electric guitar or, like groups like *DAF*, sought to distance themselves from them entirely. In an interview, Gabi Delgado of *DAF* recounts their thoughts on the instrument: “Wir haben Gitarren inzwischen auch richtig gehasst. Wir konnten keine Gitarren mehr sehen. Das war wie der letzte Rest der Alten Welt. Das musste eliminiert werden” (Teipel 293). In their place, electronic music—the direct exploration of the modern machine—caused a sea-change in popular music, ushering in entire new genres, but it also opened up the possibility to explore and express the self and the relationship to the technological in redefined ways. As Schneider notes, while the now traditional rock setup remained a fixture, “[d]as Massenmedium der Neuen Wellen schlechthin... war der Synthesizer” (Schneider 153). What had remained throughout the early 1970s prohibitively expensive technology was suddenly democratized: “Doch plötzlich gab es billige und sehr billige Modelle für den Hausgebrauch. Der Casio VL-Tone bzw. Casio VL-1—bekannt aus TRIOs ‘Da Da Da’—kostet um die 150 DM und war als Einstiegsinstrument für Kinder und als Spielzeug konzipiert” (Schneider 153). The simple device was rapidly embraced by punks, who, like the kids to whom it was marketed, found a machine they could explore and through which they could express themselves. The limited capabilities of the device, however, meant that its range of sounds was limited. The cassette scene quickly showed that too much of the same thing limited its appeal: “Da das reine Dilettieren am ohnehin musikalisch limitierten Casio und vergleichbaren Instrumenten auf immer die gleichen Geräusche und Geräuschkonzeptionen

hinauslief, erstarrte und erstickte die Casio-Revolution relativ bald gewissermaßen an ihrem Erbrochenen” (Schneider 153). But for the individual, it represented a powerful tool through which to begin learning and exploring.

Those who wanted to delve deeper into the possibilities of the synthesizer found the perfect mix of capability and affordability in the *Korg MS-20*, released in 1978. At 1,200 DM, it was a significant investment, but was a bargain compared to previous models. And in its ability to fabricate an endless number of sounds, the *MS-20* opened up the possibilities of musical experimentation and expression. The *MS-20* has remained extremely popular today, with its cost reduced to \$29.99 as the *KORG iMS-20*, a digital recreation of the *MS-20* available through iTunes. One reviewer of the app demonstrates its continued potential for discovery:

This app was my introduction to the world of synths, sequencers and drum machines. It's spare, retro minimalist interface is starkly beautiful and amazingly functional. The tone is rich and gorgeous...I will say that learning to control the power of this app takes time...but the iMS-20 will reward you for your efforts. After almost 3 years of continual use, I am still discovering new techniques. [sic] (Davideo)

This review illustrates the continuing participatory engagement fostered by both the *Wandervogel* and punk, and the further technological democratization of this exploratory potential means that almost anybody with the desire can easily and immediately get involved.

On their own, these projects of *Selbsterziehung* and DIY lack direction. Do-It-Yourself fails to mention what “It” is. *Wandervogel* and punk's relationship with the technological sought to enhance the possibilities of their engagement with the world and their respective interests,

cultivating this “It” through unbound engagement. Their creation of autonomous cultures which sought to foster an engaged, aware and adventurous reconceptualization of the self were further enhanced by their relationship towards the technological. This tendency towards exploring the technological in pursuit of the reimagining of the self, embedded in the ideals of *Wandern* and *Anderssein*, was itself also a manifestation of these ideals of openness and discovery.

Heidegger’s proposition that the essence of technology—enframing—contributed to modern boredom was, when applied to the projects of self-exploration and articulation these youth pursued, largely overcome.

## EPILOGUE: BEYOND BOREDOM

As this dissertation has attempted to demonstrate, the boredom sensed by many *Wandervogel* and punk youth was not caused by their own internalization of the technologized worldview and its lack of mystery and affective potential, but rather by their recognition of this worldview as a dominant mode of experience in their societies. Their boredom was, as the title of this dissertation suggests, a boredom caused by recognition of their imminent place in what they saw as depersonalized societies – the prospect of which deeply troubled many of them. Their response to this dawning awareness was the same: get involved and try to create a more interesting world. These youth, bored with the prospect of boredom, instinctively sought to replace it with a world which maintained the mystery, freedom and sense of discovery and adventure of youth. This is of course not to say that their historical moments were identical, nor that the two movements drew the same conclusions about the ultimate possibilities for successful reversal of the status quo in their respective societies. A comparison of two texts, one from each movement, serves to illustrate this point in the ways both groups write (or refuse to write) themselves into history.

In the May 1909 *Nachrichtenblatt* of the Steglitzer EV, an article appeared entitled “Von der eilenden und weilenden Welt.” Penned by a W. Schottky, this text characterizes the *Wandervogel* worldview through comparison with a scientific, rationalistic encounter with the world. “Es ist ein Unterschied zwischen der eilenden und der weilenden Welt. Die eilende Welt hat nichts als sich selbst; wo sie auch hinkommt, sie ist überall dieselbe, sie umfasst eine beschränkte Anzahl von Freuden und Merkwürdigkeiten, und ihre Herrlichkeit ist rasch erschöpft” (25). The world of hurried, harried activity effectively collapses the possibilities for experience and reflection. In the “weilende Welt,” by contrast, the world opens through a

receptive engagement with the world as it presents itself. The “eilende Welt” pushes forth a worldview which constrains the individual to set paths, while the receptive relationship to the world evidences infinite possibility. Schottky proceeds to recount a tale (whether real or imagined is unclear) of two archetypal figures on a *Wanderung*: a geologist who “ist nun bloss mit halben Sinnen in der Gegenwart” and whose thoughts “durchflieg[en] in einem Augenblick die ganze Entwicklungsgeschichte des Bodens, den er betritt, von unvordenklichen Zeiten an” (26). The other, a historian, “ein kleines dickes Buch in der Tasche und Kanonenstiefel an den Bein,” recounts to the *Horde* a history of the area they are exploring: “Eine ganz interessante Stelle hier, wo ich euch finde! Dort hinunten an der Wegkreuzung – ich habe eben noch einen alten Grenzstein festgestellt – laufen die Territorialgrenzen der ehemals markgräflichen, erzbischöflichen und fürstlichen Länder zusammen” (26). The hidden world these two reveal humbles the *Wandervögel*, but also inspires them with its expansive unknown. The historical and scientific facts that seem so dry and monotonous when learned about in a book, disengaged from the world, reveal in this setting the potential for an even deeper engagement with a place when experienced and felt firsthand. In the visceral, directly present interaction with the world, boredom dissipates. The world is revealed to be even more open than it seemed moments before, and Schottky closes his anecdote with an appeal to this infinite potential:

Aber es ist wahr, reich muss die Welt sein und geheimen Lebens voll, wenn schon ein armes Stück Kiefernwald so viel zu suchen und zu denken gibt! Wenn wir jetzt weiterwandern, so scheint uns die ganze Erde von Rätseln und Geheimnissen durchtränkt; nichts ist begrenzt und bekannt, nichts “wissen” wir. Ohne dass wir suchen, drängen sich überall die Fragen und Gestalten an unsern Weg, und täglich neu offenbart sich das Leben. (27)

The modern search for knowledge is viewed here as ultimately reconcilable with the ideal of *Wandern*. Each of these academic fields - geology and history - offers in themselves a new domain through which the world can present itself and a new potential site to explore. In their historical moment, the *Wandervögel* discovered a means to engage with the world which removed the dissonance between the appreciation of the institutionalized knowledge of the scientist with the affective and aimless *Programmlosigkeit* of *Wandern*. In this turn, these *Wandervogel* claimed an individual future, but one importantly still bound to the events and narratives of the past. *Wandervogel* youth situated themselves within history, and their preoccupation with their own history (often heavily mythologized as we saw in Blüher's work) reinforces their belief in a continuing historical narrative.

The gesture of reconciliation performed by *Wandervogel* youth had, for punk youth in the late 1970s, become an absurdity. The faith in a historical future and also of the ability to conceive of themselves as part of a continuous past had dissipated for many punk youth, the room for naïve optimism having shrunk considerably in the face of a disastrous past, itself the result of an inability to escape the historical prejudices of another iteration of German history. A particularly intriguing exploration of the limitations of historical narrativity is included in Issue 6 of the 1979-1980 punk zine *Musak* in the article "Aus Wissenschaft und Technik." The authors, going under Prof. Dr. Engerling and Dr. Phil Albrzx, provide "3 Versionen über die Erfindung des BUCHES" which analyze the potentials of historical agency from a tongue-in-cheek punk perspective:

- A) Wann wir in das Jahr 2000 v. Chr. hineingucken, sehen wir einen Buchbinder, einen Alten sehen wir, er ist sehr alt, denn es ist das 2000 v. Chr. Er hat Papyrus entdeckt. Wir kennen es auch als Papyrus, denn es heißt so. Nun bindet er ein

Buch, in das Papyrus nämlich. Nun nennt er sich Buchbinder, denn er ist sehr alt, nicht wahr? So war das damals. Später kam ein Mann und er-fand das Buch [weil er gern drin las] und er nannte es Buch. Er wird berühmt und stirbt – komisch und wahr. Heute ist das ganz anders; da alle Bücher schon eingebunden, ganz fest.

Das tut gut.

- B) Das Buch hat viele Seiten, die beschmiert sind. Wer das tat weiß keiner mehr.
- C) Das Buch wurde aus Zufall entdeckt. Da war mal eine Papyruspflanze. Da kam der Zufall und machte eine Papyrusrolle daraus.

In the first history, traditional historical narrativity is explored and lampooned. History has actors that propel it forwards - whatever. Agents are named, dates are chronicled and discoveries labeled – things got called things by someone sometime. The belief in history as chronological, purposive and teleological direction (or directions) is held up as an absurdity (“denn es heißt so,” “komisch und wahr”). This history closes with an image of all books having been bound – there are no new stories. This first form of history is itself ultimately confined to history – it is fixed, unchanging and unchangeable. It has been told, but the authors suggest that this era is past (“Das tut gut”). In the second history, meaning has now broken down. Something of this past exists, but any entrance to this knowledge is blocked – the language of this past is no longer legible. This, I would suggest, is the language of boredom. The authors of history are dead – there are no bookbinders here. In this late-modern expunging of narrativity, agency is lost, but there is not yet a new language through which to parse experience. There is no future in this iteration of the past. The third history recovers agency, or at the very least self-awareness, while maintaining an (at best) ambivalent posture to the past. This relation to the past dispenses with any possibility of factual (rational) historic narration – everything is happenstance – while maintaining the dignity



of the actors within it. History, these young punks seem to suggest, is an amorphous and unrecoverable series of moments, and the only possible futures that can emerge out of this past are those where its actors are both aware of the past's ultimate insignificance and dangers but also dedicated to discovery and adventure if for no other purpose than discovery and adventure. But can the same be said of the *Wandervogel*?

The answer here is likely no, but with a caveat. The *Wandervögel* who, in appreciation of the geologist and historian, re-animated their world in and through immediate experience and engagement, saw themselves as inheritors and re-instatiators of a heavily romanticized past. But the punk project here seemingly cuts off the chance to re-engage with history. This is not simply nihilistic or playfully naïve, but rather an illumination of the limitations of reason (and the inevitable intrusion of the subjective) and, by contrast, of the importance of recognizing the irrational, visceral and emotional (and acknowledging the role they have always played) in maintaining an engaged interest in the world. This is of course not entirely absent in the *Wandervogel* text, with its closing proclamation that “nichts ist begrenzt und bekannt, nichts ‘wissen’ wir.” Even with the espoused respect for the past, there is also a healthy skepticism here. But ultimately, while both punk and *Wandervogel* formulated similar lifestyles based on experience and action, they importantly diverged in their conceptualization of the past and their potential place in a continuing narrative.

Still, for both the future opens up as unwritten, and in this future one's own actions become all the more vital. The charge for engagement and reflection inherent in the *Selbsterziehung* and DIY projects emerged for these youth as answers to the boredom of modern rational life and the set paths it offered and pointed the way to reclaiming personal agency in an opened world. The effort to create individuals in societies which valued constant reinterpretation

while maintaining an atmosphere where individual exploration was prized was an idea shared by both of these youth cultures, regardless of their orientation towards the past.

In the post-script to his poem “Verwirrte Kinder,” the punk poem discussed in Chapter One, author Achim laments: “Wo ist die Zukunft,/eine Zukunft,/in der ich meine jetzige Freiheit vollkommen erhalten kann!??” The answer was not to be found within society as it existed. It was rather located in the self – working towards constructing a new worldview and working towards the possibility of its realization. Achim recognized the freedom he currently enjoyed, but seemed to fail to realize that this freedom had nothing to do with the society he situated himself against. But Achim was also the author of the impassioned speech on *Anderssein* in the fundraiser issue of *Gegendarstellung* for Face the Bass. Here he expresses individuality and difference, combined with the capacity and resolve to act, as a means of resistance and offers a hopeful vision of the future in the face of a disengaging and hostile *Alltag*. And in the act of writing, Achim claims autonomy and agency, asserting the potential of individual action in the face of established systems to create a better future.

Looking back to 1976, the initial punk explosion and the subsequent development of a thriving punk community in West Germany by 1980, the future *could* open. But it remained limited if it looked back to this initial moment and what had already been done. The fall 1980 issue of the Regensburg zine *mariouett* synthesizes this orientation towards constant reinterpretation and reorientation upon what has already been done:

Wir Punks (Punker,Punkrocker) wir sind schon manchmal sehr überzeugt von uns ne? Einige meinen, wir sind die einzigen die nicht clean, angepasst und konsumfreudig sind. Wir sind es sicher nicht in dem Maß, wie z.B. die Müslis,

ganz zu Schweigen von den Discoaffen und Popperschleimern. Aber wir hängen genauso drin, wie alle anderen. Da leben manche von uns noch in Ihrer 76er Traumwelt, Ohne zu bemerken, daß diese Welt um sie verreckt ist. Punk als solcher ist tot. Das Kategorisieren muß aufhören. Jeder kann Punk sein, solange er es für sich alleine ist. Wenn er dann jedoch von einer Punkbewegung spricht, wird das lächerlich. 76 ist eine Scheinwelt geworden. Wir unterscheiden uns in nichts von den Müslis – dann nämlich, wenn wir nicht aufhören, dem nachzulaufen. Neues muß geschaffen werden in unserem allseits verhassten Land. Hassen, dazu braucht es wenig Anstrengung, keines Nachdenkens. Was zählt ist creative Erneuerung/Veränderung in eine wenigstens teilweise bessere Zukunft.

For the author of this manifesto, punk died the moment it was categorized and categorized itself – when it confined itself to history. Becoming an ordered system meant stagnation. Stagnation created a scene with the same shortcomings as any other that came before it. The way forward was in continuous evolution – in never staying still. In a word, in *Wandern*.

The foci of punk and *Wandervogel* lifestyles were, mildly stated, superficially dissimilar; the language and aesthetics they used to express themselves often more so. Where *Wandervogel* used expressive and poetic language to describe their experiences, punks favored terse, short utterances that got to the point. Both groups of youth wrote about what was immediately salient to them. But they are both youth movements who were inspired by their direct engagement with their worlds and saw in this mode of experience a better future. In their simplicity, the *Wandervogel* and punk projects found a means of reconnecting with the world that restarted the stopped time of boredom and pointed towards futures filled with opportunity and hope. Life became an adventure, and, as suggested in the discussion on boredom in Chapter One, a life

lived for uncertain possibilities focused on experience can dissolve the conditions for boredom. From disengaged and bored youth at opposite ends of the busy 20<sup>th</sup> century, the same answer emerged: maintain the sense of openness and adventure of youth. Look for adventure in every small moment for yourself. It was a tenuous and fragile solution, as the crystallization of punk into Hardcore and the external pressures which pushed the *Wandervogel* into making concessions showed. Ultimately, punk and *Wandervogel* both fell short of spreading the widespread revolution of the self they committed themselves to. What began as endlessly interpretable excitement and adventure was derailed by attempts to unite, define and limit themselves. It wasn't ultimately the co-option of either by their respective mainstreams which caused them to fall short of their aspirations, but rather their own defining of themselves through the same limiting, leveling and historicizing they were supposedly resisting.

As an ideal, the idea of *Wandern* – of never settling down and getting stuck in one place physically or mentally – was perhaps the most earnest critique of and solution to alienated and internalized rationality to emerge out of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Movement is certainly the right word here; in their own ways, punk and *Wandervogel* put forward examples of an engagement with the world that embraced movement – direct action and constant exploration – as a core tenet of a worthwhile life. What punk and *Wandervogel* both illuminated was the degree to which we continue to struggle with our humanity and seek meaning in experiences that supercede language. That modern societies are not often conducive to this lifestyle nor fair to its expression is ultimately the greatest vindication that punk, *Wandervogel* and other emotionally charged and engaged expressions of the self are critically important to our future.

Ideas and communities like the *Wandervogel* and punk have provided much needed interventions in their societies which have given hope to millions of youth that there is

something more to existence than following the worn ruts that lead to an all-too-certain end.

They suggest that humanity in modern societies has cemented over an entire aspect of being that demands to be heard. The punks and *Wandervögel* were leaks of this desire, longing, and above all hope that the world could be a more interesting place than what was presented to them. They unfolded organically from the youngest generation as a participatory, exploratory engagement with the world; and while those who got what these phenomena were about kept the lesson with them, this mode of existence has remained in the minority.

The question of how we think our world is raised by movements like the *Wandervogel* and punk. Unpopular with millions who did not understand them in their own times, both have often also suffered in historical memory. The question of the *Wandervogel* influence on National Socialism remains a powerful narrative in the histories told about the *Jugendbewegung*. Punks have all too often been dismissed as brutish and nihilistic or as offering no alternative for the future, and the continuing presence and occasional condemnation of street punks as well as the racially and politically extreme groups who have embraced punk have certainly continued to color punk's wider reception. Both groups of youth illustrated something that made their wider societies fundamentally uncomfortable. Fixed modern life has often caused us to remove ourselves from the alternative of unbound movement bit by bit. Connecting the world – fostering rapid travel and the immediate exchange of ideas and images – has counterintuitively only encouraged this drive. Yet the instinct to explore and wander remains.

Hans Heinrich Bormann, shortly before the events which proved to have such a devastating impact on the *Wandervogel*, wrote a piece in the January 1913 *Alt-Wandervogel Monatschrift* titled “Nachklänge: Eindrücke und Stimmungen einer Sommerfahrt.” In it,

Bormann provides one of the most impassioned articulations of the hopefulness the adventurous worldview engendered, but also showed his connectedness to the past:

Als wir staunend durch die hohen, weiten Säle schritten, und vom Altan und durch die hohen Bogenfenster einen Blick hineintaten in das Land und das Leben da. Das war so ganz deutsches Wesen: Da unten das Alte, Liebgewonnene in seiner Vertraulichkeit. Daneben Sinn für den Fortschritt, für das Jetzt. Und dazu noch der Wandertrieb in der Brust, die Sehnsucht nach der Ferne, die suchen will, ob das Glück, das grosse, schöne Glück vielleicht fern in den Bergen, fern in den Weiten sei..." (8)

A synthesis of the past and the present and a hopeful vision of a wide-open future, yet still a future inflected by a past Bormann called 'that so very German character,' these words capture the potential of the *Wandervogel* reconceptualization of Germanness as a dynamic and future-oriented outlook that prized individual experience while acknowledging the importance of the past. Over 60 years later, in the fight to establish a rejuvenated popular culture out of the punk moment, punks in West Germany reclaimed the German language to speak (greatly enhanced with their inflection of the technological put to new and democratized uses), but simultaneously rejected any responsibility for any "German" past, all while holding up a caricatured pastiche of this past in a jumble of swastikas, hammers and sickles, RAF insignias, safety pins, leather and Xerox shipping bands. In their self-expression, West German punks symbolically moved beyond any specific alternative vision of the past, proclaiming nothing to be fixed or knowable – an idea *Wandervogel* youth occasionally hinted at in articles like "Von der eilenden und weilenden Welt," but which was largely overshadowed by appeals to a mythologized German past and a firm belief in its importance for the future.

Both the *Wandervogel* and punk engaged with Germanness. But the *Wandervogel* saw in the idea a still valuable and romanticizable narrative. Punks such as the authors of *Musak* above certainly acknowledged this past as well, but instead of embracing it recognized the impossibility of escape while also firmly rejecting its meaningfulness for the future. In this conceptualization, it may still be that some elements of the past are valuable, but privileging certain narratives because they are somehow one's own narratives reveals itself through punk's aspired-to openness to be a self-confining and limiting effort. While both *Wandervogel* and punk youth developed similar worldviews and orientations towards living which dissolved the structures of boredom, punk spread to and grew in a society much different than *Wilhelmine* Germany, in a present in which the once seemingly naïve beliefs in the importance of the past and nationalistic pride in the idea of Germany had revealed themselves to be as toxic as they were alluring. For many punks, even if they saw a way to reclaim a past in the future, there was no longer any past worth deluding oneself to reclaim.

Much like *Wandervogel* and punk youth argued that their societies and even their own subcultures should be constantly re-examined and questioned, so too should scholarship about them. This is not a new idea, but as traced in the discussions of scholarship on the *Wandervogel* and punk that closed Chapters Two and Three, research has often remained too closely tied to previous established discourses surrounding questions of aesthetics and politics. To take the most salient example, the reading of Germany's National Socialist future (in the case of the *Wandervogel*) and past (in the case of punks) is undeniably important. But reading youth movements in the German context disproportionately through this and other narratives is, much like hiking only in the summer or choosing when to watch television or listen to music, far too confining. This project represents one attempt to engage with the *Wandervogel* and punk youth

cultures in much the same spirit with which they engaged with their contemporary societies and surroundings: not with expectations for completeness or closure, nor with the desire to answer the contentious and polarizing questions that have often overwhelmed the larger field of German Studies, but rather with a commitment to active engagement, participatory inquiry and an adventurous mentality. Driven by the raucous and often dissonant voices of both movements' participants themselves as they emerge from the archival sources, it is my hope that this comparative study has prepared the way for further scholarship that acknowledges the unbound worldview these youth were engaged in creating for themselves, and that might offer a model for German Studies scholarship that more actively fosters the re-evaluation of its own discourse, and truly moves beyond boredom.



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*Death Trip*

*Dreck*

*Du mich auch*

*Die Düsseldorfer Leere*

*Die Endlösung*

*Fuchstrott*

*Fuck Erzbischoff Ratzinger*

*Gegendarstellung*

*Ich und mein Spiegelbild*

*Khomeni*

*Langweil*

*Marionett*

*Mode + Verzweiflung*

*Musterexemplar*

*Muzak*

*The Ostrich*

*No Fun*

*Plastik*

*Plaything*

*Pretty Vacant*

*Propaganda*

*Provinz Blatt*

*Punk*

*Punk Rules*

*Search & Destroy*

*Schwantz*

*Shit-Bolzen*

*Sniffin' Glue*

*Spargel*

*T4*

*Undenk*

*Ungewollt*

*Die Welle*

*White Riot*

*Willkürakt*

*Xerox chic*

### ***Wandervogel Periodicals***

*Alt-Wandervögel Monatschrift*

*Asgard*

*Der Fahrende Schüler*

*Der Führer: Mitteilungen für Wandervogel*

*Gau-Blatt für Niedersachsen und Westfalen*

*Jung Wandervogel: Zeitschrift des Bundes für Jugendwandern "Jung-Wandervogel"*

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