

INTRODUCTION

The German Youth Movement and the Problem of History

Instead of the old myths of death and resurrection, of victory and twilight of the gods, which the Enlightenment removed from people's consciousness, the nineteenth century has justified the barren idea that life moves like some sort of transportation on a straight road, and that one can increase speed or change direction. However, life never advances one-dimensionally, neither forwards nor backwards; neither upwards nor downwards – it rather breathes in space.

– Georg Götsch, 'Die Jugendbewegung als Volksgewissen'¹

Georg Götsch, quoted above, was one of the most prominent leaders of the German youth movement in the 1920s. According to him, in the course of three decades the youth movement had developed a collective mentality that was broader than that of children revolting against the demands of the parental generation. The children indeed refused to follow the road signs on the street of life. But rather than plotting their own route, they rejected the entire concept of life as a one-dimensional path forward, as well as the idea that the individual has the full autonomy and capability to choose his own route.

Modern ideas of the autonomy of the subject and the unilinearity of time, as symbolized in the image of the one-dimensional road, were fundamental premises for the modern conception of history. This conception saw history as the domain of the conscious and progressive self-realization of mankind – a conception that Götsch attributed to the nineteenth century, to positivism and to the parental generation. The youth movement's alternative was a 'vital conception of history', which spurred an engagement with 'spiritual

ancestors' who are still 'immediately alive'.² Using vitalist language to explain this understanding of history, Götsch resorted to the metaphor of the heart. Implying that the rejection of tradition in the modern, progressive worldview would in the end result in the death of a nation, the youth movement tried to clean the 'old blood vessels' to the 'heart of the nationhood'.³ Götsch warned that this operation of 'revitalizing' the nation by tapping the vital source of tradition should not be done away with as mere 'Romanticism'. In his view this conception of history was not a 'reaction', and nor did it refer to forward or backward orientations: 'It does not matter that something is happening, but that it is done in conjunction with the eternal law. This is the meaning of history'.⁴

On a phenomenological level, 'summer and winter' and 'past and future' are not values to which man relates himself, but eternal rhythms that revolve around him, and present themselves as destiny. The magic of the youth movement was that it enabled youth to concretely experience such rhythms in their main activities in an age which longed for a new metaphysics. In hiking through the pastures of the German countryside, in singing folk songs around a comforting old fireplace, in the bonds of comradeship forged on a journey through the Bohemian Forest, or in the spell of an old mystery play, traces of the eternal were spurred.

Götsch's ideas on history may appear rather opaque today – if not incomprehensible. His vitalist vocabulary and focus on mythical time make it all too easy to cast judgment on these ideas or to interpret them as escapist attempts to 'flee' into a mythical past in reaction to whatever identity problems the 'reality' of post-Versailles Germany caused. Such objections are as easy a score today as they were in 1928. Götsch however knew that he was operating on the brink of two worldviews and two different conceptions of history, and went to great lengths to convince his readers. The youth movement attested to a different 'reality' than the 'materialized' world, he argued. Besides materialism the movement also rejected idealism to the extent that both 'no longer have a connection to the dormant reality of the centre of the world – a centre which does not revolve, so that everything can revolve around it'.⁵ These young wanderers focused on 'form' rather than on ideas, on images rather than concepts; body and spirit were not posed in an oppositional scheme.

Today, it is common scholarly knowledge that in modernity, individuals, social entities and also social movements like the youth movement use historical memory and historical consciousness to provide themselves with a sense of identity by temporally distinguishing or associating themselves with what came before, and by projecting an expectation of coming achievements into the future.⁶ This procedure is explained clearly by Jörn Rüsen when he states that 'identity is located at the threshold between origin and future, a passage that cannot be left alone to the natural chain of events but has to be intellectually comprehended and achieved'.⁷ Identity has to be actively constructed by

recalling past events, through which individuals or collectives can ‘fixate’ themselves in time by emphasizing historical continuities or discontinuities. Götsch’s ‘vital conception of history’ is difficult to explain in reference to contemporary theories of memory and historical consciousness. It was an engagement with tradition, but did not refer to linear time. Rather than – like Rüsen – situating the ‘origin’ in the historical past, Götsch understood it in spatial terms as a ‘centre’ or ‘heart’. The German youth movement did not just remember differently but expressed views and ideas based on a specific conception of history that cannot be equated with what we usually call ‘modern historical consciousness’ – which, in the words of Hans-Georg Gadamer, means the ‘full awareness of the historicity of everything present’ and the temporal structure of tradition, constituted by a process that is articulated in developmental and evolutionary terms.⁸

Why would the interwar German youth movement go beyond defining its own identity – or the generational identity of its members – in relation to the past, and challenge the predominant mode of historical thought itself? And what can identity be based upon when one rejects history as its main source? In order to answer these questions, I will explore the conceptions of history and time in the German youth movement between the moment the ‘free’ German youth movement – the umbrella term for those youth associations that were led and organized by youth itself with as little adult interference as possible – was established around 1900, and the rise of Nazism, after which the ‘free’ youth movement was soon dissolved. Hence, I limit my study to the Wilhelmine era (1871–1918) and the Weimar period (1918–1933) of German history. Examining what was left of the youth movement in Nazi Germany would also require an in-depth analysis of the specific historical culture of Nazi Germany, which is far beyond the scope of this study, because the ideological historical culture of Nazi Germany strove towards a discontinuation with earlier Wilhelmine and Weimarian historical cultures on almost all fronts.⁹

In this chapter I will present the guiding question of my research. Three theoretical notions will provide an interpretive framework in order to explain the significance of my question: experience, representation and presence. After presenting my research question, I will discuss two important historiographical debates to contextualize my research, namely the German youth movement and the historiographical discussion on the ‘Conservative Revolution’. I will end the chapter with an explanation about sources and methods, and give the outline of the study.

Aims and Research Question

This study focuses on the development of various conceptions of history in the German youth movement in the first decades of the twentieth century. The

youth movement was an educative environment in which young people grew up together, shared the same ‘space of experience’, and phrased ideas on past, present and future on the basis of these shared experiences.¹⁰ My aim, however, is not just to write a history of the youth movement’s historical development. The case of the youth movement opens up the larger philosophical question on the possibilities and impossibilities of thinking ‘beyond’ modernity by revising the premises of modern historical thought. Is this ‘beyond’ necessarily a future beyond – something to be achieved through human action over the course of time – or can it be thought of as something that already was, and ever will be? These are not just abstract philosophical questions, but problems rooted and expressed in culture. Studying the *practical* ways in which the youth movement attempted to overcome a modern, ‘historical’ worldview next to its *ideas* about it can shine light on the possibilities and impossibilities of trying to surpass the epistemic boundaries of one’s culture.

In order to achieve these aims, this study will answer the following research question: *Which dominant conceptions of history and time circulated in the German youth movement between 1900 and 1933, and how did these relate to historical representations and historical experience?*

This question requires elaboration on two points: we first need to know what history meant in modernity in order to be able to understand which notion of history the youth movement challenged. To understand the various arguments put forward against the modern conception of history we will also have to establish a basic understanding of the central function of reason and language in this notion of history. But as today’s theory of history is still very much indebted to the presumptions of modern historical consciousness, we secondly need to establish a theoretical and methodological framework that does not treat both positions as incommensurable.

First, the term ‘conception of history’ does not refer to the past as such, but to ideas on what history is and how past, present and future relate to each other. This requires a meta-perspective on the idea of history. Thus, the question is not whether one looks at history from the perspective of a social historian, a political policymaker or a traumatized war victim, but what the premises are of a specific conception of history. Reinhart Koselleck’s well-known thesis on the rise of modern historical consciousness tells us that between approximately 1750 and 1850 a radical change took place in the Western conception of history. He bases his thesis on a semantic study of the concept of ‘history’ which reveals that, in this period in the German-speaking countries, ‘history’ (*Geschichte*) started to be used as a collective singular. Instead of referring to a multiplicity of narratives, the term ‘history’ was increasingly used to denote one historical process of which all different narratives were a part. Besides now referring to unilinear development, the function of history changed due to a second development: the term ‘history’ (*Geschichte*) also became synonymous with what was previously known in

German as *Historie* – the ‘study’ of man’s deeds. Because in modern German (like in English) history came to mean both the course of events and the conscious apprehension of these events, the concept could be interpreted as a Kantian transcendental category; so history that depended on human action and human consciousness no longer required God or nature as its source.¹¹ Koselleck calls this the ‘makeability of history’ – the idea that history no longer simply took place with and through man, but was at the disposal of man to be forged.¹² Whereas the multiple histories of previous times functioned as templates of practical knowledge on human or state affairs, the unilinear conception of history developed in modernity granted no such possibilities, because history now referred to a process of development. The idea that man is subdued to cosmic cycles and repetitive patterns, made way for the idea that man could determine his own fate and that it was even man’s moral goal to overcome his natural impulses in a rational and progressive self-manifestation. History now reflected the process of this development. It was this modern conception of history that the youth movement reacted against. The meta-historical question therefore is: on which premises did they try to overcome modern historical consciousness?

Second, because the youth movement’s critique of the modern idea of history also contained a critique on the primacy of reason, a mere analysis of the intellectual history of the youth movement will not suffice. I will counter the intellectual development of the critique of historical thought in the youth movement with an analysis of the practical ways in which they alternatively apprehended the past. Most notably, their apprehension of the past included a turn away from cognition towards *Erlebnis* (lived or direct experience). In the general sense we will see that direct experience refers to the experience of *Gemeinschaft* (community), and more concretely to what the German historian Hermann Mau once defined rather opaquely as ‘the direct experience of the revitalization of all relations of life through finding back the archetypal forms of human association’.¹³

Through lived experience, the youth movement tried to tap into the pre-rational sources and primal origins of life (a quest that August Wiedmann defines as ‘the tendency to penetrate to the presumed primal layers of existence’), be it primal social relations in community, or relations to nature, history, life or the cosmos.¹⁴ Experience was defined as something non-rational, something that eludes cognitive comprehension and is as such intuitively given to those who are receptive to it. Therefore, exactly lived experience could point into a direction beyond what is rationally comprehensible. Modern rationalism, after all, has been regarded as a central cause of the loss of authentic being ever since the eighteenth century. Analysing a movement that defied rationalism and emphasized the value of lived experience poses a problem of understanding: one can look at the preconditions and effects of experience, one can rethink experience, but one can neither relive an experience nor rationally analyse the

contents of experience without turning it into an ‘object’ of cognition.¹⁵ How then, are we to write a history of such intangibilities?

The common escape out of this aporia is to historicize the discourse of the youth movement. Dietmar Schenk, for example, argued that although the group-bound *Erlebnis* of the youth movement was intangible, the *discourse* in which the youth movement articulated their experience was far from isolated. Therefore, not experience itself ‘but the discourse of “*Erlebnis*” as an expression of a particular timely consciousness’ should be subject of historical analysis.¹⁶ Today, this approach is the rule rather than the exception. In the humanities the theory that reality is a discursive construction is broadly accepted, as is the idea that to analyse ‘reality’ we have to dissect the way meaning is constructed.¹⁷ This applies to history and memory as well. Hayden White cast the definite blow to ‘naive’ historical realism by arguing in *Metahistory* that the historical text does not entail a referential to a historical ‘reality’, but is historically constructivist in the sense that it constitutes meaning only in the *mise en scène* of the historian.¹⁸ Rather than speaking of describing or interpreting the past, speaking of the historian representing the past eludes the realist assumption that the past itself has meaning, for representation points at the narrative activity of the historian as being constitutive for all historical meaning.¹⁹ In a similar way, memory studies state that remembering – both individually and collectively – is a narrative praxis, aimed at the establishment of a sense of identity by narratively bridging the ‘gap’ between present and past, and establishing a sense of historical meaning and continuity.²⁰

The gains of representationalism – the idea that in absence, the past can be permeated only through signs, the most prominent of which is descriptive language – notwithstanding, recent literature has increasingly emphasized the flaws and shortcomings of this approach. Frank Ankersmit – once a prime contributor to the discourse on historical representation – notes that representationalism has consistently forgotten the author who writes the historical text. Although the historical narrative is no mimetic reduction of a past reality, this does not imply that the author cannot be enthused, or even enthralled, by a pre-reflexive experience of the past.²¹ Yet, Ankersmit’s theory of historical experience keeps revolving around the idea that the past is something absent and at distance. According to Ankersmit, (sublime) historical experience is an alternative and more immediate mode of permeating an absent past, as in the moment of experience the boundaries of subject and object fade away and the past is suddenly present. Yet, the sublimity of such a moment is dictated by the experience that once the magic disappears, one is left with a trauma – the trauma that the past has gone and will never return. Ankersmit’s philosophy of historical experience thus presumes that in modernity, historical distance is a natural state of affairs, and that the presence of the past can be established momentarily, but cannot be overcome.

More fundamental insights in the limits of historical thought, which take the problems of modern metaphysics into account, can be derived from Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht's theory of presence. For Gumbrecht, both representation and memory fall under the heading of 'meaning culture', which denotes the specific modern mode of making sense of the world through meaning. Gumbrecht analyses the prime emphasis on meaning and interpretation as an effect of modern Western metaphysics, which – since Descartes – rests on the dichotomy between subject and object. In this dichotomy, practically everything – even the body – can be objectified and discerned from the observer. Next to 'meaning cultures', Gumbrecht situates 'presence cultures', which – such as classical Aristotelian philosophy and medieval Scholasticism – do not discern between subject and object, are not based on a progressive conception of time, and emphasize spatiality over temporality. It is important to emphasize that the distinction between 'presence' and 'meaning' cultures is ideal typical in the Weberian sense, as Gumbrecht consistently emphasizes that all cultures and cultural expressions are based on a specific configuration of both meaning and presence effects. It is, however, the self-descriptions of cultures that tend to opt for one or the other.

Gumbrecht exemplifies his distinction by adding a number of other distinctions to it. For meaning cultures the mind or consciousness is the locus of self-reference, while in presence cultures the body – not Foucault's objectified 'Body', but the existential body – has this function. Meaning cultures route man's relation to the world through subjectivity, while presence cultures see the body as embedded in a cosmology. In meaning cultures, the material signifier has a purely spiritual meaning, while in presence cultures substance and form take hold in the sign. In meaning cultures, man's vocation is the transformation of the world, while in presence cultures man aims to inscribe oneself into cosmological rhythms. And – besides a number of other distinctions – meaning cultures have time as their primordial dimension and associate consciousness with time, while presence cultures emphasize the spatial dimension in which humans relate to the things of the world.

The great value of the distinction between meaning culture and presence culture is that it can help us to clarify the extent to which and the ways in which the youth movement tried to alter modern, progressive thought. Although Gumbrecht acknowledges that this distinction only makes sense when used in a meaning culture – of which contemporary scholarly thought is still part – it is sophisticated enough not to take all presuppositions of meaning culture as the normative basis of proper thought. This study will benefit from these insights in three ways.

A first advantage is that meaning and presence cultures are not found to be mutually exclusive: 'all cultures and cultural objects', Gumbrecht states, 'can be analysed as configurations of both meaning effects and presence effects, although their different semantics of self-description often accentuate exclusively one or the other side'.²² There is therefore no need to adapt an entirely

new vocabulary to denote what could not be grasped in modern concepts – as for example Martin Heidegger found himself obliged to do by recasting German concepts and neologisms with pre-Socratic meaning in order to disclose the domain of ‘Being’ on an existential level, rather than on the representational level of modern thought. Although Gumbrecht and theorists of history such as Eelco Runia have started a search to find figures of speech in which presence can be ‘stored’, my primary concern is not to somewhat disclose the presence of the youth movement to the contemporary reader, but to analyse the ways in which the youth movement tried to overcome a set of values that Gumbrecht attributes to ‘meaning cultures’, such as rationalism, subjectivism and individualism, by resorting to ‘presence effects’.²³ For me, Gumbrecht’s concepts primarily have heuristic value.

A second advantage follows from the first. When we regard ‘meaning’ and ‘presence’ cultures not to be mutually exclusive, we can move beyond that often challenged, but still predominant, modern predicament, namely the idea that there is no way ‘back’ to a ‘state’ of ‘presence’. Since the late 1700s, ‘presence cultures’ have been exoticized and historicized, for example in the image of the ‘noble savage’, which situated the ‘natural’ man whose nobility rested on the fact that he was not corrupted by the immoral side effects of modernity either in the distant past (e.g. the Tacitan German) or in an earlier state of historical ‘development’ (e.g. the native American). To return to this ‘natural’ state of being was impossible, because modern man – to put it in a Hegelian way – had become conscious of the inner workings of history as a process of the conceptual self-realization of spirit. And as one cannot ‘undo’ consciousness, modern man is bound to live in the void between past and future. The dominance of modern historical consciousness also temporalized attempts to overcome its own predicaments as escapes into an idealized past or flights forwards into an ever unattainable utopian future.

Third, Gumbrecht’s framework is especially beneficial when it comes to historical time. Because presence effects challenge the dominance of the linear conception of time, they do not necessarily have to appear as ‘nostalgic’, ‘unrealistic’ or ‘escapist’ in this analytical framework. However, in the historiography of the youth movement the ‘meaning’ bias has been so overwhelming that – as we have seen – the youth movement’s attitude to history and society has too often been judged ‘Romantic’ and ‘escapist’, thereby setting aside the possibility that they tried to overcome modernity not by changing the course of history, but by challenging the premises of modern temporality itself. The use of the concepts ‘meaning culture’ and ‘presence culture’ enables me to show the ways in which the youth movement tried to challenge and to overcome this dominance by altering the configuration of presence and meaning effects, without having to judge these by the standards of modern meaning cultures.

In this study, I will grasp the interplay between ‘meaning’ and ‘presence’ in the apprehension of the past by combining an analysis of the discursive

constitution of historical, eschatological and mythical *theories* and *ideas* in the youth movement with an analysis of the *practices* and *experiences* of the youth movement. In this way, my analysis will show how in modernity, presence was not absent, but a very real and culturally expressed mode of apprehending the world beyond cognition or consciousness. After all, the movement was – in the words of Thomas Nipperdey – primarily about ‘mood, about horizon, about implicit valuations, rather than about a consistent framework of thought or attitudes’.²⁴ Moreover, taking both ‘meaning’ and ‘presence’ into account enables me to show how these notions are intertwined, and how they only oppose each other in an ideal typical way, rather than being two mutually exclusive and incommensurable paradigms.

The German Youth Movement in Historiography

The German youth movement was a broad phenomenon. It developed out of the Wandervogel, an association that was established in 1901 to promote hiking among secondary schoolboys. After a few years, the initial Wandervogel-Ausschuß für Schülerfahrten e.V. (1901–1904), split up into various new branches, which then spread across Germany; all of them supported hiking among the generally higher educated boys and (since 1906) girls from middle-class families.²⁵ In 1913 most of these branches were again reunited. In the same year, the Freideutsche Jugend was established as an umbrella organization for a variety of academic student associations that were affiliated with the Wandervogel, or at least had similar ideas on social and educational reform. When these organizations dissolved in the economic and political turmoil of the young Weimar Republic, the youth movement was continued in a large number of local wandering groups and associations until a new elan sprang from the scouting movement, which led to the rise of the so-called Bündische Jugend. The Bündische Jugend was an umbrella concept that was used to refer to the various Wandervogel, scouting and – depending on the level of independence from adult influence – confessional youth associations that were developing new styles and new ideologies in the 1920s and early 1930s. Although these organizations had a less coherent organizational structure than the Wandervogel, from 1926 onwards, a significant number of *Bünde* merged in the Deutsche Freischar.²⁶ The saying goes that where three Germans gather, they establish an association – true indeed for the youth movement, but an impossibility for the historian.²⁷

We can discern three modes of emplotment in the historiography of the youth movement, which correspond to different interpretations of the movement’s ‘Romanticism’. The first is the narrative of the social emancipation of youth. This is perhaps the oldest narrative emplotment in youth movement historiography, for it was already present in the first history of the Wandervogel, published by former member Hans Blüher in 1912. Blüher’s *Wandervogel* has

been subjected to fierce criticism ever since its publication. Numerous factual incongruities have made the history questionable in the first place.²⁸ His idolatry of Wandervogel-founder Karl Fischer, his Freudianism, his anti-Semitism, his struggle with female involvement, and his early argument that homoeroticism was the prime cohesive factor of the movement have all added to the controversial status of his work. However, what remained influential is the basic plotline of his Wandervogel history: the idea that the German youth movement initiated a Romantic revolt of German youth against the petrified petty bourgeois culture of Wilhelmine Germany. In Blüher's view, Romanticism was deployed as a vehicle for emancipation. This idea has been especially popular in the field of the (history of) pedagogy. Educationalists and historians of education have interpreted the youth movement as an actor favouring the emancipation of youth – a fourth emancipatory movement after the emancipation of the bourgeoisie, the emancipation of the proletariat and the emancipation of women.²⁹ Although more recent literature has challenged this interpretation by emphasizing the involvement of adults and the continuation of bourgeois values within the movement, the basic assumption that the youth movement was a collective social entity that developed a new set of social values in opposition to bourgeois, Wilhelmine society remains unchallenged.³⁰

Second, there is the narrative of anti-modernism. Hans-Ulrich Wehler sums it up when he calls the Wandervogel 'anti-liberal and anti-democratic, anti-urban and anti-industrial', and recognizes an apparently cultivated 'jingoistic-Germanic social romanticism' to be an escape from bourgeois society.³¹ In this narrative, the 'Romanticism' of the youth movement was a reactionary, rather than an emancipatory force. The most widely read history of the youth movement in the English language – Walter Laqueur's *Young Germany* – also adheres to such a *Sonderweg*-interpretation of the history of the youth movement. In Laqueur's view, the Wandervogel had two options in their 'revolt' against the alienation of modern bourgeois society: they could either have adopted a progressive ideology of social revolution that would take society *beyond* bourgeois modernity, or a reactionary stance *against* bourgeois modernity. As Social Democracy was no option for the middle-class youths who made up the Wandervogel, what was left was a Romantic idolization and 'glorification of the past fraught with misgivings for the future'.³² Their Romanticism became apparent in their wanderings, in the songs they sang and in the tales they told. 'Their return to nature was romantic, as were their attempts to get away from a materialistic civilization, their stress on the simple life, their rediscovery of old folk songs and folklore, their adoption of medieval names and customs.'³³ Their veneration of the Middle Ages and exaltation of peasant life were plain reactionism for Laqueur, just as in his eyes Romanticism in general was a simple reaction to the Enlightenment. Although the youth movement remained immature and rather naive, it did not adequately prepare youth for the challenges ahead and made them unfit for democracy, freedom

and humanism.³⁴ Although many Wandervögel opposed National Socialism, Laqueur argues that they did contribute to the general *völkisch* Romantic atmosphere and to the apolitical attitudes that in turn facilitated the rise of Nazism.³⁵

Third, in the first decades after the Second World War, some authors connected the youth movement's 'anti-modernism' even more explicitly to the rise of Nazism.³⁶ The youth movement was criticized because the movement was intellectually inspired by the same *völkisch* and otherwise right-wing authors as the Nazis, and it was argued that the youth movement paved the way for National Socialism on the basis of the fact that the Hitler Youth copied the style of the Bündische Jugend to a large extent. Such arguments, however, are good examples of fallacious historical reasoning and have been debunked many times.³⁷ Yet, the apparent lack of sufficient English literature on the topic means that the interpretation of the youth movement as a proto-fascist movement still resonates today.³⁸ Literature that dismisses this thesis often does so in line with Laqueur, who argued that the situation was too complex to identify a singular causal connection between the youth movement and National Socialism.³⁹ Rejecting this thesis along with Laqueur can, however, imply following him in his *Sonderweg*-argumentation.⁴⁰

Recently the dominance of Laqueur's interpretation has been challenged. In *Turning to Nature in Germany* (2007), John Alexander Williams criticized earlier historiography for exaggerating the right-wing aspects of 'back-to-nature' movements in Germany – including the Wandervogel – on the basis of the fraught dichotomy of an irrational Romantic reaction to a rational Enlightenment. This critique is valid, because this fraught interpretation still echoed the caricature nineteenth-century liberalism made of Romanticism by unjustly equating it with the Restoration. Williams convincingly argues that the nationalism of the Wandervogel had little to do with the social Darwinist and racist nationalism that gained ground across Europe in the early 1900s, and that they dropped 'such jingoism in favour of an older, more humanistic and Romantic version of cultural nationalism'.⁴¹ Unfortunately, Williams trades the confusing concept of Romanticism for an even more confusing notion of 'nature'. Undefined, 'nature' still appears in his book as the Rousseauist antipode of modern, urban society.

Several recent publications have shifted attention to the individual and collective biographies of the members of the youth movement. In 2013, Barbara Stambolis edited a huge volume gathering biographies of sixty-one prominent members of the youth movement, tracing the influence of the youth movement on their individual life courses and through them the influence of the youth movement on society. The project showed the complexity and contradictions of relating individual actions later in the life course to adolescent experiences in the youth movement.⁴² This does not mean that there was no coherence in the memories and self-narratives of members of various *Bünde*, as Thomas Kohut showed in his analysis of the memories of the members of the Freideutsche

Kreis, an association established in 1947 by former members of the Bündische Jugend. Collective recollection, sharing memories and stories have generated a striking narrative coherence in the oral history interviews of the members of the Freideutsche Kreis that Kohut analysed.⁴³

The fact that after the Second World War members of the youth movement flocked together and developed a memory culture has provided German historiography of the youth movement with an additional problem to deal with. A significant part of youth movement historiography has been written by former members or sympathisers of the Wandervogel and Bündische Jugend. This accounts especially for historiography until the 1980s, when members of this specific generation were still productive authors.⁴⁴ Although many of their writings possess significant scholarly qualities, overall problems include the requirement of prerequisite knowledge by the reader, as many authors wrote from personal experience, and an apologetic stance when it comes down to the problem of Nazism. This resulted in a literature that, as Peter Stachura put it, 'when not downright polemical or propagandistic is of fragmentary and of limited value'.⁴⁵ More recently, Christian Niemeyer has shown that even Werner Kindt's landmark youth movement sourcebooks were edited in a way that expressed a 'reflexive denial' of those elements that could be connected to the rise of Nazi ideology.⁴⁶

Niemeyer goes even further on his quest to remind his readers of the 'dark side of the bright moon of the youth movement' by arguing that German historians still have a positive bias today.⁴⁷ By treating the pre-war Wandervogel movement as the 'actual' youth movement and denouncing the often politically radicalized Bündische Jugend to be 'unactual', the purported myth of political innocence was maintained.⁴⁸ In this way a discontinuity is constructed in which the Wandervogel and Freideutsche Jugend are dissociated from fascism and can be remembered as politically innocent. Although Niemeyer's critique of the selective bias of the editors of Kindt's sourcebook is valid, his attempt to reveal the 'positive' bias of the general youth movement historiography seems to be fuelled by a bias itself: the bias of guilt which also haunts German historiography. Both positions are rooted in the belief that the youth movement is part of, and an actor in, the course of causally related events which we usually call 'history'.

I would pose the question differently. Instead of treating the youth movement as a social force which played a role in the historical development of Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany, I will study the movement as an educative realm in which young people could orient themselves on their lives, the world, the past, the present and the future. Then, the question is not to what extent the youth movement codetermined German history, but to what extent the movement provided a milieu in which conceptions of past, present and future were negotiated. Hermann Mau warned as early as 1948 that interpreting the movement in line with the general developments of German history bears the danger of projecting the modern idea of history onto the youth movement:

This is obviously a fault of historical thought. We cannot categorize the youth movement by the concept of development which we are familiar with in historical observation, for the youth movement is not developing. The moving force springs from a consistent direct experience, which is not subjected to conversion.⁴⁹

More recently Kathleen Canning argued with regard to the Weimar Republic that ‘Weimar actors scarcely experienced time in the linear form that characterizes most narrative emplotments of the republic’s history’.⁵⁰ In order to be able to analyse the ways in which time was experienced, I will analyse the youth movement as a social realm in which the world was experienced and comprehended, rather than as a cohesive force in Germany’s historical development.

The ‘Conservative Revolution’ and the Limits of Historical Thought

In Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany, the youth movement obviously did not stand alone in its experiments with different conceptions of history. In the historiography of Weimar Germany, the Bündische Jugend, with the Wandervogel as its precursor, is often regarded as a part of Germany’s ‘Conservative Revolution’ – the denominator for a broad cultural movement in which analogous conceptions of history were developed. According to Armin Mohler, the ‘Conservative Revolution’ is an umbrella concept comprising a great variety of movements and individuals which together make up ‘that spiritual movement of regeneration that tried to clear away the ruins of the nineteenth century and tried to create a new order of life’.⁵¹ In his well-known dissertation *Die Konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918–1932* (1950), Mohler presents a taxonomy of this rather heterogeneous ‘movement’. He discerned *völkisch* authors, Young Conservatives such as Oswald Spengler and Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, National Revolutionaries such as the Jünger brothers, and also two more organized movements: the Landvolkbewegung and the Bündische Jugend. What this broad spectrum of conservative movements and individuals shared was a common attitude towards life, society and politics, rather than a concrete political programme or a well-defined ideology. ‘Conservative Revolutionaries’ agreed in their rejection of Enlightenment ethics, rationalism and liberalism – they basically agreed in the rejection of the entire mentality which had come to define modernity in the course of the nineteenth century. Rejecting early nineteenth-century conservatism as being merely driven by a reactionary attempt to restore the *ancien régime*, the ‘Conservative Revolution’ strove for a new synthesis in what was understood as a disintegrated and individualistic modern society. For many, the main source of inspiration for such a synthesis was the conceptually opaque, but intuitively ‘clear’ factor: ‘life’.

Because terms such as ‘life’ were understood in the Nietzschean sense as referring to a pre-rational domain beyond metaphysics, and because such

thought was based on the conviction that the world could not be grasped rationally and conceptual language was not adequate enough to capture life in its fullness, scholarly analysis of the 'Conservative Revolution' has been severely hampered. This is a great aporia of the 'Conservative Revolution': any analysis of this intellectual movement is necessarily incomplete, inadequate and reductionist, because the 'Conservative Revolution' defies the premises of analytic thought itself.

Mohler was well aware of this problem. He knew that dealing with the 'Conservative Revolution' meant dealing with an 'intellectual anti-intellectualism' that had produced a 'literature of the unliterary': this literature was convinced that the world extends far beyond what concepts and meaning can convey, and that the poetic word – the image – is better fit to disclose lived reality.⁵² Grasping together authors as diverse as Thomas Mann, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Stefan George, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck and a broad array of political, social, economic and cultural thinkers of the German right, Mohler contends that it is useless to try to understand their mentality through the endless list of ideological '-isms' they themselves and their opponents produced. Instead of attempting to analyse an incoherent discourse as a discourse, Mohler focused on *Leitbilder* or 'guiding images', such as *Große Mittag* ('Great Afternoon') or *Wiedergeburten* ('reincarnations'). He thus actually studied the 'Conservative Revolution' on conservative terms, which does not surprise, given the fact that he had been a sympathizer with the German Right ever since he had defected from the Swiss army in 1942 in an attempt to join the Waffen SS. In the Bundesrepublik, Mohler was a well-known proponent of political conservatism and an early critic of Germany's *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* – precluding Ernst Nolte's position in the *Historikerstreit* of 1986.⁵³

In the 1990s, the concept 'Conservative Revolution' received strong criticism from Stefan Breuer, who emphasized that the use of the concept as a denominator for the broad German right between National Conservatism and National Socialism was an invention of postwar intellectual history. The concept presupposed a non-existing coherent conservative discourse in the interwar period, which was sometimes also at odds with the self-image of its protagonists.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, Breuer too seems to recognize some coherence in the variety of conservatives in the Weimar Republic, as he proposes to replace the ambiguous term 'Conservative Revolution' with the term 'new nationalism'. After all, these conservatives were generally nationalists, albeit in an irrational and holistic way compared to the 'old' liberal nationalism of the *Kaiserreich*.⁵⁵ The fact that Breuer gives way for a reinstatement of the simplified opposition between 'nationalist' conservatism and 'internationalist' communism is not the only problem with such a deconstruction. When he states that 'no distinctive identity can be discerned' and that therefore the 'Conservative Revolution' should be 'erased from the list of political currents

of the twentieth century', Breuer apparently regards the German Right solely as a political movement striving for social and political change, rather than a worldview or collective mentality striving for a reorientation of the premises of modern thought. In my view Breuer disregards the utopian element of the 'Conservative Revolution' as his definition of conservatism remains in binary opposition to liberalism.⁵⁶

Nonetheless over the last two decades, broader historiography on Weimar Germany has increasingly recognized that the future horizon of the era was fundamentally open and that it was basically a 'playground' for formulating and living new conceptions of time and history. In his landmark review essay 'Did Weimar Fail?' (1996), Peter Fritzsche noted that it was time to put the dominant historiographical inquiry into the reasons of the failure of the Weimar Republic behind us, and, rather than thinking back from a dramatic ending, start focusing on the possibilities the era prompted. In this historiographical shift, Weimar was increasingly interpreted as a 'postwar workshop in which ... more or less fierce versions of the future were constructed', rather than an era that saw the birth and collapse of a democratic political system.⁵⁷ On a grass-roots level, the political divisions between left and right were not as clear-cut throughout the Weimar era as the street battles between the political left and right suggest. Political and cultural thought and action did not thrive as much on closed ideologies and systems of thought as earlier historiography contended – Weimar rather was an age of new ideas and social experiments in the light of an indeterminate future. The traditional 'split' in Weimar historiography between those who saw the era in reference to a German *Sonderweg* as a prelude to Nazism, and those who emphasized sudden discontinuity in the Nazi rise to power, seemed to have been overcome. It led Fritzsche to state that 'perhaps the long awaited "new paradigm" for German history has arrived in the form of the disavowal of the master narrative of the Republic in the name of the eclectic experimentalism of Weimar'.⁵⁸ The rise of Nazism could now be interpreted as the radical outcome of this contingency, rather than the necessary result of Germany's historical development – or its discontinuous antipode. In constructivist phraseology, Weimar became an era in which new social and political identities were (re-)constructed, and in which the nation was reinvented and reimagined.

Of vital importance for this interpretation of Weimar history was the publication of Detlev Peukert's *Die Weimarer Republik. Krisenjahre der klassischen Moderne* (1987). Peukert tried to think beyond the *Sonderweg* and reinterpreted Weimar history as a 'crisis of classical modernity'. 'Classical modernity' was the period in (German) history stretching from the 1890s to 1933 in which the great advantages – but also the disadvantages – of technological and industrial 'progress' became palpable in Germany. On the one hand there was exhilaration for, for example, Germany's colonial ambitions and the Zeppelin, while on the other hand the traditionally humanist educated class was challenged by the rise

of technicians and engineers. Nature preservation and the *völkisch* idealization of a bucolic Germany can be seen as reactionary attempts to cope with the increasing pace of social, economic and technological change.

But while for Peukert the term ‘crisis’ still referred to a factual condition, recent literature attempts to overcome such substantialism by analysing the ‘crisis’ in Weimar Germany as a narrative construct.⁵⁹ The narrative of crisis in Weimar Germany was, as Benjamin Ziemann puts it, a ‘cultural form which could be used to imagine and reflect upon possible scenarios for a renewal of society’, rather than a reflection of a measurable process of cultural demise.⁶⁰ Yet such conclusions hint at the same interpretation: Weimar Germany as an era with a fundamentally open horizon of expectation. Rüdiger Graf stressed that ‘crisis’ should be understood in its original meaning as a time of decision. According to him, historians have too often adopted the narrative of the critics of irrationalism, of the moderate rationalist republicans of the 1920s, which generally stated that a turn to irrational sentiments was a reflex caused by the socio-economic and cultural uncertainty in postwar Germany. From this perspective, Graf argues, ‘crises destroyed formerly secure expectations of the future, thereby creating insecurity and pessimistic sentiments among the people. Intellectuals allegedly overcompensated for this loss of security, producing apocalyptic fears or utopias and visions of stable orders, and thereby futurizing political, social and economic discourses’.⁶¹ By understanding crisis in its original Greek meaning, Graf disposes of the modern dichotomy between objective reality and subjective meaning – in which the latter represents the first. Speaking of crisis is not just the representation of, or reaction against, a crisis in (social) reality, but an existential moment of decision in which the situation itself is rendered in the light of future possibilities. His solution was to study the use of the term ‘crisis’ as a narrative strategy to cope with a (not necessarily or inherently negative) situation, rather than using crisis as an objective cause for uncertainty and impending doom.

Following Graf’s valid critique of the ‘naive’ conception of crisis in historiography, we can see that there is more at stake than a difference in the way ‘naive’ historians and Weimar intellectuals used the concept of ‘crisis’ to construct historical meaning in the emplotment of their narratives. Their conceptions of history and time also differ. We have already noted this problem with respect to the ‘Conservative Revolution’. In reference to the broader history of Germany, the problem of historical time becomes best visible in Jeffrey Herf’s well-known book *Reactionary Modernism* (1984).

Questioning the way in which a strong opposition against Enlightenment and democratic values was combined with an enthusiasm for technology in Nazi Germany, Herf analyses the question of technology in the work of a number of ‘Conservative Revolutionaries’ such as Oswald Spengler, Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, Werner Sombart and Hans Freyer. However, when we acknowledge that these authors tried to overcome modern historical thought,

it is valid to question the paradox of the ‘reconciliation’ between anti-modernist, illiberal, romantic and irrational German nationalisms and highly rationalistic technology that Herf observes. Herf’s analysis basically relies on the classical antithesis between progression and regression: technology represents progress, and conservative anti-modernism represents a backward-looking longing for times past. Both orientations thus presuppose a linear understanding of time as progression. This is exactly what makes reconciliation between conservatism and technology paradoxical.

When we bear in mind that this linear understanding of time was exactly what the ‘Conservative Revolution’ strove to overcome, we can ask ourselves whether an analysis that is itself based on a linear understanding of time contributes to the understanding of the ‘Conservative Revolution’. The question Herf should have answered is not why ‘illiberalism’ and ‘anti-modernism’ reconciled with technology in Weimar Germany, but why for interwar conservative thinkers, illiberalism and technology could not account as antithetic. The answer has already been given by Mohler: those who make up the ‘Conservative Revolution’ are those who ‘attack the foundations of the century of progress and still do not wish to restore any kind of *ancien régime*’.⁶² Despite the fact that contemporary historiography increasingly emphasizes the open ‘horizon of expectation’ in the Weimar Republic, the contemporary critique of the ‘Conservative Revolution’ as an analytical concept tends to overlook this temporal dimension: the shared attempt to overcome the progressive and linear conception of history.

Sources, Method and Outline of the Study

One of the advantages of the youth movement for the historian is that it has produced a great variety of sources that make it possible to counter an analysis of its historical thought with a study of actual experiences and practices. For my selection of the sources, this means that I will analyse the discourse of the main journals of the youth movement, of its main protagonists, leaders and intellectual teachers, and will juxtapose these thoughts with more personal testimonies in (local) journals, autobiographies and diaries.⁶³ Although I have translated quotations from these German sources into English, the specific use and meaning of notions such as *Erlebnis* compel me to keep using these concepts in the German language.

I will not solely rely on the traditional sources of youth movement historiography, which comprise the innumerable programmatic essays in which the youth movement’s leadership or other stakeholders tried to define the meaning of the youth movement for themselves, for others or for German society in general. I will treat the movement as a milieu in which young people grew up, educated themselves, made friends, tried to get hold of the world and ‘lived’. Therefore, I will counter these programmatic self-definitions with a focus on

experience. When focusing on experience, a problem with the sources arises that Theodor Wilhelm – member of the Deutsche Freischar until 1933 and professor in pedagogy at the University of Kiel – noted in 1963: ‘literature – what has been written and printed – is an inadequate source when one tries to capture the reality of the lived existence of a part of German youth. One ought to take this life itself into account’.⁶⁴

Hans-Joachim Schoeps noted as well that the youth movement was a deep, intuitive experience: ‘Who was actually moved by it, could never let it go, and who has not experienced the youth movement himself, but only heard of it or is only acquainted with it through literature – for them the inner essence remained hidden’.⁶⁵ Ironically, this is how historiography had acquainted the youth movement: through a reading of its literature, which is a reading of the literature of the movement’s leadership. In 1979 Ulrich Aufmuth still emphasized that almost the entire body of secondary literature on the youth movement ‘equals its symbolic, ideological, and programmatic expressions often in a culpable manner with reality’.⁶⁶ These sources do express the ideas and ideologies of the leadership of the movement and of others who tried to mobilize the movement for their own agendas, and often express what the youth movement ‘actually was’, or ought to be. Little do these sources reflect the lived experience of those involved in the youth movement. This problem was already noted in 1923 by the cultural philosopher Viktor Engelhardt, who stressed that the common practice of interpreting the movement by the words of its leadership leads to serious misconceptions, because in such analysis one only encounters the ‘leading spirits, who before the public perhaps never emphasize their inner being [*Wesen*] in full exposure. Also, the real life of the youth is certainly not mentioned in its literature – yes, this true life cannot at all be put into words’.⁶⁷

Whereas my analysis of the main discourse on history and time is indeed based on the writings of the main protagonists and leaders of the youth movement that were published in main journals, books, founding documents and other documents such as circulars, the experience of time and history will be grasped through an analysis of *Fahrtenberichte*, which are testimonies of the many hikes the associations undertook. There are two types of *Fahrtenberichte*. First, local chapters kept track of their hikes in *Fahrtenbücher*, books in which an account of the hike was written down after arrival. Second, *Fahrtenberichte* were published in journals. Contrary to the accounts in *Fahrtenbücher*, these are individual testimonies, often well written, as they were liable to be published. Whereas the *Fahrtenbuch* was a collective diary, often a literal account of the hike, *Fahrtenberichte* soon became a genre of its own. In 1932, Karl Will noted that ‘the *Fahrtenbericht* can currently be seen as the most common literary manifestation of youth’.⁶⁸ By then, it had become a genre with its own idiom and narrative structure.⁶⁹

The publication of *Fahrtenberichte* reached a peak in the years before the war. Many *Gaublätter* – journals of regional branches of the youth movement – were

established after 1911 and published numerous hiking reports. While the selection of the main journals I analyse equals the size and influence of the associations and *Bünde* that published them, the selection of local Gaublätter for the analysis of experiences is random to the extent that I do not intend to analyse or compare the *representation* of experience in these different journals. Rather than comparing the representation of experience between the ‘Protestant North’ and the ‘Catholic South’, or the ‘West-oriented Rhineland’ and ‘East-oriented Silesia’ – which would require a representative selection of sources from various German regions – my main question focuses on the tensions between ideology and experience. The *Erlebnisberichte*, which provide the content for this analysis, have been selected on the basis of the metareflections on experience itself by their authors. Thus, authors who simply depict what factually happened on a hike have less relevance than authors who reflect on their own emotions, intuitions, feelings and thoughts during a hike.

In the early 1920s, the number of published *Erlebnisberichte* dwindled. This was not only due to the organizational disintegration of the youth movement, but also to the economic crisis and hyperinflation, which severely hampered publication. In the second half of the 1920s, when the economy started to recover and the youth movement was reorganized under the aegis of the Bündische Jugend, the number of *Erlebnisberichte* rose again. Moreover, the radius of the hikes expanded enormously in the 1920s, reaching into other countries and even other continents. Not only did this result in an upsurge of travelogues, in some cases it would also lead to a professionalization of travel writing. The Nerother Wandervogel, for example, travelled the world on the revenues of the books and films they made of earlier trips. Although these sources will give us insight in the practical experience of the youth movement, we must recall that Engelhardt uttered that in general the essence of the Wandervogel can never be grasped in words; and it would indeed be rather naive to believe that it would be possible to reconstruct inner experience through the reading of a representation. But again, my aim is not to reconstruct the impossible, but to see how experiences and social practices such as travelling, dancing, singing and performing plays functioned as ‘presence effects’.

I will commence this study by recounting, in the first chapter, the history, up to 1914, of the Wandervogel – the youth movement with which the ‘free’ German youth movement commenced – and the Freideutsche Jugend, an umbrella organization of youth organizations that targeted students rather than secondary school pupils. But in parallel with this history of a young movement defining itself, I analyse how it related to the historical culture of Wilhelmine Germany. I focus particularly on two domains, namely school history and national remembrance. It was in opposition to these two factors that the youth

movement defined itself and started to search for alternative interpretations of the past. This chapter, however, mainly discusses the way in which the movement's leadership interpreted things.

The second chapter has a grassroots approach. It focuses on direct experience as an alternative mode of apprehending the past within the Wandervogel, and covers the period between 1910 and 1918. This chapter is meant to counter the first chapter, which still follows the discourse of the youth movement's leadership, and shows how, on the level of everyday activities such as hiking, the Wandervogel approached heritage – the material and immaterial traces of the past – empathically rather than cognitively.⁷⁰ This chapter is based on travel reports, out of which two recurrent concepts are distilled: direct experience (*Erlebnis*) and attunement (*Stimmung*). These will be guiding concepts in exploring how the past was experienced in hikes.

The third chapter takes us into the war, and traces how historical memory gained a different meaning, function and foundation as the result of an upsurge of religiosity in the movement. At the same time a generational conflict occurred, in which the pre-war youth movement was accused of an escapist Romanticism and individualism. Experience was still of vital importance, but rather than strengthening individual development, it was now put in service of an eschatological expectation that prophesized the coming of a new era, a new German *Volksgemeinschaft* and a new mode of being. The development of these eschatological beliefs is explained by tracing the development of a new religiosity that had taken hold of the movement in the course of the First World War.

The fourth chapter discusses the period after the downfall of the Wandervogel movement in the early 1920s. Under the influence of rogue Boy Scout organizations, the Bündische Jugend arose from the Wandervogel's ashes, and incorporated the new eschatological beliefs in its goals and practices. This chapter mainly focuses on the position of the Middle Ages within these beliefs – not only because there was a revival of medievalism in the movement, but also because the focus on medievalism can clarify the changed function and position of a historic era in a cosmological worldview.

Finally, the fifth chapter focuses on the period from around 1926 to 1933 – a period in which the Bündische Jugend increasingly looked and travelled abroad. A number of foreign travel destinations will be analysed in which the main question is how 'the abroad' fuelled the utopian expectation of the youth movement. Rather than interpreting the utopian in the conventional way, as an ideal society to be realized in the future through human agency, I ask the question: how was the youth movement's eschatology spatialized in these foreign journeys?

In the concluding chapter, I will summarize the findings of my research and provide a synthesis of the development of conceptions of history and time in the German youth movement.

Notes

1. Georg Götsch, 'Die Jugendbewegung als Volksgewissen', *Deutsche Freischar* 3 (1928) 117–19: 117.
2. *Ibid.*, 118.
3. *Ibid.*, 118.
4. *Ibid.*, 118.
5. *Ibid.*, 119.
6. In the last two decades, the body of literature on memory and identity has expanded rapidly. Knowing that any enumeration of literature would be incomplete, I would like to refer to these handbooks as entries into the field of 'memory studies': Astrid Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2005); Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008). On the topic of the youth movement, memory and identity, see: Sabine Autsch, *Erinnerung – Biographie – Fotografie. Formen der Ästhetisierung einer jugendbewegten Generation im 20. Jahrhundert* (Potsdam: Verlag Berlin-Brandenburg, 2000); Hans Ulrich Thamer, 'Der Meißner-Tag: Probleme einer jugendbündischen Erinnerungskultur', in Botho Brachmann et al. (eds), *Die Kunst des Vernetzens. Festschrift für Wolfgang Hempel* (Berlin: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2006), 399–409.
7. Jörn Rüsen, 'Introduction: Historical Thinking as Intercultural Discourse', in Jörn Rüsen (ed.), *Western Historical Thinking: An Intercultural Debate* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 1–11: 1.
8. Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'The Problem of Historical Consciousness', in Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan (eds), *Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 82–140: 110; Maria Grever, 'Nationale identiteit en historisch besef. De risico's van een canon in de postmoderne samenleving', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 119(2) (2006), 160–77; Jörn Rüsen, 'Historical Consciousness: Narrative Structure, Moral Function, and Ontogenetic Development', in Peter Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 63–85.
9. Wolfgang Hardtwig, *Hochkultur des bürgerlichen Zeitalters* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 101. See also: Detlev J.K. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity* (London: Penguin, 1991), 3–18, 275–81. For the concept 'historical culture', see: Maria Grever, 'Fear of Plurality: Historical Culture and Historiographical Canonization in Western Europe', in Angelika Epple and Angelika Schaser (eds), *Multiple Histories? Changing Perspectives on Modern History* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus Verlag, 2009), 45–62: 54–55; Jörn Rüsen, 'Was ist Geschichtskultur? Überlegungen zu einer neuen Art, über Geschichte nachzudenken', in Jörn Rüsen (ed.), *Historische Orientierung: über die Arbeit des Geschichtsbewußtseins, sich in der Zeit zurechtzufinden* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1994), 3–26; Bernd Schönemann, 'Geschichtskultur als Forschungskonzept der Geschichtsdidaktik', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtsdidaktik* 1(200) (2002), 78–86.
10. For the concept 'space of experience', see: Reinhart Koselleck, "'Space of Experience" and "Horizon of Expectation": Two Historical Categories', *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), 267–324.
11. Reinhart Koselleck, 'On the Disposability of History', in Reinhart Koselleck (ed.), *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 192–204: 196.
12. *Ibid.*, 199.
13. Hermann Mau, 'Die deutsche Jugendbewegung, Rückblick und Ausblick', *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 2(7) (1948), 135–49: 136.
14. August K. Wiedmann, *The German Quest for Primal Origins in Art, Culture, and Politics 1900–1933: die "Flucht in Urzustände"* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1995), 4.
15. Robert George Collingwood, 'History as Re-enactment of Past Experience', in Robert George Collingwood (ed.), *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), 282–302.
16. Dietmar Schenk, *Die Freideutsche Jugend, 1913–1919/20: Eine Jugendbewegung in Krieg, Revolution und Krise* (Münster: LIT-Verlag, 1991), 4.

17. The classical formulation of this social constructivism can be found in: Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1967). On the relationship between social constructivism and the 'linguistic' and 'cultural' turns in the humanities, see: Georg G. Iggers, *Geschichtswissenschaft im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 124ff; Alun Munslow, 'Constructionist History', in Alun Munslow (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies. Second Edition* (London: Routledge, 2006), 66–67.

18. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

19. Frank Ankersmit, 'Historical Representation', *History and Theory* 27(3) (1988), 205–28: 209–11.

20. Astrid Erll, 'Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction', in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (eds), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 1–15: 2.

21. Frank Ankersmit, *De sublieme historische ervaring* (Groningen: Historische Uitgeverij, 2007), 12.

22. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 19.

23. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, 'Presence Achieved in Language (With Special Attention Given to the Presence of the Past)', *History and Theory* 45(3) (2006), 317–27; Eelco Runia, 'Presence', *History and Theory* 45, no. 1 (2006) 1–29.

24. Thomas Nipperdey, 'Jugend und Politik um 1900', in Walter Rüegg (ed.), *Kulturkritik und Jugendkult* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1974), 96.

25. For a study of the social background of the *Wandervogel*, see: Ulrich Aufmuth, *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung unter soziologischem Aspekt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 106ff.; Walter Jantzen, 'Die soziologische Herkunft der Führungsschicht der deutschen Jugendbewegung 1900–1933', in *Führungsschicht und Elitproblem. Jahrbuch III der Ranke-Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Moritz Diesterweg, 1957), 127–35.

26. Clear estimations on the numerical size of the youth movement cannot be given. General estimations of the membership of the *Wandervogel* and *Freideutsche Jugend* range from 50,000 to 60,000 in 1914; the *Bündische Jugend* is estimated at 60,000 in 1925. The sphere of influence of the youth movement was, however, far greater than its numerical size, as style, practices and ideas were increasingly appropriated by adult-led youth organizations. According to Jakob Müller, the 'aura' of the youth movement was reaching some five million youths until 1933. On these estimations and calculations, see: Jakob Müller, *Die Jugendbewegung als deutsche Hauptrichtung neukonservativer Reform* (Zurich: Europa Verlag, 1971), 389–90.

27. For this saying, see: Hermann Bausinger, *Typisch deutsch: wie deutsch sind die Deutschen?* (Munich: Beck, 2000), 66–72. For the vast array of youth organizations in the Weimar Republic, see: Günter Ehrenthal, *Die deutschen Jugendbünde. Ein Handbuch ihrer Organisation und ihrer Bestrebungen* (Berlin: Zentral-Verlag, 1929); Rudolf Kneip, *Jugend der Weimarer Zeit: Handbuch der Jugendverbände 1919–1938* (Frankfurt a/M: Dipa-Verlag, 1974).

28. Cf. Walther Gerber, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der deutschen Wandervogelbewegung. Ein kritischer Beitrag* (Bielefeld: Giesecking, 1957), 62 ff., 72 ff., 96 ff.; Georg Korth, *Wandervogel 1896–1906: quellenmäßige Darstellung nach Karl Fischers Tagebuchaufzeichnungen von 1900 und vielen anderen dokumentarischen Belegen* (Frankfurt a/M: Dipa-Verlag, 1967), 27–28, 70 ff., 89–90.

29. Eduard Spranger, 'Fünf Jugendgenerationen 1900–1949', in Eduard Spranger (ed.), *Pädagogische Perspektiven. Beiträge zu Erziehungsfragen der Gegenwart* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1955), 25–57: 30. In generational theory, the youth movement was also regarded as an expression of the emancipatory dialectics of history: Karl Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations', *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), 276–320: 288, 309. On the problems of this type of generational thinking, see: Robbert-Jan Adriaansen, 'Generaties, herinnering en historiciteit', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 124(2) (2011), 221–37.

30. Research on the development of value orientations in the youth movement include: Aunfuth, *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung unter soziologischem Aspekt*, Otto Neuloh and Wilhelm Zilius, *Die Wandervögel. Eine empirisch-soziologische Untersuchung der frühen deutschen Jugendbewegung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1982).

31. Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), 127.

32. Walter Laqueur, *Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1984), 6.

33. *Ibid.*, 6.

34. *Ibid.*, 236–37.

35. When using the term ‘Wandervogel’, I refer to the totality of youth associations which referred to themselves as such – i.e. Der Ausschuß für Schülerfahrten e.V. (1901–1904), the Wandervogel – eingetragener Verein zu Steglitz (1904–1912), the Alt-Wandervogel e.V. (1904–1926), the Wandervogel, Deutscher Bund für Jugendwanderungen (1907–1911/13), the Jung-Wandervogel (1910–1916), the Wandervogel e.V. (1913–1922), and the various associations which continued the Wandervogel-legacy in the 1920s and 1930s. But when I use the term ‘Wandervögel’, I refer to the *members* of these associations.

36. Howard Becker, *German Youth: Bond or Free* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946); George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964); Harry E. Pross, *Jugend Eros Politik. Die Geschichte der deutschen Jugendverbände* (Frankfurt a/M: Büchergilde Gutenberg, 1965); Fritz R. Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961).

37. For the literature against the continuity thesis between the German youth movement and the Hitler Youth, see: Arno Klönne, *Jugend im Dritten Reich: die Hitler-Jugend und ihre Gegner* (Cologne: PapyRossa, 2003); Jürgen Reulecke, ‘Hat die Jugendbewegung den Nationalsozialismus vorbereitet? Zum Umgang mit einer falschen Frage’, in Wolfgang R. Krabbe (ed.), *Politische Jugend in der Weimarer Republik* (Bochum: Universitätsverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer, 1993), 222–43.

38. See, for example: Keith Hetherington, *Expressions of Identity: Space, Performance, Politics* (London: SAGE, 1998), 86–87.

39. Laqueur, *Young Germany*, viii.

40. See, for example: Peter D. Stachura, *The German Youth Movement 1900–1945: An Interpretative and Documentary History* (London: Macmillan, 1981).

41. John Alexander Williams, *Turning to Nature in Germany: Hiking, Nudism, and Conservation, 1900–1940* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 260.

42. Barbara Stambolis, ‘Einleitung’, in Barbara Stambolis (ed.), *Jugendbewegt geprägt. Essays zu autobiographischen Texten von Werner Heisenberg, Robert Jungk und vielen anderen* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2013), 13–42: 24.

43. Thomas A. Kohut, *A German Generation: An Experiential History of the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

44. Cf. W. Gerber, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der deutschen Wandervogelbewegung. Ein kritischer Beitrag* (Bielefeld: Gieseking, 1957); Werner Kindt, *Grundschriften der deutschen Jugendbewegung, Dokumentation der Jugendbewegung I* (Düsseldorf: Diederichs, 1963); Rudolf Kneip, *Wandervogel – Bündische Jugend 1909–1943. Der Weg der sächsischen Jungenschaft zum großen Bund* (Frankfurt am Main: Dipa-Verlag, 1967); Karl O. Paetel, *Jugend in der Entscheidung 1913 – 1933 – 1945* (Bad Godesberg: Voggenreiter, 1963); Karl Seidelmann, *Bund und Gruppe als Lebensformen deutscher Jugend: Versuch einer Erscheinungskunde des deutschen Jugendlebens in der ersten Hälfte des XX. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Wiking Verlag, 1955); Gerhard Ziemer and Hans Wolf, *Wandervogel und freideutsche Jugend* (Bad Godesberg: Voggenreiter, 1961).

45. P. Stachura, *The German Youth Movement 1900–1945: An Interpretative and Documentary History* (London: Macmillan, 1981), 5.

46. Christian Niemeyer, ‘Jugendbewegung und Nationalsozialismus’, *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 57(4) (2005), 337–65: 337; Christian Niemeyer, ‘Werner Kindt und die

“Dokumentation der Jugendbewegung”. Text- und quellenkritische Beobachtungen’, *Historische Jugendforschung. Jahrbuch des Archivs der deutschen Jugendbewegung* 2 (2005), 230–49; Christian Niemeyer, *Die dunklen Seiten der Jugendbewegung. Vom Wandervogel zur Hitlerjugend* (Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag, 2013), 19–63. Kindt published his sourcebook in three volumes: Kindt, *Grundschriften der deutschen Jugendbewegung*; Werner Kindt, *Die Wandervogelzeit. Quellschriften zur deutschen Jugendbewegung 1896–1919* (Düsseldorf: Diederichs, 1968); Werner Kindt, *Dokumentation der Jugendbewegung. Band III: Die deutsche Jugendbewegung 1920 bis 1933. Die Bündische Zeit* (Düsseldorf: Diederichs, 1974).

47. Christian Niemeyer, ‘Sozialpädagogik und Jugendbewegung’, in Christian Niemeyer (ed.), *Sozialpädagogik als Wissenschaft und Profession* (Weinheim: Juventa Verlag, 2003), 110–22: 107.

48. *Ibid.*, 107; Niemeyer, ‘Jugendbewegung und Nationalsozialismus’, 117–18.

49. Mau, ‘Die deutsche Jugendbewegung, Rückblick und Ausblick’, 136.

50. Kathleen Canning, ‘The Politics of Symbols, Semantics, and Sentiments in the Weimar Republic’, *Central European History* 43 (2010), 567–80: 572.

51. Because of incoherence, Mohler consequently puts the concept of the ‘Conservative Revolution’ in quotation marks. Armin Mohler, *Die konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918–1932. Ein Handbuch* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), xxviii. English translation cited from: Keith Bullivant, ‘The Conservative Revolution’, in Anthony Phelan (ed.), *The Weimar Dilemma: Intellectuals in the Weimar Republic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 47.

52. Mohler, *Die konservative Revolution*, 19.

53. Claus Leggewie, *Der Geist steht rechts: Ausflüge in die Denkfabriken der Wende* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1987), 187–211.

54. Stefan Breuer, *Anatomie der konservativen Revolution* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993), 1.

55. *Ibid.*, 186–87.

56. *Ibid.*, 181.

57. Peter Fritzsche, ‘Review: Did Weimar Fail?’, *The Journal of Modern History* 30(3) (1996), 629–56: 656.

58. *Ibid.*, 631.

59. Cf. Moritz Föllmer and Rüdiger Graf, *Die ‘Krise’ der Weimarer Republik: Zur Kritik eines Deutungsmusters* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2005), 19; Rüdiger Graf, *Die Zukunft der Weimarer Republik: Krisen und Zukunftsaneignungen in Deutschland 1918–1933* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2008).

60. Benjamin Ziemann, ‘Weimar was Weimar: Politics, Culture and the Emplotment of the German Republic’, *German History* 28(4) (2010), 542–71: 553.

61. Rüdiger Graf, ‘Either–Or: The Narrative of “Crisis” in Weimar Germany and in Historiography’, *Central European History* 43 (2010), 592–615: 598. See also: Graf, *Die Zukunft der Weimarer Republik*.

62. Mohler, *Die konservative Revolution*, 11.

63. For a review of the youth movement’s journals, see: Herbert Schierer, *Das Zeitschriftenwesen der Jugendbewegung: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Jugendzeitschrift* (Berlin: Lorentz, 1938).

64. Theodor Wilhelm, ‘Der geschichtliche Ort der deutschen Jugendbewegung’, in Werner Kindt (ed.), *Grundschriften der Deutschen Jugendbewegung* (Düsseldorf: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1963), 7–29.

65. Hans-Joachim Schoeps, *Die letzten dreissig Jahre. Rückblicke* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1956), 32.

66. Auffmuth, *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung*, 31.

67. Viktor Engelhardt, *Die deutsche Jugendbewegung als kulturhistorisches Phänomen* (Berlin: 1923), 119. Walter Sauer argues the same: Walter Sauer, ‘Die deutsche Jugendbewegung – Schwierigkeiten einer Ortsbestimmung’, in Walter Sauer (ed.), *Rückblicke und Ausblicke die deutsche Jugendbewegung im Urteil nach 1945* (Heidenheim: Südmarkverl. Fritsch, 1978), 9–41: 20.

68. Carl Will, *Das deutsche Jugendwandern* (Hilchenbach: Reichsverband für Deutsche Jugendherbergen, 1932), 11.

69. Cf. Helmut Henne, 'Zur Sprache der Jugend im Wandervogel. Ein unbekanntes Kapitel deutscher Sprachgeschichte', *Zeitschrift für germanistische Linguistik* 9 (1981), 20–33; Gerhard Schrank and Richard Schuch, *Wandervögel im Hunsrück: das Fahrtenbuch der Birkenfelder Wandervögel von 1914 bis 1933* (Nijmegen: Schank, 2001), 104–25; Erich Strassner, 'Zur Sprache der Wandervogel 1890 bis 1923', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 108(2) (2007), 399–422.

70. For this definition of heritage, see: Maria Grever, Pieter de Bruijn and Carla van Boxtel, 'Negotiating Historical Distance: Or, How to Deal with the Past as a Foreign Country in Heritage Education', *Paedagogica Historica* 48(6) (2012), 873–87: 880.