

BOUNDARY BREAKING AND COMPLIANCE:
WILL-ERICH PEUCKERT AND 20TH CENTURY GERMAN VOLKSKUNDE

Johanna Micaela Jacobsen

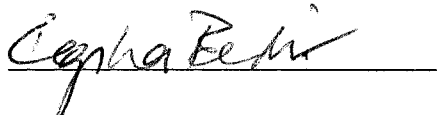
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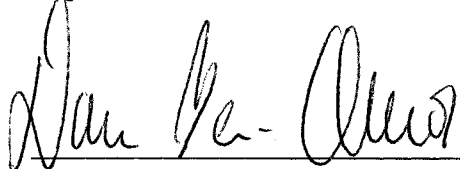
Folklore and Folklife

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*This dissertation is dedicated to
Alan Dundes (1935-2005),
who, with a twinkle in his eyes, introduced me to the field of folkloristics,*

and to my parents

Teresa Ann Ostler

and

Nils Peter Jacobsen:

Thank you for all your love and support. I could not have done this without you.

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Though only one name goes on the title page of a dissertation, in many ways a thesis represents the efforts of many: it contains not only the constructive criticism and feedback of those who made the endeavor possible, but also the support and love from individuals who stood by the writer during the long hours, weeks, months, and years it took to complete the task. I would like to step out of the spotlight and thank my mentors, my colleagues, my funding sources, the archivists and librarians, my friends and especially my family, who have all enabled me to stand where I am now standing. They deserve as much credit as I do, if not more, for helping me finish this dissertation. I firmly believe that the particularly cogent parts of this dissertation owe much to the individuals I thank below; any of the flaws, of course, are purely of my own making.

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Several scholars in Germany were very kind to offer me their insight into Peuckert's life and work, and I would like to thank Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich, Rolf-

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ABSTRACT

BOUNDARY BREAKING AND COMPLIANCE: WILL-ERICH PEUCKERT AND 20TH CENTURY GERMAN *VOLKSKUNDE*

Johanna Micaela Jacobsen

Regina Bendix

What is an individual's role in shaping disciplinary history? How does a scholar produce knowledge, caught between personal interest, academic customs, media attention, and societal pressures? And what are the repercussions of conducting scholarship during a time of political unrest? Archival research grounds this dissertation which resides at the interface between folkloristics and *Volkskunde* and disciplinary history. It examines these questions by thoroughly analyzing the case-study of Will-Erich Peuckert (1895-1969), the partially marginalized German *Volkskundler* often credited with saving the discipline of *Volkskunde* in Germany after World War II. Peuckert, a controversial figure, has faded out of recent interest in disciplinary historiography, in part because his research interests in the occult and in belief studies are now considered to be stagnant and taboo. Yet his contributions are nevertheless a fascinating insight into a discipline grappling with an ideological burden which came to a head during World War II, but which has foundations that go back much further. While Peuckert is known for his in-depth scholarship on folk narratives, his major contributions include writing a book which expanded the concept of folk, actively resisting the Nazis during World War II, attempting to internationalize the discipline,

and experimenting with witchcraft. These research areas were often in tension with a more stagnant discipline which, after World War II, was more focused on static analyses using collected data from the past. This dissertation, underscoring the dialectic between new research and a healing discipline, discusses the way in which Peuckert at one and the same time conformed to a set of disciplinary frameworks and rules, while at the same time breaking boundaries and making new advances for the field. The way in which one individual interacted with and ultimately shaped a discipline *in crisis* during a time *of crisis* is ultimately at stake.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE	i
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	x
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	xiv
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 Willi Erich Bruno Peuckert (1895-1969): A Biographical Sketch	32
CHAPTER 2 Shifting the Object of Study, Expanding the Category of ‘Volk’: Will-Erich Peuckert’s <i>Volkskunde des Proletariats</i>	89
CHAPTER 3 Beyond Borders: Attempts at Denationalizing a Discipline	147
CHAPTER 4 Scripting the Self and Negotiating Feedback: Will-Erich Peuckert’s Witchcraft-Experiment and the Production of Knowledge and Scholarly Identity	199
CONCLUSION	246
APPENDICES	256
Appendix 1: Maps	256
Appendix 2: Photographs	264
Appendix 3: Timeline	277
Appendix 4: Courses Taught	287
Appendix 5: Dissertations Supervised	297

Appendix 6: Major Publications by Peuckert	299
Appendix 7: <i>Norddeutscher Rundfunk</i> TV Transcript	304
A NOTE ON SOURCES AND NOMENCLATURE	306
BIBLIOGRAPHY	311
INDEX	329

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

MAPS

Map 1: Peuckert's Göttingen	256
Map 2: Gertrud and Will-Erich Peuckert's Flight in 1945	258
Map 3: Contemporary Map of Poland	260
Map 4: Prussia before 1905	261
Map 5: Silesia, 1905	262

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo 1: Will-Erich Peuckert's passport, dated May 22nd, 1941	264
Photo 2: Gertrud (Albrecht) Peuckert's passport, dated April 17th, 1942	265
Photo 3: Young Peuckert (undated, after the war)	266
Photo 4: Theaterplatz 7, 37073 Göttingen (first rental)	267
Photo 5: Lotzestr. 43, 37083 Göttingen (second rental)	268
Photo 6: Hainholzweg 58, 37085 Göttingen (first house)	269
Photo 7: Hainholzweg 64, 37085 Göttingen (second house)	270
Photo 8: Memorial Plaque	271
Photo 9: Peuckert, retirement (undated)	272
Photo 10: La fantastique expérience du Docteur Peuckert	273
Photo 11: Peuckert, NDR still shot, December 12th, 1967	274
Photo 12: Peuckert, NDR still shot, December 12th, 1967	275
Photo 13: Peuckert, NDR still shot, December 12th, 1967	276

INTRODUCTION

“Serendipity can be about finding something of value while seeking something entirely different or it can be about finding a sought-after object in a place or a manner that was not at all expected. The word is always about discovery [...], but the exact mixture of wisdom and luck [...] varies as the word is employed in different contexts” (Shulman 2004, XIV).

“It is not the object, though, but the desire, the process of searching itself, that yields existential meaning.” (Bendix 1997, 17).

“A study of [... biography ...] underscores the intellectual activity of the past as a human involvement, affected by the intricacies of personal interactions, the frustrations of failure, and the elation with success” (Ben-Amos 1973, 124).¹

With an accent harkening back to Silesia where he was born, the man talks of witchcraft. He talks of how to make a certain witches' flying unguent by mixing together toxic plants and herbs, including ones with names such as Aconitum and Acorum, at least according to some recipes (Peuckert 1960, 171).² He talks of how, as a young man, he actually tried out the unguent by smearing it all over his armpits and genitals. It was an attempt at a “scientific experiment,” conducted with a friend when they were in their twenties: he was simply curious about what the results would be. “It was a purely scientific experiment,” he states, “even if it took place in a private home, [not in a] [...] laboratory” (NDR 1968).³ The result was a 36 hour experience which resembled flight, as well as a massive hangover.

A slight man, shy, perhaps a bit impish, looks into the camera briefly, only to turn his head away for the rest of the three minute interview. He looks even more frail standing up, wearing a white lab-coat. He is 73 years old. He has a stroke as well as a life-threatening accident behind him, leaving him partially blind in his right eye and nearly completely blind in his left, only able to type with his left index finger. He has also lost his wife Gertrud to a deadly accident, and his oldest child, a son, has passed away from the aftereffects of starvation during World War II.

And in front of the camera, for a television segment on contemporary witchcraft crazes in Germany, he remixes the unguent on a set that resembles a stone-aged cave, with props including flickering lights, old beakers and a white lab coat, and spindly little plants whose leaves he cooks and boils into a greyish paste (cf. also Appendix 2). In the video he appears shy and even conventional, yet some of his research interests were anything but conventional for the discipline of *Volkskunde* which he had made his academic home (cf. Note on Sources and Nomenclature).

* * *

Volkskunde, akin to what in English-speaking universities is called folkloristics and which is now known throughout Germany after a series of name changes as *Europäische Ethnologie*, *Empirische Kulturwissenschaften*, or *Kulturanthropologie*, was, when Peuckert joined the discipline, a field primarily concerned with the collection and preservation of folk narratives with a general interest in the expressive culture of the nation's rural population (e.g., Bausinger 1999, 298).⁴

Though not always with success, the discipline's borders would be challenged, changed and shaped by Peuckert in unique ways.⁵

* * *

Will-Erich Peuckert (1895-1969), the man in the 1968 *Norddeutscher-Rundfunk* (NDR) television production, was what is known in German as *schillernd*: a shimmering person, translucent, chameleon-esque, at times fickle, predictable and unpredictable at one and the same time.⁶ He had a “*schillernde Persönlichkeit*”: a personality “that almost all found extremely inspiring, yet at the same time as difficult and hard to grasp, for many reasons attackable” (Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 16). Peuckert once even characterized himself as a “rebel and solitary individual”.⁷

A chameleon of a man, Peuckert’s bibliography of published works is as diverse as it is plentiful: impressively, he wrote over 23 academic books (many of which were published in second and even third editions), over 16 novels, over 237 articles (academic and otherwise), was the editor of over 42 books, and published 110 entries in the *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* (Encyclopaedia of German Superstitions) (cf. also Appendix 6). Yet regardless of the fact that “Will-Erich Peuckert was a well known individual, [...] little is known about his personality, and his academic and literary work” (Bönisch-Brednich and Brednich 1996, 7).⁸

Little has been written biographically about Peuckert, in no small part because of lacking information (ibid.). Of the little work that has been done, Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich has been the primary scholar to examine Peuckert’s life biographically, her efforts reflected in *Volkskundliche Forschung in Schlesien. Eine Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (1994) and in an article entitled “Will-Erich Peuckert (1895-1969). Versuch einer Biographie” (1996); these texts focused on Peuckert’s academic work before World War II. The fact that Peuckert’s work is less relevant today also contributes to the fact that little is known about Peuckert. Given the availability of new data on Peuckert’s life and work *after* World War II, this dissertation primarily looks at

his post-war accomplishments; the biographical chapter hopes to fill the research gap with new data.

Analysis of Peuckert's *work* is more prominent than the biographical materials about his life are. For the 100th anniversary of Peuckert's birth, Bönisch-Brednich and Rolf Wilhelm Brednich edited a volume that highlighted Peuckert's research interests and his contributions to the field (Bönisch-Brednich and Brednich, 1996). The volume included work by Heike Peetz on Peuckert's literary interests ("'Vom Schlesier und vom schlesischen Volk soll ich erzählen...' Will-Erich Peuckert als Volkskundler und Literat"), an article by Heike Bilgenroth and Maren Röber about Peuckert's habilitation (Peuckert's second dissertation, required for a professorship; "Peuckert und seine Habilitationsschrift 'Sibylle Weiss'"), a report by Johanna Moritz on his interest in the occult ("Schwarze und Weisse Magie"), several articles about his work on legends from Lower Saxony, and a piece by Wolfgang Jacobeit about Peuckert's interdisciplinary interests ("Will-Erich Peuckert 'Die Große Wende'. Ein Beitrag zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte der deutschen Volkskunde nach 1945."). Though excellent discussions of Peuckert's work, most, save Jacobeit's piece, did not embed Peuckert's work in the field. The fact that the event was also marked by the laudatory unveiling of a memorial plaque on Peuckert's birthday on May 11th, 1995, a permanent addition to Peuckert's last domicile in Göttingen, would have made critiquing his work more difficult (cf. also Appendix 2).

* * *

Characterizing an individual such as Peuckert is difficult, but one can make headway by examining some of the work Peuckert pursued. Which questions captured his interest?

Early in his academic career, Peuckert published *Volkskunde des Proletariats* (*VdP*; 1931), a 195-paged work on the *Volkskunde* of the working class. Though his earlier work has been more canonical -- collections of Silesian legendry, published primarily in Silesian journals such as *Schlesische Monatshefte* or *Mitteilungen der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde* -- *VdP* pushed the limits of the discipline, seeking to expand the scope of *Volkskunde* to include not only the rural peasantry, but the urban working class as well. Because it did not mesh with an ideologically corrupt and dangerous regime, it was a treatise which ultimately prompted Peuckert's forced first "retirement".

After losing his job and his *venia legendi* in 1935, in part because of *VdP*, Peuckert moved to his vacation home in the small Silesian village of Haasel, in the Katsbach mountains; he remained there with his first wife Gertrud until January 1945, when they were forced to flee from the advancing Russian troops. In Haasel, Peuckert wrote and published novels as a way to secure an income, drawing back on earlier literary interests that he had pursued as a young student. His hiatus from academic life during the Third Reich would help Peuckert secure a faculty position at the Universität Göttingen after the war, as one of the few individuals in *Volkskunde* whose work was not perceived as ideologically tainted:

"A man such as the Silesian Will-Erich Peuckert [...] made no ideological compromises through the end of the war. He lost his job in 1935 due to political reasons and constantly had to fear being arrested" (Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 108).

Peuckert remained the only full professor in the discipline for a number of years after the war, and was described as a "magnet" for the "young, post-war generation of *Volkskundler*" (*ibid.*, 116).

World War II would remain a marked chasm in Peuckert's life and career -- as it would be for his whole generation -- impacting much of his post-war work. Effectively, Peuckert would draw a line between the years up until his forced "retirement" in 1935 and his beginnings at Göttingen in 1946; at the same time, these years of dictatorship and instability would be the impetus for some of his most innovative work.

After establishing himself in Göttingen in the late 1940's, Peuckert renewed his focus on the field of narrative studies. Given the fact that genre-specific research is a cornerstone of the discipline, often providing its legitimating base, putting a sustained focus on folk narratives could have been a logistic move on Peuckert's part, work readily acceptable for a discipline which craved stability. Peuckert edited a series on German legends entitled *Denkmäler deutscher Volksdichtung* (Monuments of German Folk Narratives), as well as one on European legends (*Europäische Sagen*). He also attempted, after retirement, to create a *Handwörterbuch der Sage* (*HdS*, Handbook of Legends).

Though much of Peuckert's work on narratives was atheoretical (usually edited collections or articles on one individual legend), Peuckert did examine legends in light of their historicity (cf., e.g., Peuckert 1921, 1924, 1927, 1949, and 1960b). Peuckert once underscored that one of his contributions to the field had been his definition of "... the legend as a historical document ..., [... showing] their origins through individual examples." So Peuckert: "The legend, which is defined by most scholars [...] as [only] presenting itself as true, is the memorandum of a certain event and, as such, has a historical quality" (Peuckert 1956, 2). Peuckert distinguished that the legends' historicity existed primarily in a mythical and magic, non-enlightened world, and that this historicity also had an inherent poetic quality (ibid., 2, 5).

Peuckert's support of a *Volkskunde* which was, broadly conceived, an international discipline, led him to advance several agendas about Europeanization for a discipline recovering from World War II: "Volkskunde is a national as well as international discipline. [...] It is international inasmuch as no Volk exists alone and for itself; every Volk exists only with, next to, and through the other Volk groups of this earth" (Peuckert 1948, 3). *Especially* with its origins in Romantic Nationalism, ever more polarized towards national goals during World War II, and still now grappling with its history, the fact that Peuckert actively called for a border-transcending discipline is critical to examine in more detail.

Peuckert also played a role in making German ethnologists aware of the Swedish trend of folklife studies (*folklivsforskning*), offering a more holistic and sociological view on culture (Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 99-100; 116). This direction of research, including ideas of studying the *Alltag* -- the everyday -- would be adopted, adapted, and promulgated in Germany at a later point in time; the study of everyday life, still, at the turn of the 20th to the 21st century, provides much of the directive for research.

Still in the international vein, Kai Detlev Sievers highlights a volume of some significance published by Peuckert after World War II with his colleague Otto Lauffer (1886-1949), an attempted history of theoretical contributions to *Volkskunde* since 1930 (Sievers 1991, 15). The purpose of their book was to make clear to international scholars what research had been done during World War II in Germany; in the volume, Lauffer and Peuckert also doled out criticism to those authors whose works they found had been ideologically compromised (*ibid.*).¹⁰

Another benchmark of Peuckert's career was his attempt to use *Volkskunde*

data to better understand important historical junctures. Working with fields outside of the one he had found his academic home in was thus well within his range of comfort. His *Große Wende* (1948), written during his “exile” in Haasel, stands as an example; it looked at the history of the Reformation and the shift from the world of the peasantry to the world of the Bourgeoisie (Jacobeit 1996). Perhaps it was the ease with which Peuckert worked interdisciplinarily (as well as his formal education in the fields of history, German, and Volkskunde), which enabled him to think outside of the borders of the discipline he helped reconstruct after the war.

Peuckert is also remembered, anecdotally, as the individual who experimented with *magia naturalis* recipes from the 15th and 16th century. Yet despite any one of Peuckert’s contributions to the field, one observes that “two years after his death, the name Will-Erich Peuckert hit[...] upon an apathetic reserve [...] grounded in expired interest” (Zimmermann 1973, VII). By the 1970’s, Peuckert had been relegated in the rosters as someone only scantily worth remembering. Even the flourish of interest in Peuckert in 1995, on the 100th anniversary of his birth, seems to have faded.¹¹

* * *

Enigmatic, at times quite forward looking, at other times extremely conventional, the incongruities between the Peuckert who was “inspiring” and the Peuckert who was remembered with apathy is startling. This dissertation highlights a critical selection of Peuckert’s contributions to Volkskunde, couched in the context of an intellectual biography; what Peuckert’s work discussed here has in common is intrinsic attention on changing the scope of the field, expanding its focus, its geographic reference, or its methodologies. At the core of the discussion is the question of how an individual is able to produce knowledge at the intersection of disciplinary boundaries and epistemology,

personal and popular interests, sociopolitical pressure and contemporary geopolitics.

Grounded in the idea of *Wissenssoziologie* (the sociology of knowledge), the dissertation also works towards filling in the post-war gap of analysis about Peuckert, highlighting succinct moments of creativity and failure in his long and variegated career.

Several research questions guide the dissertation and are explored in its chapters:

1. What is the role of an individual in the production of disciplinary knowledge?
2. How can intellectual biographies which explore the context of knowledge production help give a better understanding of the history of a discipline?
3. How did Peuckert engage with his colleagues and the field, and how did Peuckert's work effect or change the field of *Volkskunde*?
4. Of what importance was Peuckert to the discipline?

Helge Gerndt, discussing the role and importance of disciplinary history, notes that

“[h]istorical - and that said, also discipline historical - events cannot, as a rule of thumb, be reconstructed with the goal of legitimating situations or positions of the present, or to create foundations for contemporary identities” (Gerndt 1988, 6; cf. also Stocking 1968).

This position is maintained throughout this dissertation, though it is also believed that an examination of disciplinary history and the life of an individual scholar aids in the understanding and unpacking of the contemporary field:

“Presentism [“as a means of constructing contemporary professional identities upon continuity with the past” ...] is fully commensurable with historicism. It is only when we fail to distinguish the contexts of our own theoretical positions from those of the past that presentism becomes a methodological millstone” (Darnell 2001, xx-xxi, 1).

At the same time, Mary Douglas points out that hagiographies do not make a good biographies; instead, the focus should be on “...the enigmas and problems of a person living in a particular time and place” (Douglas 1983, 759). This dissertation thus shows Peuckert's work -- and its enigmas and problems -- in the context of World War II and

its academic aftermath. Or, as Clifford Geertz asks, “[t]he trick is to figure out what the devil they think they are up to” (Geertz 1976, 228).

Intellectual Biographies and Wissenssoziologie

Disciplines are shaped by individuals who have chosen to pursue work within the boundaries of that field; they are also shaped by “an open system,” the interrelationships of institutions, publishing organs, funding, and current events and politics, to name a few (Henderson, as cited by Ben-Amos 1973, 121; Henderson 1975). In order to construct (or rather, reconstruct) the most complete disciplinary histories, one can begin with a close examination of those very scholars, and then to move in ever spiraling circles outwards, to the community of academic peers that worked closely with them, to the institutions which were home to those scholars, to the questions which drove them to do their research, and, finally, to the larger, intellectual climate at a specific moment in time and place.

An individual is more than just her work: she is made up of her life history, of family relationships, of happy and tragic moments, and moments of stasis, all of which shape and impact her scholarship. And while a person’s life history shapes their scholarship, just as much as their scholarship impacts the way they live their life, so too do socio-cultural, political, and even economic contexts influence the way a scholar thinks about the world and her scholarship:

“A study of [... biography ...] underscores the intellectual activity of the past as a human involvement, affected by the intricacies of personal interactions, the frustrations of failure, and the elation with success” (Ben-Amos 1973, 124).¹²

In other words, a thorough disciplinary history is an attempt

“...to display the historical integrity of that science in its own time [..., and to discover the relationship] between [the scholar’s ...] views and those of his group, i.e., his teachers, contemporaries, and immediate successors” (Kuhn 1996, 3).

Ideally, such a project takes as its starting point an individual, her life, and her work, and uses it concretely to discuss a problem, an issue, or a set of questions for the discipline. That is the foundation of an intellectual biography.

Wissenssoziologie, the sociology of knowledge, developed over the course of several decades with the basic premise that the social, political, economic and cultural environments in which work is produced will influence knowledge production. Max Scheler (1874-1928) coined the phrase in 1926 in his book *Probleme einer Soziologie des Wissens*, though work by Wilhelm Jerusalem (1854-1923) on the sociology of recognition helped set the stage (Jerusalem 1909).¹³ Reacting to the pronounced social fragmentation felt at the time, Scheler focused on the notion of group, and “the laws by which knowledge distributes itself within that group” (Stickers 1980, 23; Sheehan 1977, 61, referencing Heidegger). From Scheler’s original ideas on group dynamics and the way knowledge operates within society follows the idea that the *forms* of mental acts, through which knowledge is gained, are always, *by necessity, co-conditioned sociologically*” (Scheler 1980, 72-73. Italics in original).¹⁴ This idea resurfaces particularly in the discussion of Peuckert’s work on the witches’ unguent experiment, especially the interaction and play between his own cognitive processes and the reaction of the public.

Karl Mannheim’s (1893-1947) work *Ideology and Utopia* (1929, first English translation 1936) gave the field of study a more narrowly defined sociological bent. It is the individual, and not the group (as with Scheler), who comes to the forefront in

Mannheim's work, making his ideas more readily applicable to intellectual biography (Wirth 1936, xxix). As Wirth discusses, Mannheim also helped create a growing interest in knowing not only *about* the ideas of scholars, but about the lives of scholars who shaped these ideas, since "we are not merely conditioned by the events that go on in our world but are at the same time an instrument for shaping them" (ibid., xxii). Mannheim saw ideology and utopia as factors which distorted reality, prompting awareness of them as an influence on thought and knowledge production. The ideas Peuckert shaped clearly were impacted by his biography; Peuckert's experience with National Socialism and the loss of his job would noticeably feed into his work to Europeanize Volkskunde.

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966) popularized Mannheim's idea, attempting to empiricize the sociology of knowledge: "*The sociology of knowledge must concern itself with everything that passes for 'knowledge' in society.*" (ibid., 26-27. Italics in original). If the sociology of knowledge understands that context influences knowledge production, and knowledge, in turn, is broadly defined as "*any* body of 'knowledge' [...] socially established *as* 'reality'", then calling for an analysis of the social construction of reality is the next step (ibid., 15. Italics in the original):

"The central question for sociological theory can then be put as follows: How is it possible that subjective meaning *become* objective facilities? [...] How is it possible that human activity [...] should produce a world of things [...]? In other words, an adequate understanding of the 'reality *sui generis*' of society requires an inquiry into the manner in which this reality is constructed. This inquiry, we maintain, is the task of the sociology of knowledge" (ibid., 30. Italics in original).

Despite a strongly established field interested in the context of knowledge production, Mitchell Ash underscores that we are still far more likely to look at ideas

such as “‘the rise of capitalism’ or ‘the industrial revolution,’” than we are to “to describe and analyze the middle level situation in which ideas are actually produced, propagated, or applied” (Ash 1982, 348). And Fredrik Barth notes that scholars still look more frequently at knowledge itself than at its production (Barth 2002). Perhaps part of the difficulties inherent in studying knowledge production is the tenuous relationship between the past and the present, and the difficulties the ethnographer has in negotiating the two:

“Past and present stand in complex relation to one another, and those who engage in historical scholarship walk into this complexity. In acting within this complex they change not the past itself but instead our perception of it in the present, and thereby perhaps also the future” (Fenske 2007, 86).

Fenske would concur that this relationship offers up possibilities as well.

Despite this double-edged sword, intellectual biographies of ethnographers that focus on ideas in their historical context are not lacking. Studying the way in which individual curiosity and institutional need get balanced or stay imbalanced, George Stocking has made his name as the most prominent historian of anthropology, pursuing interpretative history. It is Stocking who warns of presentist approaches to disciplinary histories, and argues that the past should be accepted on its own terms, “[...] instead of attempting to read the past in the present” (Zumwalt 1988, xii, paraphrasing Stocking 1975).

Regna Darnell, who has also worked on the histories of Canadian and American anthropology and on Franz Boas, wrote a biography of Edward Sapir (1884-1939) which specifically focused on the interconnection of ideas in Sapir’s life and work, the *Wissenssoziologie* surrounding his academic endeavors (Darnell 1990). Relying on Stocking’s style of intellectual history, she lays out a chronological denouement of his

work, which follows Sapir's own chronological or biographical development. Darnell also points out that, generally, "the passage of time allows greater leeway in treating the complexities of biographical events because the intensity of personal involvements is lightened" (ibid., xiv). Perhaps this is why Peuckert was given short shrift just a few years after his death, but now has reemerged as an interesting figure over a century after he was born.

The Serendipity of Finding Peuckert

Serendipity -- defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "the faculty of making happy and unexpected discoveries by accident" -- paved the way to Peuckert in the first place (cf. also Merton 2004; Shulman 2004). Since "[...] an apparently arbitrary element, compounded of personal and historical accident, is always a formative ingredient of the beliefs espoused by a given scientific community at a given time," so is that arbitrary ingredient, serendipity, critical for historiographic research (Kuhn 1996, 4). To what extent is the work we take up fostered by such chance encounters?

Much is owed to such unexpected discoveries in the course of doing library or field research; it is, more often than not, the book right next to the one we set out to retrieve that gives us the most startling information, or the different angle that we had not yet considered. Chance encounters also reflect the fact that we, as ethnographers, are the tools through which gathered information is processed: we have the ability to use critical thinking facilities, to analyze, and to realize when something stands out as important and worthwhile to examine. Serendipity can thus breathe a freshness into projects, and can offer up creative and suggestive lines of thinking. As an agent in its

own right, serendipity should be recognized as a contributing factor in the production of knowledge.

I discovered Peuckert while researching not witches' unguents but rather the mobility of *Volkskundler*, Volkskunde scholars, and how their mobility might have impacted the ways in which they constructed their discipline. The question of whether a mobile scholar with international connections and interests might have a different outlook on the purpose of Volkskunde was at the forefront of my research agenda; highlighting the fact that the lens through which the discipline conducts its research had not always been a national one was key. I intended to focus on travel as a revisionist way to reorient the discipline, since travel was a useful standpoint from which to call for a transnational approach to scholarship.

Especially since the hyphen between nation and state is growing weaker and decisions regarding sources of funding are becoming more dubious (e.g., a visible increase in funding for Near- and Middle Eastern languages due, in part, to current geopolitics), decoupling the study of folkloristics or Volkskunde (or, for that matter, any research endeavor) from national ties seemed a critical endeavor to pursue. Besides the fact that nationally-bound research does not fit the contemporary reality of intellectual, human, and capital flow between countries, it is dangerously limiting, both in terms of scholarship and for the people affected by such research (cf., e.g., Appadurai 1996). Especially since the past decades have seen an increased interest from disciplines including cultural studies, history, anthropology, and all ethnic studies fields in the *material* that folklorists or Volkskundler study, providing a corrective for Volkskunde's underlying concepts would allow the discipline to be keenly aware of contemporary developments, and would provide a firm grounding for interdisciplinary cooperation.

As such, my project intended to open up new visions of research for Volkskunde, through in-depth, reevaluative work, and Peuckert, who had pushed for a distinctively European discipline, was to become one of my case studies in this reevaluation. Arriving at the *Handschriftenabteilung* of the *Niedersächsische Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek* in Göttingen (the Handwriting Department of the State and University Library of Lower Saxony), I asked for the available information on Peuckert (cf. also A Note on Sources and Nomenclature).

The archivists pointed me towards a 167-paged book, a catalogue of their Peuckert holdings: all in all, the library had 24 “running meters” of shelving filled with documents by and about Peuckert in their storage facilities, which, according to the staff, had yet to be looked at since they were catalogued in the late 1990’s.¹⁵ This was Peuckert’s *Nachlass*, his academic and personal effects, as of yet mostly unreferenced by other books. It contained small scraps of paper with jotted notes and fully typed manuscripts, edited by Peuckert in his fine and small handwriting, not infrequently in purple ink. It contained copies of his professional correspondences, lecture notes on the backs of phone bills, as well as autobiographical material.

This new data, mostly unexplored, with the potential to open up Peuckert’s own world and his role for the field, put travel almost immediately onto the proverbial back burner, still simmering for future projects, and Peuckert moved to the front. At first I was truly delighted with not only the sheer quantity of materials, but with its minute details: the fact that Peuckert chose to write with a lavender fountain pen whenever possible, often asking his first wife Gertrud to purchase new ink cartridges stood out, as did the fact that Peuckert did not waste a single scrap of paper, writing on the back of receipts and advertisements. It was a privilege to sift through new data on a

daily basis, a gateway into the life and work of an individual only alive on paper. And yet there were sobering frustrations, too, with sloppy handwriting, lacking citations, and questions left unanswered. To examine Peuckert's *Nachlass* meant to raise new questions.

The question of doing work which sought to inter- and thus denationalize research remained of keen interest, and comes to fruition in the examination of Peuckert's own efforts to Europeanize *Volkskunde*. But given the critical time during which Peuckert worked, the project was expanded to examine his contributions which struggled against the confines of an established field as a way of understanding how and under what circumstances knowledge is produced by an individual particularly during a time of political instability and consequent restructuring.

And thus I began to dig deeper into Peuckert's life and work. I found a man who was put out of job for over 10 years by refusing to cater his work to the ideology of an insidious regime. A man who lost his wife in a car crash in 1947 that rendered him partially disabled for the rest of his life, only able to type with his left index finger, squinting out of one eye. A man who wrote a large number of relatively bad novels. A man who, in his mid twenties, experimented with recipes from the 16th century, hallucinated, wrote about his pivotal experience, and dealt with the repercussions for the rest of his personal and academic life.

A Note on Methodology and Archival Research as Ethnography

The fact that Peuckert kept such an enormous paper-trail about his life and work is telling, a reflection of his personality. He was keenly interested in self-documenting, indicating not only a significant ego, but also a sense of importance about

his own work. Had he not cared about his legacy, he might not have held onto all of the documents that he kept until his death. Yet it is precisely these documents that allow an assessment of Peuckert's work.

Darnell points out that biography "is dependent on the accessibility of documentation" (Darnell 1990, xiv). In Göttingen, information on Peuckert was easy to come by. The 24 running meters at the Handschriftenabteilung of the library were subdivided into classes of data, sorted, catalogued, and paginated:

1. Letters (all categorized under Cod. Ms. Peuckert A)
 - 1.1. General Correspondence
 - 1.2. Correspondence with Publishers, Bookstores, Used Bookstores, and the Press
 - 1.3. Topical Correspondence
2. Personal Matters (all categorized under Cod. Ms. Peuckert B)
3. Manuscripts, Collections of Materials, and Book Reviews (all categorized under Cod. Ms. Peuckert C)
4. Unpublished Manuscripts and Collections of Materials (all categorized under Cod. Ms. Peuckert D)
5. Class and Lecture Notes (all categorized under Cod. Ms. Peuckert E)
 - 5.1. Class Notes
 - 5.2. Undated Lecture Notes
 - 5.3. Dated Lecture Notes
6. Miscellany (all categorized under Cod. Ms. Peuckert F)
 - 6.1. W.-E. Peuckert's Collections
 - 6.2. Manuscripts belonging to Others

These archival materials make up the bulk of data that was used to write this dissertation (cf. also A Note on Sources and Nomenclature).

Zumwalt posits that disciplinary histories resemble an ethnography within documents of the past, and Darnell underscores that they are "'fieldwork' with archival documents", all the while following the "methodological commitment to the reality of events as perceived by participants" (Zumwalt 1988, xiii; Darnell 1990, xv; Darnell 2001, xxii). And Fenske notes, drawing on MacDonald:

“Ethnographic research should open itself, draw more on historical dimensions, and more fully investigate the many relationships and connections between past and present. That would mean, among other things, investigating past societies on their own terms and not doing so from a ‘presentist’ perspective” (Fenske 2007, 74).

The particular training that folklorists enjoy, with a background in the performance approach, and an interest in text, texture and context and in an individual’s creative output, enables a unique read of historical documents, letting them stand in proxy for the individual that produced them.

The methodology of data gathering is an involved, interactive process between the scholar and her data. Four general questions guided the exploration of archival materials:

1. How did Peuckert construct and present his own vision of his work and what did he highlight?
2. How did his colleagues view and interpret his contributions to *Volkskunde*?
3. How did the far-reaching impact of World War II play into the way in which Peuckert grappled with his work and contribute to his selection of research topics?
4. And what unique sources could shed more light on Peuckert as an individual and as a scholar?

To explore the data and to address these guiding questions, I surveyed Peuckert’s lecture notes from the time he taught in Göttingen (1946-1960); (Cod. Ms. Peuckert E), his correspondence with colleagues, family, and the general public (Cod. Ms. Peuckert A), his publication record (Cod. Ms. Peuckert C and D, and published work), a collection of book reviews (Cod. Ms. Peuckert C), as well as diverse newspaper articles (Cod. Ms. Peuckert C).

Peuckert explained that his main interests in *Volkskunde* circled around questions of culture complexes (*Kulturkreise*) and a discipline expanded enough to view

each *Kreis* (peasant, working class, Bourgeoisie, etc.) in its own right.¹⁶ Disciplinary histories, in turn, have highlighted that Peuckert's main contribution to the field was his resistance to National Socialism, and point to his role as a rebuilders of the field after World War II. And the collection of over three dozen letters from the general public to Peuckert about the witch unguent recipe put another interesting facet of his life into the spotlight. Out of these three arenas emerged the focus on Peuckert's *Volkskunde des Proletariats*, on his attempts to Europeanize the field, and on his witchcraft experiments.

The data that addressed these prominent areas was then more thoroughly examined, with special focus on Peuckert's engagement and interaction with the field of *Volkskunde*. Marked by the spirit of cooperation on the one hand, Peuckert not infrequently found himself up against the disciplinary canon and its restrictions; his work reflects this dynamic and struggle.

Göttingen's Handschriftenabteilung, though a wealth of information for the post-war years, it did not have much on Peuckert's time in Breslau and Haasel. Besides passports and a few personal letters, most early material was lost when Peuckert and his wife Gertrud fled from the advancing Russian troops in 1945, leaving everything behind. As these years have previously been so meticulously surveyed in Bönisch-Brednich's *Volkskundliche Forschung in Schlesien* (1994), I decided to leave out Peuckert's academic work during his years in Breslau (*Wroclaw*).¹⁷

Bönisch-Brednich's work alerted me to several other archives with information on Peuckert. I visited the *Volksliedarchiv* (Folksong Archive) in Freiburg and the *Staatsarchiv* (National Archives) in Berlin, both of which had significant materials on Peuckert's work and correspondence during World War II.

As luck would have it, just two weeks before I left Göttingen to return to the United States, Peuckert's only daughter from his second marriage, Sylphia, informed me of what she called a "crypto-Peuckert archive" in Berlin, housed in the *Stiftung Archiv* of the *Akademie der Künste* (the Foundation and Archive of the Academy of the Arts).¹⁸ It contained letters between her father and Maria Hauptmann, the widow of the well known Silesian author Carl Hauptmann, written between circa 1924 and 1939. This personal information about Peuckert's young adulthood had never been analyzed, and it helped contribute to the assessment of his personality.

* * *

The archival material from the Handschriftenabteilung in Göttingen was not always without problems: some lectures were imprecisely dated, as were some letters. The biggest issues were faced with Peuckert's three undated autobiographical texts, Cod. Ms. Peuckert D12, D13 and D14. On the one hand, they offered information about Peuckert, harkening back to his childhood and his relationship with his family. On the other hand, the autobiographies may have excluded certain things, and certainly embellished other parts. But as Peuckert once pointed out, discussing German *Volkskunde*: "Somebody who says something or tells a story wants to tell something useful, something which for *him* is useful, correct and true" (Peuckert 1938, 19). The veracity of the events is less important than the fact that Peuckert chose to narrate them as such.

The autobiographical texts, in fact, slip readily into fiction, moving from the Peuckert who experimented with witchcraft recounting his experience, to a fictionalized Peuckert, who fought magic duels with rivals in love. Being *aware* of these textual discrepancies is the first step in establishing their efficacy as source material.

Corroboration with other archival sources is also useful, not least of all relying on other voices (colleagues, friends, family) to get a unique picture of Peuckert. Regardless, the autobiographies offer an impression of Peuckert as an individual, and also a glimpse at alternate means by which an ethnographer can express himself.

Nor is the intended audience of the autobiographical texts clear: while they might have been meant for publication and thus public consumption, they may have also been private memories Peuckert meant to jot down for himself. It is likely, though, given his penchant for self documenting, that Peuckert meant them for the public.

Though memory may chose to exaggerate or downplay, invent or repress certain information, there is nevertheless a wealth of knowledge to be garnered from these autobiographies -- certainly more than has been available before. If the biography in this dissertation is skewed in any particular direction, then it pushes towards the direction that Peuckert intended to direct it towards: a picture of his life, painted in his own words.

Accountability and "Thirds"

Ethnographers often ask themselves how they will present their data in publication, as it is gathered from living individuals who care about how they are represented on the page: How does one quote? Are the names of people and the details of events changed to protect their identities? Do "informants" get co-authorship? These questions were explored -- beginning in the late 1970's and particularly in the mid 1980's -- by the so-called reflexive turn in ethnography. James Clifford and George Marcus' *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986) turned the focus of scholarship onto the researcher herself, underscoring the intrinsic interpretative

nature of ethnographic research in general, and ethnographic *writing* in particular. The realization that the researcher herself, with her own cultural habitus and set of knowledge, was the tool through which knowledge would be filtered and represented in text revolutionized the field of anthropology on the one hand, and started a domino effect of ever-increasing self-scrutiny and focus on accountability.¹⁹ How does this question of accountability play out for the archival scholar?

Implicitly raising this question in his polemic plenary at the 2004 Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society in Salt Lake City, Utah, Alan Dundes (1934-2005) blamed the decline of folkloristics and its deplorable state at universities on ethnographic scholars being intimidated by informants (Dundes 2005). Referring to the cases of Henry Glassie's work in Ballymenone and Barre Toelken's reappropriation of primary data to his Navajo family, Dundes noted:

“[...] I fear for our field of folkloristics if our very best scholars are timid about analyzing their data or worse yet impelled to destroy that data. The field cannot possibly advance if data is destroyed or if we are afraid to analyze it fully for fear of offending someone [...]” (Dundes 2004).²⁰

Dundes' rhetoric creates an uncomfortable dichotomy between an ethical responsibility towards the discipline as a whole and the “advancement of science” on the one hand, and an ethical responsibility and obligation towards the informant, the friend who has opened up his or her life to the scholar on the other. Though the two viewpoints are not necessarily mutually exclusive, this opposition puts the *archival* or library scholar in the position of asking: To whom or towards what should my obligations be?

Questions of which data is published and which is left out -- and to whom we are accountable to -- should be and often is a personal, ethical decision, to be made on a

case-by-case basis, without forgetting the humanist roots of the discipline. Yet coming from a library scholar like Dundes, who emersed himself wholeheartedly into written knowledge, the criticism of “informant intimidation” is misplaced and misformulated. A more apropos question might be to what extent library scholars face a similar dilemma. Are they also forced to decide between an obligation towards the discipline and an obligation towards their sources? Do archival scholars, as Dundes’ critique implicitly indicates, have unlimited freedom to pursue research for the sake of research, and subsequently publish those results?

The dichotomy between archival and ethnographic scholars is a mistaken one when we look at accountability: archival scholars face many of the same problems as ethnographers, especially if we see archival research as an ethnography of text. Regardless of whether a scholar does archival or field-based research, there are constraints under which she operates: though it may appear as if the archival scholar has all the freedom in the world towards “informants” and data, as Dundes implied, the ethnographer *cum* historian has accountability to any number of obligations. Vincent Crapanzano would call these obligations “Thirds”, and these Thirds certainly impacted the writing of this dissertation (Crapanzano 1992).

Discussing disciplinary epistemologies in his library-based monograph *Hermes’ Dilemma and Hamlet’s Desire: On the Epistemology of Interpretation* (1992), Crapanzano notes that “The Third”

“...may be conceived as the (absent) interlocutor in those silent but forceful secondary, or shadow, dialogues that accompany any primary dialogue (for example the dialogue between the student of anthropology who engages silently with his mentors back home and all they symbolize as he converses with his friends in the field)” (ibid., 93).

The idea of conversing with “friends in the field” can be replaced with the idea of

engaging with archival notes, making Crapanzano's theories as applicable to archival work as they are to ethnographic fieldwork, as they later are to the writing which produces the monograph. Academic knowledge is strongly impacted by collegial advice, or any number of other Thirds one is in dialogue with, such as "...notions of the law, convention, reason, culture, tradition, language, or tact" (ibid., 92).

The Third influences the process of going through data and imposes both conscious and unconscious limitations. What I examined was informed by contemporary issues I saw being addressed in the field, including the question of how to grapple with a discipline still tied to national interests while the world around it has seen major geopolitical reshuffling, and changes in the flow of objects, peoples, ideas, and currency. The discipline itself is another Third of sorts. Though not "informant intimidation" in the sense that Dundes implied, it is still a part of the process of gathering information in a library setting; we implicitly interpret by focusing on particular data or on specific questions which tie into or react against the field as we know it.

As Peuckert's closest living relative, Sylphia Peuckert's opinion also mattered a great deal to me; yet when I met her, she told me that she had had such a tenuous relationship with her father that I should say whatever I wanted or needed to. To paraphrase: "There should be no hagiography", said Sylphia Peuckert, "represent my father as you see fit" (Peuckert 2004). In contradistinction to "intimidation," I had been given the proverbial green light to write whatever I thought needed to be said.

Archives themselves also impose their own limitations and influence the research *and* the writing process. Notes Fenske:

"If historical ethnography means, among other things, that one regards

the archive itself [...] as a locus of research, then this locus can be approached at a variety of levels. It is a physical location in which to conduct research and a space in which what historical documents reveal to us can be discussed. Yet it is also a place with multiple tensions between the present and the past, where the research as a person interacts with the archive personnel, with other researchers and of course with the people who, to a greater or lesser extent, ‘speak’ through the historical documents. The archive, in short, is a field research site that holds its actors captive [...]” (Fenske 2007, 76).

The archives that I visited all required that I state my purpose of research to be able to gain access. At the Berlin Document Center in Berlin, the former archives of the Allies after World War II which holds seized Nazi documents, I had to sign forms saying I would censor sensitive materials to protect living descendants of perpetrators, potentially curtailing my ability to write about certain information. And at the Berlin Academy of the Arts, I had to agree to send in every quote I used in my thesis prior to its publication: if deemed unsuitable for any reason, I would have had to strike those quotes.²¹

Far from being a burden, this accountability to the sources, the archives, to colleagues, and ultimately to Peuckert who produced the data in the first place, breathes a sense of ethics into an ethnography, even into one based on historical materials. Respecting Peuckert’s work in the context in which it was written is not intimidation; it is rather the creation of a portrait of an individual through a humanist lens.

Questions and Chapter Overview

Given the time during which Peuckert lived and worked and the nature of some of his contributions to the field -- some of which challenged a discipline, some of which challenged a regime -- the main question raised by the archival material concerns the

ability of an individual scholar to produce independent and original work within the framework of academic rules and customs, disciplinary epistemology and individual interest.

Peuckert produced knowledge and navigated various interest groups by at times complying with disciplinary rules, at times by catering to popular interest. His work teeter-tottered between fitting the praxes and practices of a conservative discipline on the one hand, and, at other times, breaking boundaries and going out on a limb. His insistence on doing mainstream narrative work (for which he is not really remembered for in academic histories, though the materials which he published are still used and cited today), while simultaneously doing witchcraft research somewhat clandestinely (for which he is remembered, but not given any academic credit for) is but one examples of this split which would mark his career.

Chapter One brings to the forefront Peuckert's own personal biography, tracing his life from his childhood in Silesia through his first job as a teacher at a one-room school, to his studies and doctoral work. The years in "exile" away from the university, the Nazi book-burning in which Peuckert's *Volkskunde des Proletariats* was destroyed, and the flight from the advancing Russian troops in 1945 are also discussed. Finally, his job as the first chair in Volkskunde in Germany after World War II, at the University of Göttingen, receives attention: crucial years, as they highlighted the struggle of German scholarship to overcome the burden of the Nazi past. His biographical chapter thus aims to fill in the gaps where there is new information, and to compliment Bönisch-Brednich's meticulous work on Peuckert's pre-war years: it also is a contextualizing medium for the remainder of the dissertation. Relying, wherever possible, on his own words and the words of those who knew him, Peuckert's textual voice -- as an

individual and scholar -- bears witness to his oscillations, his self-image and self-doubts, his outrage and his visions.

This framework of boundary breaking and compliance is explored throughout this dissertation. At the same time, how work is done during times of political unrest and *after* periods of crisis becomes a large part of this equation. In Peuckert's case, that crisis was twelve years of a National Socialist dictatorship, twelve years which had their own devastating impact, shaping the discipline for years to come. It is within this framework that Peuckert offered up three distinct approaches to open up the field.

Chapter Two, an examination of *Volkskunde des Proletariats* (1931), exemplifies the point that much of Peuckert's work swung on a pendulum between trying to conform and trying to break intellectual and academic boundaries. In what climate did Peuckert write this book? Were his attempts to try and expand the concept of "Volk" effective? Of what significance was an expansion of the field? Wracked with scandal, it is interesting to see to what extent Peuckert nevertheless tried to change the scope of the field of Volkskunde so early in his career.

Whereas Chapter Two begins with work done before World War II, and delves indirectly into the problematics of doing research during a politically corrupt regime, Chapter Three directly tackles how Peuckert came to terms with a tainted discipline after the war. Highlighted are Peuckert's attempts to internationalize Volkskunde from within a vacuum, showing the contours of a discipline that was slowly being reinvented. How did students react to his attempts? Were they successful? On a broader scale, how academic custom can regulate and control the type of research that gets conducted is discussed.

Chapter Four again addresses the question of what sort of research is

academically sanctioned, though here attention is given to the curious case study of Peuckert's experimentation with witchcraft unguent recipes. What emerges is a very different Peuckert, a man who clearly struggled with interests that lay outside of his discipline of choice and its customs. How he dealt with this clash gives fascinating insight into Peuckert's unique personality and perspective on the role of individuals in forming a discipline.

* * *

“It is understandable that P.[euckert], who never was able to take a class in Volkskunde during his time as a student, [...] had to find his own path. [...]”²² It is this path that the dissertation follows.

INTRODUCTION ENDNOTES

¹ See also, as cited by Ben-Amos, Jacob Gruber, "In Search of Experience: Biography as an Instrument for the History of Anthropology," in *Pioneers of American Anthropology: the Uses of Biography*, ed. June Helm (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966), pp. 5-27, and "The Making of Modern Science: Biographical Studies," *Daedalus* 99, no. 4 (Fall 1970).

² In an article in *Der medizinische Monatsspiegel: Eine Zeitschrift für den Arzt* (Medicine Monthly: A Journal for the Doctor), Peuckert systematically goes through recipes from the 16th and 17th centuries, to highlight the ingredients supposedly used by witches in creating a flying unguent. By comparing the ingredients to descriptive books on herbs written in the 16th century, Peuckert was able to find the contemporary equivalents. Eleoselinum is translated as Epssig in the herbal compendia, which, in turn, Peuckert sees as *Apium graveoloens*, Celery. Aconitum is called Münchskappen or Blaw Wolffswurtz, which, in turn, Peuckert interprets as Aconitum Nappelus. Acorum is also called geel Schwertel, a type of Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), while Nachtschatten is Tollkirsche, *Solanum furiosum*, now called Datura stramonium (Nightshade). See Will-Erich Peuckert, "Hexensalben," *Medizinischer Monatsspiegel: Eine Zeitschrift für den Arzt* 8 (1960): 169-174.

³ All quotes originally in German have been translated by the author of this dissertation.

⁴ At Tübingen, the Seminar für Volkskunde was replaced in name by the Seminar für Empirische Kulturwissenschaft. In Frankfurt, the available course of study is now called simply Kulturanthropologie. Augsburg calls its program Europäische Ethnologie/Volkskunde. Europäische Ethnologie, as well, has become a popular name at many institutions, and in 2003, the Seminar für Volkskunde at the Universität Göttingen changed its name to Seminar für Kulturanthropologie/Europäische Ethnologie (KA/EE), the latest of many institutional name changes across Germany. The debate about when and why such changes might be necessary is complex, with questions of tainted terminology and content matching definition; it also has been held by many. For the specificities of the debate in Germany, see Regina Bendix and Tatjana Eggeling, eds., *Namen und was sie bedeuten: Zur Namensdebatte im Fach Volkskunde* (Göttingen: Schmerser Verlag, 2004).

⁵ Peuckert was not alone in trying to affect change for the field. The work of Swiss scholar Richard Weiss, for one, was of immense importance immediately after the war. His *Volkskunde der Schweiz* (1946) was seen as an ideology-free textbook on which to rebuild a field on clean foundations. The work of Hermann Bausinger, too, through the 1960's and the present, has been of tremendous import for the field's reconceptualization. In conversation with other colleagues he discusses his role in: Hermann Bausinger et.al. *Ein Aufklärer des Alltags. Der Kulturwissenschaftler Hermann Bausinger im Gespräch mit Wolfgang Kaschuba, Gudrun M. König, Dieter Langewiesche, Bernhard Tschofen*. (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2006).

⁶ Throughout the dissertation, the first use of a non-English word will be italicized. The subsequent uses of the same word will be unmarked.

⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A111, letter from Peuckert to Gerhart Heilfurth, dated April 21st, 1967.

⁸ See Appendix 6 for a bibliography of Peuckert's work.

⁹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 4.

¹⁰ See Will-Erich Peuckert and Otto Lauffer, *Volkskunde. Quellen und Forschungen seit 1930* (Bern: Francke, 1951). Lauffer helped open up the Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte, and served as its director until 1946. He also held the first chair (1919) in Volkskunde in Germany at the Universität Hamburg, and, during World War II, was a strong critic of some of the Nazi pseudo-science, including *Sinnbildforschung*.

¹¹ See Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich and Rolf Wilhelm Brednich, eds., "Volkskunde ist Nachricht von jedem Teil des Volkes." *Will-Erich Peuckert zum 100. Geburtstag* (Göttingen: Schmerser, 1996).

¹² cf. Gruber 1966 and Gruber 1970.

¹³ In future revisions of this dissertation, I plan to shed light on Peuckert's biography from the perspective of Wissenssoziologie, relying on the following set of sources. Frederik Barth, "An Anthropology of Knowledge." In *Current Anthropology* 43 (2002): 1-18; Richard van Dülmen and Sina Rauschenbach, *Macht des Wissens. Entstehung der modernen Wissensgesellschaft* (Köln: 2004); Ulrike Felt, Helga Nowotny and Klaus Taschwer, *Wissenschaftsforschung* (Frankfurt and New York: 1995); Karin Knorr-Cetina, *The Manufacture of Knowledge: An Essay on the Constructivist and Contextual Nature of Science* (Oxford: 1981); Karin Knorr-Cetina, *Wissenskulturen. Ein Vergleich naturwissenschaftlicher Wissensformen* (Frankfurt: 2002).

¹⁴ See Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York and London: Penguin Books, 1991 (1966)) and Kenneth W. Stickers, "Introduction," in *Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge*, Max Scheler (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 1-30. Scheler's ideas have their intellectual antecedents in Marxism, Nietzschean and Weberian philosophy, as well as Wilhelm Dilthey's notions historicism (Stickers 1980, 23). The Marxist ideas of substructure and superstructure (*Unterbau* and *Überbau*) lent themselves well to the constructed relationship between "thought and an 'underlying' reality other than thought" (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 18). Wilhelm Dilthey's (1833-1911) work, as well, contributed to Scheler's conceptualization of Wissenssoziologie. While Dilthey's ideas were concerned with the concept that all human events are relative, understandable only by historicizing them in their own terms, Scheler's ideas were grounded in the notion that thought is situated *socially* (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 19).

¹⁵ The documents at the Handschriftenabteilung of the Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek were generously donated by Peuckert's daughter Sylphia Peuckert. She now goes by the name Sylvia Peuckert.

Since my research in 2003-2004, Regina Bendix and Michaela Fenske have begun working on a project which also examines the *Handwörterbuch der Sage (HdS)*, entitled "*Enzyklopädie als Wissensformat: Das Beispiel der Erzählforschung [1955-1975]*". Bendix and Fenske have examined the files in the Handschriftenabteilung that concern the *HdS*.

¹⁶ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B35, version 4.

¹⁷ Names in parentheses throughout this and other chapters are the Polish names of the towns; that is, what they are called now. I still chose to examine Peuckert's *Volkskunde des Proletariats*, as it carried through his career in Göttingen and as its history was so closely tied to National Socialism

¹⁸ Personal communications with Sylphia Peuckert on August 16th, 2004.

¹⁹ Clifford and Marcus' text marked a certain moment in time in anthropology's own history; many scholars have since contributed to the reflexive move in anthropology.

²⁰ See Henry Glassie, *Passing the Time in Ballymenone: Culture and History of an Ulster Community* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), and Barre Toelken "The Yellowman Tapes, 1966-1997," *Journal of American Folklore* 111: 381-391.

²¹ Neither the restrictions of the Berlin Document Center nor the quotes I had to run by the Akademie der Künste were problematic for this dissertation.

²² Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 4.

CHAPTER ONE
Willi Erich Bruno Peuckert (1895-1969): A Biographical Sketch

“He [the Silesian] isn’t a one-faceted and easily categorizable person [...], but a child with many inheritances [...]. He is the individual at the crossroads of many different peoples and of historical occurrences and change, and since he - unconsciously - feels to be in the whirlpool of events, he wants something graspable [...]” (Cod. Ms. Peuckert A225)¹

Studying *Volkskunde* and turning an interest that began in childhood into a career was a process which took Peuckert along a winding path: it brought out a very confident, even egocentric Peuckert, convinced of his own critical importance to a changing academic discipline, an individual doing his utmost to make a difference for his students, and an insecure, aging man, struggling to uphold that importance by continuously documenting and scripting his life. So compelled to self-document was Peuckert, at the one and the same time nervous about securing a legacy as documenting his grand visions of a discipline he struggled to revivify, that a Peuckert emerges who was, as he described himself, “*getuppelt*”.²

A Silesian version of the German word *gedoppelt*, doubled, Peuckert used the adjective to indicate that part of him would always be Silesian even when he was living in West Germany after the War; for another, being “*getuppelt*” underscored that he held a dual belief in scholarship and in magic, espousing two world views. Peuckert’s *getuppelt*ness also emerges in his sometime ambivalent record and relationship with National Socialism, and Peuckert’s tendency to emulate others is yet another duality that appears prevalent. There is also a duality in the cyclicity of compliance and

boundary breaking which marks Peuckert's career. As Peuckert's biography is explored, the term continues to take on other connotations.

Through correspondence and in autobiographical texts, Peuckert comes across as someone who was making a valiant effort, quite possibly opportunistic at times, self-convinced as well as insecure, caring as well as trite, a man who loved both writing and teaching, and an individual not adverse to artistic license.³

Family Ties

Will-Erich Peuckert was born on May 1st, 1895, in the Lower Silesian town of Töppendorf (*Kuropatnik*), in the Goldberg-Haynau district; his given name was Willi Erich Bruno Peuckert, and it was only later, as a *nom-de-plume*, that he took on the abbreviated version of Will-Erich (cf. Appendix 1, Map 5).⁴ He would sign most personal letters either as Will or Willi, presumably what he was called by his friends and family.

The Silesia Peuckert knew can only be glimpsed historically; thus, when we talk of *Schlesien*, Silesia, we describe a historic site of conflict and contention that no longer exists in the same geopolitical constellation that Peuckert knew as a child and as a maturing adult (cf. Appendix 1, Map 5). The Silesia of Peuckert's childhood, as a geographical unit, was framed by the Kraków-Wielun plateau on the northeast, by the Sudeten mountains in the southwest, and by the Beskid mountain range to the south ("Silesia" 2004; Bahlcke 2000, 14). The Oder River ran from the southeast to the northwest, dividing the region almost evenly (*ibid.*).

Now belonging primarily to southwestern Poland, the region has belonged to the Polish Piasts, the Bohemian Crown, the Habsburg Empire, the Prussians, to Germany

under the Nazis, and, finally, after the end of World War II, to Poland and Czechoslovakia. Its history as a region has been contentious, still a polarized subject for many.

Peuckert's parents and grandparents came from rural origins.⁵ Their family history in all likelihood mirrored that of their contemporaries: up until the early 19th century, most Silesian peasants leased a piece of land, living in a situation akin to serfdom (Bönisch-Brednich 2000, 250-251). The shift in the 1850's from a feudal system to a wage-based agricultural one forced many Silesians to migrate and find work in larger cities (ibid.).

These dire times his grandparents would have known did not enter into the narratives Peuckert heard growing up. Instead, he recalls local stories of lawlessness and adventure told by his grandfather:

“That's the street on which my grandfather had a terrible night: he was coming home from Bunzlau [...] and it had gotten late [...]. All of a sudden, as the horses trotted down the sandy street, an old woman stood by the pine tree next to the three juniper trees. Wouldn't he take her a small bit down the road? - Of course, said Grandpa, [...] and moved over a bit [...] She first gave him a basket, which he placed behind him. And then, when she was going to get up herself - suddenly a cloud moved away from the moon, and in the light that fell on her he recognized - a long beard. Are you that type! he shouted, and gave the horses a blow [...], and the woman with his beard fell off [...] [... The horses] raced on - and then something whistled past him, - that was the bullet, that the robber had shot after him. Because it really and truly was a robber, - when Grandpa got home, he looked at the basket, full of guns and knives. And there was also a golden watch in the basket, which I saw when I was thirteen years old.”⁶

Peuckert grew up hearing many such stories about his family; regardless of their veracity and whether Peuckert relied on artistic license to embellish, these narratives highlight the worldview and imagination of a young child. One also gets a sense of

Peuckert's personality, an individual intrigued with the borders between fiction and reality. There is something charming in reading Peuckert's descriptions of childhood games and memories with the hindsight and realization that he would follow the career path of an academic *Volkskundler*, a Volkskunde scholar.

Peuckert's father, Ernst August Peuckert (born February 22nd, 1868), came from a village near Lüben (*Lubin*); a postman by trade, he probably also owned some land which he might have farmed.⁷ The nature of their relationship is unclear: Peuckert rarely mentioned his father, but did once note that his father was a "sober and rational" type of man, a "steadfast, sober, and practical farmer."⁸

Peuckert's mother, Ernestine Pauline Emilie Peuckert (born Kühn, on March 16th, 1873), came from Alzenau, and Peuckert's relationship with her seems to have been close and warm.⁹ Peuckert frequently credits her for his interest in Volkskunde: she had grown up "with a mythical world-view[;] and her mother [Johanne Christina Kühn, born Hoberg] had been one of the best (and last) legend-raconteurs in the slopes of the mountain."¹⁰

Yet her health was fragile, a source of some concern for young Peuckert. In part because of their relative poverty, all too common for their village, they did everything they could do to save, often at the cost of his mother's health:

"[...] and we saved everywhere a *Pfennig* was to be saved. Saving [...] meant only one pair of shoes each year; it meant, that everything [...] was tailored at home. The frequent sewing and the reading at night weren't good, her eyes got tired, and her eyelids would sometimes become red and heavy."¹¹

Ernestine Peuckert went blind in one eye after a particularly bad bout of fatigue, coupled with her insistence that all windows of the house were to be kept open at night for health reasons; she lost vision in her second eye in the 1930's.¹²

It is not clear when Peuckert's parents passed away, though at least his father lived through the end of 1945. In a letter dated November 21st, 1945, Peuckert still presumed his father to be missing; it is unclear if Ernst Peuckert survived the flight from the advancing Russian troops in the early spring of 1945:

“We don't know anything yet about any of my relatives, nothing about Peter [Peuckert's son], nor anything about where my father and sister are. Puten's [Peuckert's wife Gertrud's] [...] eldest brother and his wife died while they fled [...].”¹³

Little is known about Peuckert's two sisters, Martha and Erna. Erna, born a premature baby at seven months, developed epilepsy at an early age and eventually succumbed to the illness.¹⁴ Martha married into a family with the surname Pfeiffer; she survived the war, moving first to Grimma and then Leipzig.¹⁵

Earliest Memories and Childhood Games

Secondary literature mostly bypasses Peuckert's childhood, mentioning little but the date and location of his birth and a few anecdotes; this is in part because so little information on Peuckert's life actually exists in published and thus accessible form (Brednich 1996, 11). Yet the fact that Peuckert rarely *spoke* of his childhood (thus leaving no oral record behind), noted his daughter, does not necessarily indicate that childhood and youth in Töppendorf and Kaiserswaldau were unimportant to him.¹⁶ In several unpublished manuscripts, Peuckert reflects for pages on his childhood; though he did not speak of these years, he certainly wrote about them.¹⁷

The Peuckert family moved to Kaiserswaldau (*Okmiany*) around 1900, a Lower Silesian village not too far from Töppendorf; here Peuckert attended a three-room school for a total of eight years.¹⁸ Kaiserswaldau itself was small and relatively poor:

“I grew up,” Peuckert said, in a “*Gutsdorf* [manor village], that is in a village, in whose houses *Gutsuntertanen* [subjects of the manor] lived up until about fifty years ago.”¹⁹

Peuckert continued:

“My school comrades and playmates were kids from the small houses in which former subjects lived [; their parents were] making their living and surviving off of one, two acre fields and a small salary [...] from the city, either as a train conductor, a switchman, gatekeepers, as a rural postman or a mail-conductor.”²⁰

Kaiserswaldau was the locus of Peuckert’s earliest memory, dating to 1902:

“My first and very vague memory is glued to the day on which my mother drove me through town in a little cart. I was barely seven years old and had had a bad [case of] pleurisy along with pneumonia and early stages of Tb, all of which had erased any memories of earlier years. I started my life anew, with much curiosity. [...] I was very weak, had forgotten how to read and write completely [...]”²¹

A certain childhood sense of economics comes to the forefront early on, an emphasis on how one could make money as a child in Kaiserswaldau. Equally important was the relative financial independence which ensued from such an income:

“My father was sparing with allowance[;] why does a thirteen year old need allowance? But in the summer, when blueberries hung on the blueberry bushes of our forests, [...], when we carried twenty or twenty-two pounds home after a hot day, [we would make] one [Mark] eighty or up to one [Mark] ninety.”²²

Or there was the potato harvest “that would give you a bent back - but every day you could earn forty Pfennigs. [...] The Pfennigs would just jingle in the pocket.”²³ The money would then be put to use:

“[...] what a waste - one could buy Pfennig-cigarettes. Or one could drive to Haynau and see the Circus Sarrasani. It wasn’t the real one, that one didn’t come to Haynau. But the girls on the trapeze, and those that would ride on the horses in their high heels”²⁴

Some of Peuckert's other early memories were of folkloristic nature, primarily concerned with "his own experiences with village superstition and [...] ghost stories and legends" (Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 17). Expressive culture appears to have been on his mind from an early age: beginning with childhood games, Peuckert in detail described what he played and when, not failing to note the gendered nature of his game.

"... *Kullerrädel* [rollin' wheel] in the spring usually only was a game for the boys. A *Kullerrädel*? If one has a strong, round tree trunk on the sawhorse, and cuts a two inch thick slice off of it, one can make it roll over fifty meters if one throws it skillfully enough. [It...] is just like a ball game: where the rollin' wheel is stopped [by the opposing team], that's where the opposing team can take its position and has the next throw. But how does one stop such a wheel which goes faster than a bike, that can seriously damage one's legs and knees? We got the boards off of a boxwagon and threw them towards the wheel. It was a great game for the early springtime."²⁵

These reflections no doubt were influenced by his professional pursuit of *Volkskunde*, detailed enough to be included in a scholarly collection.

Peuckert and his friends also seem to have occupied themselves with boyish pranks, combined with the most *au courant* science-fiction literature available: the novels of Jules Verne (1828-1905). After reading *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865; *De la Terre à la Lune*), Peuckert and his friends decided to launch a rocket:

"You know something, Hilger-Alfred said, I'd like to do that as well. - To the moon? You're nuts! - No, he said, I don't want to go; what if it turns out that [... there is fire] up there [...]; but we could send a rocket up [...] Jules Ferne [sic] wrote down most of the important ingredients."²⁶

Conceiving the idea was one thing; implementing it quite another. Peuckert told of finding an old stove pipe, a bottle, some bullets from a hunting rifle, and some carbide:

"We took the old stove pipe [...], and we set that up behind the old pond. Then came step two, that was the bottle with the cat, und then

we added carbide, - and when we poured water into the hole - you know, you should have seen it! It went boom! A fiery long strip flew through the air, like a comet, - and then the rocket started turning a bit, we hadn't aimed well enough. It didn't fly to the moon, it flew - right into the bedroom window of [our] Teacher Reinhold."²⁷

In another version, a frog is used instead of a cat.

For scholars working historically, these texts are insight into the games and childhood activities in Lower Silesia in the early years of the 20th century. The very fact that there are multiple versions of the "rocket to the moon" narrative might underscore that it was originally narrated orally, or point to Peuckert's artistic license. For those interested in Peuckert as a person, however, an individual emerges who still at an advancing age was recalling childhood memories. The writing also encapsulates a certain degree of humor, personal charm and spark that Peuckert must have had.

Maturation

Not surprisingly, other games eventually replaced the moon rockets, blurring the boundaries between youth and young adulthood. Since specific knowledge about the opposite sex, so Peuckert, was not yet developed, there were no initial qualms with the eleven, twelve, thirteen year old children, in mixed company, taking a quick summer dip in a little boggy pond of water that was situated right next to the train tracks that ran from Görlitz (*Zgorzelec*) to Liegnitz (*Legnica*). That is, no qualms until the pastor of Kaiserswaldau saw the children bathing naked:

"That we looked different, that some of us had a manly growth [...], - that didn't bother us at all; mermaids and leeches were much more interesting [...]. And when the express train Görlitz-Liegnitz came by around three in the afternoon, then all of us [...] ran from the pond to the tracks and waved to the travelers, who waved back [...]. Until one day

the pastor [...] saw us waving. He froze. [...] The next day he ordered that everybody who bathed needed to have a closed swimming suit [...]. With this bit of information [...] we were enlightened [about sex]. The next months we became very interested in ‘those other things.’”²⁸

Another way to see the opposite sex naked was by looking “at those funny naked photographs”; but if another boy owned one, Peuckert recalled, “he would only show it if one paid a Mark for it.”²⁹ Peuckert never spent his blueberry money on those pictures.³⁰

After completing grade school in Kaiserswaldau in 1909, he moved to Schmiedeberg (*Kowary*) in the Riesengebirge (Giant Mountains) for further schooling. With the help of a fellowship to defray the costs, Peuckert attended boarding school, staying there until he was 17 years old; during these years, the opposite sex became even more interesting. At boarding school Peuckert learned more than he ever had about girls and their body parts: “[I]t was the best school that one could give to a young person. [...] It opened the awareness that girls existed [...]”³¹ This active interest in the opposite sex would remain with him the rest of his life, appearing not infrequently in his unpublished memoirs.

At the same time, Peuckert quickly learned that being at boarding school had its own problems: students with funding were envied for their money, simultaneously becoming the object of scorn of those who did not need a fellowship. The result: several purported friends took Peuckert to a café, and, after making him drink a few glasses of apple wine (apparently, he had never had alcohol before), he was so drunk that the school noticed and revoked his spending money.³²

Early Interest in Magic and the Supernatural

It was at the same café that two strands of Peuckert's youth came to a head: his interest in the opposite sex and, in particular, his pronounced interest in witchcraft, belief, and mysticism, which he would later study under the auspices of *Volkskunde*. The veracity of the events is less important than the fact that Peuckert chose to narrate them as such. In and of itself, his penchant to portray himself and his life as interconnected with the supernatural is noteworthy, a glimpse at the way Peuckert wanted to represent himself.³³

After meeting the young waitress Eva Bilz, so the story goes, Peuckert became increasingly interested in wooing her. He first tried to speak to her to get her attention, but soon turned to what he called "*Zauber*" -- magic -- as a way to win her for himself.³⁴

"[...] one has to give the person who one wants to [...] win something to eat, for example an apple or another fruit. But first one has to [carry ...] their apple or berry on one's body for days; a woman or a young girl has to carry it in her lap, [...] a man [in] his lap or armpit. If [...] the [...] person] one is looking for eats the apple afterwards, she'll be completely head over heels."³⁵

Peuckert did try this, according to his autobiographical notes, what James Frazer called contagious magic (Frazer 1996 [1922], 13-14). The attempt resulted in a kiss, whether because of the apple or for other reasons.

Peuckert's active use of contagious magic makes sense when one realizes that he belonged to a family which had regular experiences with the supernatural: they were, in his own words, individuals who "lived close to the other side."³⁶ He describes the belief system in which he was raised in a letter written to a colleague a year before his death:

"It is true that the magical problem has fascinated me my life long [.] I am from a Silesian farm [...] and my maternal grandmother believed in magic; I also remained a believer in magic, [...] despite logarithmic tables

and Horatio.”³⁷

Discussing at length his family’s supernatural experiences, Peuckert painted a supernatural genealogy of belief, tracking those family members who had experiences with that “other side”.³⁸ His maternal great-great-grandfather, for example, saw “Death” the morning before he died. And a great-great-aunt of Peuckert’s had an encounter with the White Lady (“*die weiße Frau*”), a character appearing frequently in local memorates and legends.³⁹ His grandmother and Peuckert’s great-uncle Hoberg also had supernatural experiences, and as part of his repertoire, Peuckert frequently talked or wrote about their experiences:

“He only started his way home late that evening. As he arrived in the Gröditzforest, coming by the deepest part of the woods near a pond where the “black pine” stood, [...] he encountered it. What it was no one knows, and he never [...] divulged it to anyone, - an unspeakable thing from the other side, that’s what it must have been. He swore to his sister [...] that he would never tell anyone [...]; only on his deathbed could he tell anyone; but he would never go back home that late [...]. I asked him forty years later about it; he only shook his head, it was still as serious as it had been on that bad day [...].”⁴⁰

Peuckert credited his mother as the source for this supernatural legacy; the capacity to have supernatural encounters is construed as something genetically inheritable:

“And so it passed down, from her great-grandfather down to her und then me; five generations were closer to the other side than people usually were. Five generations were elevated out of the everyday.”⁴¹

Though he did not discuss his own experiences, Peuckert did stress his continued interest in magic: how, as a young child, he was caught reading a book about the black arts at the house of a supposed sorcerer, for example, or how he tried various love spells as a young man.⁴² Many of the interests that made up Peuckert’s adult life could thus be already seen in his youth: the fascination with the supernatural, his

interests in the opposite sex, and his love for legends and other narratives.

World War I and Early Career Steps

Peuckert attended a seminary in Bunzlau (*Boleslawiec*) from 1912-1914 in order to pursue a career in teaching. Though he himself wrote little about these years, his daughter mentioned that his time in Bunzlau at the *Präparandie* was the source for many of her father's oral narratives.⁴³ And the class of students who attended this preparatory school together with Peuckert remained in close contact, well into the 1960's, through alumni newsletters and personal correspondence.⁴⁴

In December 1914 Peuckert voluntarily joined a *Luftschiffbataillon*, a dirigible battalion, as a weatherman.⁴⁵ He remained in active duty for only four months, and was released in March 1915 for unknown reasons. He rejoined the infantry in the fall of 1915 as part of the Görlitzer *Ersatz-Bataillon* (reserves); in Lida (Beresina), now a part of Belarus, he was released again shortly afterwards, due to illness.⁴⁶ Peuckert returned home from the war in March 1916 and married the teacher Gertrud Erika Albrecht (born November 9th, 1891) from Grunfier near Filehne (*Wielun*).⁴⁷

His army service for one, and Germany's losses in World War I, for another, no doubt contributed to his early patriotism. Bönisch-Brednich sketched out Peuckert's early political interests and involvements, from his early patriotic article "*Das geistige Rüstzeug der Nation*" (1916) (an examination of the fortifications of opposing parties), to his short membership in the USPD (*Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*), which he joined in 1919 (Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 19). The USPD, an offshoot of the main Social Democratic Party, consisted of members who were frustrated with the main party's support of war bonds during World War I and their

general sanctioning of the war (“Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands” 2007). The switch to the USPD went hand in hand with Peuckert’s participation as a delegate at the Pacifist Congress in Braunschweig (1920). When the USPD joined with the SPD in 1922, however, Peuckert did not make the transition; he did however join the SPD in 1930/31 for a few short months as part of his research for his *Volkskunde des Proletariats* (ibid.). This political volatility would again resurface during World War II; to this extent, Bönisch-Brednich puts forth that “Peuckert [...] was no socialist, never a national socialist [...]. He was [...] an [...] individualist and therefore not willing to submit to the ruling opinion [...]” (Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 216).

For a few months in 1915, Peuckert’s two bouts of army service were interrupted by a short teaching stint. He taught in a one-room grade school classroom in the town of Groß-Iser (*Wielka-Izera*) in the Iser Mountains, a small and remote village that now “has been abandoned; one can only reach it by foot, streets no longer go there” (Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 18). He returned to the same job after his release from the army, continuing to teach from 1916 to 1921. These years marked the beginning of his career as a teacher, and show the professional development of a man who placed a great deal of emphasis on teaching his students, on being a good pedagogue.

Apparently Peuckert was “*strafversetzt*”, that is, relocated as punishment, to the even then rather inaccessible Groß-Iser, because the school board was none too fond of him.⁴⁸ Bönisch-Brednich attributes this to a Peuckert, who, already at a young age, was opinionated -- one is reminded of his political volatility, and his disinterest in submitting to ruling opinion, -- a young man who perhaps stepped on the feet of the school board a little too much. According to her sources, Peuckert had “plastered official decrees on the walls” of the outhouse, and when the school inspector came “all

hell broke loose” (ibid.).

Peuckert’s son Hanns-Peter was born in 1919; called Peter, he remained an only child until the birth of his half-sister Sylphia nearly three decades later.⁴⁹

Student Years

On November 1st, 1921, Peuckert was moved on his own request from Groß-Iser to the urban center of Breslau to teach; by the following year he also had begun to take courses in German History, German and Prehistory, *Volkskunde* and *Völkerkunde* at the Friedrich-Wilhelm Universität Breslau (Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 128; Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 20. cf. also Appendix 2).⁵⁰ Only at the relatively late age of 27 did Peuckert thus formally begin his academic career, later deciding to pursue a dissertation under the supervision of Hermann Reincke-Bloch (1867-1928).⁵¹

Peuckert continued to teach grade school until 1925, when he was given a year of vacation to research and write his dissertation and to improve his apparently poor health.⁵² A letter written in 1925 to his friend Maria Hauptmann, an important correspondant of many years, runs contrary to previous claims that Peuckert stopped teaching in 1922:

“This morning the state school board director came to the school and told me that I had a year long vacation. It would start on May 1. And I’m glad that that is what happened, though he attached the caveat: that I was supposed to regain energy during that time. [...] Only 1.2.3.4. days of school, and then rest. But then my work will just fly. Of course Reincke-Bloch wants me to take morning courses from him - and he helped me [get this vacation] - but even with those four hours, so much time still remains. [...] I could uproot trees today! The next few weeks will be decisive vis à vis my dissertation; since I have some time off in the morning, I can use the State Library [...], and I’ll finally be able to tell [...] that I’m on the right path. And will be able to achieve results.”⁵³

To support his wife and young son, Peuckert also spent some time working at the city library (Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 20).

Peuckert apparently expressed worry about not having his high school diploma (*Abitur*), usually a prerequisite for a university degree, and toyed with quitting if this prevented him from continuing on the academic trajectory he had chosen (*ibid.*). By the age of 30, Peuckert had not yet developed an academic ego large enough to keep him in the discipline if it would not have him. On June 7th, 1925, he told Maria :

“Yesterday and today I got back to work again, and am now so far along, that the first chapter - except a small little portion on page 3 - is all typed. That’s a big stone off of my chest. [...] I’ll tackle the second chapter soon, and I hope to finish it within the run of a week. I’m still going to be irresponsible and drive to the Zobten [Mountain] on Wednesday. [...] The dissertation is meant to act as a buffer. Reincke-Bloch wants to use it so that I get my *Abitur*. But if that doesn’t work, I won’t put any more energy or work into these things. I’ve learned all that there is to be learned.”⁵⁴

Peuckert continued to write to Maria throughout the fall and winter of 1925, telling her of his progress with his dissertation and his frustrations: “I’m doing my work with true despair; every day pushes the end back further. I had so wanted to be done in circa 14 days [...].”⁵⁵ Only few months later, in September of 1925, he expressed much more confidence: “You ask about work? Except for a small part - the last chapter and a piece in the middle - it is done: sure, it needs a lot more polish, [...] but the task is basically completed.”⁵⁶ Two years later he actually finished.

Peuckert’s dissertation, *Die Entwicklung Abrahams von Franckenberg bis zum Jahre 1641*, about the life and work of a student of the Christian mystic Jacob Böhme (1575-1624), was completed in 1927.⁵⁷ It was subsequently republished in 1928 as a significant part of *Die Rosenkreutzer*, a more in-depth discussion of the secretive Order

of the Rosicrucians founded in the 15th century by Christian Rosenkreutz (1378-1484).⁵⁸

By the time he had completed his promotion to Doctor of Philosophy *summa cum laude*, Peuckert had also published a substantial number of other texts (Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 20. cf. also Appendix 6).⁵⁹

Professional Development

After the completion of his dissertation, Peuckert was just over 30 years old and had a promising career ahead of him: a position which allowed him to teach, and an impressively long list of publications, all requisites for being an academic professional and holding a place in the public and academic eye. He was prolific as well as daring, publishing some works which would give him as much acclaim as they would get him into trouble.

Though he initially also pursued literary interests, publishing *Passion: Ein Drama* in 1919, a 90-paged play, as well as *Apokalypse 1618* in 1921, *Luntroß* in 1924, *Zwei Lichte der Welt* in 1924, *Andreas Hofer oder Der Bauernkrieg in Tirol* in 1926, and *Goldene Berge* in 1934, Peuckert soon began publishing specifically for an audience of *Volkskundler*.⁶⁰ Peuckert's earliest discipline related work was purely descriptive, and collecting, a methodology often associated with the discipline, characterized his early work: Rolf Christian Zimmermann would later describe Peuckert as a "collector from childhood on, and even more so in adulthood" (Zimmermann 1973, XVI-XVIII). And Bönisch-Brednich underscores that Peuckert's earliest journal articles, written in 1919 and 1920, "strongly resemble the usual collections of data, like those that many people submitted [for publication]" (Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 129). A 1919 publication

about Lower Silesian legends was followed by a 1920 discussion of *Natursagen*, legends about nature: while the former was purely a collection, the latter added a discussion of previous and related literature (ibid.).

Peuckert continued to write and publish prolifically during the 1920's. Besides the novels, he published several articles about the Silesian author Carl Hauptmann (1922, 1923), and a biography of Jacob Böhme (1924). Within the field of Volkskunde, Peuckert wrote and published 96 entries for the *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* (*HdA*, Encyclopaedia of Superstitions), and in 1924 he edited a volume on Silesian legends, *Schlesische Sagen* (1924).

Scholars who examine Peuckert today use these entries in the now notorious *HdA* -- entries which included "Antichrist" (antichrist) (1927-1928), "Freimaurer" (freemason) (1930-31), "Jude, Jüdin" (Jew, Jewess) (1931-32), and "Ritualmord" (ritual murder) (1935-36) -- as an indication that Peuckert did, occasionally, pursue ideologically questionable scholarship, and use these entries as an argument for Peuckert having national, if not National Socialist tendencies and racial proclivities.⁶¹ The entries themselves are indeed full of difficult materials. The entry "Jude, Jüdin," for example, covers Christian superstitions and beliefs concerning people of the Jewish faith and Judaism, and it is a reflection of much of the anti-Semitic sentiment in Germany in the 1930's. And while it is arguable that the collections of superstitions that Peuckert presented were just that -- a collection of extant belief in Germany at the time they were collected -- the superstitions are not qualified as such, nor is there an academic supranarrative on Peuckert's part discussing the myriad of problems that these entries pose.

Might these entries indicate that Peuckert had racist, anti-Semitic, or National

Socialist leanings? And why is there nary a mention of these articles in most discussions about Peuckert? The situation is not entirely translucent, as a certain ambivalence does emerge. Yet one has to wonder, given Peuckert's tendency to oscillate between rule-breaking and compliance, whether he was publishing the *HdA* articles for the sake of publishing, trying to get noticed by more of the academic world, or if he was publishing what he believed in, or was his writing thoroughly constrained by the mode of "encyclopedia", a rigid form of data presentation?

The situation is complicated even more by the fact that Peuckert joined the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* in 1933, a political party which was founded in 1918 and dissolved in May of 1933, with its capstones of "...nationalism, imperial conservatism, monarchism, and anti-Semitism" ("Deutschnationale Volkspartei" 2007; Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 24). According to Bönisch-Brednich, however, the NSDAP noted that Peuckert never actively participated in party functions of the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei*, that his membership, in other words, may well have been an attempt to preserve his job and standing at the university (ibid.). Yet -- and this needs to be underscored -- he *did* join the *Deutschnationale Partei*, which at the very least indicates that his political leanings were not without national interests, a point which is often neglected.

By the late 1930's and early 1940's, Peuckert had made it very clear how he stood politically, that he did not believe in the politics and ideology of the National Socialist government.⁶² He himself would remain very adamant about his lack of involvement in National Socialist-activities, always underscored his numerous friendships with individuals of the Jewish faith, and took a strong stance, albeit post World War II, against National Socialist ideology.⁶³ This, too, is the Peuckert that is

remembered by the field. It remains unclear to what extent this persona of “Peuckert the Resistance Fighter” was a true figure, or to what extent it was a persona created by the collective need of a field after the war, or by Peuckert himself.⁶⁴

Concurrent to the *HdA* entries, Peuckert published an introductory text to the discipline on Silesian Volkskunde, *Schlesische Volkskunde*, in 1928. It did not differ significantly from Joseph Klapper’s 1925 book by the same title, argues Bönisch-Brednich, though Peuckert “concentrated more on the present and Klapper [relied] more on historical sources” (Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 131).⁶⁵ A standard work which “did not dare any large experiments,” it was received well, and Peuckert could feel secure in having found entry into an established academic tradition (*ibid.*). And yet the similarities noted by Bönisch-Brednich are interesting insofar as this is not the only time that Peuckert’s work has been seen to mirror others. Though seemingly innovative, *Schlesische Volkskunde* is but one example of work that Peuckert would do which mirrored the efforts of other scholars.⁶⁶

Some would say that Peuckert was brave in his attempt to publish a summarizing, state-of-the-field monograph. Yet *Schlesische Volkskunde* remains in line with Peuckert’s continued attempts to break into the academic world by publishing often to gain respect. Through the late 1920’s, his attempts seem to have been successful. Reviews in the *Schlesische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, up until 1929, point to Peuckert as a rising young star in the field.

While Peuckert’s contributions to the discipline of Volkskunde during the 1920’s and early 1930’s were numerous, the subject matter and impact of his work as a whole remains unimpressive (*cf.* Appendix 6). None of Peuckert’s early work stands out as being particularly significant. On a practical level this makes sense: how would it

have been possible for a young academic without an established career or reputation to publish something innovative, new, or groundbreaking? Quite possibly, Peuckert would not have been able to break through the barrier of an established academic world if he had published a *Schlesische Volkskunde* that differed drastically from the introductory texts that preceded it. But here we get a small glimpse of Peuckert as the “getuppelt” academic: concurrently to *Schlesische Volkskunde*, Peuckert worked on his *Volkskunde des Proletariats* (1931), a work with much more theoretical potential, on first glance, than his earlier writings. Peuckert was able to at one and the same time write to his audience and gain respect in a close-knit community of scholars, securing his position, while working on a book which would affect the rest of his career. It is arguable that Peuckert felt confident enough, after being accepted by the Silesian academic system, to break out of its constraining mold which had kept his previous work in line.

After completing his dissertation in 1928, Peuckert was called to teach at the newly founded *Pädagogische Akademie* (Pedagogical Academy) in Breslau.⁶⁷ His job, until the Academy was closed in 1932, consisted of teaching in the fields of Volkskunde and German Studies.

His career did not come to an abrupt halt when the Academy closed, as it quite well could have. Between 1928 and 1932, Peuckert had also worked on his habilitation, a qualifying work required of German academics equivalent to a second dissertation and needed to receive the title of professor. His habilitation, *Zwölf Sibyllen Weissagungen*, was completed in 1932 under the supervision of Friedrich Ranke (1882-1950), and he was given a docentship at the *Deutsches Institut* of the Universität Breslau.⁶⁸ Glad to have a job, Peuckert described his early months as a docent:

“I read 80-85 pages daily at the institute [...]. Terrible! On top of that, I

need to start putting together courses [...] I get funded as a private docent, meaning 3.50 M[arks] for one semester hour. That certainly isn't royal, and if I need to get there with the cab - to be punctual - I've already gambled away the money with the ride. But I hope to get a permanent position this way and then things would be great."⁶⁹

Peuckert taught and lectured Summer Semester 1929 through Winter Semester 1932 at the Pedagogical Academy, and Summer Semester 1932 through Summer Semester 1935 at the Universität Breslau. His courses reflected the same conservatism in teaching visible in his early publication record, following a more standard *Volkskunde* canon.⁷⁰ Courses such as "*Abriß der Volkskunde*" (A Sketch of the Discipline of *Volkskunde*), "*Faust*," and "*Walensagen*" (Walen Legends) dominate his work at the Academy; he expanded his teaching horizon slightly at the Universität Breslau, lecturing on "*Tod und ewiges Leben im Volksglauben*" (Death and Perpetual Life in Volk Belief), "*Religiöse Volkskunde*" (Religious *Volkskunde*), "*Märchen und Sagen*" (Fairy Tales and Legends), and "*Siedlung und Haus*" (Settlement and House).⁷¹ And yet some of the courses also expressed Peuckert's unique vision of the field, portraying *Volkskunde* as a window into the social sciences. Thus: "Last Wednesday I lectured for 2 hours about cultivation, agrarian cults, [...] Elysian mysteries, antiquary ideas of resurrection, etc."⁷²

While the contents of these lectures are no longer available, their titles do not reflect the potentially groundbreaking research which Peuckert was already thinking about at this point -- the aforementioned *Volkskunde des Proletariats*, which looked towards the *Volkskunde* of the working class. Peuckert's early teaching record instead shows his attempts to follow in the tracks of expectation, teaching courses on areas of research which did not reflect his primary interests, instead part of a standard *Volkskunde* curriculum. Peuckert did appear to have enjoyed the research he did while

at the Deutsches Institut, for he remembered fondly the hours spent in the reading room:

“I [...] was sitting in the Deutsches Institut - only one hundred meters from the library, where I had found a good workspace in a timely fashion: in the old reading room, situated above the Oder [River] [...]. It was the type of spot no outsider should have had [...] and I had gotten it probably because I was becoming a burden to the [...] stack overseers, arriving each day with four five quirky book requests. So I got the spot, and [...] the right to go into the stacks myself -- usually only full professors had that right. I loved that place [...].”⁷³

Even up into the the early 1930's, Peuckert still hoped for a professorship: “What makes the situation difficult, is that I'm stuck in the role of a private docent. Everything depends on whether I'll get an *Ordinariat* [professorship]. And those are always political questions [...].”⁷⁴

The Breslau Letters

During the time that Peuckert was in Breslau, he corresponded regularly with Maria Hauptmann (née Rhone, ?-1963), the widow of the Silesian author and playwright Carl Ferdinand Max Hauptmann (1858-1921). Hauptmann, who studied Philosophy, Physiology and Biology in Jena, was the elder brother of the more well-known Nobel-prize winning Gerhart Hauptmann (1862-1946). He dissertated in Jena in 1883 in Biology, and then married the independently wealthy Martha Thienemann; instead of pursuing an academic career, he purchased a house in Schreiberhau in Lower Silesia with his brother, and remained there for the rest of his life, writing.⁷⁵ Carl Hauptmann and Martha divorced; he remarried the painter Maria Rhone in 1908.

Peuckert met Hauptmann in 1915.⁷⁶ One surmises that he became a sort of father figure to Peuckert: “his friendship with Carl Hauptmann, to whom, in his

younger years, he was almost as close as a son,” was important to Peuckert.⁷⁷ Hauptmann did pursue his own Volkskunde-related interests, including a book about the giant Rübzahl of Silesia (*Das Rübzahlbuch*, 1919); perhaps this, or their common love for Silesia, united their interests. They remained close friends until Hauptmann’s death in 1921. Peuckert mentioned elsewhere that he developed his “intellectual stance” because of his friendship with Hauptmann, and that he and his family “would have been nothing without him.”⁷⁸ It is also speculated that Peuckert’s literary interests arose because of his relationship with Hauptmann (Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 130).

One can easily understand how a correspondence and friendship between Peuckert and Maria Hauptmann developed, as Peuckert was chosen to manage Carl Hauptmann’s estate after his death. Though Peuckert and Maria initially corresponded regularly about bureaucratic matters, their correspondence outlived the timeline of estate management: from at least 1924 until 1939, Peuckert and Maria wrote to each other regularly. There were even a few letters into the 1960’s, indicating a continued, lifelong friendship, and Maria’s daughter, Monona, also corresponded with Peuckert. Only Peuckert’s letters to Maria remain; they span over eighteen years, and tell us twofold. For one, the letters are the only insight into Peuckert’s life as a young academic: as a student, as a dissertator, and even as a young docent. Yet they also offer a better glimpse into his personality, one that is generally not discussed: Peuckert liked to romance women. An affair with Maria proves likely, and one can only surmise how this affected his home life and his relationship with Gertrud.

This bent towards the romantic developed slowly in Peuckert’s letters to Maria. In 1924, while dealing with contention over Hauptmann’s estate and trying to secure finances for Maria and her daughter Monona, Peuckert still addressed Maria formally,

using the formal second person plural *Sie*: “*Liebste Frau Maria*”, the letters read, dearest Mrs. Maria. He signed them with “*Ihr P*”, yours (formally) P, or even “*Der P*”, the P.⁷⁹ Yet even this early on, Peuckert fondly remembered the times he spent visiting the Hauptmann Family in Schreiberhau: “I wish you were here and it would be like old times [...] where I [...] came and visited you and all was well.”⁸⁰

For over nine months, the almost weekly letters went back and forth between Breslau and Berlin-Wilmersdorf. Though the letters were mostly business related, a flirtatious, joking Peuckert did emerge early on:

“Because that is [...] most important [...], [to ...] once again feel earth and ground and [that you] can draw. [...] Although I want one of [...] the first pictures - of course in installments (couldn't do it otherwise). But then buy a piece of land large enough, so that when I'm 'famous' enough I can build next to you. You'll get your down payment back from the increased land value.”⁸¹

Already by March 1925 Peuckert was planning a trip to see Maria, despite a nosebleed and sickness. “But don't worry that anything will suffer [under the illness]. [...] You yourself know how I wish for a few minutes to once again be with you.”⁸²

A definite turn in their relationship came by the end of June 1925, a transition between their formal use of “*Sie*” to the use of the informal *Du*. “*Liebste Maria*”, the letters read, dearest Maria, and they are signed with “*Dein P*”, yours (informally) P. Words of love may very well have passed between them, for by June 1925 Peuckert concluded his letter as follows:

“Most of all, I am so happy [...]. Sometimes I think it isn't true. And then I have to pick up your letter and double check. And it is true. I just want to keep saying you you you.”⁸³

Peuckert's situation at home was tense during this time period, whether because of Gertrud's suffering health, or because of possible knowledge about his infatuation

with Maria: “Everything is OK at home, as far as such things can be OK.”⁸⁴ By 1928, so Peuckert, Gertrud was doing a bit better:

“You wanted to know how it looks like with us. Yes, Puten is a little more upbeat, depressed rather than suffering. Hopefully it’ll stay steady. How she lived 2-3 years ago, that wasn’t a life.”⁸⁵

There is a gap in correspondence from January 1926 through January 1928, though by 1928, Peuckert and Maria were once again corresponding more regularly, with Peuckert calling Maria “*Schäfchen*”, little sheep, a common German term of endearment.⁸⁶ When she did not respond regularly, he expressed much concern:

“Dearest Maria, I am really scared and worried, as I haven’t heard from you. Are you still sick? Drop me a line! If possible, as soon as you can. I waited all last week for news from you, every day more concerned, and now I have no idea what is going on with you. Your Will.”⁸⁷

Whatever their relationship might have been, Maria turned into a confidante for Peuckert: their letters, still almost monthly, discussed Peuckert’s work and troubles. In fact, Peuckert told Maria that her input impacted his work directly: “That you enjoy *Volkskunde* makes me happy. You know, I always write towards your yes or no.”⁸⁸ Or: “For your letter and your comments about the novel many thanks. You know, I’ve only passed when I get a passing grade from you.”⁸⁹

Peuckert’s letters indicate an infatuation, a close friendship, even a companionship with Maria, one which puts his relationships with his wife Gertrud into a different light. The fact that Maria held onto all of his letters of the years seems to indicate at the very least a shared love, if not an affair of a few years. If, as Peuckert claimed, her opinions on his work mattered as much as he said they did, Maria may well have played a role in his career path, influencing the academic choices he made.

Troubled Times: Book Burnings and Forced Retirement

The early 1930's marked a shift as well as a break in Peuckert's career: a change from positive feedback and accolades and a move to relative obscurity. These years were punctured only by the publication of *Volkskunde des Proletariats (VdP)*, possibly one of Peuckert's most interesting works. And Peuckert ultimately faced being fired from his job as a result of the defamation attempts and libel on the part of his colleague, a certain Walther Steller (1895-1971). The *VdP* would play no small role in this affair, either.

The same age, Steller's career never showed as much potential as Peuckert's (Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 1996). The fact that Peuckert, not Steller, had been picked for the docentship at the Deutsches Institut of the Universität Breslau in 1932 had prompted the growth of a significant rivalry on Steller's part (Bönisch Brednich 1996, 23). Sources indicate that Steller set out to exact revenge on both Peuckert and Friedrich Ranke (who had picked Peuckert for the position) by starting a defamation campaign against Peuckert after the Nazi takeover of power: "In a long row of letters as well as publications Steller pointed to the purported socialist activities and contacts that Peuckert held [...], referred to his 'Volkskunde des Proletariats' as Marxist and much more." (ibid., 23).

Yet the direct effects of Steller's letters seem to have been marginal at first; Peuckert was not initially fired, and some of his books even made it onto the so-called "*Weisse Liste*" -- the White List -- books that the National Socialists were recommending public libraries to purchase (ibid.).

Perhaps the biggest consequence of Steller's libel campaign was the way Peuckert was treated by other academics, a sort of shunning which nearly cost him his

career. The shift away from the early accolades and positive feedback was noticeable. At a *Volkskunde* conference in Weimar in 1933, Peuckert was avoided by his colleagues, including John Meier (1864-1953) of the Folksong Archive in Freiburg; in fact, Peuckert would always remember and remain grateful for the fact that Lily Weiser-Aal sat with him at this occasion (Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 24).

Simultaneously, Peuckert published less in the *Schlesische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, and by 1938 he was no longer a member of the *Schlesische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde* (Silesian Society for Volkskunde). Either he left on his own accord, frustrated by the lack of reception his work was receiving, or, increasingly, Peuckert's submissions were being pushed away as a result of Steller's attempts. By the mid 1930's, Peuckert's chances of career advancement looked dim. And in 1933, Peuckert's book joined the hundreds and thousands of other works by authors deemed to be out-of-line with National Socialist ideology, burnt in the Breslauer Ring.

Peuckert remained at the Deutsches Institut until 1935, when his *venia legendi* (Latin: the right to read; that is, the right to hold lectures) was withdrawn, essentially curtailing his ability to function as an active academic.⁹⁰ The decision to terminate Peuckert was based on the assessment that he was politically unreliable; his *Volkskunde des Proletariats* was considered to have Marxist leanings and Peuckert was furthermore accused of being a pacifist and a "*Judenfreund*" -- a friend of the Jews (Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 24-25).

Though no direct evidence links Steller's attempts of defamation to Peuckert's job loss, it is clear that Steller's repeated attempts initiated a process which brought Peuckert and his work into an unwanted spotlight.

* * *

One decade would pass before Peuckert could start to rebuild his initially promising career, prematurely cut short.

Riding out the War

Peuckert spent the years between 1935 and 1945 at his vacation home in Haasel (*Leszczyna*) in the Silesian Bober-Katzbach Mountains, in, as he called it, self-imposed exile.⁹¹ Despite the blow of losing his academic post, the war years were not as hard on the Peuckert family as they were for many: they had a car, received visits and letters from friends, had enough food to eat, and were not in a large city which was regularly bombed. Even their home, described by a used bookstore owner who helped Peuckert acquire books during the war, seemed comfortable, if not plush:

“[It ...] was situated in a large orchard. The house was build massively; as far as I remember it had eight rooms including the kitchen: four of these rooms and the hallway were used by Herr Professor Peuckert’s large library. The library was significantly larger than many bookstores. He had finished the attic and the barn, so that the room in the attic could hold bookshelves and chests with valuable collector’s items. The room for books in the barn was fireproofed, and served to house old prints and collectible handwriting samples, as well as valuable books on loan from libraries.”⁹²

Having access to his own, still growing library allowed Peuckert to get some research and writing done during the war. Among other things, he wrote *Die große Wende* during these years, a mostly historical work relying on “Volkskunde-based” methodology to discuss the reformation and the accompanying shift from, as he deemed it, the peasant world to the world of the bourgeoisie. Before Gertrud and Peuckert fled Haasel in 1945, Peuckert sent the typoscript of his book to his friend and colleague Eugen Claaßen, the head of Claaßen Press in Hamburg. The book thus survived the war in unpublished

form, and was consequently published in 1948.

One source of income for the Peuckert's was a modest pension, and it seems that Peuckert applied for, and was denied, a scholarship from the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, the major organ for academic funding in Germany (Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 210). To further financially support his family, Peuckert wrote several novels during the war, garnering an approximate monthly income of 900 *Reichsmark*.⁹³ Of the genre *Heimatroman* -- that is, a second-class novel concerned mostly with a small and isolated community, often of a national bent -- Peuckert's literary pursuits do not help clarify the picture of Peuckert's life during the Nazi regime. Did he write what was popular in order to survive? Bönisch-Brednich believes the emotionally suffused novels were simply a way to get through the war, and, if we are to believe the testimonials of people who knew Peuckert during these years, Peuckert had made a conscientious decision to distance himself from the Nazi regime and its ideology (Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 209). Other actions -- not hailing the Nazi flag, and not attending party functions -- continue to blur and complicate the picture (Albrecht 1948, 14-15).

In order to publish, Peuckert had to apply for a membership to the *Reichsschriftumkammer*, the Nazi organ under the Ministerium of Propaganda responsible for all literary publications in the Third Reich. Every author trying to publish during these years had to become a member, and Peuckert did so in 1938.⁹⁴ From the application questionnaire it is apparent that Peuckert no longer saw his trajectory as that of an academic; when asked about his main means of employment, Peuckert responded that he was a *Schriftsteller* -- writer.⁹⁵

Peuckert's application prompted a flurry of letters between the

Reichsschriftumskammer and the offices of the Reichsministry of Science, Education, and Popular Culture, of the Reichsministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, and the local *Gaugeschäftsstelle* (district office) in Schlesien.⁹⁶ Was there, the Reichsschriftumskammer asked, any extra information about Peuckert: “To get a complete picture over the evaluation of that P.[euckert], I request any information about his personality and about experiences you had with him being at the university.”⁹⁷ The office of the Reichsministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda responded as follows:

“As far as could be checked, he supposedly published little stories about rural fieldnames and legends in diverse newspapers. Whether he played a role in political life isn’t clear, since Dr. Peuckert, as aforementioned, only moved to Haasel June 1935. According to the *Kreisleitung* [the district leadership] of the NSDAP in Goldberg, however, his political reliability is questionable. He principally precluded himself from [...] activities of the NSDAP and refuses to use the German greeting [that is, the Heil Hitler greeting] in public.”⁹⁸

As a result of these letters, Peuckert was declared *politisch Unzuverlässig*, politically unreliable:⁹⁹

“[...] we are not in the position to fully assume liability that the private docent in residence Dr Will Erich Peukert [sic] would always without fail stand up for the national socialist state. [...] Peukert [sic] [...] lives very withdrawn. His life is filled through an active correspondence, including international correspondence. So far no visible interest in the political development of Germany has been seen. He doesn’t visit any NS-events, doesn’t use the German greeting, and doesn’t show the flag of the Third Reich on national occasions.”¹⁰⁰

What the day-to-day impact of these letters was is unclear, though Peuckert’s work and publication record were continually watched through the 1930’s and into the early 1940’s. Thus, when Peuckert accused the scholar Dr. Ludwig Englert of plagiarism in his work on Theophrastus Paracelsus (1493-1541), the alchemist and

mystic about whom Peuckert had also written a book in 1941, the bureaucratic wheels immediately started turning. Dr. Englert informed the Reichsschriftumskammer of the book review, demanding an apology¹⁰¹ Though given the chance to respond, Peuckert did not apologize; it is noteworthy that his letter to the Reichsschriftumskammer of July 14th, 1942, in which he defended the book review is the only letter in all the available wartime documents that Peuckert signed with *Heil Hitler*. Given that this is a singular instance under tricky circumstances which could have put Peuckert in some danger, his use of the Nazi greeting in a letter to a highly ranked ministerium is perhaps understandable.

The office of the president of the Reichsschriftumskammer responded to Peuckert on July 24th, 1942, further restricting his academic pursuits through a withdrawal of his right to publish book reviews.¹⁰² As a punishment for criticizing Englert, Peuckert's ability to have any type of academic career, impact, or visibility was essentially stymied by this second bureaucratic blow:

“[...] on 11/27/1936, the Reichsminister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda positioned the art report in place of the art critique [...] - ‘The art report should not be an evaluation as much as a representation and therefore an appreciation’ - [and even so] you thought it appropriate to show controversy between two academics in such a way, that you molest your opponent in the form of a book review [...]. You misused your position of a book reviewer to critique [valuate], which the National Socialist Reich [...] refuses to tolerate. [...] Given this case I don't feel in the position to allow you to keep your role as a book reviewer.”¹⁰³

Yet when Peuckert received the Paracelsus-Prize from the city of Villach in 1944 for the best published work on Paracelsus, it was not left unnoticed, and Peuckert's right to review books was reinstated.¹⁰⁴ Publishing little else during the war years, Peuckert spent the remainder of the war in Haasel.

Flight and the Aftermath of the War

Russian troops entered Eastern Prussia in the Summer of 1944, and Lower Silesia immediately began to fortify and set up evacuation plans for its inhabitants (Rogall 2000, 163). Yet the German troops meant to man the Russian-Polish border were battling on the Western Front instead, and thus the Russian Army's first attack on Poland on January 12th, 1945 came as a surprise for which the Germans were not prepared for (ibid., 164). By January 19th, the Russian troops had rolled through Krakau and reached the borders of Silesia (ibid.).

Silesia's civilian population of circa 4.5 million individuals (as of January 1945) needed to be evacuated (ibid., 163; "Silesia" 2005). The *Räumungserlaubnis*, however, the authorization to evacuate, was given only after January 19th, and for those individuals living on the Silesian/Polish front the orders were only to evacuate to the other side of the Oder River (ibid., 164). By February 8th, the Russian troops had come as far as Steinau and Brieg; they continued to the West, and surrounded Breslau by February 16th, 1945 (ibid., 165). Just days afterwards the Russian troops were able to reach and conquer Liegnitz, Goldberg, Löwenberg, Bunzlau and Sprottau from the north, and Grottkau, Strehlen, Striegau and Jauer from the south (ibid.; cf. also Appendix 1, Map 5).

On February 8th, 1945, Peuckert typed a postcard to his friend Claafen; it was never sent:

"Dear Claafen, thanks so much for your card from the 24th of the previous month, which just arrived here - we are still in Haasel. We can't leave because of the train blockade, and it isn't yet Haasel's turn for evacuation. Then we'll be on to a problem soon, because I'll have to play soldier in my old age again. My wife will stay here alone, and you can imagine that that isn't a good feeling under today's circumstances."¹⁰⁵

A handwritten note followed the rest of the card: “We are in Schreiberhau by now. Where we head to next we don’t know.”¹⁰⁶ Another postcard informed his son about whom to turn to in the case that his parents should die; it, too, was never sent.¹⁰⁷ The desperation of the German army late in the war prompted a late conscription of the remaining able-bodied men, of which Peuckert, at the age of 50, was one:

“I’m only writing to you, in case something happens to me or Mima. I’m about to go to the *Wehrmeldeamt* [army conscription office], since we’ve been called; I’ll probably be drafted soon. Write soon and often! All my love and my best your Vati [Dad].”¹⁰⁸

On February 11th, Peuckert and Gertrud were able to obtain a handwritten and stamped letter from the mayor of Haasel, the permission to leave town, and, give the proximity of the troops, Peuckert and Gertrud left Haasel that same day, probably just hours after receiving the letter.¹⁰⁹ They only brought along a bike and a backpack, leaving everything else behind, including the library that some say amounted to 14,000 or even 15,000 books, worth circa 150,000 Mark at the time.¹¹⁰ They fled over Schreiberhau (*Skłarksa Poreba*, where they spent a night in the house of Carl Hauptmann, probably with Maria and her daughter Monona), over the Jakobsthal Pass (*Jakuszyce*, now on the border between Poland and the Czech Republic), through Gablonz (*Jablonec nad Nisou*, Czech Republic), Reichenberg (*Liberec*, Czech Republic), Teplitz (*Teplice*, Czech Republic), Dux-Brüx (*Duchcov-Most*, Czech Republic) and Karlsbad (*Karlovy Vary*, Czech Republic), ending up in the Oberpfalz (cf. Appendix 1, Map 2).¹¹¹ In Peuckert’s own words:

“A few hours before Haasel became a battlefield, at the last moment, we were able to leave from there: on bikes and with almost no luggage, we were able to save ourselves and end up in the Oberpfalz. But what’ll happen now, without home or roots?”¹¹²

One cannot help but note that Peuckert locked his house door and took the key to the house in Haasel with him; he kept the big iron key with him until his death.¹¹³ Peuckert must still have entertained the hope that he and Gertrud might return.

No documents pertaining to their flight and their experiences exist, but historical record indicates that it would have been a very difficult and dangerous journey. 630,000 Silesians perished on the flight to Saxony, Thuringia, or Bavaria (“Schlesien” 2005).

When Peuckert and his wife reached Bavaria in March 1945, they were put up in makeshift housing.¹¹⁴ Soon they were able to rent a piece of land in Bärnau in the Oberpfalz (a plot called the Holzmühle) by June of 1945, and farmed the land with the help of three hired farm laborers. In a letter to Maria dated November 21st, 1945, Peuckert expressed joy at being able to put food on the table, but was concerned about his inability to get work done. Worse, he was worried about his books:

“Now we’ve been over here in the Oberpfalz [for] 3/4 of a year; we’ve been farming since July; we have a circa 50 Morgen sized lot [1 Morgen = 0.3 hectares or circa 1 acre] [...]; the guy renting it had two, and the one he gave us had been a burden to him; [...] we told ourselves that putting money into rent or sticking into the farm would be the same. This way we have a place to stay until next July [...]. [...] [The situation] in Haasel worries me a lot. If only [...] the books remained intact. One would like to think that they are worthless for anyone except me. Could you - because you are closer - check on the situation? [...] I always think, that even if the house suffered, some of the books could still be extricated and saved.”¹¹⁵

The letter was returned, marked “Destination does not have allowed postal correspondence.” The library was never recovered.

As the winter of 1945 was dire in Germany -- little to no food, and freezing weather -- the Peuckert family was truly lucky to have contact by the following spring

with an American friend, the pastor John Joseph Stoudt from Blue Bell, Pennsylvania. They had met in 1939 when Stoudt was doing research on Jacob Böhme, a subject close and dear to Peuckert's heart. Stoudt, a field chaplain in North Africa for the United States Army during the war, offered his support of clothing and food to the Peuckert family; more importantly, he sent a letter for Peuckert to take to a regional American Military Commander, requesting help for his friends:¹¹⁶

“The bearer of this letter, Dr. Will-Erich Peuckert, was formerly Professor at Breslau University, and was fired when the Nazis took over. When I was in Germany in 1939, doing work for my Doctor of Philosophy degree, Doctor Peuckert was very kind to me. Even though he was then in strained circumstances, he was kind and helped me even to the point of being examined by the Gestapo when I left his village, and then being punished for his hospitality for me. [...] All favours you can show this man, who is certainly a victim of the Nazis will be appreciated. P.S.: I can vouch for his anti-Nazi sentiments.”¹¹⁷

The exact effects of Stoudt's letter are unclear, though some repercussions are apparent. In an undated letter bundled together with Stoudt's letter to the Military Commander, there is a draft of a note penned in rough English, thanking the Commander for his help:

“[...] The hunger is great. In the winter, we had cold and the electric light was cut off; we despaired of the life. [...]

We could not work, because our hunger was great, and we forgot our knowledge. We are ill and headache torments us. [...] If it will be better in the future, I owe it to your parcels and the kindness of Mr. Stoudt, who recommended me to you. [...]

Your kind help has made us very happy. We shall eat a good deal in the next days, [...]. God bless you, that you may not live to see such a misery. More, He may give you the thanks, which I cannot give.”¹¹⁸

Göttingen and Academic Legitimation

Peuckert was called, “*hilfsweise*”, as a substitute, to hold the chair in Volkskunde at the Universität Göttingen around December 1945; by Easter of the

following year the position, “a so-called kw-professorship,” became a more permanent post.¹¹⁹ The professorship was so-called as it could be disinstated when or if Peuckert should cease to teach: kw, “*kann wegfallen*”, can fall away. While Gertrud stayed on at the farm until she could rejoin her husband, Peuckert moved to Göttingen. He rented a room, first quite centrally at Theaterplatz 7, then further away at Lotzestr. 43, writing to Gertrud at least twice, if not three or four times a week (cf. Appendix 1, Map 1).

Their detailed correspondence in the early months of 1946 lends insight into not only the early years immediately following the war, but into Peuckert’s early attempts at rejoining academia as well. The letters, filled mostly with information about day to day life, are less heartfelt and romantic than his love letters to Maria. Peuckert discussed the large number of refugees in the area, how noisy his student apartment was, and even regularly asked Gertrud to send things, including violet ink for his pen (his color of choice) or food: “I sure could use some cookies.”¹²⁰ Once he even asked Gertrud to send enough cookies for all of his students, circa 300-400 *Plätzchen*.¹²¹

That winter was cold, and without sufficient wood to heat his apartment, Peuckert would attend concerts in church because the building was warm -- though he would leave the Lutheran church in 1962.¹²² He also battled with loneliness and the stress of being in a new environment:

“Sunday is over: it was a terribly empty day, a.[nd] when I think that this will continue until mid March I’m overcome with [...] misery. [...] In desperation I walked down the main street, further and further, through the endless suburbia until I came to the open fields. [...] Grey in grey, a.[nd] thusly grey I came back home.”¹²³

When letters from Gertrud did not arrive, Peuckert was distraught:

“You clearly treat me bad enough, since not once on Tuesday or Wednesday did I get mail [...]; one day after another goes by without

news. That's just dreadful. [...] If the mail comes during breakfast [...] a.[nd] one gets nothing one's whole day is ruined."¹²⁴

The difficulties of finding writing paper and ink for his pen to write to Gertrud also plagued Peuckert, let alone the extraorbitant, inflated price of a used typewriter which he felt he needed for his academic work -- 2,000 to 3,000 Marks.¹²⁵

And yet, despite the difficulties of adjusting, Peuckert was fortunate enough to have a job. Remembering him from a previous encounter, the dean of the Philosophical Faculty at the Universität Göttingen had decided to help Peuckert procure a job (Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 29). Ranking him first out of a set of two possible candidates, Peuckert was recommended for the job by Herbert Schöffler (1888-1946):

“Will-Erich Peuckert is to be named before all others [...]. His accomplishments in the narrower field of Volkskunde are impressive because of his degree of circumspection, the fill of detail, and through maintaining a red thread [...]. Peuckert is a warmhearted individual with a strong educating ethos, and from him the foundation of Volkskunde at Göttingen can be hoped for [...]. The [Philosophical] Faculty can't name a third candidate. Volkskunde let itself be grabbed in 1933 from the Volk and Race intoxication, so that many scholars can't even be considered today. [...] The discipline has been bled dry, and needs loving care from a fruitful pedagogue” (ibid., citing a reference in the Göttingen Universitäts Archiv).¹²⁶

And thus, after an 11 year hiatus, Peuckert rejoined university life. It is frequently noted that he held the first chair in Volkskunde in Germany after World War II, and remained the only chair in Volkskunde in Germany for years to come (Brednich 1996, 13). Peuckert himself hyperbolized this position, referring to himself as “the pope of German Volkskunde”.¹²⁷ Regardless, his charge was not always an easy one, especially given the lack of materials in the library from which to draw on:

“...the library [...] is pitiful. [During the war the books were moved], [...] one can't get any of them back since the mine where all the books are

is broken [...] (The only bomb besides the train station, so to say.)”¹²⁸

The status and ranking of his professorship was changed three times over the course of his career according to documents. According to the documents from the Lower Saxon State Ministry, Peuckert was named “*persönlicher Ordinarius*” and given an *ordentliche Professur* (the equivalent of a full professorship) on April 30th, 1951; seven years later, on January 14th, 1958, he again received a letter saying his professorship had changed from an *ausserordentliche Professur* to an *ordentliche Professur*, from associate to full professor.¹²⁹ Finally, on July 3rd, 1960, his status was again changed to *ausserordentlicher Professor*, perhaps in response to his request to retire.

Bureaucratics aside, the years 1946-1960 are marked by a clear shift in Peuckert’s work: his striving towards establishing himself as a new (and at times innovative) scholar, which had marked his years in Breslau, gave way to a larger degree of conservatism in his research. It is arguable that the reason for change was grounded in a change in Peuckert’s goals: securing and keeping an academic job during a period of rebuilding at German universities. Bourdieu, citing Reif, notes that it is important to produce work which is of interest to others if one wants recognition -- “[t]he scientist wants his work *to be not only interesting to himself but also important to others*” -- as a way to gather and maintain social capital, and Peuckert’s conservatism makes sense when viewed in this light (Bourdieu 1999, 33, citing Reif 1961, 1957-1962. Italics in the original).

Overall, these years at Göttingen -- a second shot at an academic career that Peuckert might already have given up on -- were marked by conservatism in thought, and a certain interest in intellectually conservative, though grandiose projects. Though

his interest in the occult, present since his childhood, never faded -- Peuckert even taught courses on witches (*Die Hexe*, Winter Semester 1951/52) and on *magia naturalis* (natural magic, Summer Semester 1953) and published a few related works (e.g., *Geheim-Kulte* 1951; *Astrologie* 1960) -- most of his work was grounded in the more established genres of narrative studies.

Working extremely hard in the years up until his retirement, Peuckert's lecture notes and publications give a sense of his interests: he studied both German and international narratives, especially legends (e.g., *Ostdeutsches Sagenbüchlein* 1951, *Ostdeutsches Märchenbüchlein* 1951, *Lenore* 1955, and *Verborgenes Niedersachsen* 1960); pursued research concerned with the occult sciences, the *Geheimwissenschaften* (e.g., *Geheimkulte* 1951, *Pansophie: Ein Versuch zur Geschichte der weissen und schwarzen Magie* 1956, and *Astrologie* 1960), and was interested in internationalizing Volkskunde as a way to come to terms with its Nazi past (one which Peuckert had mostly avoided by not working during the war).¹³⁰ Instead of seeing Volkskunde as a national discipline concerned with the people and the lore within its own borders, he proposed work which looked beyond boundaries of the nation (Peuckert 1948).

There are some who suggest that Peuckert's later years were intellectually less stimulating and thus less important for the discipline of Volkskunde overall, all a part of the shift in Peuckert's research interests and attitude that occurred after 1945. Rolf-Christian Zimmermann points out that Peuckert's work stagnated during these years, forced finally to work within the confines of a strictly defined discipline:

“Much more was carried by the fact that Peuckert now had to, out of loyalty, stick to one academic discipline. As a discipline in an academic institution that divided its labor, Peuckert's Volkskunde could no longer reach out to history or to the study of literature” (Zimmermann 1973, X).

The literary interests which had kept Peuckert and his family alive during World War II came back to haunt him as well in an academic world which liked to keep academic writing and literature apart (ibid., XI). Not only did Peuckert's academic prose garner attention by virtue of the fact that it was written in a much more free-flowing literary style than most were accustomed to, but Peuckert continued to waltz in the literary world by rejoining the international writer's association, the PEN-Club, and by winning the Georg Dehio Prize, a prize given to people or institutions doing exemplary work on the culture and history of eastern Europe (ibid.).¹³¹ His work during these years -- and Peuckert himself -- are described as "*Wildwuchs*," a wild growth: not pruned to match the strict confines of *Volkskunde* (ibid.).

Personal Tragedy and Recuperation

Personal tragedy was not far behind Peuckert's reentry into the academic world: on assignment as part of a peace delegation, Peuckert and his wife were caught in a deadly accident involving a British tank; Gertrud died immediately, and Peuckert was left 3/4 blind in his left eye and completely blind in his right, sustaining heavy head injuries. In a letter to an unknown correspondent, he spoke of the event:

"In 1946, the Lower-Saxon Minister searched for a professor who hadn't belonged to the [Nazi] party, and he only found me. He drew me into the diplomatic world - particularly into things about the Oder-Neiße Border. When we were supposed to fly to the London Conference in 1947, our English Chauffeur drove us into a tank; my wife, who at that point was [my] secret secretary, was dead immediately; I lay unconscious for 4 months - brain surgery, etc."¹³²

The injuries, in fact, were far worse than Peuckert described them time and time again in letters to friends and colleagues. His doctor, the director of the neuro-chirurgical

Department of the University Clinic, described Peuckert's accident and injuries in a more technical fashion:

“Herr Prof. Peuckert [sic] was in treatment with us from 10/30 until 12/15/46 because of heavy head injuries after a car accident. In the foreground was the extensive destruction of his facial skeleton with the severing of both zygomatic bones and the upper mandibles. The top of the subcranial bone was involved in the injury as well. The trauma to the brain was less heavy in comparison. [...] Because of the fracture in the mandible, the respiratory passage was displaced; we had to apply a tracheotomy. [...] There is also a left-sided ophthalmoplegy. The right eye is nearly blind.”¹³³

Even though he had only been in Göttingen for such a short time, Peuckert's charisma becomes apparent through the memories of his students. Recalling the event years later, Peuckert's student Eberhard Paukstadt remembers sitting in vigil, waiting to hear news:

“In these days - that I want to underscore - the thoughts of your old students are with you in a special ways, hoping for a quick recovery [...]. I still remember how we had set up a news service after your accident, through which we were informed every two hours during that critical time about the fluctuations of your condition. We had set up our domicile in the department and sought comfort from one another.”¹³⁴

The feelings apparently were mutual, as Peuckert also spoke quite highly of many of his students.¹³⁵

Though Peuckert's injuries were enormous and would plague him later on in his life, he did return to teaching: moderately in the Summer Semester of 1947, and more vigorously, with a heavier course-load, by the summer of 1948 (cf. Appendix 4). Peuckert would throw himself more and more into his work as the years went by, wedded to his career.

Not too long after the accident, Peuckert married his nurse Lore-Marie Hanckel from Osnabrück, for she was pregnant with his child: his daughter Sylphia was born in

1949. Sylphia describes the marriage of her parents as one of comfort for her father -- he needed someone to take care of him -- noting that the marriage was relatively loveless (Peuckert 2004) In fact, Lore-Marie's parents cautioned her against the marriage, which Peuckert kept secret for a while; Sylphia was raised in part by her grandparents (ibid.).

Tragedy struck a second time in 1960.¹³⁶ Hanns-Peter Peuckert had spent World War II in Norway: “[T]hey had only been able to give the young man a certain number of cigarettes each day for the hunger, no bread for a week, and his [... epilepsy] was a result of this starvation” (Albrecht 1948, 19). Due to malnutrition, he developed epilepsy, and, in Peuckert's own word, became “mentally retarded.”¹³⁷ He was sent to live and work in several institutions for the mentally ill, among those the still extant Bethel Hospital in Bielefeld. He was killed in an apparent accident in 1960:

“First of all we want to express our condolence about the tragic death of your son. We don't really know how it happened. A misunderstood feeling of solidarity caused him to leave our asylum when we had to dismiss three of his friends. [...] He took all of his possessions when he left. [...] Your son noted that he was planing to go to a similar asylum such as ours in Freistatt [...]. We felt bad that he left, but couldn't stop him. I'm afraid we can't tell you more than that.”¹³⁸

Retirement and Last Years

Peuckert sent in his request for retirement to the Lower Saxon Minister of Culture on May 25th, 1959.¹³⁹ Mailed just two weeks before his 65th birthday, he cited severe health problems as a reason:

“The health problems caused by, as the doctor's attests indicate, injury to my brain, my eyes, the musculature of my face as well as my larynx do allow me to do academic research, but make it very difficult for me to teach. No semester has gone by that this applicant hasn't been surprised

with bouts of fainting during his lectures [...]. [...] The undersigned, who enjoyed his work in Göttingen and was glad to be a teacher and leader of young people is of the opinion, that he no longer feels capable of being a teacher.”¹⁴⁰

As further proof, he included letters from his doctors Okonek and Weißenfels, and his request was granted on August 12th, 1960.¹⁴¹

While retirement, for some, can mean a step away from academic life, Peuckert fulheartedly anticipated a vigorous post-retirement career. Still in his letter requesting his retirement, he outlined a list of tasks which he hoped to still have time for: “already started and stagnated investigations, but most of all the Book of Lower Saxon legends and the multi-volumed ‘Handwörterbuch [der] Sage’ [...].”¹⁴²

Peuckert and his family moved after his retirement to the property Engelsmühle in Darmstadt-Mühlthal, just south of Frankfurt/Main, that they had acquired when the British government finally paid restitution for Peuckert’s accident and the death of Gertrud Peuckert:

“The British occupying force finally approved a compensation from whcih I purchased a forested property in the Odenwald. [Called the] Engelsmühle, it reminded of Fontainebleau in its location and its surroundings. When I turned 65, I retired and we (I had married again) moved here for good.”¹⁴³

The property reminded him, he said, of his home in Haasel, and he spent hours there building a book cellar for his collection (Peuckert 2004).¹⁴⁴ Sylphia and her mother continued to miss Göttingen, and were never happy living in such isolation (ibid.).

Retirement prompted Peuckert to reflect both about his life and work. During the remaining nine years of his life, he authored three unpublished autobiographical accounts of his life; mostly framed as an old man reflecting about his life as a young man in his twenties and thirties, these “*Erinnerungen*,” memories, also highlight

Peuckert's resurfacing interest in magic, the occult, the supernatural, and in witchcraft, an interest carried from his childhood which had received little recognition in the academic world.

Peuckert was also concerned with questions of his legacy: what would happen to the his lecture notes, unpublished manuscripts, and personal effects? Would anyone remain interested in him after his death? To no avail did he try to interest the city of Darmstadt in his written *Nachlass*: and yet the city respectfully declined.¹⁴⁵ This rejection, understandable if only because of the sheer quantity of materials that the city would have to find room for, in many ways encapsulates the balance of Peuckert's life. The incidence was mirrored in a request Peuckert made to his colleague Gerhart Heilfurth (1909-2006), asking the latter to help him house his *Zettelkatalog*, his card catalogue files on German legends that he had put together over the course of years for his *Handwörterbuch der Sage*:

“But I am almost 74 years old, and I wonder what will happen with the catalogue after my death [...]. Would it be possible for your *Erzählarchiv* or your institute to come to some sort of cooperation [...]? Perhaps that as long as my wife lives, the boxes could stand here, but that they could be used by welcomed guests -- who would also have access to my library of several hundred volumes on legends [...]. Or do you have another idea? [...] Please think about it. There is interest from Uppsala [...] and from Hand, Los Angeles [...].”¹⁴⁶

Unlike the city of Darmstadt, Heilfurth agreed; of the two duplicate card catalogues, one remains in Göttingen.¹⁴⁷

Peuckert remained engaged academically during his retirement, publishing until his death. *Astrologie* was published in 1960, a history of the occult sciences (one of his few published works on witchcraft and magic), as well as *Verborgenes Niedersachsen*, a book about the legends of Lower Saxony. 1961 brought the second edition of *Das*

Leben Jakob Böhmes (The Life of Jakob Böhme), the third edition of *Die Rosenkreutzer*, volumes 1-6 of the edited compendia *Europäische Sagen* (European Legends), and volumes 1-3 of *Handwörterbuch der Sage* (Encyclopaedia of Legends). Volume 3 of the journal *Die Nachbarn* was published in 1962, to which Peuckert contributed three articles, as well as *Schlesisch*, a book on the Silesian dialect. 1963-1965 were slow work years for health reasons, although Peuckert still managed to publish several book reviews. *Die große Wende* was republished in 1966, *Gabalia* in 1967, and *Schlesische Volkskunde* (Silesian Volkskunde) republished in 1968. Even the year of his death, two of Peuckert's articles were published posthumously (cf. Appendix 6).

If the years immediately following the war were marked by research interests which mostly matching the discipline as a whole, some of Peuckert's post-retirement work was more grandiose. Despite the fact that he published voraciously, Peuckert needed an additional focus into which he could invest concentrated time and energy: as a life's work of sorts, and settled on editing his planned 10-volume *Handwörterbuch der Sage*, an encyclopaedia of legends.¹⁴⁸ Funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Peuckert gave the impression that, with this project, he saw himself as continuing in Jacob Grimm's shoes:

“Already in Breslau P.[euckert] had started to index legends, but all [index materials] fell victim to the flight. He began anew in Göttingen - with help from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft - and indexed the complete German corpus using a total of two and a half million index cards; that work continues until today. Related is P.[euckert]'s new - yet at the same time old, since Jac.[ob] Grimm also had it - definition of the legends as a historical and intellectual, as well as religeo-historical source (Sagen 1965) [...].”¹⁴⁹

Its publication was suspended after three volumes, partially because of soured relations

with Peuckert's successor Kurt Ranke (1908-1985), peer reviews, and because of the difficulties of a single individual attempting such a large-scale project: a reference work requires an encyclopedic network, which one person could not possibly have mastered alone.¹⁵⁰ In response to the reviews from his colleagues, Peuckert sent an enraged letter to Matthias Zender, saying he would no longer publish in German *Volkskunde* journals.¹⁵¹ Funding problems with the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Germany's major academic funding organ, also contributed to its suspension.

Another project pursued during Peuckert's retirement was his continued interest in witchcraft, and the media frenzy which consumed much of Peuckert's time after leaving Göttingen in 1960. Correspondence poured into the Engelsmühle, asking Peuckert for the recipe to a flight potion he purportedly had experimented with.

Self-preservation and a grandiose vision mark Peuckert's attempts of securing his legacy and written Nachlass, the *HdS* project with its 2.5 million index cards (an adherence to the canon on the one hand with a penchant for collecting and collection management, coupled with the desire to do things entirely his way or else withdraw completely), and the attention-garnering post-retirement witchcraft uproar. The comparisons to Jacob Grimm as well as penning no less than three autobiographies -- a penchant for self-documentation -- also feed into this phenomenon.

Peuckert would otherwise remain in contact with both the German *Volkskunde* and international folkloristics communities during these years. Surveying his correspondence from 1960 until his death, the sheer volume of letters is astonishing. His written legacy contains letters to and from over 360 individuals, among those Hermann Bausinger, Inger Margarethe Boberg, Wilhelm Brepohl, Gisela Burde-Schneidewind, Alfred Cammann, Erik Dal, Linda Dégh, Sigurd Erixon, Paul Geiger, Ina-

Maria Greverus, Wayland D. Hand, Josef Hanika, Gerhart Heilfurth, Wolfgang Jacobeit, Alfred Karasek, Sven Liljeblad, Waldemar Liungman, Max Lüthi, Gerhard Lutz, Heinz Maus, Karl Meuli, Helmut Möller, Eberhard Paukstadt, Kurt Ranke, Lutz Röhrich, Ingeborg Weber (later Weber-Kellermann), and Jaromir Zech.¹⁵²

Peuckert's health did not improve, in part because of his busy pace: he had a stroke in 1963 which left him partially paralyzed on the right side.¹⁵³ He also experienced "*geistige Störungen*," mental difficulties, as he put it, including delirium and a fear of being stalked.¹⁵⁴ "[S]everal other little joys" followed, including blood pressure problems, liver damage, and the functional use of only his left index finger for typing.¹⁵⁵ Peuckert made note of this fact in all the letters he continued to type to his friends and colleagues, apologizing for the short letters but underscoring with what pains he was writing back to his friends.¹⁵⁶ Contact with friends and colleagues appears to have been of utmost importance to him, a way to keep in touch with the changing academic community. Was it perhaps also an effort to secure his place in academia?

In 1967, Peuckert received a postcard from Zwi Horowitz in Safad, Israel, requesting Peuckert's most recent publications for the the Bitan Museum that the latter had founded. In their short correspondence, they compared how each had spent the war years. The letters to Horowitz uncover an apparent court case against Peuckert, in which he was accused of anti-Semitism. Peuckert was very open and direct with Horowitz about the case, since he felt the two shared similar life histories. Thus:

"[...] I want to explain that in 1967 a *Rennomier-Goi* accused me of anti-Semitism and of *Judenhetze* [Jew-baiting] (ritual murder), although I denounced ritual murder in 1937 in "*Handwörterbuch d. Aberglaubens*" as a superstition. I also was a contributor to the Warburg Library until the war began in 1939. You will understand that I did not enjoy the lies that the above-mentioned "*Rennomier-Goi*" put forth, especially given that he hid behind a heart attack when it came time for the libel action.

[...Yet,] by their titles learned scholars of the Jewish faith, though I myself did not know them, spoke up for me, and the *Zentralrat der Juden* [Central Council of the Jews] took back their accusations. Nevertheless, a bad taste remained in my mouth."¹⁵⁷

Where this leaves us in terms of Peuckert's identity is unclear. A court case accusing Peuckert of anti-Semitism is a weighty matter, and would feed into the entries of his in the *Handwörterbuch des Aberglaubens*, but it is equally interesting that Peuckert worked in association with the Warburg Library. Founded by Aby Warburg in Hamburg in 1901, expanded in 1909, and moved to London in 1933, the Library attracted a circle of well-known scholars including Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945, philosopher) and Gershom Sholem (1897-1982, scholar of Jewish mysticism). And yet, somehow, neither is surprising, given Peuckert's penchant for riding a swinging pendulum.

* * *

After nine years of a work-filled retirement, on Saturday, October 25th, 1969, Peuckert passed away at the Engelsmühle of a second, massive stroke.

Over his lifetime, he had published numerous works: over 20 books, edited over 35 others, more than seven novels, and written upwards of 230 articles. At the time of his death, he belonged to the German PEN-Club (he had belonged to this literary organization from 1928-1933 and left it when it became national socialist; he rejoined in 1958), was an honorary member of the Gustav-Adolf-Akademie in Uppsala, belonged to the *Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung* (the German Academy for Language and Poetry), a "membre correspondant honoré" of the Institut Havrais of Rouen University, an honorary member of the German Society for Volkskunde, a member of the Herder-Forschungsrat in Marburg, and an honorary member of the

Silesian *Kulturrat* (cultural council).¹⁵⁸ According to his Curriculum Vitae, he had also received the Johann-Heinrich-Merck Award for literary criticism and essay from the city of Darmstadt; the Deutsche Akademie für Sprache and Dichtung, however, the organ responsibly for rewarding the award, has no record of Peuckert ever receiving this reward.¹⁵⁹

* * *

Getuppelt, doubled, Peuckert had once given a description of what he thought most Silesians were like; it remains an apt description of Peuckert himself:

“He [the Silesian] isn’t a one-faceted and easily categorizable person [...], but a child with many inheritances [...]. He is the individual at the crossroads of many different peoples and of historical occurrences and change, and since he - unconsciously - feels to be in the whirlpool of events, he wants something graspable [...].”¹⁶⁰

Selections of Peuckert’s academic work, in all of its colors and facets, is the subject of the remaining dissertation. Particular attention is given to those few moments of recognized clarity, all focused in one way or another on notions of expanding the field’s canon, which punctured long periods of intellectual stasis.

CHAPTER ONE ENDNOTES

¹ Quote in original: “[...] Er [der Schlesier] sei kein einliniger, mit prägnanten termini zu bezeichnender und einzuordnender Mensch, sondern ein Kind aus vielen Erbschaften [...]. Er ist der Mensch am Kreuzwege der Völker, der geschichtlichen Abläufe und Wechsel, und weil er sich - ihm selber unbewußt - im Strudel des Geschehens fühlt, langt er sich nach einem Halt [...]”

² Cod. Ms. Peuckert A225. As a supplement to the 10-year correspondence (1959-1969) with Abel Miroglio, affiliated with the *Institut Havrais de Sociologie Économique et de Psychologie des Peuples*, Peuckert included a small text on Silesia. Here, among other places, in an undated letter, he explains the word “getuppelt”: “He [the Silesian] isn’t a one-faceted and easily categorizable person [...], but a child with many inheritances [...]. He is the individual at the crossroads of many different peoples and of historical occurrences and change, and since he - unconsciously - feels to be in the whirlpool of events, he wants something graspable [...]”

³ Peuckert’s three autobiographical texts (Cod. Ms. Peuckert D12, Cod. Ms. Peuckert D13, and Cod. Ms. Peuckert D14) are discussed in greater detail in the introduction of this dissertation. For more information, also refer to the Notes on Sources.

⁴ Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich, “Will-Erich Peuckert (1895-1969): Versuch einer Biographie,” *“Volkskunde ist Nachricht von jedem Teil des Volkes”*: Will-Erich Peuckert zum 100. Geburtstag (Göttingen: Schmerse, 1996), 17.

⁵ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B35. The term that Peuckert uses is “*bäuerliche Sippe*”: of peasant “clan”, that is, of rural origins.

⁶ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D13, 17.

⁷ BA-RK IO455.

⁸ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 2, and Cod. Ms. Peuckert D12, 13.

⁹ BA-RK IO455.

¹⁰ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 2; BA-RK IO455.

¹¹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D13, 6.

¹² *ibid.*, 7.

¹³ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A107. Quote in original: “Von all meinen Angehörigen wissen wir noch nichts, weder vom Peter, noch wo mein Vater und meine Schwester geblieben sind. Von Putens Geschwistern ist der älteste Bruder und seine Frau auf der Flucht gestorben [...]”

¹⁴ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D13, 7.

¹⁵ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B30. Though correspondence exists between Peuckert and his sister Martha Pfeiffer dating from after World War II, there is nothing in these letters that betrays much personal information about Martha’s life, or her relationship to her brother. Peuckert’s nephew, Martha’s son, also corresponded for a few years with his uncle, but again there is nothing personal here that is of interest.

¹⁶ I interviewed Sylphia Peuckert personally in her Frankfurt am Main apartment on August 16th, 2004. She now spells her name Sylvia.

¹⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D12, Cod. Ms. Peuckert D13, Cod. Ms. Peuckert D14, and Cod. Ms. Peuckert D18. It should be noted that even if the various anecdotes that Peuckert presents as memoirs are embellished or only partial truths, they still are Peuckert’s own vision of his life, in his own words.

¹⁸ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 2.

¹⁹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D13, 2.

²⁰ *ibid.*, 2.

²¹ *ibid.*, 4.

²² *ibid.*, 15.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *ibid.*, 9.

²⁶ *ibid.*, 11.

²⁷ *ibid.*, 12.

²⁸ *ibid.*, 13.

²⁹ *ibid.*, 15.

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ *ibid.*, 21. See also Cod. Ms. Peuckert A264, letter from Robert Pormann to Will-Erich Peuckert, dated Mai 10, 1955.

³² *ibid.*

³³ For more source critical discussions of the autobiographical texts, please refer to the Introduction and the Note on Sources and Nomenclature.

³⁴ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D13, 23. Peuckert lists more than one exploit in his autobiographical text, attempts at seducing young women throughout his life. Whether or not these instances actually took place is quite another question; they are represented here because they show Peuckert's preoccupation with magic and witchcraft.

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D14, 1.

³⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A116. Letter from Peuckert to Werner Helwig, dated February 15th, 1968. Quote in original: "Es ist schon wahr, das magische Problem hat mich mein Lebenlang fasciniert, ich komme aus einem schlesischen Bauernhause des Vorgebirges und meine Großmutter mütterlicherseits war mythen- und zaubergläubig; ich bin eigentlich auch trotz Logarithmentafeln und Horaz, [...] ein zaubergläubiger geblieben [...]."

³⁸ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D14.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p.1. The motif of the White Lady, "die weisse Frau," is motif number E425.1.1 in the Thompson Motif Index (*Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, 1955-1958). cf. also Bacil F. Kirtley, "'La Llorona' and Related Themes," *Western Folklore* 19 (1960): 155-168.

⁴⁰ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D14, p.2. See also Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 17, for other exposure to or experiences with the supernatural.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² Cod. Ms. Peuckert D14, 2, 14-16

⁴³ Personal conversation with Sylphia Peuckert, August 16th, 2004.

⁴⁴ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B38. Such close friends were Peuckert and Hering, that in one of the memoirs that Peuckert wrote after his retirement, he reinserted Bruno Hering as a conversation partner into the text.

⁴⁵ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 3. The word in Peuckert's Curriculum Vitae for weatherman is *Wetterdiensttuer*.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47. See also Cod. Ms. Peuckert B5.

⁴⁸ Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 128, citing a tape-recorded interview done by Alfred Cammann with Helmut Niepel, a man who knew Peuckert while he was teaching in Groß-Iser.

⁴⁹ BA-RK IO455, "Fragebogen zur Bearbeitung des Aufnahmeantrages für die Reichsschrifttumskammer" lists the name of Peuckert's son as Hanns-Baldung.

⁵⁰ *Völkerkunde* is the German equivalent of cultural anthropology, albeit with a very different historical trajectory than British Social Anthropology à la A.R. Radcliffe-Browne (1881-1955) and E.E. Evans Pritchard (1902-1973) and the American Boasian Cultural Anthropology. For more information, also on the relationship between *Volkskunde* and *Völkerkunde*, cf. Regna Darnell, *Invisible Genealogies: A History of Americanist Anthropology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001); George Stocking *After Tylor: British Social Anthropology, 1888-1951* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995); Elisabeth Timm, "Nicht Freund, nicht Feind: Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von *Volkskunde* und *Völkerkunde*," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde* 95 (1999): 73-86; Glenn Penny, "Fashioning Local Identities in an Age of Nation-Building: Museums, Cosmopolitan Visions, and Intra-German Competition," *German History: The Journal of the German History Society* 17: 489-506; Klaus Beitzl, "Volkskunde und Völkerkunde auf den österreichischen Historikertagen 1976-1990. Oder: Der Umgang der Volkskunde und der Völkerkunde hierzulande miteinander," *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 46: 67-71; and Wolfgang Jacobeit, "Ethnologie und Alltagsgeschichte: Zum Gegenstand von Völkerkunde und Volkskunde," *Archiv für Volkskunde* 88: 129-41.

⁵¹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 2. Before Peuckert knew him, Hermann Reincke-Bloch served as the minister president of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, a member of the Deutsche Volks Partei (DVP, German People's Party). See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecklenburg-Schwerin>, accessed January 10th, 2006. See also http://www.worldstatesmen.org/German_States1918.htm, accessed January 10th, 2006. For an obituary of Hermann Reincke-Bloch, see *The American Historical Review* 34: 672.

⁵² Carl Hauptmann Archiv k821, Deutsche Akademie der Künste, Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann, April 26th, 1925.

⁵³ Carl Hauptmann Archiv k821, Deutsche Akademie der Künste, Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann, April 26th, 1925. Quote in original: “Heute früh kam der Staatschulrat in die Schule u. sagte mir, daß ich ein Jahr Urlaub habe. Am 1. Mai würde er anfangen. Und ich bin froh, daß es so gekommen ist. Wenn er auch selbst die Klausel aushängte: ich müßte in der Zeit mich aufpäppeln. [...] Noch 1.2.3.4. Tage Schule, u. dann ist Ruhe. Dann soll die Arbeit aber fliegen. Natürlich verlangt Reincke-Block, der tüchtig mitgeholfen hat, daß ich bei ihm belege vorm., aber trotz dieser 4 Stunden bleibt ja noch so viel Zeit. [...] Ich möchte heut schon Bäume ausreißen! Die nächsten Wochen werden auch Entscheidendes über die Dissertation bringen; ich kann zum ersten Mal - weil ich vorm. frei habe - die Staatsbibliothek benützen u. [...] feststellen, ob ich auf rechten Wege bin. Und zu Resultaten komme.” Bönisch-Brednich notes that Peuckert quit teaching in 1922. cf. Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 128.

⁵⁴ Carl Hauptmann Archiv k821, Deutsche Akademie der Künste, Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann, June 7th, 1925. Quote in original: “Gestern u. heut hab ich mich nun wieder hinter die Arbeit gesetzt u. so weit bin ich jetzt, daß ich das I. Kapitel - außer einem kleinen Abschnitt auf Seite 3 - in der Maschine habe. Da ist mir schon ein wahrer Stein von der Brust. [...] Das II. Kapitel will ich nun in Angriff nehmen u. ich bekomme es wohl auch im Lauf der Woche fertig, obwohl ich leichtsinnig sein will u. Mittwoch auf den Zobten fahren möchte. [...] Die Arbeit soll ja der Prellbock sein. Mit ihr will Reincke-Block erreichen, daß ich zum Abiture komme. Aber wenn es nicht glückt, dann will ich doch in diese Dinge nicht mehr Zeit u. Kraft stecken. Was man da lernen kann, habe ich gelernt.”

⁵⁵ Carl Hauptmann Archiv k821, Deutsche Akademie der Künste, Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann, August 6th, 1925. Quote in original: “An meiner Arbeit sitze ich immer noch mit wahrere Verzweiflung; jeden Tag rückt das Ende weiter hinaus. Ich wollte so gern in etwa 14 Tagen fertig sein [...]”

⁵⁶ Carl Hauptmann Archiv k821, Deutsche Akademie der Künste, Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann, September 9th, 1925. Quote in original: “Du fragst nach der Arbeit? Die ist (-bis auf Kleinigkeiten, - das letzte Kapitel u. ein Stückel in der Mitte) fertig; es gibt freilich noch viel dran zu putzen [...], aber die Sache is doch geschafft.”

⁵⁷ The English title of Peuckert’s dissertation is: *The development of Abrahams von Franckenberg up until the year 1641*. See also Cod. Ms. Peuckert C148, Cod. Ms. Peuckert B35, and Cod. Ms. Peuckert B38, and Carl Hauptmann Archiv k821, Deutsche Akademie der Künste, for mention of his dissertation.

⁵⁸ Will-Erich Peuckert, *Die Rosenkreutzer: Geschichte einer Reformation* (Jena: Diederichs, 1928).

⁵⁹ By the time Peuckert finished his dissertation in 1927, he had published *Passion: Ein Drama* (1919), as well a numerous articles. See also Appendix 6 for complete citations of Peuckert’s publications.

⁶⁰ The book titles translate as follows: *Passion: Ein Drama* is *Passion: A Drama*; *Apokalypse 1618* is *Apocalypse 1618*; *Zwei Lichte der Welt* is *Two Lights of the World*; *Andreas Hofer oder Der Bauernkrieg in Tirol* is *Andreas Hofer or the Peasants’ War*; and *Goldene Berge* is *Golden Mountains*.

⁶¹ Chapter 3 discusses Peuckert’s coming to terms with National Socialism in greater depth. In personal conversations with several scholars, including Alan Dundes (1935-2005), the entries in the *HdA* stand out as *the* thing for which Peuckert is remembered.

⁶² cf. Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, and Cod. Ms. Peuckert B19.

⁶³ Peuckert’s portrayal as the “savior” of German Volkskunde will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 3.

⁶⁴ The final “tally” of Peuckert’s relationship to National Socialism is difficult to assess; Peuckert was not a black and white individual, nor was the situation a black and white one. On the one hand, there is the one “Heil Hitler” signature (BA-RK I0455); Peuckert’s entries in the *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*; his membership in the *Deutschnationale Partei*; and his Heimatromane, his novels which made the White List of the Nazis. On the other hand, most of his letters from 1935-1945 were signed with “*gutem Gruss*” (with “good greetings”) instead of with “*deutschem Gruss*” (with “German Greetings, e.g., Heil Hitler); he lost his job because of his friendship with people of the Jewish faith and his *Volkskunde des Proletariats*; was watched in Haasel by the NSDAP for being suspicious and for not raising the Swastika flag; was sought out by several Jewish students after the war in particular; and tried to denationalize the field after the war because he saw the dangers of a nationalized field. Most likely, Peuckert had opportunistic tendencies, perhaps felt ambivalent, but in the end, did still try to aid the field in its recovery after the war.

⁶⁵ Joseph Klapper, *Schlesische Volkskunde auf kulturgeschichtlicher Grundlage* (Breslau: Hirt, 1925).

⁶⁶ The prime example here is Peuckert’s 1931 *Volkskunde des Proletariats*, which will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 2.

⁶⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A248. Peuckert is quick to note that his call to office was by the *democratic* Minister of Culture Becker. Stressing that the Minister of Culture was not a National Socialist was of high importance to Peuckert.

⁶⁸ Note that Peuckert does write to his friend Maria Hauptmann about the Deutsches Institut, already in 1929. It is unclear whether or not he was affiliated with the Institut before 1932, before the Pädagogische Akademie closed, though his letter to Maria might indicate such a thing.

Friedrich Ranke (1882-1950) bears no relation to Kurt Ranke (1908-1985), the folk narrative scholar who founded the journal *Fabula* and the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* and who took over Peuckert’s chair in Göttingen in 1960. Friedrich Ranke left the University of Breslau in 1937 because his marriage to a “non-Arian”, and then replaced Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 at the Universität Basel. cf. Rolf-Wilhelm Brednich, “Ranke, Friedrich,” *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* 11 (2004): 203-207.

⁶⁹ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, letter from Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann, May 6th, 1929. Even today, Privatdozenten (private docents) in the German world, PD’s for short, get very little to no money.

⁷⁰ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B19.

⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁷² Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, letter from Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann, June 24th, 1929.

⁷³ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D13, 47.

⁷⁴ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k821, letter from Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann, June 24th, 1929.

⁷⁵ <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/autoren/hauptmac.htm>, accessed March 12th, 2007.

⁷⁶ Cod Ms Peuckert B47, version 2. In fact, it is of interest to note that Peuckert even dedicated his book *Schlesische Sagen* (1924) to Carl Hauptmann, after his death.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, version 1.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, version 2.

⁷⁹ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, e.g., March 17th, 1924.

⁸⁰ *ibid.* Quote in original: “Ich wollte, Sie wären hier u. es wär so wie damals [...] wo ich [...] zu Ihnen kam u. alles gut würde.”

⁸¹ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, January 11th, 1925. Quote in original: “Denn das ist doch das Wichtigste, daß Sie wieder Erde u. Boden fühlen können u. malen könnten. Wobei ich [...] eins der ersten Bilder [...] möchte - freilich auf Abzahlung (anders ginge es nicht.) Aber dann kaufen Sie sich ein Stück Land, daß groß genug ist, daß, wenn ich einmal “berühmt” genug bin, ich mich neben Ihnen anbauen kann. Und dann haben Sie aus dem gesteigerten Bodenwert schon Ihr Anlagekapital heraus.”

⁸² Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, March 23rd, 1925. Quote in original: “Aber Sie dürfen nicht fürchten, daß irgendwas darunter leiden wird. [...] Denn Sie wissen selbst, wie ich ein paar Minuten wünsche, mit Ihnen mal wieder zusammen sein zu können.”

⁸³ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, June 27th, 1925. Quote in original: “Zu allem bin ich so froh und glücklich. Manchmal denke ich, es ist gar nicht wahr. Und dann muß ich erst Deinen Brief nehmen u. nachsehen. Und es stimmt. Am liebsten sagte ich immerzu nur Du Du Du.”

⁸⁴ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, September 12th, 1925. Quote in original: “Zu Hause steht alles gut, soweit solche Dinge eben gut stehen können.”

⁸⁵ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, October 2nd, 1928. Quote in original: “Wie es bei uns aussieht, wolltest Du wissen? Ja, Puten ist jetzt ein Bissel mehr oben auf, nicht mehr so gedrückt [...] gequält. Hoffentlich hält's an. Denn wie sie vor 2-3 Jahren lebte, das war ja gar kein Leben mehr.”

⁸⁶ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, February 1st, 1928.

⁸⁷ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, February 12th, 1928. Quote in original: “Liebste Maria, ich bin in rechter Angst und Sorge, weil ich kein Wort von Dir höre. Bist Du noch krank? Schreib doch eine Zeile! Wenns geht, möglichst bald. Ich habe die ganze letzte Woche auf eine Nachricht von Dir gewartet, jeden Tag in größerer Unruhe, u. jetzt was ich gar nicht, was ist. Dein Will.”

⁸⁸ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, January 1st, 1931. Quote in original: “Daß Du an der Volkskunde Freude hast, macht mich glücklich. Du weißt, ich schreibe immer auf Dein Ja oder Nein hin.”

⁸⁹ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, November 18th, 1934. Quote in original: “Für Deinen Brief u. was Du zum Roman sagst, hab guten Dank. Du weißt, bestanden hab ich erst, wenn ich vor Dir bestehe.”

⁹⁰ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B2.

⁹¹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A172, Peuckert to Wolfgang Kretschmer, psychiatrist, November 28th, 1967.

⁹² Cod Ms. Peuckert B12, letter 4. Letter from Eve-Maria Sagner (maiden name Schmidt), a book and art dealer. Quote in original: “Er besass dort ein kleineres Bauernhaus das in einem grossen Obstgarten lag. Das Haus war massive gebaut und hart gedeckt; es enthielt, soweit ich mich erinnere incl. Küche, acht Räume: vier von diesen Räumen und der Hausflur wurden von der grossen Bibliothek des Herrn Prof. Peuckert eingenommen. Die Bibliothek übertrag in ihrem Büchervorrat grössere Buchhandlungen. Den Dachboden und den Scheunenraum hatte er ausbauen lassen, und auch das auf dem Dachboden gelegene Zimmer enthielt Bücherschränke und Truhen mit wertvollen Sammelwerken. Der in die Scheune gebaute Bücherraum war feuersicher angelegt und diente der Aufbewahrung alter Drucke und Handschriften, ebenso kostbaren, von Bibliotheken entliehenen Stücke.”

⁹³ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B19, 4. The books (non-academic) published during the ten years that the Peuckert Family lived in Haasel include *Zauber der Steine* (1936), *Schlesisch* (1937), *Die Spur im Heubusch* (1939), *Glückskind in Krakau* (1939), *Schwarzer Adler unterm Silbermond* (1940), *Liebe, Fahrten und Abenteuer des Trompeters aus der Zips* (1941), and *So lange die Erde steht* (1941).

⁹⁴ BA-RK I0455, letter to the Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, dated December 1, 1938.

⁹⁵ BA-RK I0455, Fragebogen zur Bearbeitung des Aufnahmeantrages für die Reichsschriftumsammer, dated July 21, 1938.

⁹⁶ The German name for the Reichsministry of Science, Education and Popular Culture was *Reichsministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung*. The Reichsministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, under Joseph Goebbels (1897-194), was, in German, the *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*.

⁹⁷ BA-RK I0455, letter to the Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, dated December 1st, 1938.

⁹⁸ BA-RK I0455, letter from the office of the Reichsminister für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda to the President of the Reichsschriftumsammer, dated September 24th, 1938.

⁹⁹ The letters that discuss Peuckert's political *Zuverlässigkeit* (reliability) are at the Bundesarchiv in Berlin. BA-RK I0455, letter to the President of the Reichsschriftumsammer, from the Gau-Personalamt in Berlin dated November 2nd, 1938, citing a letter from the Gauleitung in Schlesien, and BA-RK I0455, letter to the President of the Reichsschriftumsammer, from the Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, dated January 30th, 1939.

¹⁰⁰ BA-RK I0455, letter to the President of the Reichsschriftumsammer, from the Gau-Personalamt in Berlin dated November 2nd, 1938, citing a letter from the Gauleitung Schlesien.

- ¹⁰¹ BA-RK I0455, undated letter from Englert to the Reichsschriftumskammer.
- ¹⁰² BA-RK I0455, letter from the office of the president of the Reichsschriftumskammer to Will-Erich Peuckert, dated July 24th, 1942.
- ¹⁰³ *ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁴ BA-RK I0455, letter from the Reichskulturkammer Hauptgeschäftsführung to the President of the Reichsschriftumskammer, dated March 8th, 1944.
- ¹⁰⁵ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A42. Quote in original: "Lieber Claaßen, schönsten Dank für die Karte vom 24 v.M. die eben hier eintrudelte, denn wir sitzen noch in Haasel. Fort konnten wir wegen der Bahnsperre nicht, zum Räumen ist H. noch nicht dran, und dann wird es ein Problem, weil ich wohl noch mal auf die alten Tage Soldat spielen werde. Meine Frau bleibt allein hier und Sie können sich denken, daß das unter den heutigen Umständen gerade kein beruhigendes Gefühl gibt."
- ¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B23.
- ¹⁰⁸ *ibid.* Quote in original: "Ich schreib sie Dir nur, falls Mima und mir was passieren sollte. Ich gehe eben zum Wehrmeldeamt, weil wir aufgerufen sind, und werde wohl bald eingezogen werden. Schrei [off page] bald und recht oft! Alle Liebe und Gute Dein Vati"
- ¹⁰⁹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B9, dated February 11th, 1945.
- ¹¹⁰ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B12, letter 2.
- ¹¹¹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 4.
- ¹¹² Cod. Ms. Peuckert A 106. Letter to Gerhard Hauptmann, dated March 12th, 1945. Quote in original: "Wir sind im letzten Augenblick, d.h. ein paar Stunden, ehe Haasel Kampfboden wurde, von dort weggegangen, auf Fahrrädern und fast ohne Gepäck, und habe uns in die Oberpfalz gerettet. Aber was wird nun, heimat-und wurzellos?"
- ¹¹³ Personal conversation with Sylphia Peuckert in Frankfurt, August 16th, 2004.
- ¹¹⁴ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 2.
- ¹¹⁵ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A107. Quote in original: "Jetzt sind wir 3/4 Jahr hüben in der Oberpfalz; seit Juli bauern wir; wir haben ein ca 50 Morgen großes Gut gepachtet [...]; der Verpächter besaß zwei und das, das er abgab, war ihm eine Last; [...] aber wir sagten uns, ob wir das Geld as Miete usw. ausgaben, oder ob wir diesen Betrag als Zuschuß in den Hof steckten, sei am Ende einerlei. So hatten wir wenigstens einen Unterschlupf bis zum kommenden Juli; [...]. Sehr bedrückt mich die Frage Haasel. Ob nicht wenigstens was von den Büchern erhalten geblieben ist? Man möchte denken, daß sie für jeden wertlos sind außer für mich. Wenn Du - aus Deiner größeren Nähe- Dich einmal um sie kümmern könntest. [...] Ich denke immer, daß wenn das Haus auch gelitten hat, doch ein Teil der Bücher herausgeholt und gerettet werden könnten [...]."
- ¹¹⁶ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A332. N.B., that the letter from Stoudt to Peuckert is written on May 11th, 1946, when Peuckert was already residing in Göttingen. Peuckert's response, however, is apropos to this discussion, since it talks about their hardships during the time immediately following the end of the war.
- ¹¹⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A332, letter from Stoudt to the American Military Commander, dated May 12th, 1946.
- ¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, letter from Peuckert to the American Military Commander. Undated.
- ¹¹⁹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 2.
- ¹²⁰ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B17, postcard from Peuckert to his wife Gertrud, dated January 24th, 1946. See also letter from January 23rd, 1946.
- ¹²¹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B17, postcard from Peuckert to his wife Gertrud, dated May 23rd, 1946.
- ¹²² *ibid.*, letter from Peuckert to his wife Gertrud, dated January 27th, 1946. For more insight into Peuckert's relationship to the church, cf. also Cod. Ms. Peuckert B33, letter from Peuckert to Pastor Weißgerber, dated April 3rd, 1962, expressing his intentions to leave the Lutheran church.
- ¹²³ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B17, letter from Peuckert to his wife Gertrud, dated January 27th, 1946.
- ¹²⁴ *ibid.*, postcard from Peuckert to his wife Gertrud, dated February 3rd, 1946.
- ¹²⁵ *ibid.*, letter from Peuckert to his wife Gertrud, dated January 27th, 1946.
- ¹²⁶ The other candidate for the job was Walter Kuhn (1903-1983), a man who at the time was a prisoner of war of the British, and who was known for his work on language islands.

¹²⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 4. Regardless, he did garner attention and received mention in two well-known encyclopaedic volumes: “[...] and so well known was his name that even the condensed one-volume encyclopaedias such as the Knaur or the Brockhaus gave Peuckert his own entry. This usually is only done for indisputable representatives of the academic world. (Volks-Brockhaus 12, Auflage, Wiesbaden 1958, 593; Knaurs Lexikon München-Zürich 1956, 1221.)” (Zimmermann 1973, IX).

¹²⁸ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B17, letter from Peuckert to his wife Gertrud, dated January 22nd, 1946.

¹²⁹ *ibid.* The dates for the changes in status and ranking of Peuckert’s professorships seem slightly out of order. It is odd to see two changes to *ordentliche Professur*.

¹³⁰ The titles of Peuckert’s work translate as follows: *Ostdeutsches Sagenbüchlein* (The Little Book of East German Legends), *Ostdeutsches Märchenbüchlein* (The Little Book of East German Fairytales), *Lenore* (Lenore), *Verborgenes Niedersachsen* (Hidden Lower Saxony), *Geheimkulte* (Secret Cults), *Pansophie: Ein Versuch zur Geschichte der weissen und schwarzen Magie* (Pansophism: An Attempt at the History of White and Black Magic), and *Astrologie* (Astrology).

¹³¹ cf. <http://dkf.kunden3.honds.de/x/FMPro?-db=dkf01.fp5&-format=dspg.html&ID=1005764&-token.3=1000078&-find>, accessed on January 9th, 2006.

¹³² Cod. Ms. Peuckert A381. The foreign ministers of the United States, England, France, and the Soviet Union met in London at the London Conference, held November 25th through December 15th, 1947, to discuss what should happen to Germany in the aftermath of World War II. Quote in original: “1946 suchte der niedersächs. Ministerpräsident einen Professor, der nicht in der Partei gewesen ist, und fand nur mich. Er zog mich in diplomat. Dinge ein - hauptsächlich um solche wegen der Oder-Neiße grenze. Als wir 47 zur Londoner Konferenz fliegen sollten, fuhr uns der englische Fahrer auf einen Panzer, meine Frau, die damals meine geheime Sekretärin war, war sofort tot; ich lag 4 Monate - Hirnoperation usw. - bewußtlos.”

¹³³ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B29, letter from Dr. Okonek about an application for Peuckert’s travel to Sweden and Switzerland, dated February 17th, 1948.

¹³⁴ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A254. Letter from Eberhard Paukstadt to Peuckert, May 2nd, 1962. Quote in original: “In diesen Tagen - das will ich sagen - sind die Gedanken Ihrer alten Schüler in besonderer Weise bei Ihnen, auf baldige Genesung hoffende und - ich kann’s nicht verhehlen - auch beunruhigte Gedanken. Ich weiß noch, daß wir nach Ihrem Unfall damals einen Nachrichtendienst eingerichtet hatten der uns in der kritischen Zeit all zwei Stunden über jedes Schwanken Ihres Zustandes unterrichtete. Wie hatten im Seminar unser Domizil aufgeschlagen und suchten Trost aneinander.”

¹³⁵ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B17. In a letter to Gertrud dated May 17th, 1946, he talks about his early students. “Yesterday evening a student [female] was here who wants to dissertate a.[nd] I’ll accept her work. She was Baltic, lastly living in Posen, - now she works as a maid [...] at one of the farmhouses here and is concurrently writing her dissertation. [...] She really impressed me and I was thrilled.” The student was Benita Meder, who finished her dissertation entitled “Der Strukturwandel in der baltischen Lebensart um die Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts” in 1946.

¹³⁶ In the undated Curriculum Vitae, Peuckert notes that his son passed away in 1961. The letter that is cited in Cod. Ms. Peuckert B23 indicates that Hanns Peuckert might have died in 1960. cf. also Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47.

¹³⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 1.

¹³⁸ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B23, written from the town Vreden to Peuckert, dated July 21st, 1960. Quote in original: “Sehr geehrter Herr Professor Peuckert. Zunächst möchten wir Ihnen unser Beileid zu dem tragischen Tode Ihres Sohnes sagen. Wie es dazu kam, wissen wir nicht. Ein falsch verstandenes Solidaritätsgefühl veranlasst ihn, unser Heim zu verlassen, als wir gezwungen waren, drei seiner Arbeitskameraden zu entlassen [...]. Bei seinem Abgang nahm er sein Eigentum mit. [...] Bei seinem Abgang gab Ihr Sohn an, in eine ähnliche Anstalt wie die unsrige nach Freistatt zu gehen. Wie haben es bedauert, dass er uns verliess, konnten ihn aber nicht halten. Weiter können wir Ihnen leider nichts sagen.”

¹³⁹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B32.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*

¹⁴² *ibid.*

¹⁴³ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A7.

¹⁴⁴ Cod Ms. Peuckert A262. Letter from Peuckert to Marthe Pohl, October 13th, 1968.

¹⁴⁵ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A61.

¹⁴⁶ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A111. Letter from Peuckert to Gerhart Heilfurth, dated October 13th, 1968. Quote in original: "Aber ich bin demnächst 74 Jahre, und ich überlege, was nach meinem Tode aus dem Apparat einmal wird [...]. Könnte eine Kooperation oder eine andere Form mit Ihrem Erzählarchiv oder Institut erwogen werden? Evt. daß zu Lebzeiten meiner Frau die Kästen hier ständen, daß sie aber ebenso wie die Sagenbibliothek von mehreren hundert Bänden [...] von willkommenen Gästen zu benützen wäre? Oder sehen Sie noch andere Wege? [...] Aber würden Sie sich das einmal überlegen? Es liegt nämlich Interesse von Uppsala, [...] wie von Hand, Los Angeles vor [...]"

¹⁴⁷ Peuckert was clearly very concerned about how he would be remembered, and convinced of his own self-importance: who else would keep carbon copies of even the most insignificant of letters? Yet the rejection of his legacy by the city of Darmstadt could not but have helped feed into Peuckert's insecurities that might have prompted his self-documentation to begin with.

¹⁴⁸ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 1.

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*, version 4.

¹⁵⁰ Through the examination of the extant archival materials in Göttingen, it becomes apparent that Peuckert had a falling out with Kurt Ranke in Göttingen about the *Handwörterbuch der Sage*. In an undated letter to Bruno Schier (Cod. Ms. Peuckert A295), Peuckert explained as follows: "Ranke wanted to have the *HWbSage* [abbreviation in original] stopped because he wanted to expand his *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* with legends, to fill his endeavor with 12 volumes. He used a review by Peeters as justification, a review which was founded on untruths. It led to a falling out with Kretzenbacher and partially Heilfurth, to which I simply responded: not with me. Stupidly enough, [...] Göttingen has the duplicates of my card catalogue, meaning it is accessible for the *Enzyklopädie*." The story most certainly would be complicated by other voices and archival materials, though; it is always necessary to hear as many sides of a story as possible.

The *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, the encyclopedic reference guide to folktales still in production at the Universität Göttingen has certainly absorbed and surpassed *HdS*'s scope.

¹⁵¹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A378, letter from Peuckert to Matthias Zender, March 25th, 1965.

¹⁵² See Cod. Ms. Peuckert A14, A24A, A34, A38, A40, A45, A47, A61A, A82A, A89, A99, A1000, A111, A140, A151, A191, A194, A201, A202, A212, A217, A225, A254, A267, A280, A355, and A373.

¹⁵³ e.g., Cod. Ms. Peuckert B34. Some sources indicate he had his stroke in 1962.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A262. Letter from Peuckert to Marthe Pohl, dated November 14th, 1968.

¹⁵⁶ cf., among others, Cod. Ms. Peuckert A166, correspondence with Werner Helwig; Cod. Ms. Peuckert A143, correspondence with H. Jessen; Cod. Ms. Peuckert A153, correspondence with Felix Karlinger; Cod. Ms. Peuckert A366, correspondence with D.K. Wilgus.

¹⁵⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A127, letter from Peuckert to Zwi Horowitz, dated November 11th, 1967. Quote in original: "Verzeihen Sie, das ist kein Selbstlob, sondern mag Ihnen erklären, daß mich 1967 ein Rennomier-Goi des Antisemitismus und der Judenhetze (Ritualmord) beschuldigte, obwohl ich noch 1937 im "Handwörterbuch d. Aberglaubens" den Ritualmord als Aberglauben anprangerte, und obwohl ich bis 1939 - bis zum Kriesgsausbruch - Mitarbeiter der Bibliothek Warburg war. Sie werden begreifen, daß die durch den oben erwähnte "Rennomier-Goi" erhobenen Lügen mit nicht gefielen, zumal als er, da es zur Beleidigungsklage kam, sich hinter einen Herzinfarkt verkroch, - vor allem aber, weil mir unbekannt, aber nach ihren Titeln gelehrte - Juden für mich eintraten, und der Zentralrat der Juden seine Vorwürfe zurücknahm, Immerhin blieb ein schlechter Geschmack zurück."

¹⁵⁸ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, versions 2 and 4. See also Cod. Ms. Peuckert B38.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A225.

CHAPTER TWO

Shifting the Object of Study, Expanding the Category of ‘Volk’: Will-Erich Peuckert’s *Volkskunde des Proletariats*

“If, over the last one hundred and fifty years, there was talk of the *Volk* [...], it usually was about viewing the *Volk* [...] as a container, a vessel of old and surpassed views, beliefs, [and] customs [...]; the content of the vessel was of interest, but not the vessel itself. Only [...] when] questions and methods of sociological origins penetrated through [...] did one see the *Volksmensch* [Volksperson] as a person, his life, his thinking, and his actions, instead of simply a vessel into which things were put. The change began in the 1930’s [...]. In the previous *Volkskunde*, the mind’s eye was almost exclusively on the peasant [...]; only in the thirties [...] was the term expanded. [...] I raised the request to study and understand the being and the character of the worker, the factory worker, the asocial individual and the prisoner [...]”
(Peuckert and Fuchs 1971, 7. Italics added).

“A so-called academic discipline is only a partitioned and constructed conglomerate of problems and attempts at solutions. But what really exist are problems and intellectual traditions”
(Popper 1969, 108).

Alongside the books of famous Jewish authors, among works concerned with social thought and criticism, and among works by Berthold Brecht, Alfred Kerr, Erich Kästner and Ernest Hemingway, to name but a few, Peuckert’s *Volkskunde des Proletariats* (*Volkskunde of the Proletariat*, 1931, henceforth *VdP*) was burned by the Nazis in Breslau in the spring of 1933.¹ This burning was part of a large-scale literary purge of books that were of Jewish origin, books that were not seen to be in line with National Socialist ideology, or books reflecting a so-called “un-German” spirit. Coupled

with the fact that Peuckert would lose the right to teach in 1935 when his *venia legendi* was withdrawn, in no small part because of the book's publication, *VdP* takes on additional significance as a book and as a watershed moment. In his own words: "Without my wanting it to, the volume obtained a certain scarcity value" (Peuckert and Fuchs 1971, 7).

The historical circumstances surrounding the volume aside, other reasons necessitate *VdP* coming into the spotlight. Its contents -- an attempt, as Peuckert once noted, to show the path of village artisans and weavers into the factory and thus into the working class -- purportedly remained one of Peuckert's main research interests during his career at the Universität Göttingen (ibid.). *VdP* contained, so Peuckert, "[...] the theme and leading idea of the first decade of [... his] lectures and drills in *Volkskunde* at Göttingen":

"This book makes its appearance under a title [; ...] authenticating that title is its first and foremost goal. Until now, there was only *one* *Volkskunde*, one concerned with the peasantry and with those classes close to the peasantry. But that *Volkskunde* didn't know [recognize] quite large and essential layers of the Volk, though it purported to in name," (Peuckert 1931, 8; VII. Italics in the original).

A field is constructed through the joint efforts of its practitioners, though these efforts are not infrequently at loggerheads, contradicting each other. The struggle for supremacy of an idea or trope can take decades, and is ultimately established when, after a crisis, a majority of scholars have accepted and subscribed to the new paradigm (Kuhn 1996, 77, 79, 150). Stocking's definition of paradigm, presented in his linear, chronological sketch of the shift from evolutionary anthropology towards British social anthropology, is useful:

"a focused inquiry sustained for an extended period by a group of

researchers sharing a common framework of theoretical assumptions which defined a body of relevant empirical data” (Stocking 1995, 47).²

Similarly, Stocking’s insistence that paradigms overlap in the history of anthropology is a useful heuristic device with which to examine Peuckert’s work (ibid., 208). By the time Peuckert was writing his *VdP*, the peasant as trope was firmly embedded in the discipline of *Volkskunde*. There can, however, be outlying thinkers voicing differences in thought, which should not and cannot be ignored. Peuckert was one such voice.

It is impossible to look at Peuckert’s *VdP* as a text in isolation; deeply ensconced in the intellectual climate during which it was written, the surrounding intellectual context needs to come to the forefront. A book poised at the important historical juncture of the years leading up to World War II, it marks a potential shift of interest in one narrowly defined group of people and their expressive culture to interest in a larger, more inclusive group. Though some disciplinary historians have qualms ascribing quite the same early post-war primacy Peuckert himself did to the ideas in *VdP*, others highlight the text’s importance as an early step in ushering in a *Volkskunde* of the working class (c.f., e.g., Kramer 1987, 55-57; Assion 2001, 257). By extension, the inclusion of the working class within the scope of *Volkskunde* also allowed for a later expansion towards an urban *Volkskunde*, a *Volkskunde* of the city, though this process was even slower.

Instead of being *the* key text which helped open up the field, it rather marks a flexible point of transition from a “Volk” which was narrowly defined as the peasantry, to a “Volk” which was more broadly defined to include the working class; several large-scale questions are implicitly raised:

1. *Questions concerning Scope and Disciplinary Change: Who* is it that we as scholars of expressive culture make the object of our studies? Of what

importance is a disciplinary canon, the need for a clearly defined object of study? What is the process of redefining an object of study and what necessitates such change?

2. *Questions concerning the Role of an Individual:* What role did Peuckert play in changing and shifting the scope of the discipline? Was Peuckert able to push the boundaries of the discipline? Does *VdP* deserve the credit it has received as one of Peuckert's seminal works, *the* text to usher in a *Volkskunde* of the working class?
3. *Questions concerning Reactions:* Were there reactions in the field? How did Peuckert's attempt to open up the discipline play out?³

*Intellectual Climate and Historical Precursors:
Volkskunde and its Object of Study*

Though an understatement, it would not be incorrect to say that Germany's relationship to the term "Volk" has been ambivalent at best, and tenuous, dangerous, and painful at worst. The racialized use of the term itself during World War II to denote ideas of "purity" and "Aryan identity" led many scholars in the late 1960's and early 1970's to abandon the designation *Volkskunde* for their field after years of debate.⁴ Yet its meaning has shifted tremendously over the course of the field's history, intricately connected to the ways in which individual scholars delimited the scope of their discipline and focused their concrete research projects. The contours of disciplinary history are uneven, and oftentimes as diverse as their practitioners. In trying to understand and trace the way *Volkskundler* defined their object of study, one sees a diverse set of definitions which have swung from an interest in a broad population for primarily political reasons, to descriptive discussions of a larger sample of the population, to an ideologized and politicized interest in a very narrowly defined group of people. Examinations of some of the major shifts in the meaning of the term *Volk*

help explain the field of signification that Peuckert's *VdP* entered when it was published.

A cursory history of Volkskunde in Germany shows that the discipline's founders established a sphere of research with an interest in the expressive culture of the peasantry, especially in their *Erzählgüter*: those prose narrative genres including *Märchen* and *Sagen*, tales and legends. This focus on the lore of the peasantry, generally speaking, remained paramount throughout the 19th century, and even into the beginning of the 20th century, reaching its apex with the Volkskunde scholarship of the 1930's and 1940's. Yet the history of the discipline is much more nuanced. Thus, when Peuckert published *VdP*, the book was being launched into an academic climate which had its own sense of what the discipline of Volkskunde was about, and who the Volk it purported to study were: a disciplinary canon, or, to draw on Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), a certain paradigm (Kuhn 1996 [1962]).

Kuhn sets up a heuristic structure highlighting the way in which scholars of the natural sciences change their beliefs about the world and thus reconceptualize their discipline; insofar as one sees "[...] scientific development as a succession of tradition-bound periods punctuated by non-cumulative breaks," his vision is equally applicable to the humanities and social sciences (ibid., 208).⁵ When the status quo -- "normal science" -- is confronted with an anomaly or is contradicted by evidence and thus finds itself in crisis, a shift in paradigm takes place:

"[...] normal science repeatedly goes astray. And when it does - when, that is, the profession can no longer evade anomalies that subvert the existing tradition of scientific practice - then begin the extraordinary investigations that lead the profession at last to a new set of commitments, a new basis for the practice of science. The extraordinary episodes in which that shift of professional commitments occurs are the ones known [...] as scientific revolutions. They are the tradition-

shattering complements to the tradition-bound activity of normal science" (ibid., 6).

And though individual scholars are seen to play an important role in scientific revolutions, an actual paradigm shift requires the acceptance, adoption, and promulgation of an idea by a critical mass of scholars (Kuhn 1996, 7, 152). It can take generations for a scholarly community to be converted to a new paradigm (ibid.).

If we look at Peuckert's *VdP* as a non-cumulative break, a temporal disruption of decades of focusing on the expressive culture of the peasantry, it can be seen as a (perhaps unwitting) attempt at a paradigm shift, or perhaps more so as a potential point of transition. It remains to be seen whether or not the field subsequently restructured after the book's publication, or to what extent the ideas of an expanded Volk were taken up by others, over time (ibid., 84-85).

The equation of "Volk" with "peasantry" grew out of decades of interest in the expressive culture of individuals who resided primarily in the scholar's country of origin, interests which were not necessarily pursued under the banner of a unified, professionalized discipline. The process in Germany was one of cementation which lasted through the end of World War II, an increasing inflexibility and disciplinary structuring which excluded large segments of the population as a way to stress the continuity of a Germanic people and reifying an "authentic" nation grounded in a primordial past (cf. e.g., Bendix 1997). Yet a closer examination of how this cementation took place simultaneously underscores that Volkskunde -- in part before its state as a discipline had steadied -- had, in its past, entertained a more expansive vision of the category of "Volk", and thus could more readily be expected to do so in the future.⁶

Most Enlightenment scholars working under the banner of *Staatenkunde* and *Statistik* (the study of states and statistics) during the mid-to-late 18th century embraced a broad and flexible vision of their research endeavor, certainly more so than scholars merely a century later (Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 7). They traveled both to areas within and outside their own country describing the populations they encountered, though not necessarily for purposes of reifying a sense of nation; their goals, initially, were much more broad-minded:

“In no age was there so much travel as in ours [...] yes, even the non-funded scholar distances himself from his desk, and takes little excursions if not long trips, often with the intent to share his snatched up comments with the world [...]” (Kutter 1993, iii, citing *Der Teutsche Merkur*, November 1784, 151).

Yet one of the reasons for gathering descriptions of an area, its people, and their customs was still political, a way to gauge governability (Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 10). Johann Wilhelm von Archenholz (1743-1812) believed in the necessity of paying attention to all circumstances of life when one traveled: “Man, with his many dimensional customs and political ties and situations was the main object of my studies” (Archenholz 1786, X, as cited in Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 12).⁷ Archenholz and other chronological peers espoused a vision of their work which included a diverse and representative slice of a European population, as well as an interest in their occupation, customs, political affiliation and practices of everyday life. These early scholars -- travelers -- had as much of an interest in the *people* they encountered as in their expressive culture, a trend which would subtly shift just a few decades later.

Yet not everyone working in the 18th century defined their interests as broadly. Before a discipline professionalizes (and even frequently after it does, becoming more

rigid), scholars can have diverging views concerning the scope of their interests (Kuhn 1996, 13). In examining the very first use and meaning of the term “Volks-Kunde” in the German language in 1782, one would conclude that the Volk were seen to be dialect speaking “*Landsleute*” -- fellow countrymen -- of those describing them; living rurally defined the object of study (Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 7).⁸ Referring to a rural peasantry distinct from scholars, researchers, teachers and preachers, F.A.K. Fink (1783-1846) believed that those who dealt with “the Volk” in their professions should learn about their life circumstances (ibid., 10-11).

An as of yet undefined category to be filled with meaning, “Volk” in the late 18th century thus could mean any number of things -- either the entire population of the regions one was traveling in or the local peasantry -- and scholars wrote about anything from political affiliation to customs and beliefs. Though a more restrictive definition was also in use, situating the “Volk” as rural dwellers, it was by no means an exclusive one.

Such multiple definitions make sense insofar as these scholars roughly united by their research interests did not have institutional grounding or the notion of belonging to a unique discipline: “In the absence of a paradigm [...] all of the facts that could possibly pertain to the development of a given [...] discipline] are likely to seem equally relevant” (Kuhn 1996, 15; cf. also Stocking 1995). Yet these concurrent definitions of who was studied simultaneously established historical precedent for a Volkskunde interested in more than just the peasantry, highlighting that a *process* of restricting the vision of what interests the discipline should pursue necessarily occurred sometime during the 19th century.

In his revisionist history of the field, Zimmermann comments that the shift from

the Enlightenment to Romanticism was much more fluid than has previously been argued (Zimmermann 2001). Describing Romanticism as the continuation of the Enlightenment, Zimmermann showed that the former focused more on the inner self and the latter more on the outer world (ibid.). But for the nascent field of Volkskunde, it was the branch of Romanticism which fostered a national spirit which would have the most impact. Still, the work of some individuals would remain on a fluid spectrum between the Enlightenment and Romanticism, which only speaks to Zimmermann's argument. While the intellectual climate and the types of intellectual pursuits had shifted from the late 18th to mid 19th centuries, one thing, underscores Sievers, bound these two "obviously so contrary directions of thought together[:] [...] a marked interest in the Volk" (Sievers 2001, 31).

Nevertheless, the reasons for studying the Volk and the definition of who the Volk were varied dramatically (ibid.). Instead of "the endeavor to overcome narrow territorial as well as mental borders, to explain and interpret national characteristics through a reflexive comparison," an interest in the cultural goods of the peasantry grew, the mind's eye turned inward, and the object of study shrank (Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 12).⁹ The scope of the developing discipline narrowed simultaneously alongside an increasing *purpose* in research: to capture a national spirit and soul.

An object of study is subject to the ebbs and flows of thought, and, as Zimmermann points out, the transition between Enlightenment and Romantic Nationalist definitions of Volk was not always abrupt. Justus Möser (1720-1794), a figure with one foot in the Enlightenment and the other in Romantic Nationalism, contributed to create the topos of the peasant in Volkskunde. Möser saw the disintegration of peasant society as the biggest evil of his time, and thus set about to

describe and preserve them (in Enlightenment style, down to the last detail) in his *Patriotische Phantasien* (1774-1778) (ibid., 21). Yet his descriptions tended to be idealized, approaching the overt sentimentality representative of Romantic Nationalism, and emphasizing “[that t]he turn to one’s own Volk and the awakening of a historical awareness brought a love for the traditional goods of the past [...]” (ibid., 22).

Even into the mid 19th century there were scholars who did work harkening back to the tradition of Statistik and Staatenkunde. Statistics and economics professor Georg Hanssen (1809-1894), for example, was interested not only in the peasantry, but in those who practiced trade, and even in civil servants (ibid., 32). Though his primary interests lay with “people [... of] simple origin, [...] untouched from legislation and administration,” he did not study them as the Romantic Nationalists did (Sievers 2001, 32, citing Hanssen 1842, IV). Instead of valuing emotion, Hanssen’s emphasis was reason-oriented, focusing on the

“geographic [...] conditions, the various means of income for the population, the social stratification, [... as well as] a characteristic of the population, a description of costume, the way of building a house, [and] culinary habits [...]” (Sievers 2001, 32).

In general, however, the 19th century was marked by an “awakening of an excessive poetic valorization of cultural goods, especially those of the peasantry,” and Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) helped turn the peasantry into a desired object of study (ibid., 17). Drawing on the traditions of Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), and influenced as well by James Macpherson’s (1736-1796) “discovery” of the *Ossian* epic, Herder is probably best known in Volkskunde for his study of *Volkslieder*, songs which he posited were “the result of a nation’s beliefs, feelings, perceptions, and strengths” (Herder 1777, as cited in Cocchiara 1981,

176). To Herder, song and other forms of poetry reflected a unique national spirit -- the *Volksgeist* of a population. Instead of general knowledge about a broad slice of the population, research interests shifted towards exploring that *Volksgeist*, to be found in songs, tales and legends of the peasantry (Sievers 2001, 37). The Volk, to Herder, were “*schöpferische Überlieferungsträger*,” creative bearers of tradition, whose lore was of primary interest as insight and access into an ancient and historical national soul (Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 18).¹⁰

Herder narrowed the scope of the developing field and turned it from an endeavor concerned with contemporary expressions of culture to one concerned with historical questions; the Brothers Grimm (Jacob 1785-1863, Wilhelm 1786-1859) continued to push in this direction. Their collections of folktales (*Kinder und Hausmärchen* 1812-1815) and legends (*Deutsche Sagen* 1816-1818), though strongly edited, were seen to “have origins reaching back to an older, undetermined age” (Sievers 2001, 38). The past became a treasure to be excavated, buried deep in the minds of the peasantry; with such a passionate glance backwards into an undefined history, contemporary problems could easily be ignored.¹¹

Massive industrialization during the mid-to-late 19th century was the cause of widespread demographic changes in Germany, including a notable growth in the number of factory workers between 1860 and 1870 (Assion 2001). Many of the questions that scholars thus asked during these years grappled with the problems of industrialization and these demographic changes:

“[...] the longings for a whole world and a traditional-conservative lifestyle constantly intensified, especially when the present seemed threatened by mechanization, leveling, and ‘massification’” (Sievers 2001, 49).

These were also the years during which *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *Das Kapital* (1867) were published.¹² Despite this climate, Volkskundler tended to ignore the working class as a viable and productive subject of research:

“The spirit of agrarian romanticism and urban enmity gained value against this unshakable socioeconomic fact, from which such slogans as ‘*Volk ohne Raum*’ [Volk without Space] or even ‘*Blut und Boden*’ [Blood and Soil] were derived. [...] [B]ut one will only find an engagement with the plebeian masses [...] insofar as the Bourgeoisie warns of riffraff [...]” (Jacobeit 1994, 24; Assion 2001, 255).¹³

And yet contemporary discussions *about* the working class still played a strange role in defining this period of research. If Volkskundler during the late 19th century expressed interest in any group besides the peasantry, they looked at “[...] those living in the slum quarters of the big cities, victims of unavoidable economic progress [...]” (Assion 2001, 255). Most studies simply showed how industrial workers or members of the working class had become removed from custom and tradition, “only revel[ing] in material needs[, ...] threaten[ing] the intact world of the citizens and of the peasantry with the ‘craziness of egalitarianism’” (ibid.). Members of the working class -- victims, seen from this perspective -- were of interest only insofar as to show how they had corrupted a “true” *Volkskultur* (Volk culture). Such assertions helped pigeonhole the Volk as non-urban, not belonging to the working class.

The research interests of Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823-1897), often seen as the founder of Volkskunde as an academic discipline, fit this profile. Riehl’s *Die bürgerliche Gesellschaft* (1851, *The Middle Class Society*), an attempt to restructure German society and culture, continued to move the peasantry into the spotlight:

“An insurmountable conservative power resides in the German nation, a strong and persistent core despite all the change: those are our peasants,” the “future of the nation” who “continually reinvigorate [our] *Volksleben*

[lit. folklife; life of the Volk]” (Riehl 1851, as cited by Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 43).¹⁴

Riehl went on to discuss the flaws of the working class as a dangerous element for society. He posited that the working class was not tied to its history and was therefore socially uprooted, that it in fact thrived on destroying said history (Riehl 1851, 273, as cited in Assion 2001, 256).¹⁵ Instead of opening up the discipline, Riehl’s assertion effectively narrowed its scope.

The search for a “true” *Volksmensch* continued in the city in the early 20th century, where it was asked to what extent such a person might still be found nestled within the working class. Had the working class, asked Adolf Strack (1860-1906), in fact *distanced* itself from the expressive culture of the peasantry, given that “continuous new blood flows from [... the peasantry]” into the cities and the working class (Kramer 1987, 31, as cited by Assion 2001, 256)? Adolf Spamer’s (1883-1953) perceptions of what happened to “traditions” when they reached the city and belonged to the working class were more open.¹⁶ On the basis of collected superstitions, Spamer pointed out that all individuals (including the working class) were bound by tradition and *Gemeinschaft* (community), though the “traditions” held by members of the working class were significantly weaker than those of the peasantry (Assion 2001, 256). To Spamer, the working class was only but a diluted version of the much richer peasantry.

A judgment on the “value” of the working class unifies research themes from Riehl into the early 20th century. Over 50 years of interest in the working class provided a spectrum of approaches, some concerned with its apparent destructive nature (Riehl), others more interested in seeing if it still possessed any “true” *Volkskultur* (Strack and Spamer); yet the overarching balance shows what Assion calls

a culture of deficits (ibid.). Creating a comparison between the working class and a “true” *Volkskultur* -- a constructed category -- meant that the expressive culture of the working class could never measure up; “depraved by the process of industrialization,” the working class would always remain weaker than “the culture of the peasantry and the artisans” (ibid.).¹⁷ Peuckert’s *VdP* would distance itself from this trend.

The field began to professionalize during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a process of restricting vision and of self-definition by virtue of exclusion.¹⁸ Though only two universities had chairs in *Volkskunde* before 1933 (Universität Hamburg and Universität Dresden), several key German *Volkskunde* journals were founded during these years, including *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* in 1891, and *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde* in 1902, a step towards establishing a unified and stable disciplinary identity (Lixfeld 1994a, 139-140). Professionalization at the same time brought with it the burden of legitimation and a tendency to rely on established research traditions of the past:

“That meant reaching back all the way to the Brothers Grimm and Riehl, in order to legitimate the *Daseinsberechtigung* [the right to exist] and the scientific *Eigenrecht* [lit.: in its own right] of *Volkskunde*. Yet it couldn’t be hidden that [... the field] had remained with romantic ideas [...]” (Schmook and Assion 1994, 38).

Romantic notions of the peasantry as an object of study, coupled with an ideology of the superiority of an “Aryan race”, fed directly into the National Socialist *Volkskunde* of the 1930’s and 1940’s. The ideas expressed were not new *per se*; instead, they crystallized ideas found in scholarship dating back to the 1840’s -- though in a devastating manner that created a fissure in the history of the discipline that is still being discussed, if not mended, today:

“Under the guise of verbal Volk culture came the addition of [...] self-

invented ‘*Dorfgeschichten*’ [village stories], full of *Deuschtümelei* [German patriotism and/or nationalism, a term often used in criticizing these phenomena], hatred against the French, and anti-Semitism, already overly represented in the 1840’s [...]” (Jacobeit 1994, 25).

Sigfrid Svensson (1901-1984) noted that the Volkskunde of the Third Reich only had one function for the Nazis: “to show both inside and outside of Germany what was German, thereby strengthening Nazi activism” (ibid., 27). Matthes Ziegler’s (1911-1992) work stands as an example in this line of thought, an individual whose research postulated a Volkskunde based purely on racial foundations. The Volkskundler’s role, so Ziegler, was to separate out the Volk from the “foreign,” allowing the peasant (postulated as “direct descendants off the Germanic ancestors”) to move to the forefront (Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 104). This also automatically created a dichotomy between the rural, free peasant and the dependent city proletarian, note Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer, where the peasantry as link to a primordial past was not only glorified, but actively revived (ibid.):

“In [the peasantry ...] one saw the social class which to all appearances conserved the old and authentic *Überlieferungen* [lit.: transmission; cultural goods]. [...] The Volkskultur represented by the peasantry was the basis on which security and equal measure *was* to be guaranteed for a turbulent and vast societal structure” (Bausinger, Jeggle, Korff and Scharfe 1993, 8. Italics in the original).

Problems with this glorified and invented collectivity of the peasantry aside -- Bausinger, Jeggle, Korff and Scharfe point out that Germany’s agrarian population not only was shrinking, but highly differentiated, from land owners to day laborers -- the years leading up to the end of World War II firmly cemented Volkskunde as a field interested primarily if not exclusively in the peasantry (ibid., 8).

Peuckert's Volkskunde des Proletariats (1931)

Professionalization, which, for *Volkskunde*, had early beginnings with the founding of the *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* in 1891, and through World War II with the institutionalization of teaching positions in *Volkskunde* at almost all universities in Germany, usually carries with it stability for a field and a steadiness of subject, combining a set of unified interests under one name and program (Lixfeld 1994a, 139).¹⁹ Though some fluctuations are to be expected, finding acceptance and legitimacy in a field in which ideas have already stabilized is no easy feat, especially if interests diverge from the main guiding paradigm.

Gauging the significance of Peuckert's *Volkskunde des Proletariats (VdP)* involves seeing to what extent it differed from the *Volkskunde* that preceded it, and the *Volkskunde* to which it was contemporary, to see whether Peuckert created a niche of ideas apart from the professionalizing field. While it is relatively easy to answer that *VdP* did differ on a superficial level, the more specific question of *how* his vision of the discipline and the construction of the category of *Volk* diverged from previous iterations emerges. What did *VdP* attempt to do? Were its contributions successful?

During research for *Schlesische Volkskunde* (1928, Silesian *Volkskunde*), a monograph focused on Silesian history, language, and the culture of the peasantry, Peuckert encountered traditional expressive culture in population groups other than the peasantry (Peuckert 1931, IX).²⁰ By collecting customs and beliefs significantly different from those of the agricultural community most *Volkskundler* were used to working with, Peuckert felt he had stumbled upon an expressive culture particular to the working class (*ibid.*). This “discovery,” though not necessarily new (recall Riehl, and even Strack and Spamer, whose interests in the working class relied on the concept of “a

culture of deficits”), was the most direct cause of Peuckert’s reflection on the scope of the discipline. In considering who to include or exclude from his book, Peuckert soon realized that, from his point of view, Volkskunde as a whole looked only narrowly at a small segment of the population: “It seemed to me that what we today call Volkskunde is only a description of the peasant culture of Europe” (Peuckert 1931, VII). Was it possible, Peuckert posited, to expand the scope of the field? He superficially pursued these questions in 1929, showing a continued interest in the topic. His “*Angewandte Volkskunde*”, applied Volkskunde, noted:

“The worker - be it the industrial worker or the occasional worker - belongs to the Volk, just as the craftsman and the *Bürger* - not just the peasant and his people. And Volkskunde has to include them all. It needs to know and explain the intellectual world and the customs [...] of the *Bürger* as of the machinist, the day laborer, and of the pensioner. Volkskunde is news from every part of the Volk” (Peuckert 1929, 4, as cited by Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 22).

His childhood and background were the second impetus for writing *VdP*:

“In the year 1932 [*sic*] I wrote a *Vk. d. Prol.* [Vokskunde des Proletariats] which [...] succumbed on a well-known pile of literature. Why I wrote the book? Because I was raised in a Silesian village, and my childhood taught me to see things which weren’t talked about back then: the difficult situation and the suffering of the little people [*die kleinen Leute*]. I don’t want to start off [...] with something fallacious, and should thus also mention: also the art of the little people to find a piece of meat in every [bowl of] potato soup.”²¹

A reflection of childhood experience and exposure to the poverty of the working class, as well as a sense of a social obligation (which would later appear in his lectures), encouraged Peuckert to follow these interests academically.

An increasing realization of the dire economic situation of the working class was another motivation for Peuckert, one, so he believed, which was more *menschlich* --

human: “A wall crumbled as I [...] researched their history. It was as if my eyes opened for the first time” (Peuckert 1931, X). Yet at the same time he strove to be objective, wanting to present an accurate, unemotional picture: “[...] as this seemed to be the best service I could offer them” (ibid.). This social drive would later translate into a desire to bring understanding and knowledge about the working class to academic circles, as well as to doctors, teachers, politicians, and judges (ibid., XI):

“I was also guided by political considerations, though not in the sense that the word is commonly used today. I mean political insofar as it seems to me that the hate that occurs today is grounded in a complete non-understanding of our fellow humans. We don’t know what he is, what he desires, what determines [...] [his actions]; all we know is that he ‘lives below’” (ibid.).²²

In the few years between the publication of *Schlesische Volkskunde* (1928) and *VdP* (1931), Peuckert continued to develop the idea of looking beyond the peasantry. In fact, he initially pushed an even broader idea, taking a step beyond a *Volkskunde* of the working class. The operating concept behind Peuckert’s “*Volkskunde der Großstadt*” (*Volkskunde of the City*) at the Pädagogische Akademie in Breslau in 1930 was clearly an *urban Volkskunde*: in other words, his pre-*VdP* coursework showed an attempted scope expansion not only of who made up the Volk, but an expansion of geographical locus as well, generally new to the discipline.

Despite his pre-*VdP* enthusiasm about an urban *Volkskunde* that peaked in the 1930’s, Peuckert soon realized that it implied that a *bürgerliche Volkskunde* (*Volkskunde of the Bourgeoisie*) would be just as unavoidable, as the middle class also resided within the city. One can surmise that Peuckert constrained his initially quite broad research interests in urban *Volkskunde* because such interest might have been seen as too risky; compliance with the field’s boundaries, at least in publication, was a

necessity for a young docent hoping for job advancement.²³ Though he did talk of his plans for a *Volkskunde* of the Bourgeoisie, such a text was never realized; he instead chose a more bounded area of interest for *VdP* (Peuckert 1931, IX-X).²⁴

Peuckert's *VdP* begins with a set of questions. Could the working class fit into the *Volkskunde* as conceived such scholars as Spamer and Strack, resting on the legacy of the 19th century? Could the field as it was structured in the early 1930's incorporate the working class, or would it have to be expanded, reconceptualized? Was a *Volkskunde* of the working class even possible or necessary (ibid., VII)?²⁵ As Peuckert broadly saw it, the question was truly one of categorization, the ability of a bounded field to either incorporate a "new" group of people in its current state, or the possibility and/or necessity of reconceptualizing the field.

Given that the *Volkskunde* of the 1930's with its almost prescriptive paradigm of "Volk=peasantry" was at the same time concerned with "expressions of *Gemeinschaft* [community]," Peuckert argued that it would be his burden to show how the working class functioned as a community (ibid., VIII).²⁶ This was a step away from defining the discipline based on a group of people, and towards a definition of a discipline grounded rather in the community-forming *behaviors* of a group; at the same time it directed attention towards larger segments of the population.

Peuckert was aware that convincing his colleagues of the validity, let alone the *necessity* of studying the working class from within the field of *Volkskunde* would be difficult. Worrying in his introduction about the repercussions his book might have, Peuckert feared that such changes could be *erschütternd* -- staggering:

"It would overwhelm the strength of an individual to solve questions that could disrupt our entire discipline, [b]ecause [...] it could be disruptive. [...] [W]e have to now check whether the currently used

categories [...] can be maintained, if we include the Proletariat [and] the Bourgeoisie in our examination, or whether we need to change [those categories]” (Peuckert 1931, VIII).²⁷

Despite his own convictions in the worthiness of the project, Peuckert made it clear that his argument and “proof” were not meant for the discipline as a whole; rather, he claimed that the book was meant as a personal exercise that there was a *Volkskunde* of the working class (Peuckert 1931, VIII; Peuckert and Fuchs 1971, 76). Whether or not his community of peers would (or could) accept his book was something that he left for his readers to decide: “[... I]t wouldn’t be appropriate to make decisions that break through the frame of a personal decision onto a level of general recognition” (Peuckert and Fuchs 1971, 76). Yet, as Reif points out,

“[... a] scientist strives to do research which he considers important. But *intrinsic satisfaction and interest are not his only reasons*. [...] The scientist wants his work *to be not only interesting to himself but also important to others*” (Reif 1965, as cited by Bourdieu 1999, 32-33).

It is hard to imagine that Peuckert did not care about what his colleagues thought of his work.

These sentiments about the potentially revolutionary nature of the book lend themselves well to Kuhn, and we are reminded of the fact that paradigm shifts puncture the continuity of research being done, interrogating the assumptions of the status quo (Kuhn 1996, 6). Peuckert’s introduction, questioning whether or not a *Volkskunde* that only looked at the peasantry (as before) could continue, is precisely such a challenge of the preceding tradition-bound period. So Kuhn:

“Probably the single most prevalent claim advanced by the proponents of a new paradigm is that they can solve the problems that have led the old one to a crisis” (Kuhn 1996, 153).

Peuckert's introduction and the conclusion -- entitled "*Am Anfang*" (At the Beginning), a nod towards the work that he believed still needed to be done -- outline the book's theoretical premises and carry the argument: that the contemporary discipline needed to broaden its horizon to include the working class, important particularly as it exhibited the same community-forming functions as the peasantry.

A socioeconomic history of the Silesian linen weavers which examines the effects of the rise of industrialization in Silesia in the early 19th century starts off the main chapters, adding ethnographic detail and process but little analytical insight. Peuckert was most interested in the processes of change undergone by the linen weavers who entered factories in the 1840's, wanting to trace, as the book's subtitle indicates, "the rise of Proletarian culture" (Peuckert 1931, 34-50; 83-108; Assion 2001, 257; Peuckert and Fuchs 1971, 81-82). Did factory work and the conditions surrounding their employment, Peuckert asked, cause sufficient change amongst factory workers so that they could be seen as culturally distinct from the peasantry to which they historically belonged? Was there a *Volkskunde* of the working class distinct from the *Volkskunde* of the peasantry?

"Can we rely on the hitherto used methodologies to understand the [...] life of the Proletarian? Or will the attempt to grasp it with the help of *Volkskunde* fail, which until now only [...] recognize[d] the lives of the peasants and *Handwerker* [tradesmen]?" (Peuckert 1931, 4; Peuckert and Fuchs 1971, 82).

Peuckert's premise rested on the argument that longitudinally tracing the conditions of work and life of the weavers (i.e., *Volkskunde* in its very traditional sense, including housing types), with a particular focus on industrialization, could help pinpoint the moment in time where their *Volkskunde* no longer resembled that of the peasantry (Peuckert 1931, 4). Still a "community" as defined by Ferdinand Tönnies

(1855-1936), though in an urban, industrial setting, Peuckert believed that showing the weaver's agrarian roots would suffice to show the validity of his call for their inclusion in the field.

Showing the industrialization of the linen market and the subsequent urbanization of the linen weavers, Peuckert repeatedly returned to the question of their identity, asking if they were they a part of the peasantry, influenced by tradesmen, or part of the working class (Peuckert 1931, 5-51; Peuckert and Fuchs 1971, 100-151). While 18th century Silesian weavers were farmers who "occasionally did industrial work," he found the 1840's to be more ambiguous:

"Is he a tradesman or a peasant? Signs pointing towards tradesman include [...]: he gave up his fields. A peasant without a field is hard to imagine. Signs pointing towards the peasant? [...] the general attitude: he thinks and acts with a peasant consciousness. [...] The Volkskunde of the weaver cannot be differentiated from the Volkskunde of the peasant until 1840" (Peuckert 1931, 50; Peuckert and Fuchs 1971, 112; 107-119).

Problems with the essentializing nature of the phrase "peasant consciousness" aside -- at best Peuckert was referring here to Volkskunde, expressive culture -- his conclusions remained the same: until the weavers began working in factories, their identity did not differ significantly from the peasantry (Peuckert 1931, 82-83; Peuckert and Fuchs 1971, 133). This move to the factories, a change in lifestyle, marked the change from the identity of the weaver as peasant to the identity of the weaver as a member of the working class: he "turns from his previous life [...] and searches for a more free one. He is drawn [...] to the "freedom" in the factories" (Peuckert 1931, 99).

Peuckert saw evidence for this identity change in the social problems apparently found amongst the factory workers, and called these changes "something new": "This

new thing is fresh, gaining hold on its own. And one finds it in all place where there is a population of factory workers” (Peuckert 1931, 110; Peuckert and Fuchs 1971, 144, 151). This was the goal towards which Peuckert had been working, bringing the reader to the point of showing that the weavers, who formerly had a quasi-shared expressive culture with the peasantry, now shared more with the working class; nevertheless, they also had the characteristics of a community:

“We met them as weavers who had sprung from the peasantry, who had sufficiently maintained their peasant character. We saw how here and there they brushed up against influence from within the tradesmen circles, without a change in their *Grundcharakter* [basic character]. Only the moment of the arrival of the machine, when the weaver is turned into a factory worker, is life essentially changed. [...] We only say that [then] something new, previously non-extant becomes recognizable. We stand at the beginning of a ‘*Kultur*’ [Culture]” (Peuckert 1931, 113).

For Peuckert, this was proof enough that there was need to expand the field to include a *Volkskunde* of the working class; seeing no need to build a new discipline, he instead saw ample rhetorical room for *Volkskunde* to incorporate and study the working class under the auspices of the extant field. Studying the “new” group was an inevitability: “These external forms [...] need to be collected and recorded by us, whether [...] they are verbal, material, or activities [*Handlungen*]” (Peuckert 1931, 179).

* * *

Some criticisms of *VdP* stand out. For one, Peuckert’s casual, literary writing style does not lend itself well to rigorous academic argumentation, and some find it troublesome enough to make the claim that his style wholly obscured the argument. While some have called his prose literary, others have gone as far as to call it sloppy, even unprofessional (Siebs 1928, as cited by Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 131; Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 133).²⁸ This has lead some to express concern about the validity of

Peuckert's argument, given the difficulties in tracing his sources.²⁹ Nor did Peuckert make an effort to underscore the importance of his work by tying it to contemporary scholarship, creating links or highlighting divergences.

For another, Peuckert's already noted tendency to essentialize is problematic. By creating bounded categories of "types" of people, determined by social class -- categories which themselves are not only open to challenge, but clearly porous and possibly fictitious -- Peuckert was on a path not dissimilar to the Nazi reification of a collective peasantry. That is not to say that the repercussions of *writing VdP* would have been as drastic and dangerous as the glorification of the peasantry (and the racialized, hierarchical world of the Nazis), or that Peuckert had any such intentions. Yet is still noteworthy that *VdP* created and reified essentialized categories of groups of people -- collectivities which fall apart under closer scrutiny.

Perhaps these critiques are mitigated by what surely remain the text's merits: an attempt, regardless of its success, to create a niche within a strictly defined discipline for the examination of a new, socioeconomically grounded phenomenon. Peuckert's recognition that the rapid industrialization and urbanization of Silesia and the resulting changes in the everyday lives of thousands would be a useful standpoint from which to call for revision and change is of importance. In Assion's words:

"In the older *Volkskunde* Peuckert was the only one willing to recognize working class culture as something historically new, placing it in the context of economic and socio-historical development" (Assion 2001, 257).

Surrounding Events and Repercussions

Though a simple expansion of the definition of Volk may not appear revolutionary at first glance, Peuckert in no small way was challenging the establishment

and canon of *Volkskunde*, its mores, and, by default its (oftentimes aging) practitioners. Bourdieu's discussion of the specificity of a scientific field helps circumscribe the idea that the way in which knowledge is produced (or the way that the contours of the discipline are shaped) is intimately connected to the other players in the discipline:

“The structure of the scientific field at any given moment is defined by the state of the power distribution between the protagonists in the struggle (agents or institutions), i.e., by the structure of the distribution of the specific capital, the result of previous struggles which is objectified in institutions and dispositions and commands the strategies and objective chances of difference agents or institutions in the present struggle” (Bourdieu 1999, 35).

Other players in the discipline would help trigger a series of events which changed Peuckert's life and career trajectory irrevocably.

The decade leading up to the publication of *VdP*, so Bönisch-Brednich, was a positive one for Peuckert as far as his relationship to the *Schlesische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde* (Silesian Society for *Volkskunde*, SGV) and its members was concerned (Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 129-130). A member of the 1894-founded SGV, Peuckert also published actively in the *Mitteilungen der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde*, the society's journal (e.g., in 1919, 1920, 1926, 1927, 1928, and 1929b), and his major publications received positive reviews from some of Breslau's leading *Volkskundler*, including Theodor Siebs (1862-1941) (*ibid.*, 229-30, 71).³⁰

Yet this positive standing was temporary and volatile, and would quickly change within a matter of years after the publication of *VdP*. That Peuckert allegedly criticized Siebs at a conference did not help Peuckert's standing, nor did the publication of his *Schlesische Volkskunde*, a book in turn strongly rebuked by Siebs for its literary, nonacademic style (*ibid.*, 132). 1929 marked Peuckert's last publication in *Mitteilungen*,

and he was never asked to join the board of the society (as other peers his age were); by 1938 he no longer was a member of the SGV (ibid., 132, 134).

It took the publication of *VdP* to absolutely sour relations between Peuckert and Siebs, and, more importantly, between Peuckert and Walther Steller (1895-1971), a colleague of the same age who had been bypassed for several positions in favor of Peuckert, including a docentship at the Deutsches Institut of the Universität Breslau (ibid., 192-193).³¹ Steller had turned increasingly towards National Socialism; he joined the NSDAP in 1933, and his article “*National Sozialismus und Volkskunde*” (National Socialism and Volkskunde) highlights what his perspective on the field and his feelings towards Peuckert were (Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 141-144). Published in *Mitteilungen*, the 1934 article had much to say about the field itself (“German Volkskunde as a science [...] is National Socialist”), but also criticized Peuckert; born the same year, it would have been painfully clear to Steller that Peuckert had already achieved a greater visibility in the field, with a greater number of publications under his belt (Steller 1934, 68, as cited by Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 144; ibid., 194-195).

German Volkskunde, so Steller, “[...] had been falsified over the past years, debased to become a slave of a Marxist system and forced into its service [...],” and Peuckert’s book was reviewed by strategically placing it in the context of the purported dangers of a Marxist Volkskunde (Steller 1934, 85, as cited in Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 144). Thus:

“Marxism as a historical-materialistic form of thought makes the Volk *geschichtsuntüchtig* [incapable of history; useless for history], [and] keeps it far from its national determination [...]. [...] In and of itself it is [...] useful to scientifically research the formation of the working class, and to represent the changes in their way of thinking during their process of separating from the peasantry [...], but such representations cannot be colored by a party-bound social democratic position” (Steller 1934, 70,

as cited in Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 145).

Coupled with his jealousy and his allegiance to the NSDAP and what it stood for, *VdP* was enough to cause Steller to lash out against Peuckert.³²

Though Peuckert did write two sharp letters in response to Steller's article -- "you led an attack in the dark, which was not a common thing to do until now" -- and distributed a seven-paged response ("*Notwendige Feststellungen*," Necessary Observations, 1934), his attempts to pull himself out of a quagmire of accusations were to no avail (Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 200). Steller responded by distributing a report in late February of that same year which continued to accuse Peuckert of his left-leaning and Marxist involvements, pointing to the ease with which the latter had climbed up the academic rungs (due, so Steller, to help from Peuckert's Jewish faculty advisor Hermann Reincke-Bloch) (*ibid.*, 201-202).³³ He also highlighted the purported damage that Peuckert and Ranke had inflicted upon Silesian *Volkskunde* (*ibid.*).

Peuckert described these years of turmoil, showing not only that his stand amongst most Silesian *Volkskundler* had deteriorated from bad to worse, but also that the obstacles he faced had weighed him down:

"The *Volkskundler* are already beating each other up. Siebs (my teacher! - you know about him) [...] struck [at *VdP*] like [...] he was] chopping up a log. Ranke, our new Germanist, and Spamer/Dresden raised [it] into the high heavens. The drama continues. And it is getting worse. I've disturbed the entire field of *Volkskunde*."³⁴

Despite the "drama", Peuckert's initial resolve remained quite strong: "But it has to be played until it is over, [especially] since I have let myself so deeply into [the field of] *Volkskunde*. If I fall, then it'll have been a hero's death."³⁵

But by 1934 Peuckert's nerves were fraught, a slow accumulation of over three

years of job insecurity and declining status in the field:

“And here we are again. And the sorcery begins. I already spent last afternoon with it. [...] No one knows what is going on. I was simply informed per letter that a new case was opened up against me. [...] The case is such that the battle really is a battle about ranks a.[nd] positions. [...] [D]emotion doesn’t mean probation, but rather the opening of the position for a hungry ‘old fighter’. And even if that old fighter fails, the soldier killed in action [Peuckert is clearly self-referencing] won’t be called back, but rather the next old fighter [...]. -If I were to go back, I’d be shut off for the time of the Hitler regime, that is ‘for 1000 years.’”³⁶

Throughout, Peuckert realized himself to be in a potentially dangerous situation:

“And [...] Herr Steller [...] wrote an essay about the liberal-marxist [...] proletar.[ian] Volkskunde. [That essay] is in a journal. But who knows when it will be published. But Herr Steller already has his evidence a.[nd] disseminated it amongst the students, sent it to the radio, and to the ministerium. (I’m the only one who didn’t know about anything.) [...] And that’s what I [...] am stuck in, know about it, a.[nd] can’t defend myself, since I hold nothing in my hands.”³⁷

Four months later, in mid-June 1934, the situation had escalated to a point where Gustav Adolf Walz, the president of the Universität Breslau, had to step in and ask Steller and Peuckert to calm their grievances and to proclaim a truce of sorts.³⁸ Once again, Peuckert turned to Maria:

“That we are doused with considerable trouble you already know. [...] I’m not sure if we are through it yet. [...] The Minister recommended tremendous restraint, given my ‘past’. (You can see what the situation is like. I even have a past.) [...] Of course that wasn’t enough for Herr Steller. He just published his pamphlet against me yesterday. [...] The president ordered us both to observe *Burgfrieden* [lit.: peace in the castle; a truce]. But it seems to be a very one-sided [peace], otherwise St.[eller] wouldn’t have dared to publish. [...] the *Burgfrieden* will be at my expense.”³⁹

The repercussions of Peuckert’s soured relations in Breslau and the events surrounding the publication of *VdP* were felt field-wide (Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 202-

203). Correspondence between Peuckert's immediate senior colleague Friedrich Ranke and John Meier (of the Deutsches Volkslied Archiv in Freiburg) indicate that the Steller-affaire was impacting Peuckert's career chances (ibid.). So Meier:

"I was indignant about the shabby trick Peuckert had played in regards to his [political] disposition, that had consisted of switching happily and directly from the far left to the ruling party. I thus took the fact that Peuckert showed up in Weimar as an affront and treated him accordingly."⁴⁰

A year later, Peuckert was nearly bypassed for writing a volume for a series John Meier (of the Deutsches Volkslied Archiv in Freiburg) was working on, a contract Peuckert desperately needed to supplement his income (Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 202-203).⁴¹ Meier clearly indicated he did not want Peuckert to write the volume on "*Sagen, Märchen und Schwank*": "I'd rather avoid Peuckert for reasons I'll tell you in person at some point."⁴² In response, Ranke defended Peuckert and affirmed that this academic shunning could be traced back directly to Walther Steller's campaign:

"I find it very painful that you think you should stay away from Peuckert. So the dirty flood of libel that we've been fighting for a year and a half has reached you too. [...] It is one of those cases where a notoriously inept man tries to destroy an uncomfortable opponent through libel grabbed out of thin air [...]. Who the *Nachsteller* [stalker; play on words with Steller as well] is you can guess [...]. That's how it has been for the past year and a half: the [...] suspicions are always proven to be anchorless, but they keep on resurfacing and making his life hard."⁴³

Ranke continued, describing Peuckert as having a "passionate feeling for the social, personal relationships to the working class and to teachers, and possibly with communist tendencies."⁴⁴ He ultimately convinced Meier that Peuckert was more than qualified for writing the volume, and it was published in 1938.

An anonymous letter to the NSDAP, which Bönisch-Brednich strongly believes

to be from Steller, sums up the accusations against Peuckert:

“Herr Dr. Will-Erich Peuckert is completely intolerable as a private docent at the university in the field of “Deutsche Volkskunde. Dr. Peuckert should be described as a person who well understands how to work with [the political cycles]. He belonged to the radical leftist wing in 1918 as a communist and a member of the USPD. [...] Peuckert was a Volksschule teacher and received his Ph.D. through the Jewish professor Dr. Reincke-Bloch, Breslau, without obtaining his Abitur. [...] Peuckert always enjoyed broad-based support stemming from the marxist-philosemitic direction. He belonged to the circle of philosemitic, marxist-communist [...] teachers who boycotted the nationally-oriented docents. Peuckert was habilitated for the field of German Volkskunde (!) in 1932 by Prof. Dr. Ranke, whose wife is of Jewish origins. [...] Peuckert has always been supported [...] from the jewish-marxist side. [...] Herr Dr. Peuckert has to be categorized as completely unreliable, not only in the political, but also in the academic and human senses” (Anonymous, presumed to be Walther Steller, as cited by Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 24).

Motivated by jealousy and politics, Steller lashed out against Peuckert and his *VdP*, succeeding in derailing Peuckert’s career.

* * *

The event still remained fresh in Peuckert’s mind two decades later, in the early 1950’s. When a colleague wrote to him asking about Steller’s his employability, Peuckert reluctantly told his story:

“It pains me to have to write this letter to you. [...] Until now, I have always resisted pointing fingers; but if Herr Prof. Steller now wants to show himself as having been politically persecuted, I no longer can remain silent.

This is what I have to say about the matter: I was an academic assistant from 1928 to 1930 at the Deutsches Institut, where Herr Prof. Steller was an assistant. Shortly after I had started there, I was clearly warned by Herr Prof. Friedrich Andreae about the “false Brother.” And though I was friends with Andreae, I didn’t place much weight on his warning, nor acted particularly subdued because of it. On the 1st or 2nd of May, my former student Dr. Schultheiß came by [...] and told me that Herr Prof. Steller spent over an hour trying to get him to tell [Steller]

about my political views. He warned me that Herr St. most likely had something up his sleeve. I sent Herr Schultheiß to Herr Ranke, [...] and Herr Ranke [sic?] initiated a case against me with the dean, Herr Prof. Malten. Herr Prof. Steller was the witness for the prosecution, and the strange fact became apparent, that he had with him a huge folder full of reports about my conversations with him that he read aloud. [...] I cannot quite image that these incidences are helpful in showing Herr Prof. Steller as politically persecuted. [...]

[...] In the winter from 33 to 34 I attended an evening seminar and was witness to a public lecture by [Steller] about national socialist grubbing in the Sudetenland, and secret negotiations, things that no one who wasn't intensively participating in the party could know. I thought what he was saying, and the way in which he was saying it, was misguided, and at the very least politically dangerous. [...]

[...] That Herr Prof. Steller had a close relationship with National Socialism cannot, in my opinion, be denied [...]. I was assured that he was still close to it in the fall of 1944 by Frau Maria Hauptmann, the widow of Carl Hauptmann [...]. She warned me on February 13th 1945, as I passed through Schreiberhau on my way to the West [...]; if he saw me in town, things could go badly for me. [...]

Finally, my esteemed colleague, I have a request. This letter and the upheaval of old things has not been easy for me. I don't have any desire, and am reluctant to perform as a witness or to hit back. All I want to prevent is that Herr Prof. Steller somehow, unrightfully so, receives the title of "politically persecuted"; I did not conquer that title for myself, though I was told I should, since I believe that one does not need a title for one's beliefs. [...]"⁴⁵

* * *

Peuckert lost his docentship at the Deutsches Institut on May 13th, 1935 when his right to teach was withdrawn "because he was a pacifist and a friend of the Jews".⁴⁶ And just two years prior, *VdP* had been burnt by the Nazis.⁴⁷ In tangent with a vicious libel campaign with nebulous borders, the end effect of publishing *VdP* was the premature end of Peuckert's first academic career, and the beginning of his so-called self-imposed exile in Haasel:

"P.[euckert] left Breslau in the fall of 1935 and moved to Haasel [...]"

where he owned a vacation home. He lived off of his small pension and the revenues generated by his writing, until the permission to write was withdrawn in 1942.”⁴⁸

The shift from an active academic career (with access to a library, to students, and to colleagues) to a man unsure of his academic future is apparent in a letter to Maria from late November 1935. Though Peuckert did not dwell on the events of the preceding years, they are implicitly referenced, and it is apparent that he was just as afraid of boredom as he was of the feeling that he had been put out to pasture. His cynicism is hard to miss, and Peuckert did not expect a return to academic life:

“Dearest Maria, the last few weeks were a little helter skelter - a.[nd] so I am just now able to write to you. The first a.[nd] most important thing is that the Pruss.[ian] state once again has cleaned out its *Berufsbeamtentum* [professional civil service]. Phrased differently: the retirement was approved and I now lead the pathetic life of someone who has finished his work a.[nd] can only stare out of the window.”⁴⁹

The effects of their time in Haasel was not lost on Peuckert’s wife Gertrud, either; publishing in 1948 under her maiden name Albrecht, she noted that they were watched nearly continuously:

“He had been a professor at the University of Breslau, and was chased away in 1935 because he had written Marxist books and books against the war. That’s why he was watched, and the night guard would receive money to listen under his windows at night” (Albrecht 1948, 13-14).⁵⁰

* * *

Ten years later he would return to academia, and in 1951, Peuckert once again would address the ideas of his *VdP* in an article in the *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*.

Volkskunde des Proletariats, Redux

One might think that Steller’s accusations and the academic setbacks Peuckert

experienced could have dampened his interests in the scope of the discipline, since they contributed to his decade-long hiatus from the academic world. Yet despite the resistance that Peuckert had met, his desire to expand the scope of the field to include the working class was not limited to *VdP*. In fact, Peuckert himself once mentioned in an undated *Curriculum Vitae* that his work on expanding the discipline was one of his four major *post-war* achievements.⁵¹ Though *VdP* would remain Peuckert's most complete and lengthy treatise on the subject, four other categories of work indicate a longevity of thought.

1. Several lectures,
2. a 1951 article in the *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*,
3. a later article on *Schundromane* (trashy novels),
4. as well as the posthumous 1971 republication of *VdP*

all show a continued interest in *Volkskunde*'s scope. Yet the post-war years were approached with much less fervor, the interest not as vigorous. By examining these other texts, Peuckert's earlier work is put into a relationship with his latter work, showing the life of an idea over the course of Peuckert's academic career (Stocking 1995).

Though Peuckert had spent 1935 to 1945 in a vacuum -- unable to work with most colleagues and students, later actively prevented from publishing book reviews -- this did not mean an erasure of the preceding years.⁵² The lectures Peuckert held at the Universität Göttingen after his 1946 appointment offer insight into what happened to his vision of the discipline, and the question of how he continued to define the term and concept "Volk". It is possible to see in Peuckert's course titles an attempt to grapple with the general object of study of the discipline, probably for the benefit of his students who were being introduced to *Volkskunde* and being reeducated after the war

(cf. also Appendix 4).⁵³ A particularly salient period of his life -- a career being rebuilt on the foundations of a discipline in shambles -- Peuckert's early post-war work not only reflects a necessary process of rebuilding, but also the thoughts of a scholar who was silenced for the better part of the preceding decade, finally able to voice his ideas in an academic context. Yet with his position also came the simultaneous restraints a new university setting can impose on a scholar.

Besides repeatedly offered genre courses, Peuckert taught at least one course per semester which, in title, indicated a coming to terms with the scope of the discipline.⁵⁴ A continued interest in *Volkskunde*'s object of study also becomes apparent, especially as some of his classes were taught several times over the course of a decade and a half:

- “*Grundlegung der Volkskunde und vorbäuerlichen Volkskunde*”
(The foundations of *Volkskunde* and pre-peasant *Volkskunde*; Summer Semester 1946);
- “*Bäuerliche Volkskunde*”
(*Volkskunde* of the Peasantry; Winter Semester 1946/47);
- “*Bäuerliche Volkskunde I. Teil*”
(*Volkskunde* of the Peasantry Part I; Summer Semester 1947);
- “*Praxis der Volkskunde*”
(The Praxis of *Volkskunde*; Summer Semester 1947);
- “*Volkskunde der bürgerlichen und proletarischen Kultur*”
(The *Volkskunde* of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Cultures; Winter Semester 1947/48, Summer Semester 1948);
- “*Vorbäuerliche Volkskunde*”/ “*Volkskunde der vorbäuerlichen Kultur*”
(Pre-Peasant *Volkskunde*; Winter Semester 1948/49, Summer Semester 1951);
- “*Volkskunde der bäuerlichen Kultur I*”
(The *Volkskunde* of the Peasant Culture I; Summer Semester 1949, Winter Semester 1951/52, Winter Semester 1954/55);
- “*Volkskunde der bäuerlichen Kultur II*”
(The *Volkskunde* of the Peasant Culture II; Winter Semester 1949/50, Summer Semester 1952);
- “*Volkskunde der bäuerlichen Kultur III*”
(The *Volkskunde* of the Peasant Culture III; Summer Semester 1950, Winter Semester 1952/53);
- “*Volkskunde der viehbäuerlichen Kultur*”
(The *Volkskunde* of the Livestock-Raising Peasant Culture; Summer Semester 1954);
- “*Viehbäuerliches Gemeinschaftsleben*”
(The Community Life of the Livestock-Raising Peasantry; Winter Semester 1954/55);
- “*Die niedersächsische viehbäuerliche Welt*”
(The World of the Lower Saxon Livestock-Raising Peasantry; Summer Semester 1957);
- “*Das bäuerliche Jahr und seine Ordnungen*”
(The Calendar Cycle of the Peasantry and its Organization; Winter Semester 1957/58);
- “*Der städtische Mensch*”
(The City Person; Winter Semester 1958/59);
- “*Volkskunde früher Kulturen*”

- (The *Volkskunde* of Early Cultures; Summer Semester 1959);
- “*Volkskunde der mutterrechtlichen und viehbäuerlichen Kultur*”
(The *Volkskunde* of the Matriarch and Livestock-Raising Peasant Cultures; Winter Semester 1959/60);
- and “*Volkskunde der viehbäuerlichen Kulturen*”
(The *Volkskunde* of the Livestock-Raising Peasant Cultures; Summer Semester 1960).⁵⁵

Peuckert did not turn entirely towards research along the lines of *VdP*, and the working class showed up only infrequently in his courses. In fact, the majority of his courses still looked at *Volkskunde* as a historical discipline, whose focus was the *Bauer* -- the peasant -- echoing the discipline’s canon from before the war. While he did teach a course on the “*Volkskunde* of the Middle and Working Classes” (*Volkskunde der bürgerlichen und proletarischen Kultur*) four times, it was just one course among many, the majority of which focused exclusively on the expressive and material culture of an agrarian peasantry.

It is plausible that continuing to push novel, boundary-breaking ideas such as an expanded category “Volk” might have been too difficult in a climate which stressed rebuilding and continuity, not novelty and change, one explanation of this pattern of teaching (Bausinger 1999, 298). It is quite possible that Peuckert felt the necessity to teach more stable, predictable classes that would be familiar to the faculty and to the field, without jeopardizing his new position at the university.

The content of a few lecture notes offers detailed insight into the particular moment in which Peuckert attempted to impart to his students his state-of-the-art knowledge. Whether the notes to “*Praxis der Volkskunde*” (Summer Semester 1947) are the entire notes for his course with the same name is unclear; they may also be an abbreviated outline from which Peuckert delivered his lectures. Yet they paint a picture of his vision of the discipline at the beginning of his years in Göttingen, and, more importantly, of his vision of who the Volk should be and what the responsibility of a

Volkskundler towards them was.

Framed as an introduction to the field, the pedagogical aims of “Praxis der Volkskunde” are made clear from its onset: besides introducing the genres, methodologies, sources, and the institutions which Peuckert saw as key to the discipline’s operation (such as universities, archives, and museums), the notes express a visible concern for the field’s involvement in what might be termed social outreach.⁵⁶ Relying heavily on Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, Peuckert underscored that Volkskunde must have a “practical (not academic) end-goal,” though what shape or form such an “applied” Volkskunde might take is not expressed in more detail.⁵⁷ It is also reminiscent of Elard Hugo Meyer’s claim in 1898 that “Volkskunde has an academic as well as a social task” (Meyer 1898, III). In Peuckert’s vision of the field, knowledge of human expressive culture would have to be the stepping stone for all social outreach:

“Knowledge about customs [...] etc.
isn’t enough [...] but going past such information and growing into the Volk its misery and its desires.”⁵⁸

To be a Volkskundler, it was necessary to have a “knowledge of the entire Volk, not just the peasantry [...]” that is to say a determination of the term ‘Volk’ which encompasses a whole”; Peuckert enumerated “the peasantry, the middle-class, the Proletariat etc.” as examples of who could fill the category.⁵⁹ Peuckert circumscribed the scope of the field as a fact rather than something that needed to be proven: a 10-year academic hiatus had not changed his convictions. At the same time, nothing in “Praxis der Volkskunde” indicates to what extent such an expanded category of Volk was novel or how students reacted. Nor did Peuckert teach this course frequently, or delve into

the idea of an urban *Volkskunde*, which he had done as a young docent in Breslau, pushing the borders of the field.

In print, Peuckert again returned to the ideas in an article entitled “Probleme einer *Volkskunde* des Proletariats”, referencing his original *VdP* by name. Published in *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* in 1951, it also stands as a reminder of the longevity of his interest in the subject. Poorly written, it again acknowledged that an attempt to restructure the discipline would be difficult (Peuckert 1951, 11). These difficulties were not grounded in a lack of acceptance by colleagues, as Peuckert had been worried about just twenty years prior, but rather in a concern about the inflexibilities of genres and of the categories of Volk, such as “peasant” or “working class”:

“The problem of a *Volkskunde* of the non-peasantry is harder to solve than it first appears. The attempt to apply the [...] schema of “verbal” [*geistige*] and “material” *Volkskunde* (with their subsets of “spoken lore”, “sung lore”, “games” etc.) leads to lopsidedness, distortions. It also often leads to the realization that there is no answer to an entire set of questions, and again the assumption is made that an expansion of *Volkskunde*-based research past the world of the peasantry would be fruitless and useless” (ibid.).

Peuckert argued that the conclusion of the fruitlessness of a disciplinary expansion was based on the wrong premise (ibid.). *Volkskunde* was not, Peuckert posited, the answer to a predetermined schema where things fit neatly into well-labeled boxes; its genres had blurred boundaries and crossover of expressive culture between different groups was to be expected (ibid.).

As a way to explore expressive culture which did not always fit preconceived categories, the article examined particular customs which had passed from the country to the city over the course of years, some of which remained the same, and many whose meanings had changed (ibid., 11-14). Peuckert’s example about the use and meaning of

bread in the country and city indicates his argument: that context changes meaning, and that a changed meaning does not obviate the need for examining a particular custom or community -- in this case, the working class within the confines of the city (ibid.).

Rhetorical detours aside, Peuckert's main argument mirrors the one put forth in 1931. Changed customs in a new context ("something new") created an obvious need to examine them, and to expand the field for inclusion. Though changed by context, the Volkskunde of the "new" urban working class was still "valid" Volkskunde:

"And now back to the problem of a Volkskunde of the Proletariat, and of a Proletarian culture! [...]. It must show the first anticipation and flare-up of something new, then it's effect will be really grabbing and dramatic. [...]. [...] [T]he old schemes of how the discipline of Volkskunde asked questions or categorized things are today no longer sufficient, [and] we have to get to new, unencumbered categories which are born from [...] [within the culture to be researched] if we do not want a Volkskunde of the non-peasant cultures and of the Bourgeoisie to be an empty waste of words" (ibid., 19, 22).

For those expressing skepticism, Peuckert suggested an analysis of customs that had changed when their context had shifted, rather than looking at expressive culture which had emerged from within a new context: "Perhaps it would be best to tie into something already extant [...] such as 'marriage,' which still exists in the Proletarian world" (ibid., 21).

The 1951 article brings to the forefront Peuckert's neglect to consistently include citations and sources. Though it still contains the seeds of an important idea -- one already iterated in 1931 -- Peuckert's difficulties in getting to a convincing argument are apparent. A lack of interest in proving his call for expansion permeates the article, and Peuckert even comments on this himself:

"One will say, if one admits that a Volkskunde of the Bourgeoisie, of a factory worker, or of the Proletariat seems desirable and necessary [...],

that my requests are obvious. And that I took great detours to run through open doors” (ibid., 19).

And while Peuckert still had made an effort in 1931 to *prove* to his audience the need for room within a bounded discipline for the examination of a newly emerged, socioeconomically grounded phenomenon, the text written twenty years later did not express such a need. By 1951, Peuckert no longer argued *why* an inclusionary field might be useful. Such a subtle shift in argument hints at the growing security Peuckert must have felt in his job and in his position as an accepted scholar in the academy, as well as the possibility of a slowly changing field.

A second set of fragmented, unfinished lecture notes entitled “*Proletarische Vk.*” (Proletarian Volkskunde), presumably dating to 1953, gives further information.⁶⁰ Though reiterating Peuckert’s previous arguments, it also contained a stronger sense of imparting to his students the *reasons* for using Volkskunde to look at the working class as a historical phenomenon.⁶¹ Instead of looking from the top down -- perceived by Peuckert as “negative description” which expressed “pity with the poor”, a mere “*Milieubeschreibung*” (a description of context) -- the notes point towards looking at the working class in a positive light: “that is, describe him from the Proletarian perspective!”⁶² Such perspective could be attained through an examination of the Volkskunde of the working class.⁶³ Peuckert believed that its examination could lead to social reform, which

“comes not from the worker
but from the citizen [Bourgeoisie].
From the young, decent citizen.”⁶⁴

Peuckert did not give any details on what particularly he had in mind.

Peuckert’s research on the trashy novel (“*Schundroman*”) as gateway to the

“*Kleinbürgerliche Welt*” is also relevant. He hoped to trace and understand the “*Kleinbürgerliche Welt*” -- that is, the world of the petty bourgeoisie, the lower middle class -- through trashy novels. Here, too, Peuckert noted the possibility of reticence amongst his colleagues: “Unnoticed - or unbecoming to its trade I call it; it most likely will be seen as unbecoming to our trade if I, as a *Volkskundler*, examine the so-called trashy novel” (Peuckert 1958, 281). For Peuckert, *Schundromane* were to the lower middle class as *Volkskunde* was to the peasantry and the working class, a way to understand and gain access to their world. What is more, *Schundromane* gave the scholar access to “entirely different ‘expressions’” of community:

“A *Volkskunde* of the middle class world and its time (need) not only look different [...] because they middle [class] differs in many ways from the peasant [class], [...] but because they are made up of entirely different expressions. [...] The carrying thought is one that differs entirely from those that carry the world of the peasantry, and thus the[ir] [...] expressions [...] are also different” (Peuckert 1958, 282).

* * *

The original *VdP* was reissued posthumously in 1971, introduced by Günther Grundmann (1892-1976) and illustrated with the etchings of the Silesian artist Erich Fuchs (1890-1983).⁶⁵ It differs slightly from its 1931 predecessor, containing an additional section as well as Fuchs’ illustrations. Part I, “*Vom rohen Flachs bis zum Fabriksturm*,” is a rather lengthy introduction to flax and weaving, a technical treatise on the production of linen. It also contains over sixty of Fuchs’ etchings on Silesia, which Fuchs hoped would fill a noticeable gap on the history of Silesian linen weavers:

“I’m now entering my 78th year of life and I’d like to try, while still living, to at the very least produce a monograph containing pictures [...]. [...] One could [publish] a volume on “Siles[ian] Mountain Village” or the “Homelife of Linen Weavers,” [... showing pictures of] spinning and

weaving [...], the old water-driven [...] box mangle, all the way to the *Blaudrucker* [...]. [Finally] a complete work on the weaver after decades. And so much more, because there are so many themes [...] in my work!”⁶⁶

Fuchs sought out Peuckert himself, hoping to get “advice as to which publisher would come into question for such a monograph”.⁶⁷ He did not fail to request “an introduction and a short text for each picture” from Peuckert (“should [... his] age still allow such a task!”).⁶⁸

The fact that Fuchs initiated the book project to a large extent distinguishes the 1971 edition of *VdP* from the original. Fuchs’ own interest in the volume was grounded in the post-war nostalgia towards former “lost” German territories, including Silesia, Eastern Prussia, Pomeranian, East Brandenburg, and the Sudetenland.⁶⁹ Nostalgizing also meant a sense of entitlement and the belief in the right of reappropriation, a trend often associated with renewed German nationalism. The strong affiliation in identity that the circa 15 million *Heimatvertriebene* (those Germans who fled from their homes in former German territories during the last months of World War II) felt with their former home) is also well documented, and books romanticizing Silesia were not uncommon (cf. e.g., Peuckert 1950a, Teuber 1951, Kaergel 1955, Steller 1957, Grundmann and Schadendorf 1962, Maier 1973).⁷⁰

VdP-1971 was such a volume, targeting a Silesian audience and not the audience of *Volkskundler* Peuckert initially had written for just forty years prior. His original book text appears almost as an attached oversight to the romanticized etchings. Fuchs’ letter reinforced this question of audience, explicitly asking whether or not Peuckert could “name an ideal Silesian who would be interested in this work, who also knows the simple Silesian Volk”.⁷¹ The nostalgia and need to reconnect with other Silesians is

made even more explicit by Grundmann's introduction:

“Who doesn't know the humble parlors with their dark, wood-paneled ceilings, made cozy through the mighty loom which blocks even more light from the small, flower-covered windows [...]? Who can hear the roar pulsing through these parlors from early morning until late at night that makes the whole house quake? [...] And who can still see the faces deeply furrowed through work and grief and worries [...], in whose eyes there is nevertheless a bright glow of *Heimatliebe* [love for one's home] and in which a spark of godlike yearning shimmers!” (Grundmann 1971, 5).

The glorification of rural life went hand in hand with the high valuation of a working class economy; Fuchs' illustrations of the “old-Silesian past” are seen a panacea for the troubles of modern society, an “original source of *Volkskraft* [the strength of the people]” (ibid., 6). The introduction to *VdP*-1971 is not valued for its attempt to reconceptualize the field; rather, in tandem with Fuchs' etchings, it is seen as “a document that shows us the past through the eyes of the present [, a book] whose pages might hopefully become live portrayers of our beloved past [...]” (ibid.).

Peuckert's own introduction for Part II of the volume -- his 1931 *VdP* plus a new preface -- focuses more on his original aims and goals, not on the nostalgizing of the rest of the volume. Peuckert remained quite open about his purpose:

“The present examination only wants to discuss one point: how the proletarian culture grows out of an agrarian cultural environment. It has no ambition to completely circumscribe the theme “textile industries,” which was only picked as a case-study for discussion. If you are looking for an economic or economic historical introduction you are on the wrong path; there is little material in this work even for *Volkskunde*, *as it has been practiced through the present*. What I am aiming for, what one can find in this work -- that I have already discussed above.” (Peuckert 1971, 73. Italics added).

* * *

There are two main differences between the 1931 book and Peuckert's post-war work.

1. In 1931, Peuckert felt a need to *prove* his ideas. By the time he was lecturing in Göttingen, Peuckert no longer expressed such a need.
2. Before WWII, Peuckert approached his ideas with vigor and enthusiasm. Though he did spend a relatively large amount of his time on the ideas after the war, it was with less fervor.

Peuckert never strayed too far from the idea of an expanded *Volkskunde*, working on the topic until his death. In fact, the relatively large number of post-war treatises on the working class give ample inclination to ask what it might mean to have worked and reworked a subject so frequently, despite the fact that his ideas remained true to the original 1931 treatise.

Disciplinary Reflections and Evaluation

The ideas in *VdP* had had a relatively simple beginning: Peuckert observed during early field work that the expressive culture he had collected did not match the framework that the discipline dictated. Peuckert's lectures about his findings marked a next step, making clear that he believed in the necessity of expanding the discipline's scope, certainly to include the working class and even an urban *Volkskunde*. By the time his thoughts had crystallized in writing as *VdP*, Peuckert was less intent on pushing for an urban *Volkskunde* as he was on explicitly calling for an expanded discipline which took a *Volkskunde* of the working class seriously and framed it in a positive light.

As a young man beginning an academic career in his mid to early thirties, Peuckert was somehow able to express a number of ideas for the discipline, ones which

not only delimited and pushed at its scope, but contained within them the seeds of a new vision for how *Volkskunde* should be studied. *VdP* intended to expand the discipline's viewpoint, opening up the more restricted vision still held over from the 19th century. And his ideas were distinguishable in topic from the work done by his peers, hinting at a promising career truly able to affect change on a discipline.

During the war, the concept of an expanded Volk did not see much development; instead, the ten year hiatus brought Peuckert closer to a literary career than it did to an academic one. Only when he began teaching in Göttingen did Peuckert return to the subject in a limited fashion. Though several lectures underscore a maintained interest, most of his other courses focused instead on agricultural communities. And neither his lectures nor his 1951 "revision" of the *VdP*, in article form, offered new theoretical insight.

The acceptance of his ideas by his colleagues and students, and the general presence of the idea of a *Volkskunde* of the working class would stand out as benchmark signs of affecting change on a discipline. But textbooks and other scope-defining treatises immediately after the war did not see eye to eye with Peuckert on needing an expanded scope for the field. And nor were his ideas reflected in the work done by his students, who, as a whole, focused on other, more canonical areas of research.

For example, Richard Weiss' *Volkskunde der Schweiz* (1946), the first German-language textbook to address the discipline of *Volkskunde* after the war, dismissed the working class offhand. Condescendingly, Weiss commented that the working class would be of little interest for the discipline, as it "repudiate[d] tradition only to subconsciously succumb to it" (Weiss 1946, 19, as cited by Assion 2001, 257). And as

Assion points out, “Weiss noted disdainfully that the Proletarian, even against his own will, remained a prisoner of tradition” (ibid.). A decade and a half after Peuckert had published *VdP* and lectured on a *Volkskunde* of the city, Weiss still believed that “[...] to live in an urban environment means [...] to live *unvolkstümlich* [removed from *Volkskunde* and tradition]” (Weiss 1946, 73).

Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer (1985) mention the book’s existence and mention that it was disliked by the Nazis, but they do not highlight its significance. Bausinger, Jeggle, Korff and Scharfe (1993) mention Peuckert once in discussing his work on legends, but never mention his call to include the working class in *Volkskunde*’s scope. And other key texts mirror the introductions to the discipline. *Völkische Wissenschaft: Gestalten und Tendenzen der deutschen und österreichischen Volkskunde in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (1994), the book to discuss German and Austrian *Volkskunde* under the weight of rising National Socialist ideology in the first half of the 20th century, makes note only in passing of Peuckert’s 1931 volume. It is Wolfgang Jacobeit, Peuckert’s student, who points out that Peuckert’s book diverged from the prevalent trope or paradigm of peasant glorification, quest for the past, and the notions of salvage ethnography that were part of the academic climate and discourse (Jacobeit 1994, 25).

On the other hand, some of those who make reference to and discuss the significance of *VdP* did note that it is one of the first works in the 20th century to bring into focus a different object of study for the discipline, introducing a different group of people as *Volkskunde*’s focus of research (e.g., Kramer 1987, 52-56; Assion 2001, 257). Taking a step further, Assion credits *VdP* with paving the way for an *Arbeitervolkskunde*, a *Volkskunde* of the working class, which has as its focus

“the culture and lifestyle of the wage-dependent part of the population, the part of the population that lives from selling their labor and that tries to make apparent a specific worker’s culture [...]” (Assion 2001, 255; cf. also Assion 1994, 39).

And Peuckert himself also ranked *VdP* as one of his most important contributions to the field. At the bottom of an undated *Curriculum Vitae*, Peuckert argues that his research before and during his time at the Universität Göttingen helped turn *Volkskunde* into a discipline that worked with different *Kulturkreise* (culture complexes):⁷²

“P.[euckert] gave *Volkskunde* an orientation towards culture complexes, thus establishing the *Eigengesetzlichkeit* [entelechy] of the peasant, middle class etc. cultures (*Große Wende, Volkskunde des Proletariats*); in so doing he newly brought to the forefront the cultural complex of the livestock raising peasantry [...]”⁷³

His claim for the importance of *VdP* rests on the argument that it separated out peasant traditions from those of the *Bürger* (the Bourgeoisie) and from the traditions of the working class -- not, interestingly enough, that it expanded the field.

Since knowledge disseminates slowly and through interpersonal channels, one should ask whether Peuckert’s doctoral students -- those students with whom he worked with most closely -- picked up on his ideas. Most of the 28 dissertations produced under Peuckert reflect, more or less, Peuckert’s collective research interests during his tenure at Göttingen. Two dissertations were concerned with *magia naturalis* and the scholars of the 16th and 17th centuries, six dissertations broadly concerned with prose narratives, mostly about specific legends or tale types, one about witchcraft and belief, and one even about theory (cf. also Appendix 5).

There are also no less than eight dissertations, written between 1947 and 1954, concerned directly with the peasantry and their material culture -- nearly a third of all dissertations produced under Peuckert. The fact that none discuss an expanded

discipline could mean that Peuckert was not interested in further pursuing the ideas in his *VdP*. But if that were the case, he would not have continued himself to publish and lecture. The dissertations Peuckert supervised would have needed to speak to the discipline's canon, on tried and true, accepted topics. We must therefore surmise that a dearth of dissertations on similar ideas is indicative of the fact that, at least through the late 1950's, the idea of a *Volkskunde* of the working class was not accepted by mainstream academia. Kuhn concurs: "At the start a new candidate for paradigm may have few supporters [...]" (Kuhn 1996, 159).

This strange combination of recognition on the one hand, coupled with the fact that Peuckert's *VdP* is not infrequently ignored in contemporary historiography and by his own doctoral students, begs the question of why there are such differences in opinion on the importance of Peuckert's *VdP*. Concurrently, the fact that Peuckert repeatedly produced the same basic argument with but little variation is curious to say the least. Why did Peuckert continue to work on an idea if he barely said anything new?

Perhaps it would be easier to accept the lack of interest and Peuckert's continued efforts to publish if we take a step back from the premise that his book was *the* introduction to a *Volkskunde* of the working class. If its significance is notched back and we recall that Peuckert himself went through many iterations of his ideas, repeatedly publishing the same concept over and over again, it becomes more understandable why others have ignored it. Could one not think of *VdP* as a point of transition instead, a Kuhnian non-cumulative break? Recall that both Adolf Spamer and Adolf Strack, as well as Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, looked at the working class in their research. While their perspective did not welcome the working class as an object of

study, and in fact warned of it, they certainly brought attention to the population group. Scholars predating Peuckert, in other words, had looked at the working class.

Peuckert's lectures, his 1951 article, his work on Schundromane, and the republication of *VdP* in 1971 indicate not only a continued interest in the subject; they simultaneously convey Peuckert's need to continue to work on the subject, to stress its importance. By frequently revising his ideas in speech and writing, Peuckert indicated that there was more work to be done. His 1931 *VdP*, in other words, was not his ultimate word on the subject, not *the* text which changed *Volkskunde* in Germany to be an inclusive field. His frequent publications can be seen instead as an acknowledgment on Peuckert's part that *VdP* was only one step in a larger disciplinary transition, a transition which would take years to become established. Those that acknowledge his work, in turn, might have realized the significant of Peuckert's *VdP* as one big step towards a more inclusive field.

* * *

The Oxford English Dictionary defines canon as "a general rule, fundamental principle, aphorism, or axiom governing the systematic or scientific treatment of a subject". A disciplinary canon, or paradigm, gives structure to that discipline, gives a sense of united purpose to its practitioners, and defines what it means to belong to a field. At the same time, as research ideas change, advancements are made, and as thoughts subtly shift, a field cannot remain rigid. Canons are not immutable, though their very definition would like to make us think that they are.

And herein lies the problem. Stasis is comfortable, but change is inevitable. This is the friction Peuckert's work encountered, and also the reason that it took decades for *Arbeitervolkskunde* to take hold. By the end of the 1980's, however, after

work by Otto Rühle (*Die Illustrierte Kultur- und Sittengeschichte des Proletariats*, 1930 and 1977, a glimpse at the everyday life of the working class), by Gottfried Korff who highlighted the fact that an *Arbeitervolkskunde* was still lacking in 1971, by Wolfgang Steinitz in the German Democratic Republic whose work turned the field towards historical *Arbeiterforschung* (1954-1962), by Gerhard Heilfurth (*Der Bergbau und seine Kultur. Eine Welt zwischen Dunkel und Licht*, 1981, about miners), and by Wolfgang Ruppert (an edited volume entitled *Die Arbeiter*, 1986, which examined the working class from economic, social and cultural perspectives), the field had restructured, still including the peasantry but also including the working class in its canon. And by the turn of the 20th to the 21st century the pendulum continues its swinging arc, and the field once again faces restructuring; the decline of unions and overall demographic changes made the working class less of an “Other”, and research questions have shifted towards more particular questions of gender and the working class or towards a more historical bent (Warneken 2001, 280).

Peuckert certainly did push at the boundaries of the discipline, though the effects were not immediate. His work was effective inasmuch as it was part of a larger process of reformulation and change. Those who remember Peuckert and his role in this change emphasize his work in no small part because of Peuckert’s at times compelling, at times difficult personal history, also because he was the only one post-war in an academic position to affect change. His *VdP* (and its various iterations) remains of interest not because it single-handedly affected change, but because it is a larger puzzle piece, part of the picture of pre- and post-war German *Volkskunde*.

CHAPTER TWO ENDNOTES

¹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A172, letter from Peuckert to Dr. Wolfgang Kretschmer, dated November 28th, 1967.

² Stocking relies on the work of Thomas Kuhn.

³ The term “Volk” is here used in quotes, as it is a constructed category. Part of the purpose of this chapter is to show that constructed nature, that the phrase has meant different things over the history of the discipline.

⁴ At Tübingen, the Seminar für Volkskunde was replaced in name by the Seminar für Empirische Kulturwissenschaft. In Frankfurt, the available course of study is now called simply Kulturanthropologie. Augsburg calls its program Europäische Ethnologie/Volkskunde. Europäische Ethnologie, as well, has become a popular name at many institutions, and in 2003, the Seminar für Volkskunde at the Universität Göttingen changed its name to Seminar für Kulturanthropologie/Europäische Ethnologie, the latest of many institutional name changes across Germany. The debate about when and why such changes might be necessary is complex, with questions of tainted terminology and content matching definition; it also has been held by many. For the specificities of the debate in Germany, see Regina Bendix and Tatjana Eggeling, eds., *Namen und was sie bedeuten: Zur Namensdebatte im Fach Volkskunde* (Göttingen: Schmerser Verlag, 2004).

⁵ There are a number of extant critiques of applying Kuhn to the humanities and social sciences. See, e.g., Gary Gutting, ed., *Paradigms and Revolutions* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980).

⁶ As Bachelard points out, “[t]he training of the scientific mind is not only a reform of ordinary knowledge, but also a *conversion* of interests.” See Gaston Bachelard, *Le Rationalism Appliqué* in Pierre Bourdieu, “The Specificity of the Scientific Field and the Social Conditions of the Progress of Reason,” in *The Science Studies Reader*, ed. Mario Biagioli (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 31.

⁷ Christian Wölfling provides another example of a Staatenkundler who gathered descriptions during his travels. Christian Wölfling, in this light, described people from all socioeconomic classes “in their daily activities and from all possible points of view,” writing about more than just the expressive culture of the people he encountered. See Christian Wölfling, *Briefe eines reisenden Franzosen über die Deutschen, ihre Verfassung, Sitten und Gebräuche. Nebst Beschreibungen u. Bemerkungen von e. Deutschen*, as cited in Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann and Andreas C. Bimmer, *Einführung in die Volkskunde/Europäische Ethnologie* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1985), 11.

⁸ The term “Volks-Kunde” is mentioned in 1782 in *Der Reisende. Ein Wochenblatt zur Ausbreitung gemeinnütziger Kenntnisse*.

⁹ The notion of *wandern* (hiking, walking) instead of travel became key in Germany, a way to experience the land as opposed to having a concrete geographic goal; instead of (more or less) objective description, subjective feelings moved to the forefront. “Traveling means, to move from one place to another, [...] and to reach a destination is its goal. To *wander* [hike, roam] on the hand, is marked by a certain aimlessness, because it is the trip that matters [...]” See Uli Kutter, *Die Georgia Augusta: Ein Beitrag zur Reisekultur des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: 1993), 2.

¹⁰ The popularity of Herder’s romantic vision of a unique and unblemished national spirit embodied in the lore of the peasantry should be viewed against the backdrop of contemporary sociopolitical changes and upheavals. Not only was German civil society still reeling from the territorial losses to the French, and, as Alan Dundes has pointed out, a “national inferiority complex” towards the French, but they were also dealing with “sectarianism and an absolutist corporative state [...]” An unblemished national soul, in other words, had the appeal of a curative power, an infinitely deep historical trajectory which could fix contemporary problems (*ibid.*). See Alan Dundes, *Folklore Matters* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), and Kai Detlef Sievers, “Volkskundliche Fragestellungen im 19. Jahrhundert,” in *Grundriß der Volkskunde: Einführung in die Forschungsfelder der Europäischen Ethnologie*, ed. Rolf. W. Brednich (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2001), 37.

¹¹ This type of historical, uninterrupted continuity, furthermore, of a “continuous, indestructible Volksgeist, [...] would be a heavy mortgage for Volkskunde, only shed after the end of the Second World War.” See Sievers 2001, 40.

¹² Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer make note of the fact that Riehl paid no attention to Karl Marx at all. See Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 50.

¹³ This agrarian romanticism of the early 20th century quite clearly and readily fed into the growing glorification of the peasant during the 1920's and 1930's, and ultimately into the cult of the peasantry espoused by the Nazis. One is reminded of the often-made argument that National-Socialist *Volkskunde* did not spring out of a vacuum, but instead had roots in the early 20th century and earlier decades. See, e.g., Hermann Bausinger, "Volksideologie und Volksforschung. Zur nationalsozialistischen *Volkskunde*," in *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 61 (1965): 179.

¹⁴ In 1858, as a professor at the University of München, Riehl proclaimed a new discipline -- *Volkskunde*. He saw *Volkskunde* as an "'evocative center' [...], an 'intellectual home' of a whole number of neighboring disciplines." More importantly, the goal of such a *Volkskunde* was a "self-recognition of the *Volksstum*," all rooted in an understanding of Nation. Note however, that a large debate about Riehl's significance seems to have erupted after 1945. There are some that argue that his theoretical contributions to the foundations of the discipline were negligible. Among those are Hans Moser. See Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 52-53.

¹⁵ Wolfgang Jacobeit points out that Riehl's work was characterized by "Reliktforschung" and a "Rettungsgedanke", the search for relicts and the pursuit of a salvage ideology; clearly ignoring the contemporary, Riehl's work was characterized by a historical glance backwards. It thus is not surprising, notes Assion, that Riehl is picked up again in the 1920's by those looking for proof that the working class-- and by extension, the working class living in the city -- contributed to the dilapidation of society. See Wolfgang Jacobeit, "Vom 'Berliner Plan' von 1816 bis zur nationalsozialistischen *Volkskunde*. Ein Abriss," in *Völkische Wissenschaft: Gestalten und Tendenzen der deutschen und österreichischen Volkskunde in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, eds. Wolfgang Jacobeit, et.al. (Vienna: Böhlau, 1994), 35. See also Peter Assion, "Arbeiterforschung," in *Grundriß der Volkskunde: Einführung in die Forschungsfelder der Europäischen Ethnologie*, ed. Rolf W. Brednich (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2001).

¹⁶ For more information on Adolf Spamer, see also Peter Assion, "Adolf Spamer," in *Völkische Wissenschaft: Gestalten und Tendenzen der deutschen und Österreichischen Volkskunde in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, eds. Wolfgang Jacobeit, et.al. (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1994): 61-85.

¹⁷ The idea of "tradition" as a concept reigned paramount in the question of whether or not a *Volkskunde* of the working class could even be acceptable. And with the need and quest for a "true" *Volkskultur*, we have arrived at the debate Regina Bendix described in *In Search of Authenticity* (1997): the legitimation of a discipline based on the invented construction of authenticity. Peuckert, we shall see, moves away from the idea of tradition as truth, and instead grounds his claim for a *Volkskunde* of the working class on the idea of community. See Regina Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1997).

¹⁸ The late 19th century and the early 20th century were host to a variety of different research trends, including an interest in ethnopsychology, a discussion of the relationship between the collective and an individual, and Hans Naumann's (1886-1951) *gesunkene Kulturgüter* (sunken cultural goods) -- the idea that the expressive culture one saw in the peasantry had trickled down from the upper classes. See Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985 and Assion 2001.

¹⁹ Hannjost Lixfeld points out that only two universities -- in Hamburg and in Dresden -- had chairs in *Volkskunde* before 1933. See Hannjost Lixfeld, "Institutionalisierung und Instrumentalisierung der deutschen *Volkskunde* zu Beginn des Dritten Reiches," in *Völkische Wissenschaft: Gestalten und Tendenzen der deutschen und österreichischen Volkskunde in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, eds. Wolfgang Jacobeit, et.al. (Vienna: Böhlau, 1994), 139.

²⁰ Peuckert conducted his research for the book in 1925 and 1926. The book *Schlesische Volkskunde*, published just three short years after a book with the same title was (Klapper 1925), did not make note of the problematic. It makes no leaps and bounds, and is on par with the other books on regional *Volkskunde* published at that time. Even though, as Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich points out, it was brave of Peuckert to publish an overview of the discipline at such an early point in his career, the book itself does not do what Peuckert notes the research for it made him think about. Instead: "He treated the prehistory and early history of Silesia, gave 'the Silesian' a character [...], and otherwise restricted himself to the usual themes of annual customs, [...], religion, folk narrative, language, and the peasant culture." See Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich, *Volkskundliche Forschung in Schlesien* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 1994), 131.

²¹ Cod Ms Peuckert D 13. Abbreviations in the original.

²² cf. also Cod. Ms. Peuckert E22.

²³ Peuckert once noted, in a letter to Maria Hauptmann, that he hoped to obtain a permanent position at the Deutsches Institut of the Universität Breslau. Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, letter from Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann, dated May 6th, 1929.

²⁴ Peuckert saw his *VdP* as Volume 1 of a larger series, one which looked at several segments of the population as objects of study for the field separately. He hoped to write a *Volkskunde* of the Bourgeoisie, though his plans were never realized after the disruption of his academic career between 1935 and 1945. In his own words: “So it only was a step .. to speak of a *Volkskunde* of the working class instead of a *Volkskunde* of the city. The fact that [speaking] of a *Volkskunde* of the city would not allow me to leave a *Volkskunde* of the Bourgeoisie unresearched was a further reason to grab the new terminology (*Volkskunde des Proletariats*), since it was totally impossible [...] to sketch out a *Volkskunde* der Bourgeoisie on top of a *Volkskunde des Proletariats*.” See Will-Erich Peuckert, *Volkskunde des Proletariats. Bd. 1. Aufgang der proletarischen Kultur* (Frankfurt am Main: Neuer Frankfurter Verlag, 1931), IX-X.

See also Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 144: “[...] [h]e is like the chess player, who, with a problem stated and the board physically or mentally before him, tries out various alternative moves in search for a solution.”

²⁵ Peuckert also makes note of the fact that Elard Hugo Meyer attempted to do the same in 1898 in *Deutsche Volkskunde*. See Peuckert 1931, VII.

There is also the larger question about the source of Peuckert’s ideas. Carola Lipp at Göttingen, in personal communication on June 24th, 2004, called *VdP* a “true plagiarist”, and, in e-mail communication on March 16th, 2006, pointed towards W. Wolf’s *Die Weber* as the source for Peuckert’s ideas. A book by that title could not be located in the RLIN/Eureka and WorldCat databases, as well as in the database of the Niedersächsische Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek. As such, the basis for this claim remains unverified; however, the larger impact of Peuckert’s work remains. Even if these ideas were borrowed from Wolf, it is through Peuckert’s *VdP* that these ideas found their influence.

²⁶ One is reminded here of the work of Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936), whose seminal work *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1887 -- Community and Society) posited the difference between two different types of social groupings. Whereas *Gemeinschaft* (e.g., a neighborhood or a family) was grounded in a feeling of togetherness, *Gesellschaft* (a state or a company) was rather determined by a joint, often instrumental goal. Peuckert never cites Tönnies in his *VdP*, but one can assume that he was informed by one of the premier sociologists of the time.

²⁷ As noted in endnote 23 of this chapter, *Volkskunde der Bourgeoisie* was a plan conceived of while writing *VdP*, to be part of a series of books on an expanded *Volkskunde*. Though it was never realized, it is clear that Peuckert was already trying to pave its way by discussing it tangentially in his *VdP* introduction.

²⁸ This was also noted verbally on June 24th, 2004 by Carola Lipp in Göttingen, when I held a talk on Peuckert entitled “Grenzüberschreitungen und Folgsamkeit, Zauber und Rationalise: Will-Erich Peuckert’s Hexensalben Experiment im Rahmen einer Wissenschaftsgeschichte”. Lipp was shocked and vehemently noted how Peuckert “got away with” (to paraphrase) such clearly unprofessional practices. Peuckert himself noted that Carl Hauptmann (1858-1921), brother of the nobel prize winning Gerhart Hauptmann, had a huge influence on his interests throughout Peuckert’s life, and would have had impact on his style as well. And we should not forget that Peuckert’s earliest publications were literary, and that he was able to eke a living from 1935-1945 by publishing novels. See also BDC RKK 2101, ca. 1942, and Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 128.

Even scholars contemporary to Peuckert noted that he would often not cite or include contemporary scholarship; such was the case with Peuckert’s *Schlesische Volkskunde* (1928), which made no citation to Joseph Klapper’s 1925 book of the same title. See Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 131.

Carola Lipp called Peuckert’s work sloppy on June 24th, 2004, in personal communications.

²⁹ Again, it was Carola Lipp who pointed out in personal communications on June 24th, 2004, that Peuckert did not use a standard citation style, often quoting without explicitly noting where his text ended and the quotation began. In a 1971, posthumously published version of *VdP* with a new introduction, Peuckert himself gave a retort to these criticisms. In fact, he would have concurred with Lipp, perturbed not at all by the fact that his work was not standard. In fact, he seemed to relish in the fact that other works, like the bible, did the same thing. His main reason for not citing in academic fashion rested on the fact that he found such citations unaesthetic:

“This preface seemed necessary to me to escape the notice that I did not use certain important works for this examination. There were only a small number of important works for this examination: the sources. Everything else written is all equally important or unimportant. [...]

[...] I also want to explain how I cite. Based on the consideration that the reader does not care where the source ends and my own words begin - especially since I concur with the source and it is obvious when I don't - I find it pointless to decorate and tear up a page with so and so many 'quotation marks'. The bible also cites and does not need quotation marks [...].” See Peuckert 1971, 73.

³⁰ For a chronicle of the history of the SGV, refer to Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 71-185.

³¹ Friedrich Ranke had replaced Theodor Siebs' *Lehrstuhl*, his chair, at the Deutsches Institut of the Universität Breslau, though Siebs still remained an active presence (Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 192). The conflict essentially swirled around the fact that Walther Steller, whether in actuality or whether simply in his own mind, believed himself to be the rightful director of the Volkskunde department of the Deutsches Institut (*ibid.*, 193). Though Steller may never officially have held such a position, it appears as if he must have felt replaced, taking out his frustrations against Ranke on Ranke's protégé, Peuckert (*ibid.*).

Siebs' review of *VdP* in *Mitteilungen* drew on some of his earlier criticisms of Peuckert's work, standing as a harsh comment on its lacking academic prose; Siebs' content-based critique, however, was grounded in the fact that he believed Peuckert's assumptions had been completely fallacious (Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 132-133). Volkskunde in Germany and Silesia, so Siebs, had never been class-based: “I [have] never heard that our discipline of Volkskunde has ever seen the term ‘Volk’ [used] in any other way than the entirety of all Germans, and is [only] confined to certain social classes [...].” (Siebs 1931, as cited by Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 133). Whether Siebs' reaction was simply reacting to a book (and a person) he was already not favorably disposed towards, or whether it was his subjective assessment of the field is unclear. It may also have been an indication of generational differences between the younger Peuckert and the older Siebs, a different assessment of the discipline's scope. Regardless, notes Bönisch-Brednich, Siebs' review of *VdP* could only have made an already tense relationship worse, and Peuckert did feel pressure to not only produce his announced second volume (*Volkskunde der Bourgeoisie*), but was also suffering under the commotion:

“Everyone is clamoring for volume II - and my anxiety is on the rise. [The volume] is supposed to prove that everything is accurate and contemporary. [...] And sometimes it gives me trouble. I get tired too easily” (Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, Mappe 2, letter from Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann, dated May 20th, 1931). Quote in original: “Alles schreit jetzt nach dem II. Bande - und mir steigt die Angst hoch. Er soll doch nun beweisen, daß alles aufs Heute stimmt. [...] Und es macht mir manchmal viel Mühe. Man wird zu leicht müde.” See also Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 132-133.

³² Steller's comment that Peuckert was interested in the Social Democratic Party was not unfounded, for Peuckert did join the Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD) in 1930/31 for a brief eight months, as a way, he later claimed, to garner information for his *VdP*; he had also been affiliated with the SPD's still extant magazine *Vorwärts* in the 1920's. See Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 204-205, 207. Yet his political affiliations were anything but constant:

"...according to Peuckert himself, he joined the "Unabhängige SPD" (USPD) [*Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, the independent SPD] in 1919 which stood to the left of the SPD. In 1921 he was *Landesleiter* [regional leader] of the "Deutsche[...] Liga für den Völkerbund" [German League of the League of Nations] and was a delegate at the Braunschweig Pacifist Conference [...]. In the year that followed, however, he did not follow along when [... the USPD merged with the] SPD [...]. [...] Peuckert joined the *Deutschnationale Partei* [German National Party] in 1933 [...]." See Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 19, 24.

A few comments about these various parties are necessary. The USPD was founded in 1917 as a splinter-party to the SPD in reaction to the war loans the party was approving, and the increasing acceptance of the war (*Burgfriedenspolitik*). Considered to be on the extreme left, its members included Karl Liebknecht; its main goal was to prevent the continuation of World War I. Its membership peaked in 1920, and the party was dissolved in 1931 (See "Unabhängige SPD" 2007). On the other side of the political spectrum, the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* in turn, was founded in 1918 and dissolved in May of 1933, and had as its capstones "...nationalism, imperial conservatism, monarchism, and anti-Semitism" (See "Deutschnationale Volkspartei" 2007; Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 24). John Meier expressed concern what these shifts in political affiliation might indicate about Peuckert: "I was indignant about the shabby trick Peuckert had played in regards to his [political] disposition, that had consisted of switching happily and directly from the far left to the ruling party" (*Deutsches Volkslied Archiv*, *Korrespondenzenband* 55. See letters from Meier to F. Ranke, dated November 28th, 1934).

Peuckert's frequent party changes lead to the predicate from the *Reichskulturkammer* (the umbrella organization founded by Joseph Goebbels to which the Reichsministries of Science, Education, and Popular Culture and of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda belonged to) in 1939 that he was naught but a "*harmlose[r] Irre[r]*" (a harmless crazy person) whose political affiliations, given his predilection for hopping between radically different parties, was meaningless. See Bönisch-Brednich 1994, 214. And contemporary Peuckert scholars agree, tending to underscore his role in helping to denazifying German *Volkskunde* above his patchy political past, an emphasis rather on Peuckert's idiosyncrasies rather than the potential implications of belonging to a conservative, strongly right-leaning political party (ibid., 204, 205, 214, 216; Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 23-24).

Steller's use of Peuckert's brief affiliation with the SPD is somewhat odd in light of the fact that Peuckert himself had expressed frustrations with the Social Democrats. Perhaps better characterized as a Peuckertian idiosyncrasy, a disinterest in nailing himself down emerges, a strong ambivalence as far as politics and political stances are concerned:

"Right now in Breslau they think I want to curry favors [with my *VdP*] in Berlin. (It couldn't hurt, because I'm not totally trusted there.) The others in turn claim that now I've finally exposed my black soul and showed that I am only interested in the peasantry; everything else [, they say,] I looked at with contempt. Who is right? One thing is true, though. The experience that I had with the SPD people at that time are sad. Such stupidity and impossibility never existed in the glorious years before 18" (Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, Mappe 2, letter from Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann, dated January 1st, 1931). Quote in original: "In Breslau hat man augenblicklich gefunden, ich wollte mich damit in Berlin einschmeicheln. (Schaden könnte es ja nicht, denn man traut mir dort nicht recht.) Die anderen wieder behaupten: nun hätte ich endlich die wahre schwarze Seele enthüllt und gezeigt, daß mich bloß die Bauern interessierten; daß andere sähe ich mit Verachtung an. Wer hat nun recht? Eins freilich stimmt. - Die Erfahrungen, die ich mit den SPD Leuten in der Zeit gemacht habe, sind traurig. So was von Dummheit und Unmöglichkeit hats in der glorreichen Zeit vor 18 kaum gegeben."

Regardless of belief or affiliation, Steller tried to turn Peuckert and his *VdP* into a showpiece of social democratic and even Marxist scholarship -- and thus a threat to the ruling regime -- as a means of exacting personal revenge on Peuckert for his successes, which had surpassed Steller's own.

³³ Steller's retort was called "*Berichtigungen*", revisions.

³⁴ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, letter from Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann, dated March 19th, 1931. See also Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, letter from Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann, dated May 7th, 1931. Quote in original: "Die Volkskundler prügeln sich schon. Siebs (mein Lehrer! - Du weißt ja von ihm) [...] haben zugehauen wie auf einen Holzklotz. Ranke, unser neuer Germanist, und Spamer/Dresden in die Himmel erhoben. Das Theater geht weiter. Und wird schlimmer. Ich hab die ganze Volkskunde aufgestört."

³⁵ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, letter from Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann dated May 7th, 1931. Quote in original: "Aber es mußte nun mal, da ich so tief in die Volkskunde eingelassen habe, zu Ende gespielt werden. Falle ich dann ists eben der Heldentod gewesen."

³⁶ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, letter from Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann dated October 21st, 1934. Quote in original: "Ja, hier sind wir also wieder. Und nun geht der Zauber los. Ich hab den gestrigen Vormittag schon damit verbracht. [...] Was los ist, weiß niemand. Nur daß ein neues Verfahren eröffnet sei, schrieb man mir. [...] Der Fall liegt doch so, daß der Kampf in letzter Hinsicht ein Kampf um Ämter und Positionen ist. [...] Eine Rückversetzung bedeutet also [...] eine Bewährungsfrist, sondern ein freimachen der Stelle für einen hungrigen 'alten Kämpfer'. Und selbst, wenn dieser alte Kämpfer versagt, wird nicht der Gefallene geholt, sondern der nächste alte Kämpfer [...]. Ginge ich aber zurück, so schlosse ich damit für die Zeit der Hitler Regierung, d.h. 'für 1000 Jahre' ab."

³⁷ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, letter from Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann dated May 2nd, 1934. Quote in original: "Und [...] Herr Steller [...] schrieb einen Aufsatz über den liberalistisch-marxistisch [...] der proletar. Volkskunde. Der steht in einer Zeitschrift. Aber die erscheint erst Gott weiß wann. Bloß Herr Steller hat seine Belege schon u. hat sie unter die Studenten gestreut, zum Rundfunk geschickt, ans Ministerium geschickt. (Bloß ich wußte von nichts.) [...] Und da stecke ich [...] drin in dem Ganzen, weiß es, u. kann nicht wehren, weil ich die Dinge nicht selber in Händen habe."

³⁸ cf., e.g., Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, letter from Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann dated June 19th, 1934. It is interesting to note that Gustav Walz in fact was responsible for bringing several young scholars to Breslau, including Heinrich Lange and Norbert Gürke, who were very much oriented towards National Socialism. This only complicates the Peuckert/Steller picture. See the in-progress dissertation by Thomas Ditt, "*Stoßtruppfakultät Breslau*" – *Eine Studie zur Rolle der Rechtswissenschaft an der Breslauer Universität in der NS-Zeit*, being written at the Max-Planck-Institut für europäische Rechtsgeschichte in Frankfurt.

http://www.mpier.uni-frankfurt.de/forschungsgebiete/mitarbeiterforschung/ditt_breslau.html

³⁹ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, letter from Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann dated June 19th, 1934. Quote in original: "Daß wir durch manchen Ärger geplagt sind, weißt Du. [...] Ob wir durch sind, weiß ich noch nicht. [...] Der Minister hat mich äußerste Zurückhaltung auferlegt, von wegen meiner "Vergangenheit". (Du siehst, was an mir ist. Sogar eine Vergangenheit habe ich.) [...] Freilich, Herrn Steller hat das nicht genügt. Er publizierte gerade gestern sein Pamphlet gegen mich. [...] Der Rektor hat uns beiden Burgfrieden auferlegt. Aber das scheint einseitiger zu sein, sonst hätte St. ja die Publikation nicht gewagt. [...] [D]er Burgfrieden wird auf meine Kosten gehen."

⁴⁰ Deutsches Volkslied Archiv, John Meier to Friedrich Ranke, November 28th, 1934.

⁴¹ Deutsches Volkslied Archiv, Korrespondenzenband 55. See letters from John Meier to Friedrich Ranke, dated November 15th, 1934, from Ranke to Meier, dated November 23rd, 1934, from Meier to Ranke, dated November 28th, 1934, and Ranke to Meier, dated December 6th, 1934. See also Will-Erich Peuckert, *Deutsches Volkstum in Märchen und Sage, Schwank und Rätsel* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1938).

⁴² *ibid.*, November 15th, 1934.

⁴³ *ibid.*, November 23rd 1934.

⁴⁴ Deutsches Volkslied Archiv, Friedrich Ranke to John Meier, December 6th, 1934.

⁴⁵ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A37, letter from Peuckert to Erich Burck, March 28th, 1953. Quote in original: “Ihnen diesen Brief schreibe zu müssen, fällt mir sehr schwer. [...]und ich habe mich bisher immer wieder geweigert, Vorwürfe zu erheben; wenn Herr Prof. Steller aber nun darauf aus ist, sich als politisch verfolgt anerkennen zu lassen, darf man wohl nicht länger stillschweigen. Was ich zu der Angelegenheit zu sagen habe, ist dies: ich war von 1928 bis 1930 wissenschaftlicher Hilfsarbeiter am Deutschen Institut, an dem Herr Prof. Steller als Assistent tätig war. Kurz nach meinem Eintritt warnte mich Herr Prof. Friedrich Andrae, sehr deutlich vor dem “falschen Bruder”. Ich habe, obwohl ich mit Andrae befreundet war, dieser Warnung kein großes Gewicht beigemessen, und mich keiner besonderen Zurückhaltung befleißigt. Am 1. oder 2. Mai 1933 kam mein damaliger Schüler Dr. Schultheiß[...] zu mir und berichtet[e?] dass Herr Prof. Steller ihn über eine Stunde lang über meine politischen Ansichten habe ausholen wollen. Er warnte mich, denn Herr St. führe bestimmt etwas im Schilde. Ich schickte Herrn Schultheiß zu Herrn Ranke, [...] und Herr Ranke [sic?] veranlaßte beim Dekan, Herrn Prof. Malten, ein Verfahren gegen mich. Dabei wurde Herr Prof. Steller als Anklager und Zeuge vernommen und es ergab sich die merkwürdige Tatsache, daß er mit einem dicken Aktenbündel anrückte, aus dem er die vielen Aufzeichnungen über meine Unterhaltungen mit ihm, vorlas [...]. Ich kann mir nicht recht vorstellen, daß diese Vorfälle geeignet seien, Herrn Prof. Steller als politisch verfolgt auszuweisen. [...] Ich bin Winter 33 zu 34 Zeuge eines Seminarabends gewesen, in dem vor aller Öffentlichkeit, d.h. vor allen Anwesenden, über nationalsozialistische Wühlereien im Sudetenland, heimliche Verhandlungen usw. von ihm vorgetragen wurde, Dinge, die niemand, als der intensiv am Parteileben teilnahm, wissen konnte. Ich hielt, was dort ausgesprochen wurde, und die Art, in der es geschah, für töricht und zum mindestens politisch gefährlich. [...] [...]Daß Herr Prof. Steller dem Nationalsozialismus sehr nahe stand, ist m.E. nicht zu bestreiten [...]. Daß er im [sic] noch Herbst 1944 nahe stand, wurde mir durch Frau Maria Hauptmann, die Witwe Carl Hauptmanns, versichert [...] Sie warnte mich noch am 13. Februar 1945, als ich auf der Flucht nach dem Westen Schreiberhau passierte und bei ihr über Nacht blieb, vor ihm; wenn er nicht im Ort sähe, könnte es mir schlecht gehen. [...] [...] Schließlich, sehr verehrter Herr Kollege, habe ich eine Bitte. Dieser Brief und das Durchwühlen der alten Dinge ist mir nicht leicht geworden. Ich habe keine Lust, und es widerstrebt mir, als Ankläger aufzutreten oder zurückzuschlagen. Was ich allein verhindern möchte, ist daß Herr Prof. Steller unberechtigterweise das Prädikat “politisch verfolgt” erlangt; ich habe darauf verzichtet, es für mich zu erobern, obwohl es mir oft nahe gelegt wurde, weil ich der Meinung bin, daß man für seine Überzeugung auch ohne Prädikat einzustehen habe. [...]”

⁴⁶ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B35, and Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 1.

⁴⁷ cf., e.g., Cod. Ms. Peuckert A172, letter from Peuckert to Wolfgang Kretschmer dated November 28th, 1967.

⁴⁸ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 1. Documents at the Berlin Document Center in Berlin indicate that Peuckert did receive a *Rezensionsverbot*, the withdrawal of his ability to publish book reviews. He did not receive a *Schreibverbot*, the withdrawal of his right to publish (cf. also Chapter 1).

⁴⁹ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281. Letter from Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann, dated November 27th, 1935. Quote in original: “Liebste Maria, die letzten Wochen gingen ein bisschen kunterbunt - u. da komm ich erst jetzt dazu, Dir zu schreiben. Das erst u. uns wichtigste ist ja wohl, daß der preuss. Staat mal wieder sein Berufsbeamtentum gesäubert hat. Anders gesagt: die Pensionierung ist bewilligt worden, und ich führe nun das bedauerliche Leben eines, der seine Arbeit getan hat u. zum Fenster hinaus guckt.”

⁵⁰ It is an interesting aside that Gertrud Peuckert (née Albrecht) promoted Peuckert to professor; of course, while at the Universität Breslau, Peuckert had only been a docent.

⁵¹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 4.

⁵² One should note that Peuckert did, according to one of his unpublished memoirs, spend time during the years in Haasel with his friends Bruno Hering, Gerhart Pohl, and Werner Milch, who apparently came and visited him and Gertrud in Haasel. Both were intellectuals; Peuckert’s exile was not in a complete vacuum.

⁵³ It needs to be noted that not all of the lectures whose titles are known have extant copies remaining. Thus, the title not infrequently must stand in for the contents, at least a subtle indication in the continued interest that Peuckert had in a broader definition of ‘Volk’.

⁵⁴ Many of Peuckert’s lecture notes no longer exist, and thus this claim is made on the basis of course titles.

⁵⁵ A large set of lectures on “*Naturvölker*”, “primitive people”, is disregarded here, as it seems likely that these courses were taught under the auspices of *Völkerkunde* instead of *Volkskunde*. Cf. Bönisch-Brednich and Brednich 1996, 189-194, for a full list of lectures. Cf. also Appendix 4.

⁵⁶ Cod. Ms. Peuckert E22, pp. 2-13, 25.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 25. The term “applied,” in reference to *Volkskunde*, is of contemporary usage, certainly not *au courant* in Peuckert’s time.

⁵⁸ Cod. Ms. Peuckert E22, p. 27, p. 41. Peuckert arranged his lecture notes by a series of indentations, and I have tried to the best of my ability to reproduce the spacing. It may help give a flavor of the way Peuckert thought and arranged his materials.

⁵⁹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert E22, p. 50.

⁶⁰ Though the typoscript itself does not include a date, the archivist at the Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen, Handschriftenabteilung, dated it to circa 1953, though it is plausible that it was given a few years after 1953 as well. It appears that this date was decided upon based on the scrap paper on which Peuckert made his notes; on the back of page five of the lecture notes one finds an invitation to a lecture to be held in the University Auditorium by Professor Dr. Martin Buber, dated July 15th, 1953: “Über Geltung und Grenze des politischen Prinzips.”

⁶¹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert E39.

⁶² *ibid.*, p. 1, 4, 15.

⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 24.

⁶⁵ Erich Fuchs (1890-1983) was a painter and etcher with whom Peuckert corresponded in 1968. The correspondence (Cod. Ms. Peuckert A80) is comprised of a total of 18 letters back and forth between the two men, and concern Fuchs’ attempts to get some of his many etchings of Silesia published. Peuckert, in offering advice, turns to the Bläschke Verlag, a publisher in Darmstadt,

⁶⁶ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A80, letter from Fuchs to Peuckert, dated January 22nd, 1968. Abbreviations in the original. *Blaudruck*-- literally “blue print” -- is a technique blue-colored printing on textiles and fabric, and is still practiced today around Cottbus and around the Spreewald.

⁶⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A80, letter from Fuchs to Peuckert, dated January 2nd, 1968. Most certainly a blow to Peuckert’s ego, Fuchs apparently had (and did not fail to make note of) asked several professors with an interest and expertise in Silesia to help him out before he turned to Peuckert.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

⁶⁹ One should note that Peuckert *claimed* he never wished to return to Silesia, nor believed, as so many others did, that it should be reappropriated to Germany; Sylphia Peuckert, his daughter, concurred with that claim in my conversation with her (Personal conversation with Sylphia Peuckert on August 16th, 2004). However, this runs contrary to something Peuckert mentioned in a letter dated October 22nd, 1946, written to the *Landsmannschaft Schlesien, Nieder und Oberschlesien, Für das Gebiet der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Berlin*, in which he said: “I thank you for your writing, and I concur with you that it would be right if Silesia remained German.” Perhaps one can attribute this discrepancy to the temporal proximity to the end of the war, and strong feelings about the loss of his home and books; perhaps it also shows another side of Peuckert that we are unaware of. See Cod. Ms. Peuckert A456.

⁷⁰ cf. also: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heimatvertriebene>

The romanticizing and literature is part of the formation of the same phenomenon of *Landsmannschaften* -- associations and clubs with the focus of caring for and promoting the customs and traditions of the region they consider to be their *Heimat*, their home.

An overarching umbrella organization of *Landsmannschaften* was also founded in October of 1957, the so-called *Bund der Vertriebenen*; it is still a state-funded association today.

⁷¹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A80, letter from Fuchs to Peuckert dated January 2nd, 1968.

⁷² The Curriculum Vitae, Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, was written after Peuckert's retirement as he makes notes about Darmstadt, the town he retired to in 1960. Besides discussing his *Volkskunde des Proletariats*, Peuckert also notes in this document that he did important work leading Volkskunde back to its "roots in intellectual history and sociological foundations," while at the same time "humbly" mentioning that people call him the "pope of German Volkskunde" - nothing that I have run into during my research. In an aside, he also notes that Scandinavian disciplinary histories have called him a "pathbreaker in intellectual history research concerning the Renaissance and Post-Renaissance". Since the scope of this dissertation highlights some of Peuckert's contributions to Volkskunde, his work on the Renaissance and Post-Renaissance is generally moved to the back burner.

⁷³ Cod. Ms Peuckert B47, version 4.

CHAPTER THREE

Beyond Borders: Attempts at Denationalizing a Discipline

“In every historical age, a certain set of concerns and problems are experienced more deeply than others by those living in that age and lie most closely to its vital center, nagging at its heart, trying its people’s souls, and hindering, to a greater or lesser degree, its life flow” (Stickers 1980, 1).

“[...] [T]hat the real foundation for a ‘new’ Volkskunde could be laid only after the destruction of Hitler fascism, an independent Volkskunde focused on ways of life, the cultural expression of the ‘masses’ [...], [...] with the inclusion of the contemporary [world]” (Jacobeit 1994a, 24).

“Folkloristics is a Janus-faced enterprise[:] the same folklore materials may be used to glorify the creativity and unique intellectual achievement of a particular tradition community on one hand, and the deep, wide and ancient layers of global traditions on the other” (Honko 1990, 21).

That the history of folkloristics as a discipline is linked to the romantic nation building phenomenon of the 19th century is undisputed (cf. e.g., Wilson 1976; Herzfeld 1982; Öztürkmen 1993; Chin 1997). Countless examples from different intellectual trajectories and different historical traditions stand as clear reminders: the Grimm Brothers collected *Märchen* in an attempt to find and preserve what they believed was a pure German national soul and the Finns adapted the fragments of the *Kalevala* epic as their own, patched together into a whole by the doctor Elias Lönnrot (1802-1884). In other words, the *study* of folklore and its connection to nation-building and even

nationalism have gone hand in hand for decades (Klein 2001, 64-65; Löfgren 1999). The link between *Volkskunde* and nationalism, case Germany, was at its most dangerous during World War II in Nazi Germany, where the theoretical apparatuses that made up the discipline were used to legitimate racial discrimination; where traditions were invented for ideological reasons; and where most academic rigor and scholarship gave way to falsehoods and pernicious lies (cf. e.g., Jacobeit, Lixfeld and Bockhorn 1994).¹

Even in the 21st century, knowing what we know about our disciplinary history, most “western folklore scholars [still] regard themselves as custodians of a national heritage” and most exhibit “...deep-seated nationalisms and national loyalties that are seldom openly spelled out in individual scholarly texts” -- though it is not readily admitted (Klein 2001, 66). And yet others, paradoxically, argue and worry that scholars have “...underestimate[d] the staying power of the nation-state, especially in Northern Europe” (Löfgren 1999, 80).

Concurrently, on a meta-disciplinary, meta-historical level, it has also become clear that continued ties of folklore scholarship to the nation could create theoretical stagnation for the discipline, thus obscuring more fruitful arenas of research (Abrahams 1993). And since folkloristics in general and *Volkskunde* specifically saw its disciplinary beginnings with nation-building, the worry exists that the field may fall apart as a discipline during an age when the very concept of nation-states has become suspect (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1995, 213; Jöhler 1999). Regardless of which stance scholars take on these issues, as Orvar Löfgren points out, our disciplinary heritage “...makes it [especially] crucial for us to [continue to] pay close attention to the national embedding of research” (Löfgren 1999, 79).

Peuckert, in a limited way, tried to reinvigorate the field of *Volkskunde* after

World War II. From his position as a new faculty member at the Universität Göttingen, Peuckert attempted to denationalize, even internationalize a discipline which was, after years under the National Socialist regime, deplorable on a “material, intellectual, and moral” level (Gerndt 1987, 11). From a contemporary standpoint, the reasons for trying to denationalize Volkskunde are clear: besides the fact that nationally-bound research does not fit the contemporary reality of intellectual, human, and capital flow between countries, it is dangerously limiting, both in terms of scholarship and for the people affected by such research (Appadurai 1996). But what were Peuckert’s specific reasons for trying to reshape the field?

* * *

“Internationalization” as a way to combat a nationalized discipline proves a valuable tool to think on, and raises several questions: What did Peuckert mean by internationalization, and were these ideas innovative? Can internationalization really be held up as a dichotomy to nationalization, a panacea for solving the problems linked to Volkskunde’s disciplinary epistemology as a field interested in the nation? What role did Peuckert fill for the ailing field? And why is Peuckert still lauded by scholars for this particular contribution to the discipline?

Mark Mazower comments that “[n]ational histories generally have clearly defined heroes and villains,” and then asks: “but what would a history look like where these roles were blurred and confused?” (Mazower 2004, 11). Though Peuckert was no villain or hero, he is often portrayed as the latter. By carefully examining Peuckert’s actions, we raise the awareness that he was more complicated than frequently acknowledged; just how successful Peuckert was in his attempts is a matter of debate.

Volkskunde in Germany, 1933-1945;
Volkskunde in Göttingen, 1937-1945

The Volkskunde scholarship of the Third Reich, in whose shadow Peuckert began teaching in 1946, was marked by several common characteristics, including overarching interests in “the teachings of the superiority of the nordic race, [...] the elite character of male society, [and] the high value of warlike action [...]” (Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 103). Others highlight that National Socialist Volkskunde was also marked by an origin mythos, a desire for meaning, and the belief in race as a scientific principle (Jeggle 2001, 63). While it has been pointed out that there were numerous precursors in the decades leading up to World War II, that Volkskunde did not from one day to the next become ideologically corrupt, Bausinger underscores that no matter how “insistent the overture is, the game only begins when the curtain is raised” (Bausinger 1965, 179).

Paramount to the goals of Volkskunde during World War II was the so-called discovery, rather, the *invention* of a “characteristic Germanic continuity on racial basis” (Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 106). Preexisting interests in the peasantry as “Volk” that had developed and flourished in Volkskunde before World War II were easily absorbed into Adolf Hitler’s *Blut und Boden* ideology -- the preeminent importance of blood (that is, race) and soil to Nazi ideology (ibid.).

Between 1933-1945, Volkskunde became an auxiliary discipline to the Hitler dictatorship under the “guidance” of individuals with dubious backgrounds, a discipline that “supported the state in its pursuit of its goals, the extinguishing of different thinking, and thinking overall” (Jeggle 2001, 65). Such state support was facilitated by the fact that most academics belonged to at least one of the so-called *Dachverbände*,

umbrella organizations, which included John Meier's "Association of the German Societies for Volkskunde", and several founded by the Nazi party, such as the "Division Volkskunde of the Reichsociety for German Volkresearch" under Adolf Spamer (1883-1953), the "Research- and Teaching Society 'Ahnenerbe'" under Heinrich Himmler (1900-1945), and the "NSDAP Office of the Appointee of the Führer for the Supervision of Total Intellectual and Ideological Education and Upbringing" under Alfred Rosenberg (1893-1946) (Lixfeld 1994a, 139-140; Lixfeld 1994b).² The fact that Volkskunde gained departmental status during these years, and simultaneously became a popular discipline with student following had much to do with the fact that it could, through these umbrella organizations, "consciously and unconsciously serve the partisan structure of authority and their politically grounded interests in power" (ibid.). Hannjost Lixfeld underscores how popular the discipline became during World War II, noting that only two universities had professorships in Volkskunde (Hamburg and Dresden) before 1933; by 1945, that number had significantly multiplied, and by the end of World War II, nearly all universities had professorships in and taught courses on Volkskunde (ibid., 139).

It has been argued that the nazification of Volkskunde as a discipline at Göttingen was less extreme than at other universities or in Germany as a whole, and that Volkskunde recovered more quickly in Göttingen after 1945 than elsewhere (e.g., Brednich 1987a). Several reasons support this argument, including the relatively late institutionalization of Volkskunde in Göttingen and the near complete loss of the library that was culled together during the years of Nazi dictatorship (ibid.). The immediate reestablishment of a professorship in Volkskunde after the war quite likely had a positive impact as well.

Although the term “Volk” itself, used primarily to demarcate “Arianness,” was used rampantly in Göttingen as in the rest of Germany, Göttingen did not have a department or a program in Volkskunde until the late 1930’s, nor did the university offer courses in the field (Brednich 1987a, 109).³ Eugen Mattiat (1901-1976) was chosen to fill the newly created chair in Volkskunde in 1937. Despite his irregular academic background, Mattiat’s career in the NSDAP had rapidly advanced, and he was made head instructor for the humanities at the Bureau of Science at the Reich- and Prussian Ministerium for Science, Education, and Popular Knowledge in Berlin (ibid., 110).⁴ Mattiat was soon given a professorship in practical theology and Volkskunde at the Universität Berlin without ever receiving his doctorate or completing his habilitation (ibid.).⁵ This position was then transferred to Göttingen in 1937, Mattiat became its holder, and he was given the charge to not only focus on the religious lore of the state of Lower Saxony, but also to found a *Seminar für Volkskunde*, a department (ibid., 110).

In other words, Mattiat held a professorship at Göttingen without any qualifications to speak of, and it is thus not surprising that it proved difficult for him to teach; Mattiat himself had to take a Volkskunde course before offering his first set of classes in 1939 (ibid., 111). Revised examination regulations for those students pursuing teaching and lecturing careers made Volkskunde a required discipline, obligating students to a year’s worth of study; Prehistory and Early History, as well as *Rassenkunde* and *Charakterkunde*, the study of races and personalities, also became required courses (ibid., 109). Called to the front in 1940, Mattiat had little time to inflict much damage (ibid.).

Two other individuals with equally dubious academic qualifications and motives shaped Göttingen’s developing *Seminar für Volkskunde* during World War II: Herman

Wirth (1885-1981) and Karl Theodor Weigel (1892-1953). Wirth, who never actually taught in Göttingen and who simply in name held a *Kustodenstelle* (curatorship) that Mattiat had helped arrange from the front in 1944, was not popular amongst faculty at the Universität Göttingen, most of whom were up in arms when he was hired (ibid., 113). Though his academic background was more solid than Mattiat's -- Wirth had worked with John Meier in Basel and actually finished a dissertation in 1910 -- his work was fraudulent: Wirth believed in the veracity of an Old-Friesian epic that turned out to be a hoax; he nevertheless translated it and tried to build his career on it (ibid., 113).

Karl Theodor Weigel was one of Wirth's students, who, when the *Hauptstelle für Sinnbildforschung* (the Headquarters for Symbolic Research) was moved to Göttingen in 1943, hoped to establish roots by obtaining an honorary doctorate (ibid.). Weigel actively collected and photographed artifacts that he considered to have symbolic, national, and racial value (ibid., 114). Still in possession of the *Seminar für Kulturanthropologie/Europäische Ethnologie* in Göttingen (the renamed descendant of the Seminar für Volkskunde), these pictures "still today transmit something of the spirit (rather, evil spirit) with which folkloric-worldview research was conducted at that point in time" (ibid., 114).⁶

Besides Weigel's photographs, little else remains of what had been the Seminar of Volkskunde during World War II. The collection of books that Mattiat had culled for the few courses he had planned to teach -- *Die Begründer der Wissenschaft des Volks* (The Founders of the Science of the Volk, never taught), *Übungen zur Geschichte der deutschen Volkskunde* (Exercises Regarding the History of German Volkskunde, never taught), *Deutsche Volkskunde* (German Volkskunde, taught summer semester 1939),

and *Volkskunde und Brauchtum* (Folklore and Custom, taught winter semester 1939/1940) -- were destroyed, when the mine shaft in the salt mines in which many departments kept their books to protect them from bombing collapsed (ibid., 7, 111, 115).

Though little *tangible* of the eight years of Volkskunde-related endeavors at the Universität Göttingen during World War II remained, when Peuckert began teaching in 1946, he not infrequently commented on the fact that some of the students he encountered that still had to be “cured of quite a lot of [that] Nazi-craze,” which he hoped to do by “showing how evil the Machiavellian theory was, [...] a.[nd] how to build a different fatherland out of Goethe’s spirit, the spirit of peace.”⁷

Peuckert was right: National Socialism had affected the university on all levels. By 1931, the student government at Göttingen was primarily National Socialist, and “non-Arian” faculty had been “relieved” of their teaching duties and were replaced by individuals with non-academic or even political backgrounds, such as Mattiat: by

“Nazi party members, stormtroopers, SS officers, and many individuals whose careers had been based partly or even primarily on their support of the National Socialist worldview” (Ericksen 2000, 4-5).

Soon after the *Machtübernahme* in 1933, Hitler’s seizure of power, most scholars were no longer able to publish unless their work catered to National Socialist interests: “all universities were equalized, the principle of the Führer was anchored into place, [...] [and] receiving a job was tied directly to joining the party...” (Hausmann 2002, XXIV). The curriculum was also “changed to accommodate the National Socialist [...] worldview], with the introduction of ‘racial science’ as a requirement, but also with pro-Nazi ideas emerging in nearly all disciplines” (Ericksen 2000, 4-5). By the early 1940’s, the only students remaining at the university were women and those too old to serve in

the army, and by 1943 most instruction stopped: bombed out buildings effectively prevented classes from taking place, and burned or destroyed libraries all around the country prohibited active research or study (Hausmann 2002, XXIV).

A topic of frequent debate and discourse for the field, World War II and National Socialism had an irrevocable impact on the discipline, in whose shadows Peuckert would begin his second teaching career:

“[...] after the end of the Second World War, most of the scholars living and researching during the Third Reich fell into the trend of hushing up the events of the past, to veil them [...]. Those that had been impacted by National Socialism were silent, but also those that had stood with the opposition [...]” (Lixfeld 1994a, 139).

Creating a deep chasm in scholarship and continuity, and creating a vacuum in the years that followed, the years in Germany under a National Socialist regime would in so many ways shape what was to follow, forcing scholars to come to terms with their shared past:

“National Socialism did not lose its impact; but the preoccupation with it does occasionally disrupt from the covered questions of our time. Volkskunde has the opportunity to discover such cover memories [*Deckerinnerungen*], in opening up and analyzing above all the history of popular knowledge, above all the history of one’s own discipline” (Jeggle 2001, 55).

Criticism would follow in the years to come, though not actively from *within* the discipline until the mid to late 1960’s.

Critique from the Outside

One of Volkskunde’s many idiosyncrasies is that the initial critique of National Socialist Volkskunde did not come from within the field; instead, it came from the

sociologist Heinz Maus (1911-1978) (Jacobeit 1994a, 27). Writing and publishing an article in 1946, “*Zur Situation der deutschen Volkskunde*” (“About the Situation of German Volkskunde”), Maus (a student of Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) and Max Horkheimer’s (1895-1973), and colleague of Ernst Niekisch (1889-1967)) was the first to call for reform and introspection for the field of Volkskunde (ibid.).⁸ Peuckert would respond to Maus in 1948, the only scholar to do so for two decades. And this response constituted Peuckert’s major attempt to reinvigorate the field.

Some have characterized Maus’ critique as Marxist (as he called for a Volkskunde which looked from the bottom up), or believe that he intended for Volkskunde needed to be completely dissolved (e.g., Jacobeit 1994; Maus 1988 [1946]). Yet Maus had also underscored how Volkskunde had been used by the National Socialists to confirm their “right” to leadership and power, and how it needed to free itself from such ideological complicity (Maus 1988 [1946], 25; Dow and Lixfeld 1994, 347). In order to continue fruitfully, the term “Volk” would have to be examined and reevaluated, and new directions -- namely steps towards Volkskunde as a discipline concerned with social history (*Sozialgeschichte*) and with *Gegenwartskunde* (the study of everyday life) -- were pressingly needed (ibid.). Such a Volkskunde, argued Maus, which was concerned with “the social” and with “the present,” “would follow these practical tendencies with the impulse to improve the [current societal] situation” (Dow and Lixfeld 1994, 347; Maus 1988 [1946], 37). And the positive effects of such tangible changes, Maus pointed out, would be noticed by other disciplines and countries:

“An appropriately handled, in this case an applied German Volkskunde could enrich theories about the general society, and animate and fertilize non-German Folklore to new work, therefore make a positive

contribution to the collaboration between different Volk groups” (Dow and Lixfeld 1994, 347).

Yet responses directed at Maus from the field of Volkskunde were almost wholly lacking. Initially, most scholars rather

“turned towards the task of the day [a]fter the trials and tribulations of denazification [...], distanced themselves from the public, and, at the first official Volkskunde Meeting in 1951 in Jugenheim, acted as if nothing had happened” (Jacobeit 1994a, 27).

Some even openly denied their own complicity, and tried to exculpate the field; John Meier (1864-1953), founder of the German Volksong Archive in Freiburg, published a comment to this extent in 1947 (Dow and Lixfeld 1994, 344; cf. Meier 1947). Though it had been written before the end of the War, it could not be printed in the *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* until 1947 (ibid.). So Meier, in his “Geschichte des Verband deutscher Vereine für Volkskunde”:

“The leading circles of the Party nevertheless, and for this we are thankful, let the *Verband* [Association] continue working without disturbance [...], and [the Association] is probably the only large organization which remained autonomous, head and body [...]. Only the little followers [...] of the movement repeatedly and publicly [...] threw dirt on our endeavors” (ibid., 344-345; Meier 1947, 27).⁹

Meier’s statement was false; the repercussions of the whitewashing and denial were felt field-wide.

There were early attempts to move *past* a National Socialist Volkskunde; critical here was Richard Weiss’ psychological-functional *Volkskunde der Schweiz* (1946). Coming from neutral Switzerland, the book gave hope to the post-war generation that Volkskunde as a discipline could continue after World War II. It was not until the 1960’s that Volkskundler *actively* reflected on their immediate ideological

precursors, and the vacuum the war had left to be filled (cf., e.g., Bausinger et.al. 2006).

The realization that avoidance strategies were no longer effective emerged concurrently with the acknowledgment that the field had long been plagued with ideological problems extant well before the rise of National Socialism (cf. e.g., Bausinger 1999, 298; Jacobeit, Lixfeld and Bockhorn 1994). Though two whole decades had passed since the end of World War II, other disciplines combed through their disciplinary pasts much later; the field of history only did so in the 1980's and 1990's, coming to a head with the *Historikerstreit* in 1986 (cf., e.g., Wehler 1988). Volkskunde's *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, its coming to terms with the past, was primarily led by younger scholars, including Hermann Bausinger (1926-present):

“[...] only with begin of the 1960/1970's did Hermann Bausinger and others face the Mausian criticism [...], and much rather saw their task as pursuing disciplinary-historical enlightenment about how it ever came to an [...] abuse of German Volkskunde [...]” (Jacobeit 1994a, 27; cf. also Dow and Lixfeld 1994).

Bausinger's 1965 lecture and subsequent publication “*Volkstumsideologie und Volksforschung: Zur National Sozialistischen Volkskunde*” was accepted as sufficient critique of the Third Reich, obviating the need for follow-up, and Wolfgang Emmerich's 1968 dissertation *Germanistische Volkstumsideologie: Genese und Kritik der Volksforschung im Dritten Reich* (Germanic Ideology of the Volk: Genesis and Criticism of Research on the Volk in the Third Reich) was met with stringent, often unfair criticism (Bausinger 1965; Emmerich 1971).¹⁰ Bausinger would continue to work on ways to change the field into the 21st Century, very much a key player in bringing the study of the everyday into the mainstream (Bausinger et.al. 2006).

Though this battle of the younger generation was not easily fought or won, these initial steps laid the groundwork for the years to come (Dow and Lixfeld 1994, 351-

352).¹¹ Combined with a conference in Falkenstein in 1970, now seen as a cornerstone for the revisioning and refashioning of the field of Volkskunde (and the impetus of disciplinary name changes from Volkskunde to *Europäische Ethnologie* (European Ethnology), to *Empirische Kulturwissenschaften* (Empirical Cultural Studies), to *Regionale Kulturforschung* (Regional Cultural Research), or to *Kulturelle Anthropologie* (cultural anthropology), depending on the respective institution), these years would forever change the field (Bausinger 1999, 300; Dow and Lixfeld 1994, 358; Brückner 1971. cf. also Bendix 2004).

Maus' outside criticism, in other words, had the potential to serve as the springboard for an earlier Vergangenheitsbewältigung beginning in the 1940's. It did not, however, during the late 1940's or early 1950's, lead to an overarching reexamination from within, as a research vacuum as well as a constellation of events stymied interest and ability (though certainly not the need) to self-examine. Maus was ignored for the most part, with one notable exception: Peuckert.

Universität Göttingen after the War

When Peuckert began teaching at the Universität Göttingen immediately following the war, there had not yet been an internally voiced need to come to terms with the Nazi past of the discipline; instead, most Volkskundler chose to work on non-ideological research, trying to move forward by focusing, paradoxically, on collections of folklore from Volkskunde's disciplinary forefathers (Bausinger 1999, 298).

Göttingen was the first German university to reopen its doors and offer courses, beginning a new semester on September 17th, 1945 (Ericksen 2000, 5). Universities across Germany had to face the concrete reality that all university-aged students had

grown up under National Socialist rule, and would thus have been influenced by its ideology in numerous ways; Peuckert thus had to start teaching with the realization that many students needed reeducation. The new president of the university, Rudolf Smend (1892-1975), voiced his concerns about what was to be expected from the new term and the new faculty, especially *vis à vis* the student body:

“Are we all up to the tasks that are posed for us in this and in coming semesters, despite all the tension between age groups, and despite all the mental and political opposites and the burdens we carry? Are the old going to be able to put themselves in the shoes of the young generation, who grew up in the Third Reich, and only knew the Third Reich and no other Germany? Will the young generation even be able to find the path to a different Germany that lies beneath and beyond the ruins of the Third Reich? Will they be capable and willing to fill in the many gaps in their education?” (Ericksen 2000, 5).

The dean of the Philosophical Faculty at the Universität Göttingen, Herbert Schöffler (1888-1946), agreed, and was also concerned with the fact that a scholar was needed for the professorship in *Volkskunde* who had *not* been tainted by Nazi ideology: who, as a “fruitful pedagogue,” could give “loving care” to the discipline and to the students at the university (Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 29).

Peuckert’s *Entnazifizierungsverfahren* documents -- the written application for “denazification” that German citizens seeking jobs had to fill out after World War II -- are good insight into Peuckert’s self-characterization: he stressed his relative seclusion during World War II to support the argument that he had not been involved in ideological compromises (Ericksen 2000, 2).¹² Peuckert also intimated that he has been a member of the international PEN Literary Club and the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft sozialistischer Lehrer* (the Working Group of Socialist Teachers), associations that were dissolved or banned after 1933.¹³ To the questions of whether or not he had ever been

arrested, had his personal freedom restricted, or lost his jobs for racial or religious reasons, Peuckert responded: yes, for reasons of active and passive resistance to National Socialism.¹⁴ And though this answer was true -- Peuckert's *venia legendi* had been withdrawn -- one has to wonder about the efficacy of the denazification process, and whether Peuckert's directed answers really made a difference in obtaining the job:

“[D]enazification proved controversial from the beginning. Although theoretically a joint Allied policy, it was never meaningfully coordinated across the four zones of occupation. It also proved hopelessly illusory as realities set in. The Americans, for example, thought to be the most grandiose in their intentions, did not have the personnel to read, much less process, more than a fraction of the [... questionnaires] in which Germans were required to report on their past” (ibid.).

Peuckert never specifically commented on his qualifications, but it is clear that he saw himself as a prime candidate for the job in Göttingen; he was in a unique position, as the first holder of a chair in Volkskunde in Germany, to effect change. Already during the war Peuckert had worried about the way in which students had latched on to National Socialism -- “my boys and gals only have politics left in their head [and ..] I'm worried what will happen because of it.”¹⁵ After teaching in Göttingen for a few months, that conviction only grew:

“I never made even the smallest concession to the Nazis, -- rather, I always settled my account, -- and this is the first visible success, so to say. That is to say, [the students] don't necessarily want to see the accounts settled, but want to be shown what one has to do to start *a new life*. And I show that, time and time again.”¹⁶

Letters to Gertrud: Intimated Change and Reform

How did Peuckert approach his teaching duties, as they had been outlined by Smend and Schöffler? In what ways did he try to do justice to their joint calls of

reinvigorating and changing a tainted discipline, showing “a new life” to his students? What were Peuckert’s strategies for dealing with the state of the field as he began his second academic career at the age of 50? And what were his reasons for the steps he did take? Was his interest in reinvigorating the field self-generated?

Peuckert’s writing shows two different responses to the nationalistic legacy of Third Reich Volkskunde and his charge to reformulate the discipline: while one approach was a focus on notions of community, public service, and thus accountability to the public, the other approach entailed a call for international and comparative work.¹⁷

Peuckert did not, for the most part, overstep the reticence to critique that his colleagues exhibited after the war, and most of his early post-war work did not stand out as he proceeded with his other research interests in folk narratives. Yet there are sufficient lectures, letters, and publications which can help paint a picture of Peuckert’s thoughts on how to reformulate the discipline from the mid 1940’s onwards.

Both in correspondence to his wife Gertrud (61 letters and postcards, and one telegram, all written in 1946), and to his son Hanns (8 letters and postcards, written between 1945-1946, and then in the 1950’s and 1960’s), we see a steady progression in his thoughts concerning disciplinary reformulation. He was concerned with:

1. documenting the still prevalent National Socialist sentiments among the students;
2. highlighting the need to denazify the students and the university;
3. mentioning the support he was garnering from the students; and
4. giving more information about his plans for change.

Writing in his small, cramped handwriting using violet ink, Peuckert not infrequently told Gertrud about the still prevalent Nazism at the university among the students, all educated under a National Socialist regime. “The students are still naziing

around,” Peuckert explained on one occasion; on another: “the students are supposed to be Nazis, strongly.”¹⁸ Or, in a letter to his wife and son, dated January 29th, 1946,

Peuckert noted:

“The class was good. [...] - and they all sat there, willingly, paying attention. I think I’ll get them. One of them said afterwards: yes, one believes someone like that, who has acted on his own words. And I was really proud over that verdict. I think if I can continue a few semesters like this, I’ll cure them all of this Nazi-delusion.”¹⁹

The solution, as Peuckert saw it, was to reshape their thinking through his lectures and courses:

“Next semester, I’ll speak with an even more fiery tongue. Since it has been proven what effect [...] [teaching can have], I want to really begin my war for the[ir] souls. And those that I [...teach], they will not be Nazis.”²⁰

Similarly, later in the 1945/1946 Winter Semester, he pointed out: “And I notice more and more how I grab those students [...], a.[nd] how I am starting to shape them. A few more semesters, and it’ll be done with that Nazi-thinking.”²¹ By May that resolve had only strengthened; writing to Gertrud, Peuckert hoped that the remaining *Hitler Jugend* [Hitler Youth] who had gone on strike in Göttingen in March and April of 1946, would “soon realize what nonsense” they were up to.²² Or again:

“When I was called in 1945 to Göttingen, my first months were difficult [...], as all of my students had been raised in Nazi schools. We sat together night after night from December through March, discussing, until 3 am - and then the ice broke.”²³

Peuckert seems to have drawn a line between the war and postwar years, thus firmly demarcating the old discipline from what he hoped would be a “new” and changed one. As part of his efforts he thus criticized the *Volkskunde* of the Third Reich:

“I drew a strong dividing line between [unreadable] and the Volkskunde of ‘33 with the Swastika [...]. And that made sense to a lot of people. [...] And that’s what I want to achieve. [...] Enthusiasm [and ...] a renunciation of the last 12 years.”²⁴

Pointing out how undemocratic the years under Nazi dictatorship had been was part of Peuckert’s critique:

“A critique of the last years [...] A violation of democracy, the opposite of times of terror; paths towards which we have to go. [...] How well one could construct something respectable here, expunge the whole contamination.”²⁵

And, at least according to Peuckert, his lectures were getting positive feedback: “And how they follow along!”; or “they hang on my every word”; or “You’re different, said my graduate student, one senses your earnesty.”²⁶ Wolfgang Jacobeit (1921-present), one of Peuckert’s earliest students, remarked:

“It was a time of searching for new, personal directions, but also for the pros and cons of the hitherto existing scholarly opinions in a fundamentally changed world. [...] We were [...] hungry to open up to new thoughts and alternatives, to test them out, and to make our conclusions. [...] Volkskunde as a discipline interested in the history of ideas, the way Will-Erich Peuckert [...] interpreted the field, made sense to us” (Jacobeit 1996, 142-143).”

Yet in correspondence Peuckert never quite spelled out the contents of the reshaping he was advocating for. One letter, albeit briefly, mentioned that he hoped to uncover new ways of thinking for the discipline:

“I also go very strongly against [the III. Reich] and I am very outspoken [...]. And I really do think that I am doing good here, [...] *especially since it goes beyond criticism and I open up new paths.* [...] I’m thinking about these things so much because they are so important to me, since they have to be tackled. Everything depends on it. And no thanks, not another time like those 12 years -- only by coincidence were we not liquidated last time. And if it means that I have to preach at midnight!”²⁷

Or again, just a day later: “I probably already mentioned that my people attest that finally new thoughts are being voiced. *And that means positively building something new, besides criticizing the last 10 years.*”²⁸ The closest Peuckert came to voicing an actual plan in correspondence was late February 1946:

“I settled accounts with Nazi-Vk [Volkskunde] a.[nd] its political incompetence a.[nd] then showed a positive path. Because it really doesn’t help to just say No [;] that won’t knock sense into them. They have the good will, but a pure No makes them recalcitrant [...] Once one has generate the positive path, one has got them. And I’ve got them. The positive path? I showed the path of how one had to get out of the nationalistic hardening, how to find access a.[nd] thus find one’s way back *into a European way*. And I really succeeded [...].”²⁹

Lecturing Towards New Paths

Peuckert’s letters never followed through on what that “European way” might consist of; luckily, lecture notes and publications point towards more specific plans to open up such new paths for the field. Peuckert offered up two distinct plans, one in speech and the other in publication, both of which placed Volkskunde prominently as a discipline that could tackle the reforms needed in society and that could aid the general population. In lectures Peuckert highlighted the need for a Volkskunde focused around community, a Volkskunde with marked social contributions, and one that was to be tackled by academic experts; *publications*, on the other hand, underscored the need for a Volkskunde which was international -- that is, European.³⁰ Both lectures and publications contain the common seed of needing reform and change for the future of the field, though neither advocated an in-depth discussion of its past.

Perhaps because the way in which the particular lecture notes were formatted -- loosely scripted, both hand written and typed, containing many crossed-out phrases

and sections -- the extant manuscript does not always present a coherent narrative, nor is it internally consistent. And yet, lecture notes are not written for public consumption; rather, they are notes by the scholar for him about ideas fresh in his mind, not always perfectly scripted or spelled out. The notes *do* put forth the verve with which Peuckert hoped to change his students' convictions: texturally, visually, Peuckert's notes dance across the page with rhetorical flourishes, bold underlinings highlighting points of importance which would have punctuated his oral delivery.

Though no lecture materials of the first courses Peuckert taught Winter Semester 1946 survive, 61 pages of lecture notes for the Summer Semester 1947 course "*Praxis der Volkskunde*" (The Praxis of Volkskunde) offer up Peuckert's teaching world. Beginning with a discussion of the nature of Volkskunde ("Vk [Volkskunde] is a science, is research, not a preparation for the foreign service"), the notes quickly move through a list of pertinent genres ("Folktale, Legend, Song, Schwank, Riddles, Märchen, Sage, [...] House, Tools, Folk Art etc.").³¹ Next follows a discussion on the need for museums and archives, seen as methodological components for the field; Peuckert was influenced in his vision of the field by the relatively recent Scandinavian developments in *folklivsforskning*, folklife studies.³² Peuckert's praise of Scandinavian research (he always thought very highly of Sigurd Erixon (1888-1968)) is the only indication here of his interest in things "European".

Peuckert then discussed the need for Volkskunde to be a discipline that could move beyond esoteric knowledge for the sake of knowledge and contribute to social understanding and aid. While not an active dealing with National Socialist Volkskunde, such a reorientation did have the potential to give a new and positive outlook to the

field:

“All Vk. [Volkskunde] opens out into the realm of
social understanding
social aid.

Vk. [Volkskunde] is not just knowledge about harvest customs
a.[nd] wedding customs
a. [nd] stages of culture

Scholarship that only knows [is about knowledge] is dead.

Vk. wants to a.[nd]
needs

to operate into the social [sphere].

1. Cor. 13!³³

One of the differences between Peuckert’s early implicit critique of the Nazi years and the explicit and successful attempts of the 1960’s was his inclination to offer new solutions as a way to cover up the past, instead of actively examining it.

Volkskunde as a socially responsible field, entailed, so Peuckert, the importance of doing research on refugees, in particular those from Silesia and other areas who had fled or been displaced.³⁴ As Schenk points out, this interest in individuals with a German linguistic heritage who had grown up in an entirely distinct context was not an unusual research trend during the early post-war years (Schenk 1988). Peuckert’s vision of research was an 11th hour project, as he believed that the expressive culture of the refugees would soon get lost or disappear entirely.³⁵ A secondary reason was “to regain lost land,” a not too uncommon hope of refugees that they might at some point be able to return to their home (and, consequently, that the regions would return to German possession).³⁶

Peuckert saw this research both as social outreach and a countervailing trend to the nationalized research of World War II, although explanations as to why are lacking. Yet work on refugees can easily be politicized, especially when questions of land,

diaspora, and national possession come into play. That Peuckert called for this research is thus not without irony, especially if he entertained hope that Germany might regain land: for is that not research for national purpose? Only a few years later, Peuckert would point out that Silesia rightfully belonged to Poland; these early lecture notes rather betray strong emotions on Peuckert's part (to regain lost land, underscored), quite possibly the grief for the loss of his home of 50 years.³⁷ What remains key is the understanding that Peuckert saw the study of refugees as a new venue for *Volkskunde*, a focus which did not *change* or *deal with* National Socialist *Volkskunde*, but rather pushed it aside to move on.

A further part of Peuckert's social vision for the discipline involved public accountability by publishing in newspapers, placing the academic into the role of a public intellectual.³⁸ This makes sense in light of his later media appearances, though there is no active indication that Peuckert followed this route himself in the early post-war years. Nor do his lecture notes expand significantly on public intellectualism as a mechanism for change and reform.

More importantly for his students as a more transparent and extended "path" for *Volkskunde*, Peuckert argued that it was necessary to believe in whatever work they did, and in the importance of their job as scholars who could offer up important knowledge about humanity; their integrity was paramount:

"He has to be a real person [a good guy] [...]
One that has something to say. [...]
Become something
Be a fellow
a total fellow!
That is the solution to the puzzle.
That is the task
that is posed for you. [...]"

You cannot shirk that duty.³³⁹

Even in political careers, argued Peuckert, his students could and would not succeed unless they had a knowledge of Volkskunde:

“Here knowledge about the Volk is the requirement
that is to say
knowledge of the whole Volk
not just the peasantry [...]
the Vk. of the peasantry
bourgeoisie
Proletariat etc.
[...] a Vk. of the present
We aren't interested in the hist. trajectory [...]
but rather the contemporary condition.³⁴⁰

One has to wonder whether Peuckert's notes, abridged as they were, only failed to make note of the dangers involved in a discussion about the *political* uses of Volkskunde immediately following the war. He was well aware that there were dangers in the political uses of Volkskunde, and it is difficult to gauge the extent to which Peuckert actually *wanted* Volkskunde to (once again) become involved in politics. One gets the sense that, at best, Peuckert saw it as important for trained Volkskundler who had a liberal and expanded sense of the discipline to help inform politicians about the actual needs of the population as evidenced in *contemporary* expressive culture. Yet more critical reflection certainly would have been desirable, had Peuckert chosen to comment on what made Volkskunde particularly susceptible to abuse from politics, and what made his vision different -- and safe.

His course notes conclude with a call to arms, a charge for his students to answer to. Postwar Germany, in shambles -- and, by extension, the discipline -- would only return to health if scholars, trained in the field of Volkskunde, would approach its

contemporary problems:

“A healing can only take place
once the illness
(not by quacks a.[nd] dilettantes)
but by the doctor
1. is correctly diagnosed a.[nd]
2. the correct medicine is found.
You are the diagnosticians
a.[nd] doctors. [...]
Be the healers [of the Volk] [...]”⁴¹

Though replete with ideas, Peuckert’s lecture appears as an intellectual dead-end as far as the reconceptualization of the field is concerned. The ideas about social responsibility, barely elaborated upon, were not taken up again at a later point. Though they prove insightful as an early glimpse into Peuckert’s trajectory of thought, the ideas of student mobilization and the role of Volkskundler in repairing society never saw fruition in any other work that he attempted.

At the same time, they match the sentiments in his letters to Gertrud; their tone and texture is not without emotion, and one can see in them a passionate attempt of an individual to grapple with the minds of young and misguided students. These students would have been exposed to rhetorical flourishes during the years of the National Socialist dictatorship, a passion and verve that was rarely lacking in party functions. Perhaps we can see in the texture and tone of Peuckert’s paper notes -- the preparations, after all, for oral performances -- a similar sort of vigor. The rhetoric with its crescendoing punctuation and metaphors would have been meant to be persuasive, in line with Peuckert’s goal to change the minds of his students.

Beyond Borders?
Publishing towards Change

The European reshaping for Volkskunde that Peuckert had called for in his letters to Gertrud were perhaps most interestingly (and explicitly) voiced in a project he sporadically shepherded between 1948 and 1962, a journal apparently close to his heart. Peuckert founded *Die Nachbarn: Jahrbuch für vergleichende Volkskunde* (The Neighbors: Yearbook for Comparative Volkskunde) in 1948; according to Thomas Hauschild, *Die Nachbarn* is the “only European-oriented journal in the history of German Volkskunde” ever founded (Hauschild 2003).

It was only published three times: once in 1948, once in 1954, and once in 1962. During the late 1960’s, as Peuckert’s health was failing, he tried to get Gerhard Heilfurth (1909-2006) to take over its editorship, but his offer was declined, with Heilfurth citing his duties towards the *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde* as cause.⁴² One might question whether it was his relationship to Heilfurth which prompted the latter to reject the offer, but theirs was a friendly one: Peuckert even asked Heilfurth to keep an eye on his daughter Sylphia, who was to begin her studies in Marburg in 1968.⁴³ Over its lifespan the journal thus remained in every sense of the word Peuckert’s project, expressing his individual vision for the field. In fact, of the 28 articles published, Peuckert and his wife penned nearly a third: he wrote six and Gertrud wrote two, using her maiden name Albrecht.

The picture Peuckert painted in his letters to Gertrud of an implicit *self-generated* interest in reinvigorating the field is complicated by the fact that the publication of *Die Nachbarn* was a direct reaction to Heinz Maus’ 1946 critique of the field. Though some of Peuckert’s letters predate Maus’ critique, giving indication that

Peuckert did develop some of his sentiments *sui generis* without being prompted by Maus, one has to wonder whether *Die Nachbarn* as a response to Maus was a knee-jerk defense of the discipline's honor. Or could it be seen as Peuckert's published exoneration, publicly accounting for his actions during World War II? Would Peuckert have founded *Die Nachbarn* if Maus hadn't specifically criticized the field of Volkskunde for ignoring its Nazi past? Quite probably he would have. As Peuckert's letters to Gertrud did predate the Maus critique, the notion that moving beyond the Nazi years was important does seem to have been on his mind before Maus made his call. And since he also lectured on the subject, it was an issue Peuckert was already grappling with on a daily basis immediately following the war.

Peuckert argued that Maus' article made the wrong presumptions and had the wrong conclusions, and took most (it seems, personal) offense to Maus' claim that all of Volkskunde, and, by extension, all of its practitioners, had been tainted by National Socialist ideology (Peuckert 1948b, 130). Peuckert dismissed the individuals that Maus had listed as part of the National Socialist Volkskunde constellation -- such as Emil Lehmann (1880-1964) or Karl von Spieß (1880-1957) or Max Hildebert Boehm (1891-1968) -- as politicians or non-Volkskundler (ibid.). He also believed that several scholars had escaped mention, such as, notably, Peuckert himself, his advisor Friedrich Ranke, or John Meier; they could have stood as counterarguments to Maus' claim that all scholars had been ideologically influenced (ibid.). Thus:

“in a much more serious and on a much larger scale than was visible to the outside, a serious, hardworking, scientifically rigorous Volkskunde existed, which stood next to the loud ‘Volkskunde’ that stood in the spotlight” (Peuckert 1948b, 130).

As his main retort to Maus, Peuckert cited his belief in the existence of *two* different

Volkskunde trajectories: one Volkskunde which had been influenced politically and ideologically, and one whose practitioners had done good work before, possibly during, and after the war (ibid.). Peuckert argued that his *own* branch of Volkskunde which had not been ideologically impacted was a discipline which had made advances even during World War II, “even if its progress only was audible in the [...] conversations held most intimately in close circles” (ibid., 131). These few short sentences helped create what is now known as the “mythos” or legend of two Volkskunden, the idea that not all of the field had been corrupted by NS ideology. It would remain with the field until Bausinger’s seminal 1965 speech and publication which would begin to unpack Volkskunde’s National Socialist past (Dow and Lixfeld 1994; Bausinger 1965).

The mythos of an extant rigorous and untainted Volkskunde can be shown as a faulty argument with numerous counterexamples. Among other holes, John Meier’s activities during World War II were certainly not without problem: Meier did not, for example, hesitate to sign his letters with “Heil Hitler,” and several articles have been written about his complicity (cf. e.g., Oesterle 1987; Holzapfel 1987; Dow and Lixfeld 1994, 343-345).⁴⁴ Self-serving and misguided, Peuckert’s retort to Maus nevertheless expressed a strong viewpoint: some scholars, he believed, had not let go of scientific rigor and ideals during World War II, and had continued doing research for the field of Volkskunde that was not imbued with National Socialist ideology. The reason their voices had been quiet, noted Peuckert, was that they had been silenced by academic censorship: as an example he cited the withdrawal of his *venia legendi*, for one, and the problems that ensued after publishing *Volkskunde des Proletariats*, for another (Peuckert 1948b, 131).

His unsupported critique against Maus, easily refutable, underscored that this

second *Volkskunde* with “underground accomplishments” that Peuckert purports to have been a part of did the best it could to resist under the circumstances (ibid., 131). To the claim that the term “Volk” has been used to legitimate and give academic credibility to the concept of *Blut und Boden*, blood and soil, Peuckert simply responded that the dangers of the term were well known to his colleagues and to himself, but there were other uses of the term which lent no cause to worry. Again, Peuckert cited his own *Volkskunde des Proletariats* as a counterexample of a productive use (and redefinition) of the term “Volk”.

A short article at the end of the first volume of *Die Nachbarn*, Peuckert’s response to Maus is a list of what Peuckert saw to be his pre- and postwar accolades. Justifying Peuckert’s own work during the war, it did not take the Mausian critique to heart or address it as a valid piece of scholarship. Only in one instance did Peuckert acquiesce: Maus’ vision of the future of the field and the stress on *Volkskunde*’s role in studying social history and contemporary culture appealed to Peuckert, which he duly made note of (Peuckert 1948b, 133-135). For the most part the response remains a reactionary piece in which Peuckert saw the need to advance his own agenda.

Did the rest of the journal more cogently pose solutions to National Socialist *Volkskunde*? Peuckert’s introduction to the journal is issued as a challenge to the field, underscoring the need to reform *Volkskunde*:

“The last fifteen years politically ruined *Volkskunde* and turned it into a ‘goal-oriented discipline’. They demanded proof [of *Volkskunde*] that the own Volk was the best, the only one that had the right to exist[;] all the other [Volk] were unimportant or less important, depending on changing political constellations. There is no need to prove that such perspectives were unscientific. Moreover, they represent a betrayal to *Volkskunde* itself” (Peuckert 1948a, 3).

Ideally, argued Peuckert, Volkskunde could be rebuilt in a such a way that it would be stronger than before it had been ruined by the Nazis (ibid., 4). Though his lectures underscore accountability and social responsibility and called for Volkskunde students to be the potential healers of societal illness, *Die Nachbarn* offered a different, more elaborate solution, which would also find resonance in later work.

Especially since Volkskunde had historically been both international and national in scope -- that is, looked both within and outside of a nation's borders -- Peuckert argued that returning to these roots could be a way to solve the crisis it was facing:

“A national [discipline] insofar as it puts this or that Volk at its focus and poses its questions around that Volk. An international [discipline] insofar as no Volk exists alone and for itself; every Volk only exists with, next to, and through the other Völker of the earth” (Peuckert 1948a, 3).

Volkskunde should and had to, noted Peuckert, continue to incorporate this international scope into its vision for a post-war future. As examples of intellectual precursors to this idea Peuckert mentioned no lesser scholars than Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), the Brothers Grimm (Jacob: 1785-1863; Wilhelm: 1786-1859), and Theodor Benfey (1889-1901), founding fathers of the discipline which in name lent a certain tenor to his argument (ibid., 3). Peuckert argued that these scholars had been aware of both the national as well as the international nature of their united endeavor; as a project, Romantic Nationalism could only function by placing the concept of the international as a backdrop to frame the national, an awareness of a certain universalism (ibid.).

Yet one still has to wonder what Peuckert *specifically* meant by calling for a discipline which was both international and national. What did that translate to on a

practical level? Was the “international” part of this vision a reference to the subject materials that were studied, or an indication of an idealized international cooperation between scholars? Or did Peuckert have a combination of both in mind?

He offered the more contemporary efforts of the Folklore Fellows as an example of what he saw as the international foundation and nature of the discipline, and, by extension, the direction in which the field should go. A project initially conceptualized by Kaarle Krohn (1863-1933) of Finland, the Folklore Fellows (FF), founded in 1907 through the concerted efforts of the Dane Axel Olrik (1864-1917), the Swede Carl Wilhelm von Sydow (1878-1951), and Krohn, is still probably *the* major international folklore organization in the world (Dundes 1999, 83).⁴⁵ If the FF stand as Peuckert’s example, it is clear that part of his vision of an “international” field was scholarly cooperation and friendships between individuals of different nationalities:

“And the knowledge concerning the interlinked [...] ‘national’ and ‘international’ folklore materials allowed the creation of a cooperative work group which encircled the entire globe. At a time when all [...] folklore researchers were meeting each other, in the monographs of the FF Communications in Helsinki, in Folk-Liv in Stockholm, as English and Swedish, Finnish and American, Belgian and German scholars worked with one another [...], at this hour a new political rule dashed the happy union and led German scholarship [...] into isolation” (Peuckert 1948a, 3).

Peuckert’s own tremendous record of international correspondence confirms the idea that an “international” discipline would be considered as such based on its constituent practitioners, their communication, and their relationships with one another. In the last decade of his life, Peuckert corresponded with over 300 scholars from within *Volkskunde* and other related disciplines, from over 15 different countries. They include Hermann Bausinger, Inger Margarethe Boberg, Wilhelm Brepohl, Gisela Burde-

Schneidewind, Alfred Cammann, Erik Dal, Linda Dégh, Sigurd Erixon, Paul Geiger, Ina-Maria Greverus, Wayland D. Hand, Josef Hanika, Gerhart Heilfurth, Wolfgang Jacobeit, Alfred Karasek, Sven Liljeblad, Waldemar Liungman, Max Lüthi, Gerhard Lutz, Heinz Maus, Karl Meuli, Helmut Möller, Eberhard Paukstadt, Kurt Ranke, Lutz Röhrich, Ingeborg Weber (later Weber-Kellermann), and Jaromir Zech.⁴⁶ The sheer volume of letters is an indication that Peuckert thirsted for contact, and wanted to stay informed with the world of *Volkskunde* and academia in general.

Yet in talking about the data -- the expressive culture -- Peuckert's arguments become emotionally charged; it is here where his introductory essay to *Die Nachbarn* points to where the discipline of *Volkskunde* should head:

“More importantly than anywhere else, *Volkskunde* has need for access to and the *glance across the borders* of its own Volk. [...] A *Volkskunde* which can look only at its own Volk at the exclusion of its neighbors will neither be able to see what is characteristic of its own *Volksgut*, [...] nor understand the historical relevance of this or the other *Gut* in the development of humanity. A *Volkskunde* that limits itself to its own Volk and their expressive culture is nonsense” (Peuckert, 1948a, 4. Italics added).

A “glance across borders” meant, to Peuckert, a *Volkskunde* which considered the “*Nachbarvölker*”, the neighboring Volk, and a *Volkskunde* which did so to gain a historical understanding. An inclusion of the *Volkskunde* across borders, not a *Volkskunde* which stayed within national boundaries, was key: in Peuckert's case, this meant a *European Volkskunde*.⁴⁷ Peuckert's call for the discipline to be redeveloped was an essentially comparative *Volkskunde* of Europe which offered insight into processes of change. The concept of *relationships* between groups of people -- “paths from one Volk to other Volk groups” -- was equally important: “that just as Volk cannot in the academic community be an isolated factum, it cannot in life stand alone and for itself”

(ibid., 5).

* * *

Some of the ideas concerning an international, Europeanized Volkskunde saw limited follow-through in subsequent research and publications that Peuckert undertook. Jacobeit, in fact, posits that Peuckert's *Die Grosse Wende* (1948) -- published the same year as *Die Nachbarn* -- served as Peuckert's detailed response to Maus' critique of the field (Jacobeit 1996). *Die Grosse Wende*, a mostly historical work relying on "Volkskunde-based" methodologies, highlighted the reformation and the accompanying shift from, as Peuckert described it, the peasant world to the world of the Bourgeoisie. Jacobeit's thesis is grounded among other things in the fact that *Die Grosse Wende* offered a new perspective for Volkskunde as intellectual history, a new path for the field to take which was interdisciplinary (ibid., 145).⁴⁸

There were other post-war responses, however, besides *Die Nachbarn*. In 1951, Peuckert and his colleague Otto Lauffer (1874-1949) published a volume entitled *Volkskunde: Quellen und Forschungen seit 1930*. In it, Peuckert and Lauffer review some of the more significant publications in Germany (and to a lesser extent Scandinavia) since 1930, divided into sections which included Methodology and History of Folklore, Superstition, Folk Song, and Proverb. Its focus, Sievers reminds us, was "to show a picture of the development of the field during that time during which international contact to the field had been interrupted (Sievers 1991, 15). Peuckert and Lauffer saw the necessity in bridging the intellectual gap that had widened between Germany and other countries during World War II. The fact that it was reviewed by Wayland D. Hand (1907-1986) and Archer Taylor (1890-1973) both is an indication that the book had its desired outcome, building a web of connections. Taylor

noted that Peuckert had omitted some works that could be found in the *International Volkskundliche Bibliographie*, but lauded the work for “the selection of the really significant work of the last twenty years and his critical comment” (Taylor 1952, 231). And Hand himself pointed out the international connection: “the present book has a broadly European orientation [...]” (Hand 1952, 431). More importantly, Hand encouraged his readers that Volkskunde in Germany was changing, in no small part due to Peuckert and his work:

“For those who feared that folkloristic science had come to Ragnarok in Germany at the hands of its Nazi practitioners, there is ample evidence in this book of a return to the tradition which made German folklore scholars famous from the time of the Grimms until the death of Bolte” (ibid., 431-432).

More concretely concerned with the international, beginning in 1961, Peuckert edited six volumes on European legends, a compendium of collected data that was published in a series entitled *Europäische Sagen*. Meant for a scholarly audience, each volume was dedicated to the legends of one country, or, barring significant regional variation, the legends of one region of one country. Hand notes that the volumes were culled using rare “... sources to which few scholars have access, and [that] the material brought together is representative of the whole body of North Germany legendry and rich in the sampling given” (Hand 1962, 135).

Peuckert had a clear vision for *Europäische Sagen*. Initially seen as a resource, granting access to otherwise difficult to obtain source materials and even secondary literature, there is a definite sense of wanting to outline zones of contact between different nations: “paths from one Volk to other Volk groups” (Peuckert 1948a, 4). Working in spiraling circles outwards, beginning with Germany and then moving to its neighboring countries, Peuckert’s *Europäische Sagen* circumscribed a larger,

interconnected Europe:

“Since the destruction in our libraries was so extensive and there was no good access to materials, especially to journals, they were initially meant as an aid to those working on the ‘Handbook of Legends’. [...] We have German, Austrian (Eastern Alpine), Swiss (Western Alpine), in print Polish, in Msk. [manuscript] Czech texts. If we set aside the Scottish, English, and Northern French texts, a central-European complex clearly becomes visible. To complete that complex through a compendium on Italian legends is not only highly tempting, but gives me great joy. [...] The volume on northern Italy would not only round out the German-speaking region, but make visible the back and forth influences. The volume on southern Italy would make a good transition to one on southern France, [...] to Spain, Portugal, and on the other side, Romania.”⁴⁹

The published results of Peuckert’s endeavors were two books on legends from within Germany (Lower Germany in 1961, and Middle and Upper Germany in 1962), legends from the Eastern and Western Alpine regions (1962 and 1965, respectively), a book on Scottish legends published in 1967, and one volume on legends from Northern France which came out in 1968. An undated letter to his colleague Bruno Schier (1902-1984) indicates that a typescript on Polish legends had been completed, though it was never published.⁵⁰ And in 1969, Peuckert corresponded with his Austrian colleague Felix Karlinger (1920-2000) at the Universität Salzburg for help with planned future volumes on Italy, Spain, Portugal and Romania.⁵¹ Karlinger suggested, among others, contributors from Bucharest and Lisbon, expanding the web of connections; Peuckert never contacted these scholars, given his failing health.⁵² Mobilizing colleagues from around Europe to help him out, the *process* of putting together the series thus also mirrored Peuckert’s wishes expressed in *Die Nachbarn*.

Peuckert was also in touch with the Japanese scholar Toschio Ozawa (1930-present) in and around 1968, who had expressed an interest in publishing a collection of

Japanese legends.⁵³ Triggered by Peuckert's *Europäische Sagen*, both Peuckert and Ozawa began to think about a series entitled "*aussereuropäische Sagen*", a collection of legends from outside of Europe, to be divided into "*Sagen der Hochkulturen*" (legends of the high cultures) and "*Sagen der Frühkulturen*" (legends of the early cultures or civilizations). The idea never flourished, given Peuckert's death in 1969.

The collection of books on European legends, taken as a whole, are a further glimpse into Peuckert's ideas. Linked in idea, though not in word, to the *Die Nachbarn* project, *Europäische Sagen* conveys both scholarly cooperation and a geographically large scope; nevertheless, border-crossing figures not at all in the books, the legends still sorted and categorized by their geographic distribution, neatly fitting within national borders.

Internationalization?

Peuckert's situation in Göttingen after World War II would not have been easy. The university had limited resources after the war and was operating with reduced faculty. There was hardly any access to new publications, and funds to publish were limited. Rebuilding a network of scholarly contacts was difficult, as it was hard to know who one could trust socially and on the academic front. Teaching conditions were rough, classrooms often unheated. Peuckert struggled even to get a typewriter in order to write, and he was lonely in his bachelor apartment. Talking about those early years, Jacobeit points out:

"[...O]ne can never lose sight of the external life circumstances under which Will-Erich Peuckert worked once he took the professorship in Göttingen. [...T]here was the operation of the university, the rebuilding of a Seminar under [...] contemporary conditions, and his own tight living quarters as a tenant [...]" (Jacobeit 1996, 162).

And yet Peuckert had his career to think of for the first time in a decade. No doubt this was a luxurious feeling for a change, the ability to once again work legitimately in his chosen area of interest; his excitement about teaching also resonated in his letters to Gertrud. And within a decade, Germany would begin ramping up towards its *Wirtschaftswunder*, the economic upswing that the Federal Republic experienced starting around 1955: an economic rebuilding of the nation paralleled by the rebuilding which was to take place, bit by bit, amongst academic disciplines.

At the same time, Peuckert was deeply troubled by the state of the field and by its students. And he had aspirations for change, hopes for innovation and rebuilding. Where was such an individual to place his energies and focus? How does this ethnography of an academic *Volkskunde* in the post-war decades play out?

Peuckert remained concerned about the scope of the field after the war, continuing to push for a *Volkskunde* that looked past the peasantry and towards a more broadly defined field. And Peuckert also turned towards intellectual history, publishing his *Grosse Wende* in 1948 on the transition from the peasant world to the world of the bourgeoisie in 1948. Yet above all of his work still hovered the cloud of National Socialism. The most prevalent reaction field-wide and amongst his colleagues and peers was to turn a blind eye towards the past, and to move on. That was not difficult, as people wanted to maintain their careers, did not want their own pasts excavated.

Articles with a whitewashing function such as John Meier's "History of the Association of German Societies for *Volkskunde*" (1947) made the step towards ignoring the past an even easier path of least resistance. Meier's article -- and with it, Peuckert's response to Maus in *Die Nachbarn* -- publicly created a "mythos" of two

Volkskunden and exculpated the field, thus obviating the need for other scholars to come to terms with the discipline's past. By claiming the existence of two Volkskunden, or, even worse, by claiming that a particular strand of Volkskunde had resisted becoming handmaiden to a dictatorship, Peuckert and Meier relieved scholars of their burden of guilt, and eased the discipline to a place where its practitioners could move on instead of looking back (Dow and Lixfeld 1994, 348).

Mazower notes that “[n]ational histories generally have clearly defined heroes and villains”, below which lies the fact that it is easier to essentialize than to unravel the realistic ideosyncracies of an individual (Mazower 2004, 11). It thus is not surprising that some laud Peuckert for his post-war work in general, and his article in *die Nachbarn* in particular. Thomas Hauschild points to the journal as being the only one in the history of Volkskunde in Germany to try to do truly European work (Hauschild 2003) And Rolf-Wilhelm Brednich, in painting the initial aftermath at the Universität Göttingen immediately following World War II, highlighted Peuckert as “a scholar with integrity with a social democratic past, who was silenced by the National Socialists” (Brednich 1987a, 115). *Die Nachbarn*, in turn, so Brednich, showed the field in which direction Peuckert would continue to make forays:

“With the founding of a new Volkskunde-journal with the programmatic title ‘The Neighbors’ he already early on made a strong sign towards the directions his research was aiming at: the rehabilitation of Volkskunde as a culturally comparative science, that made connections to the big names of the past, such as Herder, the Grimm Brothers, Theodor Benfey and Johannes Bolte” (Brednich 1987a, 115-116).

Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann and Andreas Bimmer note that “[...] the Silesian Will-Erich Peuckert, the old socialist and author of a ‘Volkskunde of the Proletariat,’ made no ideological compromises through the end of the war,” and that he was a “magnet” for

the “young, post-war generation of Volkskundler” (Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 108; 116). Though they do not specifically discuss *Die Nachbarn*, they point towards his contributions in student reeducation. Kai Detlef Sievers, in turn, comments that Peuckert and Lauffer’s *Volkskunde: Quellen und Forschungen seit 1930*:

“was intended to show a picture of the development of the field at that time during which international contact to the field had been interrupted. [... T]he authors attached critical comments to the literature which had been tinted by National Socialism. As such, the volume already stands as a first contribution towards the refurbishment of Volkskunde’s disciplinary history” (Sievers 1991, 15).

And Wayland Hand’s comment about Peuckert’s work tending towards “a broadly European orientation” dually reinforces the argument that Peuckert wanted to Europeanize and internationalize (Hand 1952, 431).

On the surface, Peuckert emerges as a critical figure of the post-war landscape, until one recalls that he had faded from the intellectual landscape just years after his death, a sign of the brevity of intellectual memory (Zimmermann 1973). But how can one evaluate Peuckert, and “what would a history [of the field] look like where these roles [of hero and villain] were blurred and confused?” (Mazower 2004, 11). After all, though Peuckert’s article in *Die Nachbarn* was the first published response to National Socialist Volkskunde in the field, it also helped obviate the need for others to address the subject, putting Peuckert into an ambivalent position: an individual with aspirations for grandeur and change, stuck within institutional boundaries and his own limitations.

Though the article in *Die Nachbarn* did gloss over the past, Peuckert himself did not ignore the years of National Socialist rule. He produced and wrote letters, held lectures, and edited a newly-founded journal, all of which denounced and tried to make a clean break with the past. Most of Peuckert’s rhetoric also pushed for something

“new”, vaguely defined. What are we to make of these attempts, and were they successful? On a larger scale, did the discipline as a whole rally around Peuckert’s call? Given the more cogently outlined “path” in *Die Nachbarn*, the focus remains on the outcome of Peuckert’s internationalization efforts.

Die Nachbarn never quite lived up to the high standard that Peuckert called for in 1948; perhaps only three issues were every published because of the articles in it, or because of Peuckert’s declining health. As one outside reviewer noted: “We hope that future volumes will be published in closer succession and that, as promised, more attention will be paid to professions other than farming” (Ettlinger 1955, 310). Though the contributors to the journal did hail from around Europe -- including Louis Bromfield, Jonas Balys, H. Kothe, Bruno Schweizer, Oskar Loorits, Maximillian Braun, Josef Szövérfy, Gertrud Albrecht, Oskar v. Zaborsky, Richard Weber, Heinrich Hempel, Jan de Vries, Jaque R. W. Sinninghe, Alfred Cammann, Christiane Agricola, P.T. Meertens, Robert C. Hekker, and J. de Kleyn -- the articles themselves did not predominately deal with expressive culture which crossed borders. Nor did the comparative thrust which underlay Peuckert’s call come to fruition in *Die Nachbarn*.

Though the *topics* were international, only a rare article discussed comparative questions of border contact and interaction, shared tradition, and the spread and travel of expressive culture beyond national borders. Instead, Lithuanian fairy-lore was published alongside Johnny Appleseed, and even an ethnographic/ethno-social description of Peuckert’s vacation town and war-retreat Haasel found its way into the journal (Bromfield 1948; Balys 1948; Albrecht 1948). Regional legends, too, were published indiscriminately, with a focus on legends from southern Germany (v. Zaborsky 1954; Weber 1954). Though perhaps legends from around Germany and

Europe -- even a focus on *oicotypes*, regional variants -- would have fed into Peuckert's charter for the journal, little gives indication that Peuckert's colleagues followed his call to arms. Their work was only "international" as such by virtue of the side-by-side article placement.

In fact, besides Jaque R.W. Sinninghe's "The Last Battle in the Limburgian Border region," Hekker's "House (type) research in the Dutch-German Border Region," and de Kleyn's "Potters and their Daily-use Ware in the 19th Century Border Region," only articles by Peuckert himself actively tried to glance across borders, though even these did so only in name (Sinninghe 1962; Hekker 1962; de Kleyn 1962). Even Peuckert's inspiringly titled "*Grenzfragen*" (Border Questions), published in 1962 failed to "glance across the borders of its own Volk" and study "the paths from one Volk to other Volk groups" (Peuckert 1948, 4-5). Peuckert rather set out to take stock of several international Volkskunde projects. As a case-study, Peuckert compared the particular atlas projects of several European countries -- including the *Volkskunde-Atlas voor Nederland en Vlaams-Belgie* -- to their German and Swiss and Swedish counterparts. One can only wonder if he realized the irony in comparing mapping projects which aimed to cartographically represent regional, even national "culture" as a way to try and think beyond national borders. Yet by attempting to show crossovers between Dutch and German legends, Peuckert at least made an effort to show that expressive culture does not stop at borders (Peuckert 1962, 155-158).

After an aside about *Gemeinschaft*, community, and the question of mass culture, Peuckert turned once again to questions of "neighbors" who share borders: "I'm solely concerned with the zone of contact between the neighbors and the German Volk, with the contact, influence, [...] one through the other" (Peuckert 1962, 161).

And though such pleasing rhetoric seems to match with Peuckert's set goals, there was only limited follow-up exemplifying cross-contact or influence. In book-review form, Peuckert highlighted different recently published works which looked at expressive culture of the Western border regions, including his own *Bremer Sagen* (1961) (albeit acknowledging that Bremen was in no way a border town), and his *Deutsche Sagen I. Niederdeutschland* (1961). In so doing, Peuckert sought to bring attention to current scholarship; thus, Paul Schlosser's *Bachern Sagen* was praised as "exactly that what your yearbook and the scholars associated with it are looking for: a source book of materials from the German border and regions of transition" (ibid., 166). Why Peuckert was unable to get Schlosser to write for *Die Nachbarn* directly is unclear; individuals such as Schlosser only came to voice in Peuckert's review of their work. Peuckert's article only gave insight into the type of work the journal *hoped* to publish, though it never actually published such work.

The second and third volumes of *Die Nachbarn* include similar articles. There is a sense, by the time the third volume is published in 1962, that Peuckert was aware of faltering response to his original charter, for he was quick to reemphasize the original goals of the journal while at the same time underscoring the difficulty of such a task:

"The task raised by this journal, that is, to talk about the relationship between Germans and their neighbors and vice versa [...] automatically excludes a whole number of topics, though not the legend and the Märchen. Especially these [...] allow neighborly relations to become visible" (Peuckert 1962, 173).

Judging by *Die Nachbarn*'s publication history -- moreover, by the subject matters of most of its articles -- the journal remained Peuckert's brainchild. While he projected much hope into the journal, the majority of its articles did not follow though in spirit or letter.

* * *

Despite criticism, one should not lose sight of what Peuckert did accomplish:

1. Peuckert was the first *Volkskundler* to respond directly to Maus' article, and the only one to do so for two decades. As such, he was part of the early phase of *Volkskunde's* *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, the majority of which would take place in the 1960's and 1970's. Compared to other fields such as history, *Volkskunde* addressed its past relatively early.
2. Peuckert made active attempts to draw a line between the war and the post-war years, in letters, in lectures, and publication.
3. Peuckert offered up a plan for the field, a new "path" for *Volkskunde* as a way to make a clean break with its past. Roughly conceived, he hoped that a *more* internationalized field could avoid some of the problems that a nationalized field had run amuck of. His discussion of "border" work, too, and "zones of contact" came earlier than most in the field.

Even the "simple" act of calling for change was important, for who else would have been in a position to do so? Recall that Peuckert was the first *Volkskundler* to hold a chair for many years following the war. The critiques are further mitigated if one takes a few steps back and acknowledges how hard it is to do truly comparative work. Even today, "international scholarship" by that name often remains a simple juxtapositioning of objects or lore from one country next to objects or lore from another. As an example stands the 2001 issue of the *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, Germany's most prestigious *Volkskunde* journal, devoted to Halloween in a European context. It has contributions from Patricia Lysaght (Dublin), Martine Segalen (Paris), Nicoletta Diasio (Strasbourg); Fabio Mugneini (Siena), Josefina Roma (Barcelona), Ane Ohrvik (Oslo), Agneta Lilja (Uppsala), John Helsloot (Amsterdam), Bernhard Tschofen (Vienna), Gabriela Muri und Ueli Gyr (Zurich), Heinz Schilling (Frankfurt am Main), Alois Döring (Bonn), and Sabine Doering-Manteuffel (Augsburg); despite the mix of contributors from all over Europe, the articles are not internally comparative. Instead,

the volume is “European” by virtue of the articles’ place, one next to the other.

And regardless of the limited publication history and questionable success of *Die Nachbarn*, it was a very early endeavor trying to be international, predating other, similar efforts by almost a decade. By comparison, the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR) held its first post-war meeting in Kiel and Copenhagen in 1959; alongside was published its journal *Fabula*, whose first edition came out in 1957. *Fabula* is considered to be the leading journal for comparative narrative research, reflecting part of its international charter in its subtitles: *Zeitschrift für Erzählforschung*, *Journal of Folktale Studies*, and *Revue d'Etudes sur le Conte Populaire*. And *Ethnologia Europaea*, too, coming out of Scandinavia under the guidance of Peuckert’s colleague Sigurd Erixon (1888-1968), was only founded in 1966, a journal which hoped to work against the linguistic parochialism of national scholarship. Its tasks in the 21st century, under the editor Orvar Löfgren, are to break “[...] down not only the barriers which divide research into Europe from general ethnology, but also the barriers between the various national schools within the continent.”⁵⁴

Zones of contact, the idea of looking across borders, and the idea of neighbors all involve the juxtaposing of two (or more) separate entities next to one another. Border zones and neighborliness, both, refer to points of convergence and conflict, and connote overlap and contact. Though not outlined with any particular plan in mind, Peuckert’s work on ideas of zones of contact was also a relatively early stance on the concept. In the United States, Richard Bauman and Roger D. Abrahams’ edited volume “*And Other Neighborly Names*”: *Social Process and Cultural Image in Texas Folklore* (1981) harkens back to Américo Paredes, in whose “work recognition of the generative power

of borders and other contact zones assumes really central importance” (Bauman and Abrahams 1981, 5). Paredes, and, by extension, Bauman, Abrahams, and their co-authors, were the first to toy with the concepts in the United States, and it is Abrahams who pushed for the further study of display events as a reorientation away from the idea of closed communities (Abrahams 1981, 319-320). Two decades later, Galit Hasan-Rokem’s *Tales of the Neighborhood: Jewish Narrative Dialogues in Late Antiquity* (2003) once again referred to the notion of neighborhood; she concurs:

“Neighbors have earned astonishingly little scholarly attention. Their connection is, however, the socio-spatial tie that constitutes the closest relationship beyond the family unit, and in patriarchal societies neighbors very often also belong to the same family” (Hasan-Rokem 2003, 8).

Perhaps, then, there is also something to be said about Peuckert’s *Die Nachbarn* being “ahead of its time” as one reason for the difficulties in keeping the journal up and running, or for finding people to publish in it. If other scholars were simply not ready for its agenda of doing comparative and/or international research under the banner of reformulating the discipline, perhaps Peuckert simply had no audience. Or, in turn, perhaps it was his flamboyant character and his sense of self-importance (“the pope of German Volkskunde”) that made it difficult for others to want to work with him.⁵⁵

* * *

Few of Peuckert’s efforts seem to have had immediate impact on the discipline. There were no other responses for decades to Maus, and on a disciplinary-wide scale, there was limited if extant focus on international issues during these years, nothing to match the scale and tenor of what Peuckert had been calling for. At most, Volkskunde as a discipline saw an increased interest in the expressive culture of *Flüchtlinge*, the refugees that had fled from formerly occupied German territories upon the advance of

the allies or the Russian troops (Schenk 1988). The return of the Sudetengermans to Germany after the end of World War II -- those Germans, approximately 3,000,000, who were living in Czechoslovakia when its national borders were drawn in 1818/19 -- or those coming from Silesia, triggered an interest from within *Volkskunde* (Wolf-Beraneck 1977). But instead of focusing on the displacement of individuals, its effects on expressive culture and the socio-cultural ramifications of leaving a home, *Volkskundler* saw their job only as documenting “the folklore of the currents of *Heimatsverwiesene* and *Flüchtlinge*, to collect and save” -- a true salvage ethnography, with a German population at its centerpoint (Schenk 1988, 279).

The emergent picture of Peuckert is of an individual replete with ideas, who tried hard and ran into obstacles, and whose attempts were met with contemporary reticence. But might not the continual back and forth be a comment on the difficulty of the task that Peuckert set out to do? Can internationalization really be held up as a dichotomy to nationalization, and is this fruitful? Is internationalization a panacea for solving the problems linked to *Volkskunde*'s disciplinary epistemology as a field interested in the nation? Especially since scholars today are *still* struggling to denationalize the field, is it any wonders that Peuckert's attempts did not always have the outcome he hoped they would have?

To return to Löfgren: our disciplinary heritage “...makes it [especially] crucial for us to [continue to] pay close attention to the national embedding of research” (Löfgren 1999, 79). Given the struggle which continued through the 1990's and into the 21st century to denationalize research, several salient questions remain: What would an inter- or transnational *Volkskunde* or folkloristics even look like or consist of? Would it simply be an increased “glance across borders”? Is it even *possible* for a discipline with

such concrete roots in Romantic Nationalism, that then saw politicization on another level throughout the 20th century, to attempt international, even transnational work? In other words, is it part of disciplinary identity (and therefore disciplinary history) whether or not the field can expand past its original horizons or borders?

Peuckert may have been looking in the right direction when he returned to the scholars who we laud as the founders of the discipline. In using *Die Nachbarn* to return to the Brothers Grimm, to Johann Gottfried Herder, to Theodor Benfey, and to Johannes Bolte, Peuckert was trying to reinvigorate a tradition of cultural comparison which assumed a certain universalism. The awareness of a human capacity to express itself culturally and artfully, united by a creative impulse and defined by specific output also remains a strong basis for an internationalized field. In fact, related fields such as anthropology have, at the end of the 20th century, made a renewed claim for once again being comparative. In calling for a reexamination of comparison, Andre Gingrich and Richard G. Fox's *Anthropology, by Comparison* argues that if scholars

“[...] are simply aware of the comparative element inherent in human cognition; if they appreciate the implicit ‘weak’ comparative aspect of any kind of anthropological method and practice; or if they explicitly pursue the ‘strong’, epistemological paths of new, pluralistic procedures: It is *by comparison*, and not without it, that anthropologists will find answers to the questions they ask” (Fox and Gingrich 2002, 21).

The return to disciplinary founders was also an acknowledgment that the field was historically, and continued to be, simultaneously a national and international discipline, which others continue to discuss into the beginning of the 21st century (Honko 1990; Klein 2001; Schacker 2003). And this, perhaps, is the necessary starting point, and one which Peuckert *did* make. The field, so Peuckert,

“[...] was] national insofar as it puts this or that Volk at its focus and

poses its questions around that Volk. [And it was ...] international insofar as no Volk exists alone and for itself; every Volk only exists with, next to, and through the other Völker of the earth” (Peuckert 1948a, 3).

Realizing, as so many others have, that the field by its very definition and disciplinary identity was and is both grounded in a national and an international outlook is a useful heuristic standpoint from which to try and affect change. Instead of dichotomizing, creating the impossible situation of having a field be *either* a national one, or *only* an international one, the very basic concept that it can and is both allows for greater theoretical steps.

To paraphrase Adam Kuper, Peuckert “began with the problems” of an overly nationalized discipline. Seeing the difficulties his field was facing, Peuckert outlined paths for change. Though they were not immediately picked up on, nor specifically referenced in work that would follow, they were the best solutions Peuckert could suggest at a time when change could not be tolerated. His attempts are of import not only for the historiography of the field, but for its future. Could another journal like *Die Nachbarn* be founded in the 21st century, and would it meet with more success? What is it about Scandinavia in particular that has allowed for *Ethnologia Europaea*? The answer to some of these questions have the potential to push further, and Peuckert’s statement remains true even now: “A Volkskunde that limits itself to its own Volk and their expressive culture is nonsense” (Peuckert, 1948a, 4).

CHAPTER THREE ENDNOTES

¹ What follows is but a limited selection of relevant sources on Volkskunde and National Socialism. Refer to Wolfgang Jacobeit, et.al., *Völkische Wissenschaft: Gestalten und Tendenzen der deutschen und österreichischen Volkskunde in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Wien: Böhlau, 1994), 633-717 for a more complete bibliography.

cf. e.g., Abschied. 1970. *Abschied vom Volksleben*. (Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 1970); H. Bausinger, "Volksideologie und Volksforschung. Zur nationalsozialistischen Volkskunde." *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 61 (1965): 177-204; H. Bausinger, "Kritik der Tradition. Anmerkungen zur Situation der Volkskunde." *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 65 (1969): 232-250; H. Bausinger, "Konsequentes Extrem. Völkische Wissenschaft." In *Volkskunde: Von der Altertumforschung zur Kulturanalyse* (Berlin: Carl Habel Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1971), 61-73; H. Bausinger, "Volkskunde und Volkstumsarbeit im Nationalsozialismus." In *Volkskunde und Nationalsozialismus. Referate und Diskussionen einer Tagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde. München, 23. bis 25. Oktober 1986*, edited by H. Gerndt (München: Münchener Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 1987); O. Bockhorn, "Wiener Volkskunde 1938-1945." In Gerndt 1987, 229-237; R. W. Brednich, "Das Weigelsche Sinnbildarchiv in Göttingen. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Ideologiekritik der nationalsozialistischen Volkskunde." *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 81 (1985): 22-38; R. W. Brednich, "Die Volkskunde an der Universität Göttingen 1938-1945." In Gerndt 1987, 109-111; R.W. Brednich, "Volkskunde - die völkische Wissenschaft von Blut und Boden." In *Die Universität Göttingen unter dem Nationalsozialismus. Das verdrängte Kapitel ihrer 250jährigen Geschichte*, edited by H. Becker et.al. (München: K.G. Saur, 1987), 313-320; W. Brückner, *Falkensteiner Protokolle*. (Frankfurt: Institute für Volkskunde, 1971; W. Brückner, "'Volkskunde und Nationalsozialismus.' Zum Beispiel Mathes Ziegler." *Bayerische Blätter für Volkskunde* 13 (1986): 189-192; W. Brückner, "Nachträge und Anfragen zum Nationalsozialismus." In *Bayerische Blätter für Volkskunde* 14 (1987): 28-32; W. Brückner, "1988. Ein Jahr der NS-Forschung." *Bayerische Blätter für Volkskunde* 15 (1988): 19-23; C. Daxelmüller, "Nationalsozialistisches Kulturverständnis und das Ende der jüdischen Volkskunde." In H. Gerndt 1987, 149-167; J. R. Dow and H. Lixfeld, editors. *German Volkskunde, A decade of Theoretical Confrontation, Debate, and Reorientation (1967-1977)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); J. R. Dow and H. Lixfeld, "National Socialist Folklore and Overcoming the Past in the Federal Republic of Germany." *Asian Folklore Studies* 50 (1991): 117-153; J. R. Dow and H. Lixfeld, "Nationalsozialistische Volkskunde und Vergangenheitsbewältigung." In *Völkische Wissenschaft: Gestalten und Tendenzen der deutschen und österreichischen Volkskunde in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, edited by Wolfgang Jacobeit, et.al. (Wien: Böhlau, 1994), 341-366; W. Emmerich, *Zur Kritik der Volkstumsideologie*. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971); H. Gerndt, "Volkskundliche Arbeitstagung in Falkenstein." *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 67 (1971): 161-168; O. Holzapfel, "Das Deutsche Volksliedarchiv im Dritten Reich. In Gerndt 1987, 95-102; O. Holzapfel, "The German Folk Song Archiv Freiburg i. Br. in the Third Reich." *The Journal of Musicological Research* 11 (1991): 189-200; W. Jacobeit, "Die Auseinandersetzung mit der NS-Zeit in der DDR-Volkskunde." In Gerndt 1987, 301-318; W. Jacobeit and U. Mohrmann, "Zur Geschichte der volkskundlichen Lehre unter Adolf Spamer an der Berliner Universität (1933-1945)." *Ethnographisch-Archäologische Zeitschrift* 23 (1982): 283-298; U. Jeggle, "L'ethnologie de l'Allemagne sous le régime nazi. Un regard sur la Volkskunde deux générations après." *Ethnologie française* 18 (1988): 114-119; H. Lixfeld, "Die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft und die Dachverbände der deutschen Volkskunde im Dritten Reich." In Gerndt 1987, 69-82; H. Lixfeld, "Mathes Ziegler und die Erzählforschung des Amts Rosenberg. Ein Beitrag zur Ideologie der nationalsozialistischen Volkskunde." *Rheinisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 26 (1987): 37-59; H. Lixfeld, "The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and the Umbrella Organizations of German *Volkskunde* during the Third Reich." *Asian Folklore Studies* 50 (1991): 95-116; H. Lixfeld, "Institutionalisierung und Instrumentalisierung der deutschen Volkskunde zu Beginn des Dritten Reiches." In Jacobeit et.al. 1994, 139-174; H. Lixfeld, "Rosenbergs 'braune' und Himmlers 'schwarze' Volkskunde im Kampf um die Vorherrschaft." In Jacobeit et.al. 1994, 255-331; H. Maus, "Zur Situation der deutschen Volkskunde." In Gerndt 1988, 25-40; W. Mieder, "Proverbs of Nazi Germany. The Promulgation of Anti-Semitism and Stereotypes through Folklore." *Journal of American Folklore* 95 (1982): 435-464; H. Strohbach, "Positionen und Grenzen der 'kritischen Volkskunde' in der BRD. Bemerkungen zu Wolfgang Emmerichs Faschismuskritik." *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde und Kulturgeschichte* 16 (1973): 45-91.

² The German names of the umbrella organizations were as follows: *Volkskunde Verband deutscher Vereine für Volkskunde*; *Abteilung Volkskunde der Reichsgemeinschaft für deutsche Volksforschung*; *Forschungs- und Lehrgemeinschaft 'das Ahnenerbe'*; and *Dienststelle des Beauftragten des Führers für die Überwachung der gesamten geistigen und weltanschaulichen Schulung und Erziehung der Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiterpartei*.

³ In the rest of Germany, in fact, it was precisely after Hitler's *Machtergreifung* that *Volkskunde* started to have a presence at universities. Rolf Wilhelm Brednich's chapter on the history of *Volkskunde* in Göttingen (Brednich 1987a) proved invaluable for this discussion. While other works discuss the state of academia in Göttingen during World War II generically (Becker *et al.*, 1987; Ericksen 2000), his is the only article I could find that specifically targets *Volkskunde*. See Rolf Wilhelm Brednich, "Die *Volkskunde* an der Universität Göttingen 1938-1945," in *Volkskunde und Nationalsozialismus. Referate und Diskussionen einer Tagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde. München, 23. bis 25. Oktober 1986*, edited by Helge Gerndt (München: Münchener Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 1987), 109-117; Heinrich Becker, Hans Joachim Dahms, and Cornelia Wegeler, editors, *Die Universität Göttingen unter dem Nationalsozialismus. Das verdrängte Kapitel ihrer 250jährigen Geschichte* (München: K.G. Saur, 1987); Robert P. Ericksen, "Denazification at Göttingen: Negotiating the Transition from a National Socialist to a Democratic University." Presented at the International Commission for the History of Universities Colloquium, Oslo, 10th-11th August 2000, part of the 19th International Congress of Historical Sciences.

⁴ NSDAP stands for *National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei*. The Bureau of Science at the Reich- and Prussian Ministerium for Science, Education, and Popular Knowledge, in German, was called *Amt für Wissenschaft, Reichs- und Preußisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung*.

⁵ The habilitation is a necessary step in most of the German-speaking universities for receiving the title of "professor", usually in the form of a second (postdoctoral) monograph.

⁶ cf. Regina Bendix and Tatjana Eggeling, editors, *Namen und was sie bedeuten: Zur Namensdebatte im Fach Volkskunde* (Göttingen Schmerse Verlag, 2004).

⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B23, letter from Peuckert to his son, dated January 29th, 1946.

⁸ "Zur Situation der deutschen *Volkskunde*" translates as "Regarding the Situation of German *Volkskunde*."

⁹ Meier, one should note, has been shown to have been firmly entrenched in the NS-tainted *Volkskunde*. cf. e.g., Anka Oesterle, "John Meier und das SS-Ahnenerbe." In *Volkskunde und Nationalsozialismus. Referate und Diskussionen einer Tagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde. München, 23. bis 25. Oktober 1986*, edited by Helge Gerndt (München: Münchener Vereinigung für Volkskunde 1987), 83-94; Otto Holzapfel, "Das Deutsche Volksliedarchiv im Dritten Reich. In *Volkskunde und Nationalsozialismus. Referate und Diskussionen einer Tagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde. München, 23. bis 25. Oktober 1986*, edited by Helge Gerndt (München: Münchener Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 1987), 95-102; James R. Dow and Hannjost Lixfeld, "Nationalsozialistische *Volkskunde* und Vergangenheitsbewältigung." In Jacobeit *et al.*, 1994, 341-366. Meier's "Geschichte des Verband deutscher Vereine für *Volkskunde*" translates as "History of the Association of German Societies for *Volkskunde*".

¹⁰ Bausinger's publication translates as "Ideology of and Research on the Volk: About National Socialist *Volkskunde*", and Emmerich's dissertation as "Germanic Ideology of the Volk: Genesis and Criticism of Research on the Volk in the Third Reich".

¹¹ Another student of Bausinger's, Utz Jeggle, worked to counter the critiques against Emmerich. See Utz Jeggle, "Im Schatten der Vergangenheit. Eine Erwiderung auf die volkskundlichen Emmerich-Rezensionen." *Tübinger Korrespondenzblatt* 1 (1970): 5-10.

¹² Cod. Ms. Peuckert B19.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.* Section 1, version 1, Politische Mitgliedschaft, questions c, d and e.

¹⁵ Akademie der Künste, Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281, letter from Peuckert to Maria Hauptmann, end of June 1933. Quote in original: "Meine Jungs und Mädels haben nur noch Politik im Kopf, [...]. Ich hab Sorge, was daraus mal werden wird."

¹⁶ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B17, letter from Peuckert to Gertrud, dated February 23rd, 1946. Italics added.

¹⁷ Peuckert, also toyed with notions of regionalism during these years -- in works such as the republished books on Silesia (*Schlesien: Biographie der Landschaft* and *Schlesisch*), or the collections of tales from eastern Germany, such as *Ostdeutsches Sagenbüchlein* or *Ostdeutsches Märchenbüchlein*. Yet these works never in conjunction with explicit notions of disciplinary reformulation; in fact the books on Silesia can be seen more in the light of the preservation of a Silesian identity, or even a salvage ethnography of sorts. By focusing very specifically on a narrowly defined geographic region in Germany, such as Lower Saxony, the claim can be made that Peuckert was trying to draw attention away from a national corpus of materials; yet, as aforementioned, regionalism as such never became an explicit attempt to counter nationalism, never a voiced solution to the Nazi years. See Will-Erich Peuckert, *Schlesien: Biographie der Landschaft*. New edition of *Schwarzer Adler unterm Silbermond* (Hamburg: Claassen & Goverts, 1950); Will-Erich Peuckert, *Schlesisch* (München: R. Piper & Co., 1950); Will-Erich Peuckert, *Ostdeutsches Sagenbüchlein* (Hamburg: Flemmings, 1951); Will-Erich Peuckert, *Ostdeutsches Märchenbüchlein* (Hamburg: Flemmings, 1951).

¹⁸ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B17, letters from Peuckert to Gertrud, dated January 27th, 1946 and February 9th, 1946.

¹⁹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B23.

²⁰ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B17, letter from Peuckert to Gertrud, dated February 27th, 1946.

Underscore in the original.

²¹ *ibid.*, letter from Peuckert to Gertrud, undated, estimated to be late February 1946.

²² *ibid.*, postcard from Peuckert to Gertrud, dated May 20th, 1946.

²³ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A127, letter from Peuckert to Zwi Horowitz, dated January 14th, 1968.

²⁴ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B17, letter from Peuckert to Gertrud, dated January 28th, 1946.

²⁵ *ibid.*, letter from Peuckert to Gertrud, dated February 1st, 1946.

²⁶ *ibid.*, letters from Peuckert to Gertrud, dated January 31st, 1946 (first two quotes), and February 5th, 1946.

²⁷ *ibid.*, letter from Peuckert to Gertrud, dated the 3rd and 4th of February, 1946. Italics added.

²⁸ *ibid.*, letter from Peuckert to Gertrud, dated February 5th, 1946. Italics added.

²⁹ *ibid.*, letter from Peuckert to Gertrud, dated February 21st, 1946. Abbreviations in the original. Italics added.

³⁰ The discussion of Volkskunde's social contributions reminisces of Chapter 2 and the discussion of Peuckert's *Volkskunde des Proletariats*.

³¹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert E22, 5-9. Quote in original: "Zuerst: Vk is eine Wissenschaft ist Forschung nicht Vorbereitung zum Staatsdienst [...]."

³² *ibid.*, 11-17.

³³ Cod. Ms. Peuckert E22, 27. Underscore and abbreviation in the original. 1 Corinthians 13 (King James Version) reads as follows: “1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. 4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

It appears as if Peuckert is drawing a parallel between his lecture and the biblical verse: his argument that Volkskunde as knowledge, without the social component, is dead, mirrors the verse in the bible that without charity, any talent, speech, gifts are worthless.

Quote in original (original spacing not reproduced here): “Alle Vk. mündet in den Bezirk sozialen Verstehens, sozialen Helfens. Vk. ist nicht nur Wissen um Erntebräuche u. Hochzeitsbräuche u. Kulturstufen. Wissenschaft, die nur “weiß”, ist tot. Und die Vk. will u. muß ins Soziale wirken. I. Kor. 13!”

³⁴ Though not voiced as a means of reform and renewed focus -- that is, not explicitly as a plan of action -- this call to do research on refugees mirrors the work of others who concurred that this was a new venue of research that should not be neglected.

³⁵ Cod. Ms. Peuckert E22, 19. Peuckert never himself conducted research about this topic.

³⁶ *ibid.* Underscore in the original. Quote in original: “um verlorenes Land wiederzugewinnen.”

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ *ibid.*, 33-34.

³⁹ *ibid.*, 42. Underscore in the original. Quote in original (original spacing not reproduced here): Er muß ein echter Mensch sein [...] Einer, der was zu sagen hat. Werden Sie etwas. Werden Sie ein Kerl, ein ganzer Kerl! Das ist des Rätsels Lösung. Es ist die Aufgabe die Ihnen gestellt ist. [...] Sie können sich ihr nicht entziehen.

⁴⁰ Cod. Ms. Peuckert E22, 50-51. Underscore and abbreviations in the original. Quote in original (original spacing not reproduced here): “Hier aber Kenntnis des Volkes Bedingung d.h. Kenntnis des ganzen Volkes nicht nur Bauern. Also eine Bestimmung des Begriffes “Volk”. die das ganze umfaßt das die eine Voraussetzung, die Vk. des Bauern, Bürger, Proletariat usw. Eine Gegenwarts Vk. Es interessiert nicht der hist. Gang [...] sondern der gegenwärtige Zustand.”

⁴¹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert E22, 61. Underscore and abbreviations in the original. Quote in original (original spacing not reproduced here): “Eine Gesundung kann erst erfolgen, wenn die Krankheit nicht vom Kurpfuscher u. Dilettanten, sondern vom Arzt 1. richtig diagnostiziert wird u. 2. die richtige Medizin gefunden wird. Sie sind die Diagnostiker u. Ärzte. [...] Seien Sie [...] seine Heiler!”

⁴² Cod. Ms. Peuckert A111. Letter from Gerhart Heilfurth to Will-Erich Peuckert, dated October 31st, 1968.

⁴³ *ibid.*, dated October 13th, 1968.

⁴⁴ cf. Deutsches Volkslied Archiv Freiburg, Korrespondenzenband 55, e.g., letter from Meier to Peuckert, dated August 10th, 1935

Dow and Lixfeld review some of Meier’s complicit behavior, which clearly show his culpability (and therefore the uselessness of using him as a counter-argument to Maus). See James R. Dow and Hanjost Lixfeld, “Nationalsozialistische Volkskunde und Vergangenheitsbewältigung,” in Jacobeit, et.al. 1994, 343-345.

⁴⁵ They picked the name Folklore Fellows because it was easily translated into several major languages: Folklore Fellows; Folkloristischer Forschungsbund, and Fédération des Folkloristes, to name a few.

⁴⁶ See Cod. Ms. Peuckert A14, A24A, A34, A38, A40, A45, A47, A61A, A82A, A89, A99, A1000, A111, A140, A151, A191, A194, A201, A202, A212, A217, A225, A254, A267, A280, A355, and A373.

⁴⁷ Other countries, particularly those in Africa or South America, would have been studied under the auspices of *Völkerkunde*.

⁴⁸ Be that as it may, *Die Grosse Wende* was written during the war, and though it most likely did on some levels incorporate Peuckert's problems with *Völkunde's* complicity to the National Socialist Regime, it is outside the scope of this dissertation.

⁴⁹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A153, correspondence with Felix Karlinger. Letter from Peuckert to Karlinger, dated February 14th, 1969.

⁵⁰ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A295, correspondence with Bruno Schier. Undated letter from Peuckert to Schier. It is noteworthy that Schier had a strong career during the years of Nazi dictatorship. For more information on Schier, see also Hannjost Lixfeld's "Rosenbergs 'braune' und Himmlers 'schwarze' *Völkunde* im Kampf um die Vorherrschaft", in Jacobeit et.al. 1994, 255-331.

⁵¹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A153, correspondence with Felix Karlinger.

⁵² *ibid.* Letter from Karlinger to Peuckert, dated February 10th, 1969.

⁵³ *cf.* Cod. Ms. Peuckert A252. Letter from Peuckert to Ozawa, dated March 7th, 1968.

⁵⁴ See <http://www.mtp.hum.ku.dk/tidsskrift.asp?issn=0425-4597>, accessed March 22nd, 2007.

⁵⁵ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B47, version 4.

CHAPTER FOUR
Scripting the Self and Negotiating Feedback:
Will-Erich Peuckert's Witchcraft-Experiment
and the Production of Knowledge and Scholarly Identity

“We will hardly see anything frozen or complete; but we will see how something is created. We see the creation itself, the bubbling in the vats, out of which the completed blocks are poured. That, to me, seems much more intriguing and instructive than doing a project about something already complete”
(Peuckert 1931, 179).

“A story that was the subject of every variety of misrepresentation, not only by those who then lived but likewise in succeeding times: so true is it that all transactions of preeminent importance are wrapped in doubt and obscurity; while some hold for certain facts the most precarious hearsays, others turn facts into falsehood; and both are exaggerated by posterity”
(Attributed to Tacitus, *Annals*, Book III).

As a student in Breslau at the Friedrich-Wilhelm Universität in the 1920's, Peuckert tried to investigate hands-on the claim that 16th and 17th century witches had experienced flight. This interest in the occult, in magic, in witchcraft, and in an experiential approach to scholarship would remain with him until his death in 1969, peaking and ebbing throughout his career.¹

Using recipes found in Giambattista Porta's (1535-1615) *Magia naturalis* (1558), the then barely 25 year old Peuckert and a friend purportedly mixed together a so-called witches' unguent, a salve comprised of animal fat and both harmless as well as poisonous herbs; they then smeared the salve all over their genitalia and their armpits -- porous areas of the skin which would, so they conjectured, facilitate absorption and

thus the flight experience they had read about.² The apparent result was a 36 hour experience which involved the feeling of flying, vivid sexual hallucinations, as well as a massive hangover the following day:

“Ghosts danced before my eyes and made faces. Then suddenly I felt as if I was flying through the earthly atmosphere, and on a broom at that. [...] I was a participant in an orgiastic festival, a witches sabbath of faces, [and] colors, [...] all creating an indescribable confusion....”³

While Peuckert contributed not insignificantly to the epistemological development of *Volkskunde* in Germany with such work as his *Volkskunde des Proletariats*, his work on German and international legends, and his post-war attempts to denationalize the field, he is not solely remembered for these contributions. Instead, this experiment with psychotropic substances in particular remains a primary descriptive function whenever Peuckert is orally discussed. Why is he remembered for the unguent experiment, an event that did not contribute to disciplinary development? More importantly, what can we learn about the process of knowledge production from this event and its subsequent reworkings?

There is more to this story than just the experiment and experience of a college student. For one, that college student would later hold the first professorship in *Volkskunde* in Germany after the war, a position of eminence in the field. For another, an extant wealth of meta-narratives gives ample room for analysis:

1. The media (newspaper, radio, and television) latched onto the experiment, sensationalizing it, and keeping it in the public eye.
2. His contemporary colleagues hardly reacted.
3. The public sent many letters to Peuckert, requesting the recipe, seeking his help with their supernatural problems.
4. He was called as an expert witness in a “witchcraft trial” held in the town of Braunschweig in 1956, in no small part because of his sustained academic interest in the occult and because of this experimentation.

5. Peuckert himself could not shake the experience, scripting it repeatedly until his death, both in letters to friends and colleagues and in autobiographical accounts.

What makes this constellation of events and narratives most important, however, is the fact that we have the unique situation of a man whose interests did *not* always mesh with the discipline he held a chair in; whose work had tremendous popular response from the general public and media; and whose work was not always taken seriously by his colleagues. And we have the unique situation that all of these parallel points of view are textually documented. In other words, we can see how Peuckert oscillated between the attempt to be rigorously academic and between writing about the experience as one might a newspaper report or a novel. The way Peuckert's thought processes were impacted by feedback both from within the discipline and from the media and private individuals becomes apparent.

The examination of these narratives and meta-narratives offers a unique look at the way in which knowledge is produced at the nexus of popular response, scholarly feedback, personal interest, and disciplinary epistemology. At their intersection are questions of belief and of academic legitimation, the epistemology of the discipline of *Volkskunde*, notions of expertise, and a need to script and re-script the self. At the same time, the notion of Peuckert as a boundary-breaker resurfaces, a continued drive on the part of one individual scholar to shape his own, particular vision of *Volkskunde*.

What is more, Peuckert's own narratives about the event contain something perhaps much more important than a remembered experience: they contain the seed of a methodology, grounded in the *experiential*. Though such a methodology was never explicitly defined, he wanted to try the unguent to see if "one could have the witch experience".⁴ Moreover, it was upon reading about the effects of the unguent that

Peuckert realized: “one would just have to try it all out”.⁵ Though it was a methodology which remained mostly undefined -- its parameters were not spelled out, nor, explicitly, its purpose -- one can see that he was using experience and tactility as a novel way to gain access to otherwise unobtainable data. It also shows that Peuckert did possess the conviction that his work had an intrinsic academic value.

The veracity of Peuckert’s unguent experiment and its details are not at stake here, nor is it useful to ask if he experienced what he claims he did: truth is as much of a constructed category as is knowledge. Instead, focusing on the aftermath of the experiment and the life of its own it took once news had leaked to the press and the public opens up a new vision to understand Peuckert in the framework of a post-World War II *Volkskunde*, and begs the answer to a series of questions:

1. How did the media, the academy and the public react?
2. Why did Peuckert spend so much time working on a subject which did not find much resonance among his colleagues?
3. What does the constant re-scripting of one event indicate about a scholar, his work, and his personality?

To answer these questions, this chapter looks at *Volkskunde*’s disciplinary history to show the discrepancy between Peuckert’s idiosyncratic interests and the discipline’s post-war trajectory. Next, the reactions from the media are presented to show some of the external influences which impacted Peuckert’s work; similarly, reactions from his peers and from the public are discussed. Thirdly, Peuckert’s own texts, which scripted and re-scripted the event in parallel, are presented through an examination of his articles, his television appearance, his court testimony, letters to friends, and his unpublished autobiographical memoirs. We can use these written results of an embodied experience to understand Peuckert as a person and as a scholar, as they offer his own perspectives on an event, the story that he wished to tell. This

story changed over time, and it is these changes which drive the remainder of the chapter, offering insight into the production of knowledge.

Disciplinary Epistemology and History

The ways in which National Socialist ideology infiltrated a discipline which already had a nationalist orientation has, over the course of the past four decades, become a rich topic of study in Germany, focusing on the interplay between ideology and institutional practice, and on the racist proclivities that sprang out of a profession (cf. e.g., Cocchiara 1971; Dow and Lixfeld 1986; Dow and Lixfeld 1994; Bausinger, Jeggle, Korff and Tschofen 1999). Peuckert's unguent experiment and the subsequent unfolding of meta-narratives *about* the event need to be viewed in this context, which simultaneously shaped Peuckert's work on *Die Nachbarn* and his attempts to denationalize the field.

In response to the scholarship of the Nazi era, post-war Volkskunde research in Germany returned to static analyses, research interests not unlike those that arose during the discipline's professionalization in the late 19th century. Volkskunde reverted to examinations that were descriptive and classificatory in nature:

“In the first two decades after the war the discipline was not characterized ... by a departure towards new [...] arenas of research, but by a retreat back to traditional positions and eager work on the data that had been collected over long periods of time. It was clear that [scholars] were happy to be rid of the bombastic ideological superstructure of the national socialist era” (Bausinger 1999, 298).

In stark contrast to previously stressed Germanic continuity, change became a positive area of research, processes of diffusion were highlighted, and song and myth were seen as exemplary forms to underscore human creativity, not the roots of a German spirit

(ibid.). As Bausinger notes, “[t]his sober ... work was sort of freeing” (ibid.).

As a way to deal with the Nazi past and to begin anew, universities also came under scrutiny, often needing reform, guidance and an overhaul of their infrastructures and faculties. Peuckert, promoted to chair of Göttingen’s Volkskunde department in 1951, was implicitly charged to be a reformer who would reestablish the discipline on cleaner foundations: “The discipline has been bled dry, and needs loving care from a fruitful pedagogue” (Brednich and Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 29; Brednich 1987, 115).⁶ Although, comparatively, fairly little long-term ideological damage was done at the Universität Göttingen during World War II -- in fact, the library of materials on German and National Socialist Volkskunde that Eugen Mattiat had gathered was destroyed in an explosion before the end of the war -- there *were* students who had been educated in a climate which believed in racial superiority by faculty “[... which] included Nazi party members, stormtroopers, SS officers, and many individuals whose careers had been based partly or even primarily upon their support of the National Socialist worldview” (Ericksen 2000, 4-5). These were students who needed to be re-educated.

It was required of Peuckert to be somebody who, at least academically, would stay within the main frame of research needed for a discipline recovering from the preceding years. Brednich points out that what Peuckert was really valued for, both contemporarily and retrospectively, was his adherence to older traditions: he was important because he stood for “the rehabilitation of Volkskunde as a culturally comparative science, that made connections to the big names of the past, such as Herder, the Grimm Brothers, [...] and Theodor Benfey” (Brednich 1987, 116).

And for the most part, Peuckert’s work suited the discipline’s canon. He spent the early post-war years working on ways to denationalize the field, still expressing an

interest in the canonical peasantry, and focusing on regional narratives, legends in particular (cf., e.g., Peuckert 1948, 1951b, and 1953). Especially Peuckert's compendia of legends were non-threatening and within the framework of those static analyses and the eager work on older collections that were the hallmark of the early post-war years.

Personal affirmations underscore Peuckert's tremendous influence on the field. Folklorist Wayland D. Hand (1907-1986) once noted, writing from Los Angeles:

“I want to you know that I respect you very much, that I have nothing but praise for your work, and that I regard you as the greatest legend scholar of this generation, or, for that matter, any other. [...]”⁷

And on Peuckert's 60th and 65th birthday, he received a congratulatory note from the second president of the Federal German Republic, Heinrich Lübke (1894-1972), who stated that “it is the legacy of [Peuckert's work] [...] that Volkskunde is currently so highly respected at universities [and] ... that there is a deeper contemporary understanding of legends and fairy-tales”.⁸ Respected as an expert in some areas by his colleagues, Peuckert's influence during his time was palpable while he was still alive.

Yet, as has been discussed elsewhere, Peuckert received hardly any mention in disciplinary histories written in the late 20th century. And just a few years after his death in 1969, in an introduction to a new edition of Peuckert's *Das Rosenkreutz* (1973), Rolf Christian Zimmermann mentioned that no students of Peuckert's were to be found who were willing to edit and write an introduction to the book (Zimmermann 1973, XVI). While few scholars in the field are remembered as Jacob or Wilhelm Grimm or Johann Gottfried Herder are, it is nevertheless surprising how quickly Peuckert's work lost the standing it had achieved while he was still living. Only two years after Peuckert's death it was noted: “The name Will-Erich Peuckert is met with an apathetic reserve, a reserve based in a lack of interests” (ibid., VII). Though there was a brief

resurgence of interest in Peuckert in 1995 around the 100th anniversary of his birth, the trend of disregard continued through the end of the 20th century (Bönisch-Brednich and Brednich 1996).⁹

Peuckert's reputation as the *magician*, however, has lived on, in no small part because of his experiments with the unguent. Although Peuckert did other professional work on the occult -- *Geheim-Kulte* in 1951, a survey of the occult sciences which sections on e.g., death and resurrection, *Weiberbünde*, and *Das Geheimnis*, and *Astrologie* in 1960, a text which tried to look at the worldview of astrology in its own right -- these works do not figure into the discussions on Peuckert the magician.¹⁰ Instead, Thomas Hauschild mentions that "one didn't call him the *Zaubermeister* [magician] for nothing".¹¹ And Rolf Wilhelm Brednich and Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich note "that Peuckert self-experimented with a witches salve" (Bönisch-Brednich 1996, 16). Peuckert himself also upheld this image:

"In the city and in the valley I'm simply known as the witch professor. Many come to get advice or help [...]; some want to buy a jar of witches' unguent [...]. Thus the old climate grew up around me."¹²

These layers of memory wherein Peuckert emerges as the magician with the magic salve have covered or overwhelmed those memories which surround his academic contributions. There is a stark contrast between Peuckert the *Volkskundler* sketched above, whose scholarship had some significant impact on the discipline but who is no longer often talked about academically, and the remembered "magician" Peuckert, whose experiments are still discussed. We see, in other words, a man remembered for work which in no way was compliant with what the discipline needed after World War II.

Peuckert's interest in belief and experience broke the boundaries of a discipline that did not want groundbreaking work or radical change, a discipline that could not

actually *handle* that sort of change. Peuckert as the new chair of the department of Volkskunde in Göttingen after World War II would have had to teach students, and build from the ground up an institution that would have to not only gain respect from colleagues, but simultaneously legitimate itself. Legend and narrative scholarship, based on older, prestigious collections would certainly fall within the realm of academic canon. But could the witches' unguents be able to serve the same purpose?

Zimmermann explains, summarizing:

“He too obviously didn't fit the role [as a professor] at a university keen on showing solidarity, respectability and authority [...] The word got out that Peuckert tried to concoct the legendary [...] salve from the *magia naturalis* in his classes in Göttingen to amuse the students” (Zimmermann 1973, XI)

Reactions from the Media

“*Es sprach sich also herum*” -- the word got out -- and there were responses. The reception of any sort of idea is useful insight into the dialogues that occur when ideas are exchanged.

When, beginning in 1959, newspapers from around the world reported that a German professor had experimented with a witches' unguents, Peuckert's experience from the 1920's was put into a new framework and recontextualized. No longer would the event itself or its veracity matter: of increasing interest was Peuckert's identity as a professor and the sensationalism of an academic doing something perceived as particularly non-academic. The newspaper narratives would also later trigger a concatenation of events, resulting in a frenzy of responses from the public.

Peuckert recalls how the media latched on to the story some 40 years after his experiment:¹³

“In a lecture I gave in [...] Bremen in 1959, when I was speaking about the Bremer legends, I commented about the fact that many things in the witches’ legends can be explained via the witches salves. ‘The salve acted as a narcotic - and probably caused flight dreams [...]; that these types of dreams were caused by the salve we figured out through experimenting on our own.’ This little sentence, mentioned in a forty-five minute talk, caused a newspaper uproar. [...] the first few reports ran as follows: ‘Professor flew [... and] witches’ salve produced again.’ And that surged through the newspapers of first Bremen, then those in Lower Saxony, the ‘Welt’ had a longer article - and then the entire West spoke up: Op-Ed pieces were printed from Capetown all the way to Buenos Aires, from ‘Life’ to ‘Readers Digest’, from Rome to Milan and all the way to Stockholm; then the weekly newspapers and the tabloids caught on, turning it into something fictional, [...] into a ghost story [...]. And in response to a court case against one of the newspapers, a judge in Göttingen ruled: if the prosecution, given his intellectual activities, is considered a person of the public sphere [...], he has to tolerate the fact that newspapers will write about him and his work.”¹⁴

By commenting on the fact that he was not interested in public opinion, going so far as to take a newspaper to court for turning his experiment into a mere “ghost story,” Peuckert tried to make clear that at this point he believed his work had scientific and academic value: it was not something “fictional”, rather, it belonged to Peuckert’s “intellectual activities.” And the dismissal of the court case and the judge’s response stand in validation of Peuckert’s claim that his experiment had an academic foundation. He would continue to stress the scientific aspects of his experiment for years to come, as he would stress the importance of *experience*, a recurring facet of his own narratization of the event.

There was a wide spectrum of reports in the print media about the experiment. The *type* of newspaper generally correlated with the type of report: the lower-brow the paper, the wilder and more Bakhtinian the report, and the less focus on Peuckert’s research as research. It was only the rare report that focused on the scientific value of

Peuckert's experiment, or on tactility and experience as a new methodology: quite on the contrary, most focused on the fact that a scholar was doing something perceived as particularly *unscholarly* and thus illicit. Full of mistakes, the reports seem more concerned with selling a carnivalesque sensation than with telling Peuckert's version of the story. Perhaps as a tactic to lure the reader, most newspapers and magazines dichotomized between the sage scholar and the sensation he turned into once he pursued his interest in the unguent experientially.

Sandro Paternostro's six-paged report in the Italian magazine *Tempo* (March 3rd, 1960), for example, entitled "A Night amongst the Witches", discussed how Wilhelm Ernst [sic] Peuckert, a professor from the small town of Göttingen, experimented with the unguent:

"Göttingen, in Lower Saxony, is a town that is famous for its scholarly achievements [...]. If you dial 57 1 25 in Göttingen, you'll reach the Institute for Volkskunde Research, and you'll be asked by one of Herr Professor's researchers to be patient for just a few months: wait until the scholar finishes his monumental work, the 'Handbook of Legends' [...]. In 1963, Peuckert set himself the task to derobe the 'recipes' of the alchemists and the 'possessed' [...] of the past centuries, to remove the metaphysical and metapsychic cloud [...]. Peuckert's research only turned into a sensation once he drove his analytical research so far, that he himself became a guinea pig for the experiment. [...] The most important trial of the recipe that Wilhelm Ernst Peuckert [sic] tried recently happened with a yellow salve [...]. In front of witnesses, Pauckert [sic] and a friend -- a lawyer from Göttingen -- rubbed the salve on their foreheads and under their armpits. [...] Twenty hours later the scholar and the lawyer woke up out a deep sleep, with a strong feeling of having been anesthetized. Both [...] wrote about their dream experiences independently of one another. Their descriptions proved to be almost identical."¹⁵

Continuing, Paternostro noted that Wilhelm Ernst experienced visions of Hell, and showed tremendous personal strength in daring to try the unguent on himself. The

article discussed that perhaps the visions were related to the type of plants Peuckert was using, though these were “plant poisons, whose effects on the human organism had by no means been researched sufficiently.”¹⁶

Despite the use of a wrong name, and the presumably false claim that Peuckert had, recently, “tried on himself no less than sixty recipes from witches and wizards from the Middle Ages,” Paternostro’s article showed surprising sensitivity to Peuckert’s push towards science and actual research.¹⁷ It focused a considerable amount of attention on Peuckert’s experiment as such, highlighting the underlying physiological and biological reasons for his hallucinogenic experience.

A more sensationalistic recasting of narrative is found in the U.S. news journal *Newsweek*, which focused more on the image of a scholar dabbling in the occult. Appearing under the rubric of “science”, *Newsweek* reported the following on April 4th, 1960:

“The elderly ... German watched the juices extracted from henbane, deadly nightshade, and Jimson weed bubble and boil down to a thick syrup. The brew was then mixed with blood from a pig - rather than an unborn child as called for in the 400-year old recipe - to make a “magic salve” love potion. ... The “sorcerer” in this weird, solitary experiment was Dr. Will-Erich Peuckert, the rational, unpossessed, and courtly professor of German folklore at Göttingen University. In a country filled with Dark Age legends, the 65-year-old scholar has spent most of his life chasing down sirens, witches, and superstitions. In the course of his research, Professor Peuckert ... frequently brews, and occasionally tests on himself, most of the potions ...” (“Witchcraft” 1960, 104).

Newsweek failed to mention that Peuckert attempted this experiment before he was a professor, invented the fact that his unguent was a love potion, and clearly dramatized the use of blood. The language itself draws tabloid-esque attention to the experiment, removing the work from an academic plain. Words such as “weird,” “sorcerer,”

“solitary,” “the blood of an unborn child,” and especially the term “superstition” relegate Peuckert’s experiment to the purely fantastical.

Reports in newspapers about the experiment continued to resurface through at least the late 1960’s. A Sabine Corazza, writing from Limont-Fontaine in France on April 24th, 1966, sent Peuckert a copy of the article “*La fantastique expérience du Docteur Peuckert*”, a seven-paged report about the witchcraft unguent and experiment published in the French magazine *Constellation* (cf. also Appendix 2).¹⁸ Couched in a description of the Engelsmühle, Peuckert’s home near Darmstadt, and leading with a photo of a befuddled -- even drugged -- looking Peuckert, the discussion questioned whether believing in sorcery and witchcraft was naive or crazy. Though the author, François Maintenon, did not come to a conclusion, the remainder of the article only highlighted the sensational aspects of Peuckert’s experiment:

“The drug started working in less than fifteen minutes, and the two men left for the Sabbath. [...] Journey to the end of Hell! [...] [T]hey flew at the speed of the wind, [...] rose to the sky and then fell into emptiness. [...] It was an extravagant bacchanalian event, an erotic ballet that defied all the laws of decency and of morality, a vortex of debauchery, of screaming, and of drunkenness.”¹⁹

As with the articles in *Tempo* and *Newsweek*, the *Constellation* piece presented a dichotomy between the experience -- presented as strange or odd -- and Peuckert’s intention to gain academic knowledge through the experiment:

“[...] the man who spoke to me was not a sorcerer but a scholar. [...] - Well understood, I didn’t put all the things into this demonic salve that the witches’ recipe called for, he explained: fat of an unborn baby, [...] skin of a snake or of a male frog [...]. I was satisfied with a mixture of questionable plants, the famous ‘witches’ herbs’ that have been identified my medicine and the pharmaceutical industry as numbing. [...] They are extremely toxic products, provoking alcaloids which, at a certain dosage, have hallucinogenic responses.”²⁰

Still, it concluded with the -- to the author -- astonishing revelation that this “test of truth” which was “conducted according to scientific rules,” showed that

“the testimony of witches weren’t wholly invented by these women or by their accusers. They corresponded to a real experience: maybe not, as one used to believe, to a true voyage into an infernal world, but perhaps to carefully studied and codified hallucinogenic practices.”²¹

The newspaper reports all shared in common a general disenfranchisement of Peuckert’s voice: for an event which was grounded in the experience of an individual, his own narrative was wholly lost in the print media’s version of the story.

A radio report about Peuckert’s life, aired by the *Süddeutscher Rundfunk* channel on May 12th, 1965, only alluded to his experimentation, but there is evidence of the unguent narrative as a subtext making its appearance. Entitled “*Zwischen Mystik und Realität: Zum 70. Geburtstag von Will-Erich Peuckert am 11. Mai 1965*”, the report glowingly delineated Peuckert’s academic contributions, replete with quotations from his work and praise from his colleagues.²² Yet the title of the show itself, for one, and the acknowledgment of the speaker, for another, underscored that “his work always [... stood] in an internal struggle between the scholar and the Volkskundler on the one hand, and [...] the poet on the other.”²³ At the same time, for those with knowledge of Peuckert’s experimentation, a broadcasted quote by Kurt Ranke was indicative:

“The researcher Will-Erich Peuckert was particularly interested in the psychological [...] evaluation of custom and tradition. His publications attest to this fact, as do his studies about secret cults, witchcrafts delusions, and occult sciences. [...] In a [...] preface] Kurt Ranke said [...]: ‘Maybe ... one still has to be quite close to the magical foundations to understand them, and you, dear friend, have really become the ‘*Zauberprofessor*’ [profess or magic; magic professor]. You’ve become the magician, not just the apprentice, and you’ll be able to tame the ghosts that have again awoken.”²⁴

Putting forth a dichotomized image, though less sensationalistic and carnivalesque than the newspaper reports, the radio show also did not let Peuckert come to voice. Though the actual experiment was not mentioned, the allusions to Peuckert the magician underscore that his experiment was still very much in the media's eye through the mid 1960's.

What astonishes is not the fact *that* there was media attention on Peuckert's experiment, but rather that the media reports had such longevity. Perhaps the fact that they were being written (and read) in the 1960's is of some importance here, a time of social rebellion and experimentation with drugs and altered states of consciousness. Furthermore, the extent to which all the media sources more or less dichotomized the event itself stands out: the experiment was fascinating for the newspapers simply because a professor (a rational, scientific, university-trained, educated individual) had done something so unlike what one would expect from such a person.

But what of other reactions?

Reactions from the Academy and from Peers

Though media attention may not be the academic accolades a scholar hopes to obtain, a story that goes through the news *will* garner attention: from peers, friends, colleagues, and strangers. As a direct result of the media reports, Peuckert's neighbors turned to him for magical advice, and he received letters from around the world asking for the unguent recipe (cf., e.g., Peuckert 1967b).²⁵ To many, the fact that a professor had tried this recipe and supposedly experienced flight was proof that witchcraft was "real" and "rational"; Peuckert became an expert they could turn to (cf. Hufford

1983).²⁶ Concurrently, *despite* the fact that Peuckert repeatedly commented on the fact that his experiment was meant to have scientific value -- even publishing an article about it in a journal for medical doctors -- there was a noted absence of responses from the academic world (Peuckert 1960a).

How did the media frenzy about his experiment feed into or detract from the disciplinary epistemology as it was unfolding? Were the reports received positively or negatively by Peuckert's colleagues? And what does this mean for the production of knowledge?

Though there is no direct description of how news of the event leaked, scholars (like everyone else) would have had access to the newspaper reports, the radio, and to the television show. They might also have learned about the experiment through word-of-mouth from students who had heard it from Peuckert, in dialogue with Peuckert himself, or from his publications.

Historiographic particulars guide reactions to narratives, which, once disseminated, take on a life of their own. The way Peuckert's peers responded to his work (and his interest in witchcraft and the occult in general) is part of the question of how he wrote and thought about his experiment, for all academics crave a healthy dialogue with their colleagues. Recognition and fame may not be paramount, but, as Reif points out, academics want and need their work to be taken seriously: "The scientist wants his work *to be not only interesting but also important to others*" (Reif 1965, as cited by Bourdieu 1999, 33). Silence, in other words, the *lack* of a dialogue, can be a form of censorship. And silence can shape the way in which something is written about.

Though there were probably oral responses, hallway conversations are rarely

published; few responses from colleagues and peers remain. And most of the academic reactions remaining in print are redacted though Peuckert; we learn about how his colleagues responded through Peuckert himself. In one example we hear of Peuckert discussing witchcraft with colleagues and being met with mockery:

“I was invited to a talk in Oldenburg, and we sat together afterwards as is customary: the leading men of the intellectual circles with their ladies. We talked about superstition, the second face, and witches. Someone joked about it, and I dared to say: there certainly was more to witches than one believes today. and we thus came to the question if witches ever existed. I said: of course, because there were also witches unguents. - Why? I tried it myself.”²⁷

The topic of belief, experiential research, and even witchcraft *itself* was joked about, shunned as a plausible research topic, and yet Peuckert still stood up for its validity.

Another example from April 1960 goes beyond disbelief and mockery, and relegates Peuckert’s interest in the witches’ unguent to a mere April Fool’s Day joke. The attempt that he saw as scientific was turned into an inversion of the truth, one that his longtime friend Maria Hauptmann could only laugh about:

“I was delighted by your letter with the reports of the witch commotion you caused. [...] Schendell wrote and told me, he read a report about your experiment in the newspaper on April 2nd. ‘I looked again and again, it really wasn’t an April Fool’s joke.’”²⁸

If these responses from colleagues and peers -- skepsis, mockery, and hilarity -- are a form of censorship, an overt indication of disbelief and a sign of not taking Peuckert seriously, then silence is a covert but very audible form of similar censorship. There was frequently no reaction at all to Peuckert’s experimentation. While one would not necessarily expect a response to any word-of-mouth report, or even to the newspaper articles, the lack of response to his publications is notable. Peuckert wrote

about the unguent experiment in several scholarly journals and books, including an article in a journal for doctors, *Der medizinische Monatsspiegel*, and an introduction and conclusion to the German edition of Julio Caro Baroja's *Las Brujas y su Mundo (Die Hexen und Ihre Welt)* (1967) (Peuckert 1967a, 1967b). There are no reviews of Peuckert's discussion in the *Monatsspiegel*, and most of the reviews of Baroja's volume focus on the main text, not Peuckert's texts. As Barnes points out,

“Scientific communities rarely undertake exposés of those they regard as incompetent; informal communication usually ensures that their work is treated as suspect or, in some cases, written off” (Barnes 1972, 287).

His other works on the occult which did not reference personal experience -- such as *Geheim-Kulte* (1951) and *Astrologie* (1960) -- were reviewed, and reviewed positively.²⁹ They differed from his interest in the witches unguent only insofar as they were not researched experientially. His peers were reacting explicitly to the fact that Peuckert had done research in a way perceived to be particularly unscholarly, shying away from the experiential aspect of Peuckert's interest in the unguent and not the topic itself.³⁰

* * *

Comparing Peuckert's unguent example to other scholars in the humanities dealing with experience and working experientially is useful. Edith Turner, wife of the anthropologist Victor Turner (1920-1983), for example, participated in a Ndembu healing ritual in Zambia. Together, the two Turners have advocated for an anthropology of experience, making headway in the field (cf., e.g., Turner 1985; Turner and Bruner 1986; Turner 1992; Turner 2004). E. Turner recalls:

“In the past in anthropology, if a researcher ‘went native,’ it doomed him academically. [...] In 1985, I was due for a visit to Zambia. Before going, I decided to come closer than on previous occasions to the

Africans' own experience, whatever that was -- I did not know what they experienced. [...]

My research was developing into the study of a twice-repeated healing ritual. To my surprise, the healing of the second patient culminated in my sighting a spirit form. In a book entitled *Experiencing Ritual*, I describe exactly how this curative ritual reached its climax, including how I myself was involved in it; how the traditional doctor bent down amid the singing and drumming to extract the harmful spirit; and how I saw with my own eyes a large, gray blob of something like plasma emerge from the sick woman's back.

Then I knew the Africans were right. There is spirit stuff. [...]

[...] Thus for me, 'going native' achieved a breakthrough to an altogether different world view, foreign to academia, by means of which certain material was chronicled that could have been gathered in no other way" (Turner 1997).³¹

One of the many things which sets E. Turner apart from Peuckert is the fact that she was able to find an academic -- and thus more acceptable -- voice to narrate her own experiences as a scholar participating in and experiencing ritual.

Of interest as well is the case of Carlos Castaneda (1925-1998), who not only purportedly took the psychotropic drugs peyote and datura as part of his apprenticeship with a Yaqui Indian shaman, but wrote about it in the first person in a way which blurred fiction and anthropological ethnography. He turned his thesis from the University of California, Los Angeles into the books *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge* (1968), *A Separate Reality* (1971), and *Journey to Ixtlan* (1972). Grounded in the experiential, his books have been criticized as not being based on empirically verifiable work (cf., e.g., Maquet 1978, Murray 1979, Wallis 2003). He was even accused of inventing his experiences entirely. Wallis explains:

"At first, and with the backing of academic qualifications and the UCLA anthropological department, Castaneda's work was critically acclaimed. Notable old-school American anthropologists like Edward Spicer (1969) and Edmund Leach (1969) praised Castaneda, alongside more alternative

and young anthropologists such as Peter Furst, Barbara Myerhoff and Michael Harner. The authenticity of Don Juan was accepted for six years, until Richard de Mille and Daniel Noel both published their critical exposés of the Don Juan books in 1976 [...]. [...] Beneath the veneer of anthropological fact stood huge discrepancies in the data [...]" (Wallis 2003, 40).

The crux of the critiques against Castaneda rest on the fact that his work -- if he did any research at all -- was experiential and therefore not verifiable, and his use of psychotropic drugs echoes Peuckert's own experimentation. And, like Peuckert, Castaneda's experiences were rarely positively reviewed, though Peuckert was ignored more often than he was criticized.

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), better known for his novels such as *Brave New World* (1932), also experimented with peyote. With a friend who was interested in studying the extent to which mental illness was due to chemical imbalances observing him, Huxley ingested the dried buttons from the cactus root:

"By a series of, for me, extremely fortunate circumstances I found myself, in the spring of 1953, squarely athwart that trail. One of the sleuths had come on business to California. In spite of seventy years of mescaline research, the psychological material at his disposal was still absurdly inadequate, and he was anxious to add to it. I was on the spot and willing, indeed eager, to be a guinea pig. Thus it came about that, one bright May morning, I swallowed four-tenths of a gram of mescaline dissolved in half a glass of water and sat down to wait for the results" (Huxley 1954, 12).

Like Peuckert, Huxley's purpose was to aid scientific research (and to follow an interest of his own); believing that the mind/brain filters reality, he thought that psychotropic drugs would help open the "doors of perception" (ibid.). What makes the case-study of Huxley stand out, however, is the fact that he wrote as a novelist and essayist, where experience is the tool of the trade through which an individual processes and writes

about the world; unlike ethnography with its necessary veneer of verifiable science, his experiences were seen as valuable.

Responses to Turner, Castañeda, and Huxley were varied. Kendall, discussing Turner, noted:

“As in *Experiencing Ritual* [...], these claims will make some readers uncomfortable. They cannot be proven. Do they have a place in anthropology? [...] Others might argue that it is presumptuous to assume that the anthropologist’s perceptions and feelings match those of her subjects” (Kendall 1996, 411).

And yet, the anthropology of experience has seen an increasing acceptance, in no small part because of the Turners’ scholarship, and E. Turner’s work is generally respected in its own right.

The responses to Castaneda’s use of peyote and his work, on the other hand, were not unlike the responses to Peuckert. Since anthropology “[...] is a discursive discipline of knowledge”, the discomfort of an academic relying on his faculties of experience with the use of hallucinogens was palpable:

“A Ph.D. dissertation that expands into a series of four best-sellers relating a shamanistic apprenticeship is an unusual event; yet the reaction of the profession has been, on the whole, silence and uneasiness” (Maquet 1978, 362).

At the same time, the decade or so that went by without critique of Castaneda reveals

“more about the structure of academic science. The organized skepticism that is supposed to operate in science is often largely invisible to outsiders. [...] anthropologists who believed Castaneda’s work was a hoax did not publish their judgments” (Murray 1979, 190).

So too was the case of Peuckert, a general silence in response to the news that he had experimented with the unguent. And yet Castaneda’s work was at least received by some as a foray into the experiential, while Peuckert’s work was not:

“Castaneda’s contribution to anthropology is significant enough [...]. It is that he has shown the potentialities of the experiential approach for the investigation of some mental phenomena not otherwise accessible” (Maquet 1978, 362).

* * *

Though there are steps towards change, experience is not valued highly in the humanities because the subjective nature of experience contradicts the scientific method: the ability to reproduce evidence repeatedly, under exact circumstances. Sound, touch, taste, and smell, of the five senses, are uniquely individual, and it is this individuality that causes discomfort.

The discipline on both sides of the Atlantic still shies away from the “touchier” subjects such as those that Peuckert broached in his work on the witches’ unguent. It is notable that Victor Turner’s work on structure and anti-structure was only translated into German in 1989, two decades after its publication in English, hinting at a reticence to focus on work relating to experience and belief (Turner 1989).³² And after the criticism of the *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* for having racist and ideological contents, superstitions as a topic became quasi-taboo (Daxelmüller 1987). Research on experience, belief, the intangible, superstitions, and research with a methodological or experimental, hands-on approach, thus lags sadly behind in *Volkskunde* as a whole; in Brednich’s edited introduction to the field, for example, such topics do not make an appearance (Brednich 2001). In fact, according to David Hufford, belief is “the least studied of all topics in the discipline [,] fragmented, lacking in conceptual clarity, and focused on materials that are often trivial or marginal or both,” in part because of the “cultural conditioning of scholarship” (Hufford 1983, 21).

Hufford’s work on the traditions of disbelief may explain in part the reticence to

accept Peuckert's experimentation. He argues that Western "science" has positioned itself such that it sees "supernatural beliefs [as] aris[ing] from and [as] supported by carious kinds of obvious errors": belief, experience, and anything not fitting within the framework of the testable and the objective, is shown to be irrational and thus unfit for research (Hufford 1982b, 47).

Peuckert did not receive positive attention from academia regarding his experiment, if he received any attention at all. Given the historical context in which these dialogues (or lack thereof) were taking place, this censorship probably was related to the need of a discipline to stick to "traditional" topics of research, and the unspoken assertion that belief studies with an experiential focus were not intellectually sound, or academically canonical enough. Scholarship on the experiential could never have been something that could be used to reestablish a discipline.

Reactions from the Public

Beside the media reactions from around the world which brought attention to the unguent experiment in the first place, there were also over two dozen private individuals who turned to Peuckert. Over 70 pages of letters ranged in content from people wanting the recipe of this (or other) unguents, to those desperately in need of help with a supernatural problem (how to deal with what they believed to be ghosts and poltergeists, for example), to a young adult simply looking to enrich his autograph album with Peuckert's signature.³³ Especially those letters which refer to the unguent are insight into just how much Peuckert's experiment fascinated the public. Their closer examination is key in trying to understand his *own* relationship with the unguent experiment, a way to ascertain whether or not this public response impacted his own

perception and scripting of the event.

What the letters all have in common is a strong belief in Peuckert's role as an expert. His academic credentials, to the general public, lent credibility to his work *and* to his experience. In a quasi-reversal of the situation with his colleagues and peers, the fact that Peuckert claimed an experience through the use of the unguent was, to the public, a sign of its validity.

A Josef Speck in Zug, Switzerland, wrote to Peuckert on June 21st, 1961:

“Dear Mr. Professor! Read in German newspaper an announcement RE: different recipes of salves, but lost the newspaper. I hereby order the various recipes of the salves for the price of 4.50 DM. [...] Signed! Josef Speck.”³⁴

Placing a fiscal value on Peuckert's work, we can assume that spending a not-insignificant amount of money indicated a belief on Mr. Speck's part that they were going to work, and thus, indirectly, a belief in Peuckert's claims and experience.

Mrs. M. Winkler-Sandler wrote to Peuckert on April 11th, 1963, asking him for a few quotes for a school-report her daughter was going to hold on the witches' unguent. She updated him a few day later with the results:

“P.S. The report about the witches was held and was greatly admired. Peuckert was called an ‘ace’: that's the highest compliment these 18 year olds can dole out.”³⁵

Though Peuckert had mentioned that the uproar was not to his liking, one cannot help but believe that he would have been flattered at the thought of being used as an example in a school class, in and of itself another sign of how much the media had disseminated information on his experience. According to Peuckert's daughter Sylphia, he greatly enjoyed this attention (Peuckert 2004).

Peuckert also heard from a Mr. Hombrebueno, a man writing from Quezon City

in the Philippines, on February 14th, 1969:

“I am sincerely interested in your research regarding ancient formulas.... I even hope you could make use of me as an assistant in your experiments. I am presently in a fast to aid in my meditations. I hope you are convinced of my serious interest in experiments of this kind. P.S. I am a young man of 26 and the formula that claims to provide attractions between the opposite sex certainly intrigues me. ... I will try it on my prospective mother-in-law: for as my girl loves me, she [mother-in-law] hates me. Do you think it will work?”³⁶

Motivated by the need for a solution to his difficulties with his mother-in-law, Mr. Hombrebueno clearly put his faith into the news articles he had read that indicated the success of Peuckert’s unguent experiment.

Another inquiry came from J.L. Bracelin, a member of a witches’ coven in England; for him the use of the unguent was meant to be spiritual:

“As one of the leading members of the Hertforshire coven of witches, I was keenly interested to read of your experiments with ... witches “flying ointments” I would like to mention that we intend to experiment with the consumption of *Agaricus Muscarius* to enlarge our own religious knowledge [though we] ... should like to advance at the same time the cause of science. We should also be grateful for any suggestions that you may care to make about the way they should be conducted.”³⁷

The dichotomy of experience and science here, too, is of import, though perhaps Bracelin was only trying to appeal to the academician in Peuckert.

The public belief in the unguent’s functionality was made clear by the fact that money was wired, as well as through the expressed willingness to *use* anything Peuckert might have sent back; the letter-writers also exhibited an inherent trust in Peuckert, willing to accept from a stranger -- a professor no less -- a potentially poisonous and dangerous recipe. While Peuckert did not send the recipes, stating that they were too dangerous or that the ingredients were not available in whatever country the solicitor

was writing from, he or his secretary did write back to almost every letter.³⁸

* * *

The overall very positive -- almost adoring -- responses from the letter-writers stand in stark contrast to the reactions Peuckert received from his peers and colleagues. What is apparent is that Peuckert's identity as a scholar made him trustworthy to the general public; and yet, that very same identity as a scholar made his experiential approach inherently unacceptable to his peers. Interestingly enough, the media focused on both the scholar and the magician, placing Peuckert, as the title of the radio show indicated, in a place squarely between "mysticism and reality".

Scripting the Self: Peuckert's Changing Performances

Peuckert's experiment might be viewed as a college prank, an attempt with a friend to push the margins of expectation of young-adult behavior. His experimentation with illegal substances, attempts of achieving liminality, and boundary breaking behavior could also be likened to recreational drug-use or binge-drinking. And the sexual nature of the experiment certainly cannot be ignored, and he once pointed out that "the many reports about unguents which helped prepare for the 'flight' make me suspect that there was certainly an attempt [...] to achieve some sort of sexual release [...]" (Peuckert 1967, 318).

And yet the experiment also had a long and diverse narrative life of its own, years after Peuckert tried the unguent: over the course of several decades, colleagues narrated it, the media narrated it, the general public narrated it, as did Peuckert himself. His own narration of the experience markedly changed depending on the context. Each time changing the narrative slightly, Peuckert retold his story in at least six different

ways:

1. academically, in an article in a journal for doctors;
2. academically again, in the introduction and conclusion to the German version of Caro Baroja's *Las Brujas y su Mundo*;
3. on television as an expert;
4. as an expert once again in a court testimony;
5. in letters to friends;
6. and personally and privately in three autobiographical narratives.

Given the differing narratives surrounding the same experience, it is plausible that it had a changing meaning for Peuckert over its narrative life. The very existence of parallel narratives is indicative of the fact that his own thoughts about the experiment oscillated over time, between academic argumentation and sensationalist prose. Though the chronology of all the texts is not always easy to ascertain, multiple narratives show that Peuckert himself was not sure of how to best frame the event; might not feedback from the other extant meta-narratives have influenced his own?

Some of the academic narratives Peuckert produced about the unguent experiment highlight its purpose: to check that the “narcotic and numbing substances” really did cause an experience as was described in reports from the 16th and 17th centuries (Peuckert 1967b, 317). An academic interest thus, initially, seems to have been behind his experiment. In an article published in *Der medizinische Monatsspiegel: Eine Zeitschrift für den Arzt* in 1960, a glossy journal for doctors, Peuckert presupposed that identical confessions about the flight experience could not have been tortured out of multiple individuals; thus, hallucinogenic plants become his rational explanation: “It seemed to me [...], that the cause of this experience could have been an affection of the nerves, drawn up by an intoxication” (Peuckert 1960a, 169). Discussing with great detail the plant composition of the recipes, he concluded that they, when combined,

indeed were toxic (ibid., 173). His own experimentation, relegated to a mere sentence, did not emerge as important; rather, it is downplayed, perhaps because of his primarily medical audience. Highlighted instead is medical “fact”, not the idea of *belief* in witchcraft.

Peuckert’s introduction and conclusion to Caro Baroja’s *Hexen und ihre Welt* (the 1967 translation of *Las Brujas y su mundo*) also noted how carefully Peuckert and his friend went about trying the unguent. Peuckert described the concept of a *Parallelversuch*, in which both parties simultaneously conduct the same experiment and then come together to discuss the results after writing them down separately (Peuckert 1967a, 17). Stressing a long history in his interest in the subject, he also pointed out that “the question of ‘truth’ and the foundations of witchcraft” interested him (Peuckert 1967b, 285). Yet even though Peuckert put forth the academic basis of the experiment, he could not resist to explain his personal involvement in the subject:

“I have spent a lot of time with the problem of witchcraft and witches [...], first because I was raised on a small lower-Silesian farming village, where one still believed in witchcraft [...] - then, as I was a docent in *Volkskunde*, I participated as an expert witness in many Silesian and lower Saxon witch trials, and I was asked repeatedly to exorcize barns or houses [...]. It is not surprising that I wanted to practically get to the bottom of the question of witchcraft with a friend” (Peuckert 1967b, 285).

The 1968 *Norddeutscher Rundfunk* television show emerges at the nexus of media sensation and Peuckert’s earlier attempts to be academic about his experiment. The documentary on “Delusions of Witchcraft” in “modern Germany” turned to Peuckert as an expert for information on the unguent and on his experience with it (cf. Appendix 7). Interviewed for the show, Peuckert even recreated the unguent in his own basement. Using sharp, uneven camera angles and dark flickering light, the clip

promoted the sensationalism Peuckert would have been accustomed to from all the magazines and newspapers. Simultaneously, however, he tried very hard to highlight that the experiment also had a scientific basis:

“First we flew through the air the way one sometimes also flies in a dream, then we were at big festivals [...], and finally the whole thing culminated in more or less erotic adventures, during which we, I want to note, lost consciousness. We lay in our chairs for a long time, and when we awoke the next morning we separately jotted down our experiences. Turns out that we approximately experienced the same things - those things that I told you about. *It was a purely scientific experiment, even if it took place in a private home, not in a lab.* I was silent about this and other experiments [...] because I wanted to publish about it all in one swoop. But then I was dumb enough to say in a lecture that I had tried the salve and that it worked. *Unfortunately no one understood that it was a scientific experiment,* and they instead assumed that I was trying to advertise for some slave or another. In thousands upon thousands of letters I was offered money in exchange for the salve. I could have opened a factory and would have had enough to do there to fill all the orders.”³⁹

Unlike the print narratives in which Peuckert had narrated his experiences, television as a visual medium could tell a story superimposed over Peuckert’s spoken text. Thus, while Peuckert was stressing the fact that his experience had “purely scientific” intentions, he was asked by *NDR* to recreate the unguent. There was nothing scientific looking about an aged Peuckert, who, in a dark grotto (his basement) was stirring plants into a beaker with nothing but a flickering candle to light the way (cf. Appendix 2). The story is complicated only by the fact that Peuckert himself thought his basement would be the most suitable location to film the show; the apothecary in the village had offered up his equipment, but Peuckert deemed it too modern:

“[A]ll our preparations for the 7th of December seemed in place, when we ran into troubles yesterday. The apothecary, who was lending us his laboratory and equipment, was just informed that he had to vacate the

lower rooms, as they were to be renovated. He suggested the dispensary, but that looks rather modern. Since I own an old basement [...] on my farm, let us use it for the experiment; we'll be borrowing the equipment. The only thing we don't have is a bunsen burner [...]. Does your props department have one?"⁴⁰

Peuckert was already trying to script the event to his liking; he would do so even more in other texts.

A decade earlier, Peuckert had been asked to give his testimony as an expert in what the media termed a *Hexenprozess* -- a witch trial.⁴¹ Ferdinand Masuch and Heinz Schnell, editors of the Planet Verlag press in Braunschweig, were accused (and convicted) of "continued collective deceit that coincided with unfair competition and request to perpetrate punishable acts."⁴² More specifically, the accusation stemmed from the fact that Masuch and Schnell had published a book entitled *Das 6. und 7. Buch Mosis* (The 6th and 7th Book of Moses), which purportedly contained recipes for healing and for "black magic":

"In 1953 the publishers were already accused once, as the book is taken as God's truth by the many superstitious people that still exist today. And because of this, thousands of helpless women are suspected of being witches and are not rarely abused, or even killed."⁴³

Losing the case, Masuch and Schnell were fined 9,000 DM and 1,000 DM, respectively.

What stands out is Peuckert's role as a summoned expert in the trial. Invited by the municipal court of Braunschweig to attend the trial on November 28th, 1956, Peuckert prepared himself well for his day in court.⁴⁴ Over 30 pages of his testimony remain, a history of previous editions of the book and examples and counterexamples of beliefs and superstitions from the 16th century to the present.⁴⁵ Peuckert was not willing to call Masuch and Schnell's book worthless or dangerous; instead, he wished to

underscore the book's merits and to show the possibility of the coexistence of multiple belief systems:

“[...] many [...] things] that seem useless today to the naive reader are not useless, but rather rest on old knowledge and old observations. Who amongst us can decide which of the printed recipes also contain something useful, claims which rest on forgotten observations that are ignored today because we think in different medical systems. One day they will reemerge just like penicillin did because of a coincidental discovery.”⁴⁶

To further underscore his point that there was a need to first test things, Peuckert returned to his own experience:

“Since I am of the opinion, as I just showed, that one should not, before testing, damn the so-called superstitious book, despite how odd it might look, [... I should note that] I also for examples tested the witches unguent. It is made out of human fat if one follows the old recipes. I don't think that my colleagues or I used human fat, though we did find out what caused the Sabbath craze.”⁴⁷

Because of his experience and not in spite of it, Peuckert could claim an expertise relevant to the trial, and his experiment was the source of this expertise.

For Peuckert, though, the biggest underlying problem of the trial was the dichotomy between belief and knowledge:

“The problem, your honor, extends far past the walls of this room. It is the problem of the clash of a still mythically thinking and a shaking enlightened world. It is the problem of belief versus knowledge. It is the problem that is making our country restless these years, tearing it apart and rattling it.”⁴⁸

This return to the dichotomy between “*Mystik und Realität*” would also be repeated in later work. Peuckert would conclude that both world views could coexist, though he would only come to that conclusion after his retirement.

Yet narratives parallel to Peuckert's academic discussions changed focus, moving

away from the Western, medical/scientific belief system in which there was a scientific explanation for all phenomena and in which Peuckert was the expert. Instead, we see the possibility of multiple realities emerge: a belief in science (toxic plants) and a belief in witchcraft were shown to fit into their own, specific systems of knowledge. Critical here is the understanding that, not unlike David Hufford's work on "traditions of disbelief", those individuals expressing a belief in witchcraft were doing so with a rational grounding in experience. In a letter written in 1968 to a man who had asked for help regarding an encounter with the supernatural, Peuckert responded:

"Well, - perhaps I'll be able to do this this way, - I count on several levels of experience, and with them, several levels of consciousness and interpretation. [...] Every interpretation [...] is 'correct' on its own level of consciousness, 'wrong' on the other. I always tell my students: my grandmother [...] explained thunder [by saying]: the good Lord is yelling or fighting [...]. My first eight years I spent at the Volksschule, and Kantor Meier explained: a balancing of positive and negative charges. (Today one says ions etc.). I still today don't know which of the two 'was right[:]' probably both on their own level."⁴⁹

Highlighting multiple realities, Peuckert made clear that he no longer necessarily saw science as the only valid belief system. Instead, dual levels of consciousness emerge: the unguent experience as science and the unguent itself as part of a larger framework of belief in the supernatural. These thoughts resonate in his article "*Das Sechste und Siebente Buch Mosis*" (1957) and in *Astrologie* (1960):

"I don't want to see this phenomenon [...] as a triumph of lower superstitious moments, - I only see "belief" in "superstition" [*ich kann im "Aberglauben" nur ein "Glauben" sehen*], no more, no less [...]. [The interesting thing is not] the renewal of the medical knowledge of the Baroque but the clashing of the enlightened and the mytho-magical thought" (Peuckert 1957, 189).

And by 1968, Peuckert no longer expressed an interest in writing about his unguent

experience in academic fora. On receiving a request from the journal *EuroMed* for an article about his experiences, Peuckert simply responded:

“Old docents have lost the habit to write manuscripts and can speak freely. - I already talked about the problem ‘witches unguent’ in my years as a young *Privatdozent* and followed it to its roots in the texts of the 16th/17th centuries.”⁵⁰

Instead, he turned towards an alternate means of expression, the autobiography; one was even called “*Erinnerungen eines Zaubermeisters*” -- “Memories of a Magician”.⁵¹ Written after his retirement, these first person texts are a strange mixture that blur the boundaries between ethnography and auto-biography: they offer the most complete information on his purported experimentation with witchcraft (cf. Note on Sources and Nomenclature). Peuckert’s autobiographies contain memories as well as fiction, and it can be difficult to separate the two from one another. Nevertheless, the narratives are heuristic not for their intrinsic factual nature but rather as insight into the way Peuckert wished to represent himself, and as he wished the experiment to be presented. It may even be the way Peuckert remembered the event himself, or the way in which a novelist might have narrated or embellished it. The fact that he called himself a magician in and of itself pointed towards the idea that his view on the experiment was shifting.

Two distinct narrative trends emerge out of the autobiographies, one which stressed the primacy of experience as a research tool, the other which wholeheartedly embraced magic as a worldview. But how can one examine Peuckert’s experience to understand the texts analytically?

What Linda Dégh refers to as an *Erlebnissbericht* -- literally a report about an experience -- personal experience narratives are defined as “prose narrative account[s] of

the performer's personal experience," providing "[a ...] depth of revelation of the social life of a community" (Dégh 1976, 48-49; Allison 1997, 635). They are key precisely because they "arise out of the experiences of their individual performers - and out of a felt need to relate those experiences" (Allison 1997, 636; Oring 1986).

Similarly, the study of memorates lends insight into how accounts of individuals about their own experiences have been studied. Coined by Swedish folklorist Carl Wilhelm von Sydow (1878-1952), the term memorate originally referred to "narratives by people about their own, personal experiences" (von Sydow 1948, 73). To adapt this definition to the study of belief, Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko (1932-2002) reworked the meaning of the term: memorates now refer to a first- or secondhand account of an encounter with the supernatural (e.g., Honko 1964, 1968).

Though there has been some debate over the past three and a half decades about whether or not personal experience narratives are legitimately part of the field, their status as part of disciplinary canon has, for the most part, been validated (cf. e.g., Abrahams 1977; Dégh 1985; Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1989; Stahl 1989; Langellier 1989; and Ochs and Capps 1996). The debate has always been grounded in the question of genre; since personal experience narratives are necessarily, by definition, idiosyncratic, and therefore do not mesh with the idea of types, some have regarded them with skepticism. However, studies show that

"personal experience narratives do manifest characteristics of many of the recognized oral narrative genres [T]hey follow accepted structural and performance patterns; and they rely on a set of understandings common to the group in their transmission of meaning" (Allison 1997, 636).

A discussion of the importance of *Erlebnissbericht* (experience reports), *Alltagsberichte* (reports about every day life), *Alltagserzählungen* (narratives about everyday life), and

Tatsachenberichte (factual reports), among others, has also been held in Germanys.⁵²

Given that they were originally textual, there is a question as to whether or not Peuckert's autobiographical texts mirror the genre of personal experience narratives, whether they were ever transmitted to an audience, or whether they were ever meant to be transmitted in publication. While their form of transmission may not be standard, their contents do mirror the function and the forms of prose narratives. The fact that Peuckert rewrote his experience at least three times -- performed and re-performed it -- lends credence to the notion that he had a need to relate those experiences, just like individuals who narrate their experiences orally.

The main, most complete narration of the unguent experiment clearly arose "out of the experience of [the] individual performer[s]" (Dégh 1976, 48-49). Written after 1963, this narrative stressed the importance of experience, though Peuckert still emerged as the cautious individual worried about the possible side effects:

"It was Schulze, - that editor [...], who got me started an a completely unexpected adventure [...], an adventure belonging to the 16th century. [...]"

We had slowly talked ourselves into the [topic] of witchcraft with our conversations. [...]"

We probably wouldn't have tackled the problem of the witches unguents if Schulze hadn't flipped through the pages of the old Porta text. [...] Amongst the many recipes, [which included] [...] how one could give people a "catty" character through a certain meal, how one attracts game, there was also the recipe of the witches' unguent, along with a report about its use and efficacy.

On the next day, Schulze read Porta's specifications to me in German translation, since he didn't like the Latin version [...]. [...]"

Should we try to cook the recipe and try it? Schulze interrupted my thoughts.

I'm not so sure. Nightshade plants are all poisons. And without sufficient dosages-? [...] And what do you want to achieve [by trying it]?"

Well, one could have the witch experience. [...]"

We decided to first figure out the contemporary names of the herbs, to collect them, and then make a salve out of them. [...].

[...] what was creepy [about the recipes] was the stressful circumstance that there were no dosages given, we had to rely on our luck and on a (pretty loose) estimation. [...] A few nightly hours were enough to extract the juices out of the chopped and mashed herbs. Bilsenkraut was the hardest to get; in the end Schulze had to get it from the Botanical Gardens. [...] And regarding the technical aspects, it wasn't easy for us bachelors to make a binding salve out of grease and the extracted juice; one learns a lot in schools [...] and at various universities, except that which one could really use in life under specific circumstances.

[...] I was saying that our salve, grey and greasy, finally was finished. One late evening in April, if I remember correctly, - the semester hadn't yet started, it wouldn't have worked during the semester to do an experiment whose results were not entirely clear, - we wanted to try it on an evening which got dark around six. We did the experiment at Schulze's; my pad was not sufficient since my landlady [...] would not have left us alone for a whole night. It was really simple, because we had already determined the details: one had to rub the salve onto those areas [of the body], where the skin was most porous: the armpits, the temples, [...] and] as the taylor calls it, the inseam.

I got tired. Noticeably tired.

But the tiredness dissipated soon. Why, I don't know. I only know that I suddenly was supposed to fly. It was a flight without external means, but somehow I tried it. It was as if I had flight skins between my arms and my body, similar to bats, - [...]. And then I lifted up a bit higher - and I flew over a forrest, not too high, and always with the danger of bumping against the tops of the trees -

How I got to a fair and the hubbub of a party I have no idea, - but there were many stands, swings carousels, barkers screaming, parrots squawking - and the sausage stands were steaming. On one wall it said dance tent - and although I don't like any sort of dance, I went in. In reality it was probably a variety show, because the "dances" done in that tent had a pure exotic character. [...]

It wasn't wild men, by the way, but women. And these women, old and young ones, sixty- as well as twelve year olds were showing off dances, that I didn't recognize despite my time as a student. They formed a chain, but their faces were blurry, only their breasts and crotches appeared [...]."⁵³

In another one of Peuckert's autobiographies, he more strongly underscored his attitude towards the experiment itself, and addressed its purpose, not failing to note that the tabloid sensationalism went against his original purpose:

“Did you ever get in trouble because of a witch, teased Werner Milch, for divulging the secret of [the salve's] production [...]?”

Not because of the witches. But because of the magazines, which turned the report into something dirty and backhanded, [...], the tabloids with their [...] headlines: Scholar and Witches ride together Walpurgis Night [...]. The German papers and the European papers, the African papers and the American ones: *a scientific experiment turned to dirt*.

As I read about the effects of the salve, I came to the conclusion that anyone who is interested would have come to: one would just have to try it all out.

Damn me, Will - !

Yes yes, that's what I thought as well. No, not quite your worries; I was not afraid of the solanum poisons [in the plants]. I told myself: if the witches were able to handle it back then, then I should be able to as well. No, it was something else. I thought it would be good to have some sort of control features: first of all, whether or not one experienced anything at all, and secondly, whether or not one was reproducing something old, something one perhaps had read before [...]. [...]

That's why I asked Gustav Behn, - you don't know he, he studied law [...] - I asked him if he knew anything at all about witches. [...]

[No].

Would he be interested in trying out the witches' salve? [...]

And then I described it to him. And you know, right, how corresponding experiments work. We both, on our own, write what happened, whether or not we got together with any witches. If there was Champagne - or if we drank soda water. [...]

[...] Did you publish your reports?

No, that was an indiscretion. [...]

A newspaper reporter who was sitting near us turned our conversation and my report about the salves into a scandal report for a small-town [...] local newspaper. From there it went off into the wild, wide world, and *what was once a serious experiment turned into a scandalous story belonging to the tabloids. Later there also were some scientific discussions.*⁵⁴

Though this was not an academic forum, science still remained of import, following the rules of a corresponding experiment and expressing frustration at the media which “turned the report into something dirty and backhanded”.⁵⁵

Not specifically defined, experience emerged as a new methodology. Implicitly, Peuckert’s narratives delved into tactility: the touch and the texture of the “chopped and mashed herbs,” the “grease and the extracted juice”; the act of rubbing the salve into the “armpits, the temples, [...] the inseam”; the feeling of flight and seeing the carnivalesque atmosphere and the sexual dances, seeing the steaming sausages, and hearing the barkers call out their wares.⁵⁶ The texts underscored tactility and experience; they also underscored that a prime way of obtaining knowledge was through the researcher’s senses: through touch, taste, smell, seeing, and hearing (cf. Bendix 2000). As Bendix points out, the rarity of considering “... the more intimate, affective linkage between burgeoning scholars and their disciplinary subject” leads to “... its marginalization if not disappearance from scholarly purview that has contributed to the equal marginalization of sensory experience, affect, and emotion from ethnographic work” (ibid., 33). Combined with the fact that Peuckert noted that “a scientific experiment turned to dirt,” and that “what once was a serious experiment turned into a scandalous story,” the idea of experience as methodology should not be discredited, nor should the fact that Peuckert looked at this experiment as a more serious, scientific one.

The autobiography *Erinnerungen eines Zaubermeisters* contained a second narrative of magic and experience, focused on a *Liebeszauber* -- love magic. While the description of the unguent experience focused on the primacy of science, this narrative delved rather into a full immersion of belief, with Peuckert’s role as a magician, not as a

scientist, coming to the forefront. Peuckert described the experiment, at first unsure about the validity of his research, almost embarrassed.

“It started with a totally foolhardy game. If you hold such text in your hand frequently enough, then the parts that do not make sense finally do, and, on the contrary, one sees them as more and more plausible. And then a desire arises; [...] one should try it. [...] At first it isn't serious. One thinks of it as part of a game. Why wouldn't one try it. Trying can't hurt. Of course one would do it secretly, not make a big fuss out of it. One voice claims: that's ridiculous. That's worthless. The other [voice]: why wouldn't one try it! The one protests: you'll look ridiculous. The other: no one will see it and you don't have to tell anyone.”⁵⁷

And yet, despite the forum of autobiography, the explanation of his experience still, at first, culminated in science, as his first report did. Magic is disregarded completely. “It is a stupor, the stupor of the poisonous [...] deadly nightshades. [...] Magic? It was certainly not magic that took place here.”⁵⁸ Soon, however, the text shifted in nature from Peuckert the experimenter who made witches unguents to try and understand the scientific basis for the flight experience of witches, to Peuckert the magician, the man who made and used love-potions. The text shows that the Peuckert who was being portrayed in the narrative believed in magic and its efficacy:

“It was the young and tempting Irma Hostek. Her beauty burned deeply into my blood [...]. Und because I could not otherwise obtain her, because she shied away from me when I grabbed her out of desire, because my obsession only grew, - then I used it, [the magic] that I had known for years and had learned [...].

We lived in an old house on the Kaiser Wilhelm-Straße. Her scarf hung on the coat rack that was accessible to all. I took it and wore it against my skin for a few days. [...] Then I inconspicuously returned it. [...] What happened next [...] is not important, - the deciding magic was attached to the scarf. And my endeavors were stronger than her resistance. [...] Irma Hostek became mine. [...]

I had the magic. [...] I was the master of magic. [...] I had learned to use the magic I knew and to use it to do my will [...].”⁵⁹

The worldview put forth by Peuckert was one of magic, not of science; despite the obvious fictional nature of the text, a Peuckert who *believed* in magic emerges.

While grounded in the experience of making and using a 16th century recipe, this second narration in *Erinnerungen eines Zaubermeisters* takes on a fictionalized, slightly manic tone, following a thread of what could be fantasy, an attempt at another novel, or the ponderings of an older man reconsidering and reshaping the importance of his experiment.

* * *

Peuckert's above-presented narratives -- in radio, text, letter, and autobiography -- all differ, yet ultimately stem from the same experiment. His own parallel narratives offer up not only a fluid and changing interpretation of the event, but also present a fledgling methodology of experience, a participant-observation with true immersion. From experience as science to experience as a way to express belief, Peuckert scripted and re-scripted the event.

The concept of restored behavior, developed in the field of Performance Studies, is a useful framework through which to view and perhaps understand Peuckert's multiple, shifting narrations. Richard Schechner discusses restored behavior as a type of performance, wherein the memories and one's thoughts about them can be performed over and over again, each time with a changing focus (Schechner 1985, 35). Thus:

“Restored behavior is living behavior treated as a film director treats a strip of film. These strips of behavior can be rearranged or reconstructed; they are independent of the causal systems (social, psychological, technological) that brought them into existence. They have a life of their own” (ibid.).

In other words, Peuckert's memories were allowed to shift and reformulate themselves

over time; with each subsequent and parallel narration, they were “rearranged” and “reconstructed” into a new performance, into a new memory. From a memory of an experience performed as a scientific experiment, to a memory of an experience that was grounded in belief, Peuckert could thus cut and paste the event into the shape he needed it to be.

In late September 1968, around the same time as the NDR television show was being produced about the experiment, Peuckert wrote a narrative resembling a theatrical script. It is a reconstruction, treated, literally, as a strip of film or a scene-by-scene theater piece might be treated, and reads like the notes of a director who hopes to piece together a new event out of parts of the puzzle:

“W i t c h e s U n g u e n t

- I Two Students find old book about witchcraft. Find unguent recipe. Let us try as a joke what happens.
- II Old fashioned laboratory
Solanacea-Extract - stir to make a salve.
- III Middle Class Living room. Rub unguent on. Fall into sleep.
 - Visions: Flying through the air (cf. well known dream)
 - Change of landscape: roofs
forrest
meadow on
 - a
hill
 - In between a fair booths and
 - figures
 - Witches party (meal) on the meadow
 - Grotesque figures
 - Naked dance (striptease)
 - pairs separate
 - penetration
- IV Rooster crows All separate. Still holding pieces of fabric

in hand, when he wakes up - Dazed in the chair, across from the second one, who also wakes up.

Three possibilities

- I. Accurate Report. Vision necessary,
but it would have to be unique, not like mescaline.
- II. Expanded to a game:
see above.
- III. Play until the end:
Make an unguent alone. With girlfriend. Curiosity.
She experiences the witches' part as a "witch". with.⁶⁰

Roads not Taken

What can be learned from this event and the set of intertwined narratives associated with it? What was the potential in Peuckert's experiment and its narrative manifestations? And why does this experiment not figure into the areas in which Peuckert made his biggest advancements academically, if, as we have seen, this is what he is remembered for popularly? What does the constant re-scripting of one event indicated about a scholar, his work, and his personality?

The multiple parallel narratives offer a glimpse at how something is created. The fact that Peuckert continuously wrote about his experience stands as indication that he did not see his work as finished, also highlighting a personality which could not rest without satisfaction with the outcome:

"We will hardly see anything frozen or complete; but we will see how something is created. We see the creation itself, the bubbling in the vats, out of which the completed blocks are poured. That, to me, seems much more intriguing and instructive than doing a project about something already complete" (Peuckert 1931, 179).

The reticence of his colleagues that he encountered over the years, as Peuckert attempted to discuss his work in an academic context, may very well have pushed him

towards trying different venues of narration, perhaps influenced by the belief of the general public in his work, and the ever present sensationalism of the media. Grounded in the disciplinary epistemology of the field of *Volkskunde*, it comes as no surprise that the discipline was not interested in Peuckert's attempts at turning experience into a new methodology. Not only was his work "out of academic fashion" in terms of its subject matter, but it also did not fit *analytically* with the discipline's historical trajectory. Until perhaps the mid 1960s, the discipline of *Volkskunde* in Germany relied on philology as the primary way of analyzing data; an experience-centered approach (*Erfahrungswissen*), was thus very much out of place.

Peuckert, once retired, thus turned to autobiography as a new forum for expressing his views, after having played the role of the expert in a court case, and after trying to describe it to friends and colleagues in letter. His retirement meant reflection, the attempt to express himself in non-academic ways. And still, initially, Peuckert's private autobiographical accounts attempted to show his underlying belief in the scientific nature of his experiment. But by the late 1960's, Peuckert had re-scripted the experience in a way that mirrored the style of the newspaper reports in which a belief in magic was his supreme focus. As such, the multiple layers of parallel narration about the unguent experiment, from a range of perspectives, offer up a unique glance at "creation" itself. In examining them as a set, the complexities of knowledge production and an individual's actions -- couched between academia, peers, the public, the media, and unique personal idiosyncrasies -- becomes apparent.

At the same time, the different ways in which Peuckert re-scripted the event -- academically, on the radio and in television, in personal letters, and in unpublished and therefore private autobiographies -- were full of potential. Taken as a whole, Peuckert's

narratives suggest at least two possible paths, that, if developed academically, might have been interesting for a discipline focusing on expressive culture.

For one, a strong, experience-centered complex of belief studies could have emerged from the experiment. Peuckert certainly stressed his experience, and this sort of individual-based focus could have been developed into a methodology to get at contemporary systems of belief and belief practices. His collective narrations offer up a rudimentary methodology, one which was not further developed or recognized as such.

For another, Peuckert's narratives also present an interesting insight into what is now known as the "Writing Culture" movement, an approach to scholarship that is subjective, and recognizes that the tool through which scholarship is created is, by necessity -- the ethnographer (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Peuckert is aware of himself throughout the texts, and does not write himself out of his research, frequently (if not almost exclusively) using the first-person voice.

Though past potential is not salvageable, the strands of interest and influence that go into shaping, molding, and producing knowledge are fascinating. Ultimately, being aware of how knowledge is produced can only raise the awareness of how we, as academics, are influenced by many currents, not least of all funding, popularity, collegial responses, personal interest, and the cultural conditioning of academic traditions.

CHAPTER FOUR ENDNOTES

¹ As this chapter is not meant to serve as an introduction to witchcraft studies, belief, magic, or the occult, it does not spend time discussing definitions of the aforementioned terms. Rather, it traces Peuckert's experimental approach to these subjects, all the while focusing on the way his own perception of his work shifted over time, in tune with feedback from within academia and from the media and the general population. Peuckert did produce other academic work that focused on believe and witchcraft and the occult, including *Geheim-Kulte* (1951) and *Astrologie* (1960).

² Giambattista Porta, also known as Giovanni Battista Della Porta (circa 1535-1615), was an Italian philosopher, author of *Magia Naturalis* (1558). In the book, Porta discusses the way the natural world can be explored and explained through natural experimentation, with the presumption that it possessed a natural order. For more information on Porta, see Louise George Clubb, *Giambattista Della Porta, Dramatist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).

³ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A455, citing an article in *Tempo* dated March 3rd, 1960, p. 67.

⁴ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D13, 59.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B31

⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A99. Letter from Wayland D. Hand to Peuckert, dated February 24th, 1964.

⁸ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B40. A Birthday Telegram from Heinrich Lübke to Peuckert.

⁹ Recently, Regina Bendix and Michaela Fenske at Göttingen have once again turned to Peuckert, his *Handwörterbuch der Sage*, and his novels. This interest is part of a project entitled *Enzyklopädie also Wissensformat. Das Beispiel an Erzählforschung (1955-1975)* which aims, among other things, to look at alternative ways in which scholars express themselves.

¹⁰ cf. Cod. Ms. Peuckert C25, and Cod. Ms. Peuckert C80:2, for reviews of *Geheim-Kulte* and *Astrologie*, respectively.

¹¹ Personal correspondence with Thomas Hauschild, January 22nd, 2004.

¹² Cod. Ms. Peuckert A116. Letter from Peuckert to Werner Helwig, dated February 15th, 1968.

¹³ Though Peuckert remembers speaking about the unguent experiment in 1959, he did receive a letter from a Mrs. Anny Moosbichler of München, dated September 23rd, 1958, who makes note that she had just recently heard about the experiment in the tabloid magazine *7 Tage*. Cod. Ms. Peuckert A455, 62.

¹⁴ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D13, 61-62.

¹⁵ Cod Ms Peuckert 455, 2-4. Peuckert was not in possession of the original Italian article; he owned a typescript copy, translated into German, presumably sent by an Italian colleague, friend, or an individual interested in the unguent recipe.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 3.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 6.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, 15.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *ibid.*

²² The show's title in English translates as "Between Mysticism and Reality: For Will-Erich Peuckert's 70th Birthday on May 11th, 1965".

²³ Cod. Ms. Peuckert B41, 2.

²⁴ *ibid.*, 10.

²⁵ See Cod. Ms. Peuckert A455.

²⁶ This compares quite readily with the experiences of David Hufford, whose work *The Terror that comes in the Night* was seen by many as proof for, on the one hand, the existence of the "Old Hag"; and proof on the other hand for medical and "rational" explanations of the same phenomena.

²⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D12, 72. Undated.

²⁸ Cod. Ms Peuckert A107.

²⁹ See, e.g., Cod. Ms. Peuckert C25 and Cod. Ms. Peuckert C80:2. Reviews of *Geheim-Kulte* were put out, among other places, by the *Deutsche Press Agentur*, in *Freude and Bücher: Monatshefte für Weltliteratur* (1952), in *Mitteilungsblatt der Vereinigten Großloge in Berlin: Die Kette*, and in *Die Sammlung: Zeitschrift für Kultur und Erziehung* (July/August 1952). *Astrologie* was reviewed in *Die Andere Welt* (1960, Nr. 1), in the *Aral Journal* (Stuttgart 1963), in *Atlantis* (November 1963), in *Die Bücherkommentare* (November 1960), in *Deutsche Tagespost* (February 1961), *Göttingen Presse* (January 29th, 1961), *Kosmobiologie* (1961), and the *Österreichischer Rundfunk* (December 2nd, 1960).

³⁰ Contemporary examples also help underscore the fact that academics are uncomfortable with Peuckert's work, even after the passage of more than eighty years. Presenting research on Peuckert's unguent experiment in both German and in English at two separate academic events, I was struck again and again by the fact that my audience would laugh boisterously at Peuckert's narratives and at the video clip of an aging man talking about the activities of his youth. Laughter is a sign not of valorization, no, not even of acceptance, but rather a sign of discomfort or even aggression. The academy condones only a strict set of behavior, relishing in its customs, comfortable only with a set of normative, conformative behavior.

³¹ This article of Edith Turner's is published online at <http://www.shamanism.org/articles/article02.html>. Accessed May 20th, 2007.

³² See Victor Turner, *Das Ritual: Struktur und Antistruktur* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1989).

³³ There are also letters from individuals who, from a mental health perspective, clearly exhibit signs of illness, informing Peuckert of conspiracy theories involving the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, written manically in alternatingly blue, red, and black ink. See Cod. Ms. Peuckert A455.

³⁴ *ibid.*, 65. Letter to Peuckert from Josef Speck, dated June 21st, 1961.

³⁵ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A454. Letter to Peuckert from M. Winkler-Sandler, dated April 11th, 1963.

³⁶ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A455, 55. Letter to Peuckert from Mr. Hombrebueno, dated February 14th, 1969.

³⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A31.

³⁸ e.g., Cod. Ms. Peuckert A455, 52, 71.

³⁹ NDR 1968. Italics added.

⁴⁰ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A454.

⁴¹ Cod. Ms. Peuckert F8.

⁴² *ibid.*, 282, quote from *Die Welt am Sonntag* 2/12 1956.

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Cod. Ms. Peuckert F8, 16.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 106-244. Peuckert charged for his services and for his appearance in court, sending an itemized receipt listing each hour he spent preparing his expert testimony.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 115.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 123.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 140.

⁴⁹ Cod Ms. Peuckert A116. Letter from Peuckert to Werner Helwig, dated September 13th, 1968.

⁵⁰ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A439, Letter from Peuckert to Herr Rufmann, dated February 1st, 1968.

⁵¹ Though they are undated, given post-retirement events that they reference, they were written after 1960.

⁵² See, for example: Richard Wolfram, "Zwischen Erlebnis und Sage: Ein Beitrag zur Sagenbildung im zweiten Weltkrieg." *Fabula* 5 (1962): 246-251; Alexander Schreiber, "Sage ohne Erlebnis." *Fabula* 6 (1964): 258; Georg R. Schroubek, "'Das kann ich nicht vergessen': Der Erinnerungsbericht als volkskundliche Quelle und als Art der Volksprosa." *Jahrbuch der Ostdeutschen Volkskunde* 17 (1974): 27-50; Albrecht Lehmann, "Erzählen eigener Erlebnisse im Alltag: Tatbestände, Situationen, Funktionen." *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 74 (1978): 198-215; Albrecht Lehmann, "Rechtfertigungsgeschichten: Über eine Funktion des Erzählens eigener Erlebnisse im Alltag." *Fabula* 21 (1980): 56-69; Albrecht Lehmann, "Erzählen im Gefangenenlager: Über Formen und Funktionen des Erzählens in einer extremen Lebenssituation." *Fabula* 25 (1984): 1-17; Albrecht Lehmann, "'Organisieren': Über Erzählen aus der Kriegs- und Nachkriegszeit." *Der Deutschunterricht: Beiträge zu seiner Praxis und wissenschaftlichen Grundlegung* 39 (1987): 51-63; Albrecht Lehmann "Erzählen zwischen den Generationen." *Fabula* 30 (1989): 1-25; Siegfried Neumann, "Erlebnis Alltag: Beobachtungen zur Volkserzählung in der Gegenwart." In *Papers I-IV & Plenary Papers: The 8th Congress for the International Society for Folk Narrative Research, Bergen, June 12th-17th, 1984*, edited by Reimund Kvideland and Torunn Selberg (Bergen: International Society for Folk Narrative Research, 1984), 97-106; Gottfried Korff, "S-Bahn Ethnologie: Acht Bemerkungen zum Berliner Alltag nach Öffnung der Mauer unter Einschluss einiger Überlegungen zu Musealisierung des Alltags aus Anlass eines Kolloquiums." *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 44 (1990): 5-26; Klaus Roth, "Erzählen im sozialistischen Alltag. Beobachtungen zur Strategien der Lebensbewältigung in Südosteuropa." *Zeitschrift der Volkskunde* 87 (1991): 181-95; Jürgen Beyer and Reet Hiiemäe, *Folklore als Tatsachenbericht* (Tartu: Sektion für Folkloristik des Estnischen Literaturmuseum, 2001); Helmut Fischer, "Erzählte Wirklichkeit im Folklorisierungsprozess." In Beyer and Hiiemäe 2001, 11-20; Ines Köhler-Zülch, "Erzählungen über den Scheintod: Faktizität und Fiktionalität im medizinischen Fallbericht." In Beyer and Hiiemäe 2001, 107-126; Isidor Levin, "Folklore als Tatsachenbericht." In Beyer and Hiiemäe 2001, 127-140; and Fred Van Lieburg, "Mädchen, Vergewaltiger und Schutzengel: Die moderne Umwandlung einer protestantischen Wundergeschichte." In Beyer and Hiiemäe 2001, 140-161.

⁵³ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D13, 54-63.

⁵⁴ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D12, 63, 68-69, 72. Italics added. Peuckert's use of two different names in his different narrations -- Schulze and Behn -- may be indicative of several things, including the scripting and rescripting of the same event; perhaps the story was originally oral, as well, accounting for the difference in narratives.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D13.

⁵⁷ Cod. Ms. Peuckert D14, 6.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 15-17.

⁶⁰ Cod. Ms. Peuckert A455.

CONCLUSION

“We must infuse our discipline with ideas, be able to pose problems in general terms and seek solutions on the basis of research. The need for such a change in course of our studies and the conception of our discipline is particularly urgent now, in the postinstrumentalization era of folklore; yet in order to regenerate folklore research we have to reach no further than the preinstrumentalization stage of the discipline, examining the ideas that initially gave rise to the interest in folklore”
(Ben-Amos 1973, 117-118).

“...here, too, it can be claimed that the history of science is science itself
(Goethe, Preface of “*Zur Farbenlehre*”).

Just over a century old, the history of *Volkskunde* as a *professional* field has been turbulent at times, and continues to see rapid changes as it develops through the 21st century. Since the 1960's, one particularly salient topic of interest has been the name of the discipline itself, *Volkskunde*, and the extent to which its name viably represented the interests and praxes of its practitioners. By the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, most departments at German universities had already changed their name, indicating a general discomfort with the old label and its history. At Tübingen, the *Seminar für Volkskunde* (Seminar for *Volkskunde*) was replaced in name by the *Seminar für Empirische Kulturwissenschaft* (Seminar for Empirical Cultural Studies). In Frankfurt, the available course of study is now called simply *Kulturanthropologie* (Cultural Anthropology), and Augsburg calls its program *Europäische Ethnologie/Volkskunde* (European Ethnology/*Volkskunde*). *Europäische*

Ethnologie, as well, has become a popular name at many institutions, and in 2003, the *Seminar für Volkskunde* at the Universität Göttingen changed its name to *Seminar für Kulturanthropologie/Europäische Ethnologie*, the latest of many institutional name changes across Germany (cf., e.g., Bendix and Eggeling 2004).

This grappling with institutional and professional identity arose in no small part out of *Volkskunde*'s particularly pernicious history with National Socialism, the abuses of a still professionalizing discipline for the purpose of advancing a racialized and anti-Semitic worldview. Over two decades after the end of the war, in the late 1960's, the term "Volk" was also reevaluated, which had denoted a rural and agrarian peasantry representing a primordial but glorious German (Arian) past.

The field itself and its practitioners cleft a deep chasm around World War II, attempting to make a break with this painful past of pseudo-science and persecution. The chasm, though, excluded the 19th century founding fathers of the field, as Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Clemens Brentano, Achim von Arnim, and Johann Gottfried Herder were all held up after World War II as examples of scholars whose work was eminently acceptable as a way to reestablish the discipline on the basis of its historical roots (Stocking 1974, 511).

Peuckert as an individual -- and as a scholar, eccentric, and teacher -- is of intrinsic interest to the field because his career spanned over five decades, including these most scarring years in the history of German *Volkskunde*. Peuckert was not alone to carry the distinction of having a career both before and after World War II, but somewhat more unique in having his career suspended from 1935 to 1945 during the years of dictatorship, only to *resume* his career in 1946. While some *Volkskundler* lost their jobs after the rise of National Socialism, and while other professors filled the

vacant slots after university life resumed after 1945, Peuckert did hold the first professorship in Volkskunde after World War II.

Perhaps because of this absence from academia from 1935-1945, Peuckert has entered into meta-historical discourse more than many of his peers. In fact, his role as the “savior” of the discipline of Volkskunde, based in part on his attempts to denationalize the field beginning already in 1948, has been one of the most persistent narratives about Peuckert. Matthias Zender noted in his obituary that Peuckert had, after 1933, “[...] felt the antagonism of those newly in power”, but that this had not impacted his career; instead, he “founded the Volkskundliche Seminar” in Göttingen after the war, and “worked until his very last days, [...] his ideas fascinating each and every one of us” (Zender 1970, 173). Decades later, disciplinary histories would continue to push this image of Peuckert, describing him as “a scholar with integrity with a social democratic past, who was silenced by the National Socialists”, as “[...] the old socialist and author of a ‘Volkskunde of the Proletariat,’ [who] made no ideological compromises through the end of the war” who was a “magnet” for the “young, post-war generation of Volkskundler”, as a scholar who worked “towards the refurbishment of Volkskunde’s disciplinary history”, as one of those individuals “whose position [against National Socialism] could not be swayed by anything”, and as a man “who was punished with the loss of his teaching license and who was threatened with [...] a concentration camp” (Brednich 1987a, 115; Weber-Kellermann and Bimmer 1985, 108, 116; Sievers 1991, 15; Jeggle 1994, 64; Lixfeld 1994, 177).¹

The story becomes more complex if one tries to dig deeper through these narratives of the Peuckert who helped save the discipline of Volkskunde, as it has disabled more serious and more critical research on Peuckert. His stance that two

different Volkskunden had existed during the war did play a role in postponing a more serious Vergangenheitsbewältigung, and one also finds no substance attached to the claims that Peuckert purportedly saved the field: the claims are made without really discussing who Peuckert was and what work he pursued. Was it the very strong need for the field to forget and the general spirit of rebuilding as Germany ramped up towards its economic miracle that contributed to Peuckert being placed in the role of a figurehead for a discipline which needed stability and wanted to quickly break free from its past? The incongruity between the Peuckert who is constructed by the field and the Peuckert who emerges out of the new, previously unexamined primary data is startling.

If the Peuckert of disciplinary histories is the Peuckert who helped save the field by staying well within the confines of disciplinary canon, collecting and studying folk narratives, then the Peuckert discussed here is the Peuckert whose work was often in tension with that same canon and his colleagues. His repeated endeavors to engage and interact with the field he made his academic home in, and his efforts to pursue his own interests regardless of whether they worked towards the discipline or struggled against it, are a benchmark of his career. His work teeter-tottered between fitting the praxes of a conservative discipline on the one hand, and, at other times, breaking boundaries and going out on a limb; the continuous desire to figure out his place in academia and his role within the field of Volkskunde marked Peuckert's academic life. This framework of boundary breaking and compliance, and his reactions to the particular contexts in which he worked, was explored throughout this dissertation. The question of how research is done *after* a period of crisis also figures into the greater understanding of Peuckert's contributions to the field, as well as the unfolding of post-war Volkskunde.

In the process of navigating the discipline, Peuckert offered up three distinct

approaches to open up the field. This dissertation explored the way he attempted to change *Volkskunde* over the course of his fragmented career, often as a lone individual, at the intersection of disciplinary epistemology, feedback from peers, personal and popular interests, as well as his own idiosyncrasies. By focusing on arenas of research that emerged from the data itself -- Peuckert's statement that the work on *Kulturkreise* (culture complexes), and by extension his *Volkskunde des Proletariats*, was his most important research, the discipline's verdict of Peuckert's importance as a resistor during World War II, and the clear outpouring from the public in response to Peuckert's witches' unguent experiment -- this dissertation also brought to the forefront areas which have not often been in the spotlight.

Bringing Peuckert for the first time to an English-speaking audience, what Peuckert's work discussed here had in common was its intrinsic focus on changing the scope of the field, expanding its focus, its geographic reference, or its methodologies. Yet how each of his projects struggled to do so varied tremendously.

Peuckert's *Volkskunde des Proletariats* looked to expand the definition of the term "Volk", pushing for the inclusion of a broader segment of the population. Instead of just referring to the peasantry, Peuckert actively pushed for a field which included the working class. As a text, *VdP* marks a flexible point of transition from a "Volk" defined as the peasantry to a "Volk" which ultimately encompassed the working class and other segments of the population. What stands out in particular is the longevity of thought on *VdP*-related work: despite or perhaps because of the fact that Peuckert thought this was his main contribution to *Volkskunde*, he continued to work on the ideas until his retirement, in lectures and in other publications.

Peuckert's work after the war to denationalize the field tried to tinker with the

scope of the field by changing the parameters of what was considered to be part of the discipline's focus. He offered up a new "path", at heart an international one, to counteract the implementation of a nationalist ideology and agenda. By attempting a change for the field from looking at data within national boundaries to looking at zones of contact, border areas, and neighbors, Peuckert hoped that a *more* internationalized field could avoid some of the problems that the nationalized field had run amuck of.

Finally, Peuckert's work and experimentation with the witches' unguent also pushed at the discipline's methodologies by showing (not by describing or advocating) an experiential approach to data-collection and analysis. Generally speaking, this endeavor was ignored, or laughed off in hallway conversations, not least of all because it made (and makes) people uncomfortable. Yet the fact of the matter is that it was a sphere of research Peuckert could not stay away from for too long, fruitful for him perhaps precisely because it enabled him to reexamine his disciplinary home, challenging its assumptions.

* * *

Especially the data at the Handschriftenabteilung in Göttingen and the Akademie der Künste in Berlin, remains a rich resource for further endeavors. Looking towards the future, there are several research projects which emerge out of this dissertation, opening up a larger window into Peuckert's past, his contributions to the field, and the specificities of the field of Volkskunde during the years Peuckert worked.

More remains to be done on Peuckert's non-academic writing, his corpus of literature written primarily as a young student and during his years in Haasel, as well as unpublished novels in his Nachlass.² An examination of his novels has the potential to further elaborate on Peuckert's nonconformist personality, and are also insight into

alternate ways in which scholars chose to express themselves.³ Since his books were also commended by the Nazis, put on the so-called “White List”, examining the topics he chose to write about and their discussions on Poland and Eastern Europe, and Germany’s place in the world could be fruitful, complicating Peuckert’s reputation as an anti-ideologue. Also salient is the question of the relationship between novel writing and ethnography, or fiction and ethnography. Especially since Peuckert’s academic writing has always been criticized as being too prose-like -- his daughter even vehemently pointed out that she had hated her father’s writing style -- this relationship is one that needs to be teased out (Peuckert 2004).

Peuckert’s autobiographical texts also feed into the idea of alternate means of expression, warranting closer examination. They underscore his penchant for self-documentation, as well as his love for moving between biography and fiction. One has to wonder: of what use were three autobiographies to Peuckert? How do they complement or contradict each other? Why did Peuckert rely so frequently on fiction as a means of expression? The possibility of an edited volume which juxtaposes these three texts could offer up rich new information on the nature of self-documentation in general, and Peuckert’s thought processes in particular. The question of voice remains salient, as Peuckert used one voice throughout his life, cross-cutting academic and non-academic prose alike.

As it stands, there is only scant work about Peuckert’s contributions to the field after the war, most published in Bönisch-Brednich and Brednich’s volume commemorating the anniversary of his birth. As such, an examination of further unpublished manuscripts in the archives -- a manuscript on *Bier*, beer, for example, and work on Goethe and *Volkskunde*, for another -- would expand and deepen our

understanding of Peuckert's research interests.⁴ His lectures notes as well offer up information that reflects a specific point in time in his life and thought, a scholar imparting his knowledge to his students. And how -- or did -- Peuckert students interact with Peuckert's research interests?

Further intellectual biographies on individuals whose ideas engaged with Peuckert's own could also help strengthen our understanding of the field of knowledge he operated in. Though their chronological overlap in the field was minimal, a biography of Hermann Bausinger, for example, whose 1965 lecture and subsequent publication "*Volkstumsideologie und Volksforschung: Zur National Sozialistischen Volkskunde*" was the first stringent step in critiquing the *Volkskunde* of the Third Reich, would complement and expand the explorations of Peuckert's own forays (Bausinger 1965). In some ways, Bausinger's attempts to expand the scope of the field in the 1960's and 1970's -- not least of all his work *Volkskultur in der technischen Welt* (1961), which sought to show how technology and modernization influenced and interacted with folk culture -- mirror Peuckert's own efforts just two decades prior. Working at distinctly different times, both tried to struggle against the field that had produced them. How Bausinger succeeded would be an interesting counterpoint to Peuckert's own work.

* * *

Bendix points out that "[i]t is not the object, though, but the desire, the process of searching itself, that yield existential meaning" (Bendix 1997, 17). Peuckert was intrigued by the processes of changing the field. There is no doubt that he knew what he was interested in and wanted to work on; all he needed was a field which understood him and accepted his work. To obtain that, he set about changing the discipline of

Volkskunde, gaining meaning in that very process which he would continue to pursue until his death. The field, in some ways, has now caught up.

CONCLUSION ENDNOTES

¹ Nowhere in Peuckert's own notes is there a discussion on the threat of being sent to a concentration camp. It is unclear where this claim comes from.

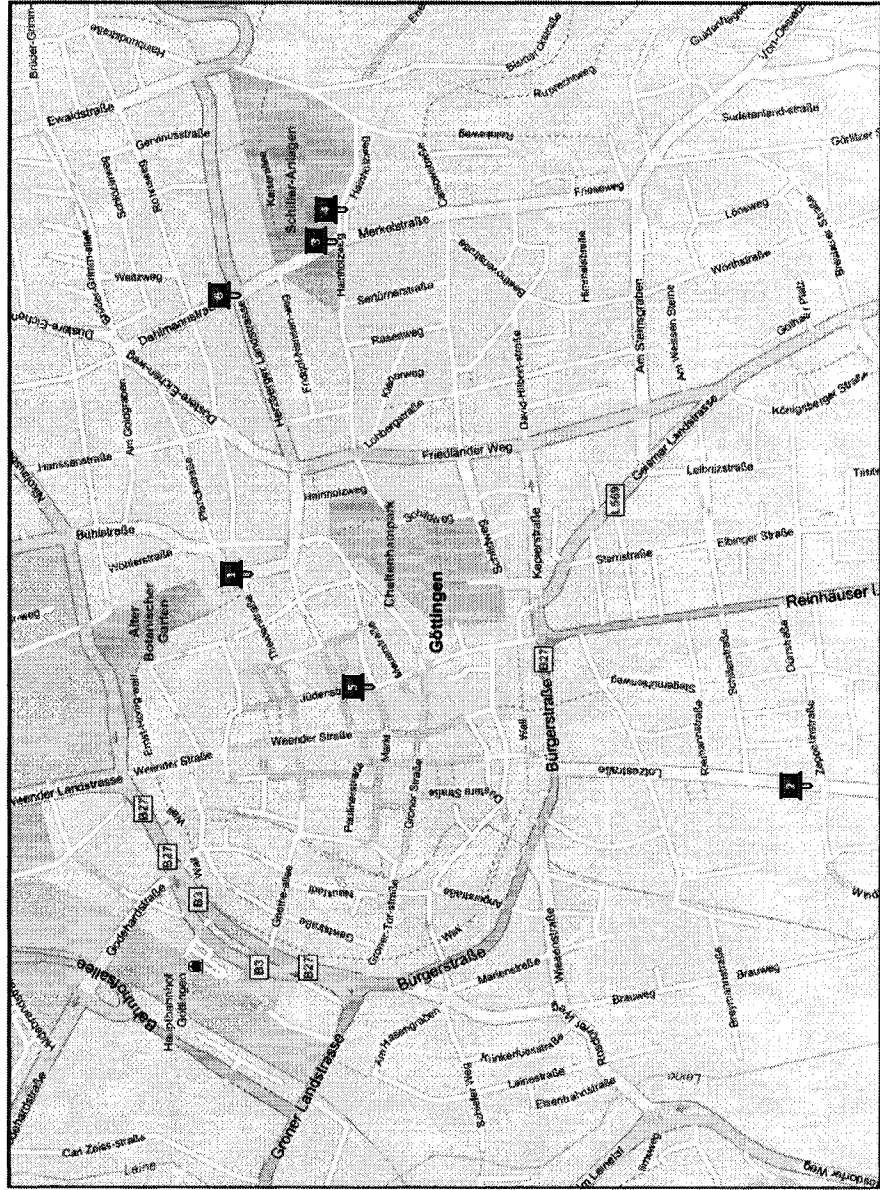
² cf., e.g., Cod. Ms. Peuckert D17, "Flüchtlingsnovellen", and Cod. Ms. Peuckert D20, "Froschgranate" (a book for children).

³ The idea of alternate means of expression comes from Regina Bendix in personal communication.

⁴ cf., e.g., Cod. Ms. Peuckert D6, and Cod. Ms. Peuckert D21.

APPENDIX 1: MAPS

Map 1: Peuckert's Residences in Göttingen and the Location of the Seminar für Volkskunde



Map generated by <http://maps.live.com/>

Map 1, Key:

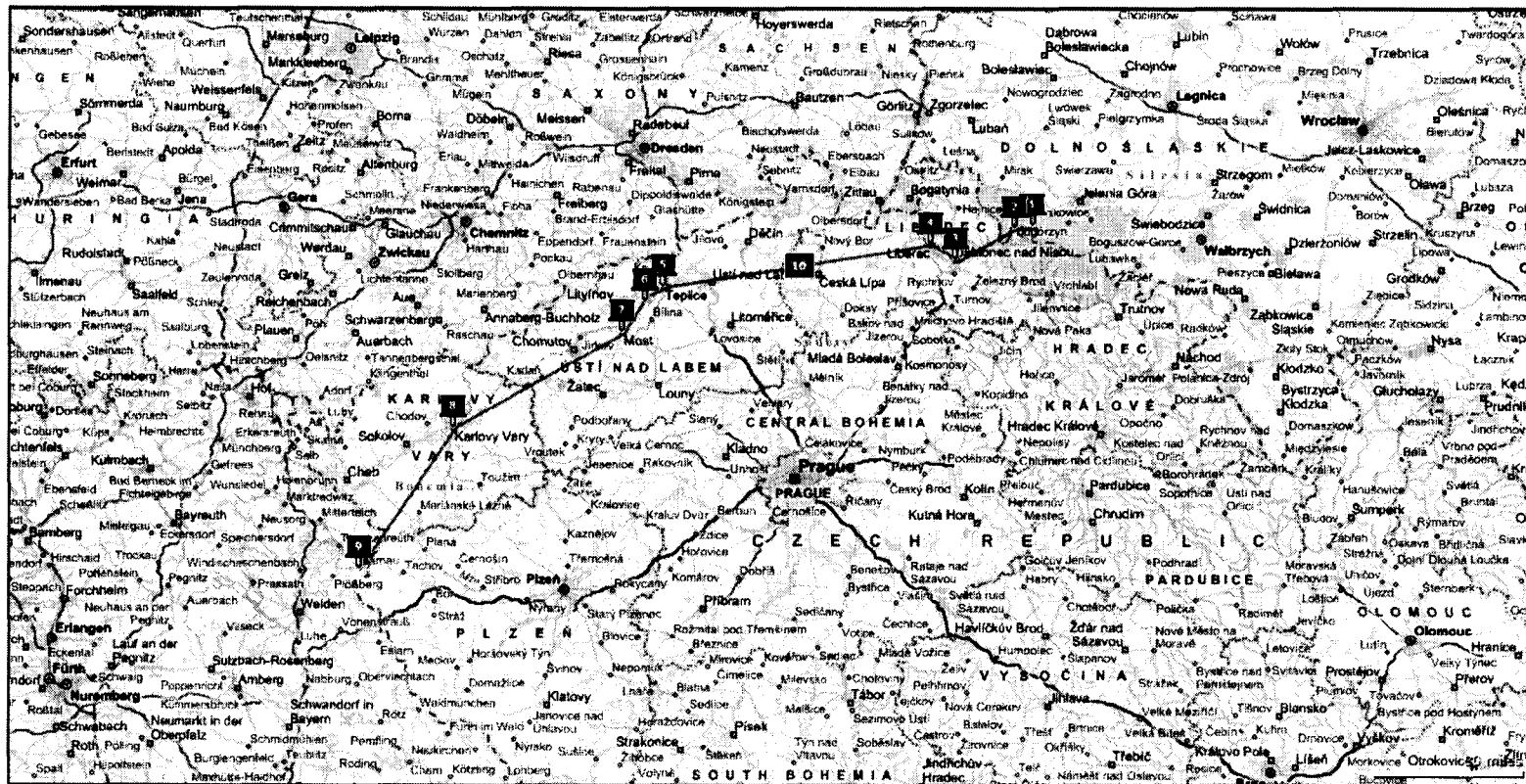
Peuckert's Residences

1. Theaterplatz 7, 37073 Göttingen
2. Lotzestr. 43, 37083 Göttingen
3. Hainholzweg 58, 37085 Göttingen
4. Hainholzweg 64, 37085 Göttingen

Locations of the Seminar für Volkskunde

5. Kurze-Geismar-Str. 40, 37073 Göttingen
6. Merkelstr. 3, 37085 Göttingen

Map 2: Gertrud and Will-Erich Peuckert's Flight from Haasel, over Schreiberhau, to the Oberpfalz, Bavaria.



Map generated by <http://maps.live.com/>

The flight is superimposed on a contemporary map of Europe.

Map 2, Key:

1. Sklarska Poreba, Poland
2. Jakuszyce, Poland
3. Jablonec nad Lisou, Liberec, Czech Republic
4. Liberec, Lieberc, Czech Republic
5. Teplice, Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic
6. Duchcov, Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic
7. Most, Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic
8. Karlovy Vary, Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic
9. Bärnau, Bavaria, Germany

Total distance from Schreiberhau (sklarska Poreba) to Bärnau: 165.08 miles

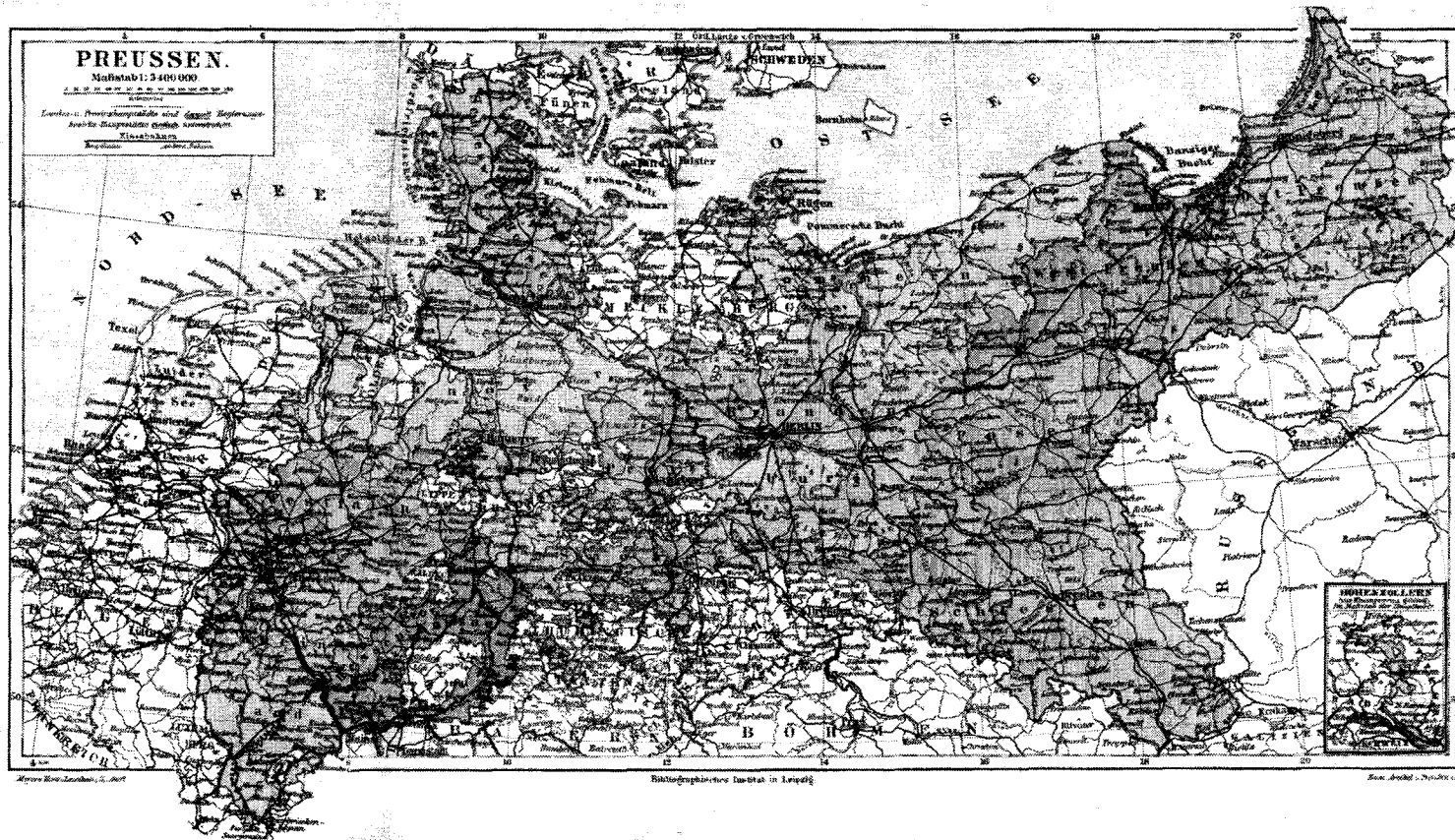
Map 3: Contemporary Map of Poland, showing the three Voivodeships (administrative regions; Dolnoslaskie, Opolskie, and Slaski) which make up the former Silesia.



Map found at http://europa.eu/abc/maps/members/poland_de.htm

260 The copyright of this map is with the European Commission, but reprints are allowed.

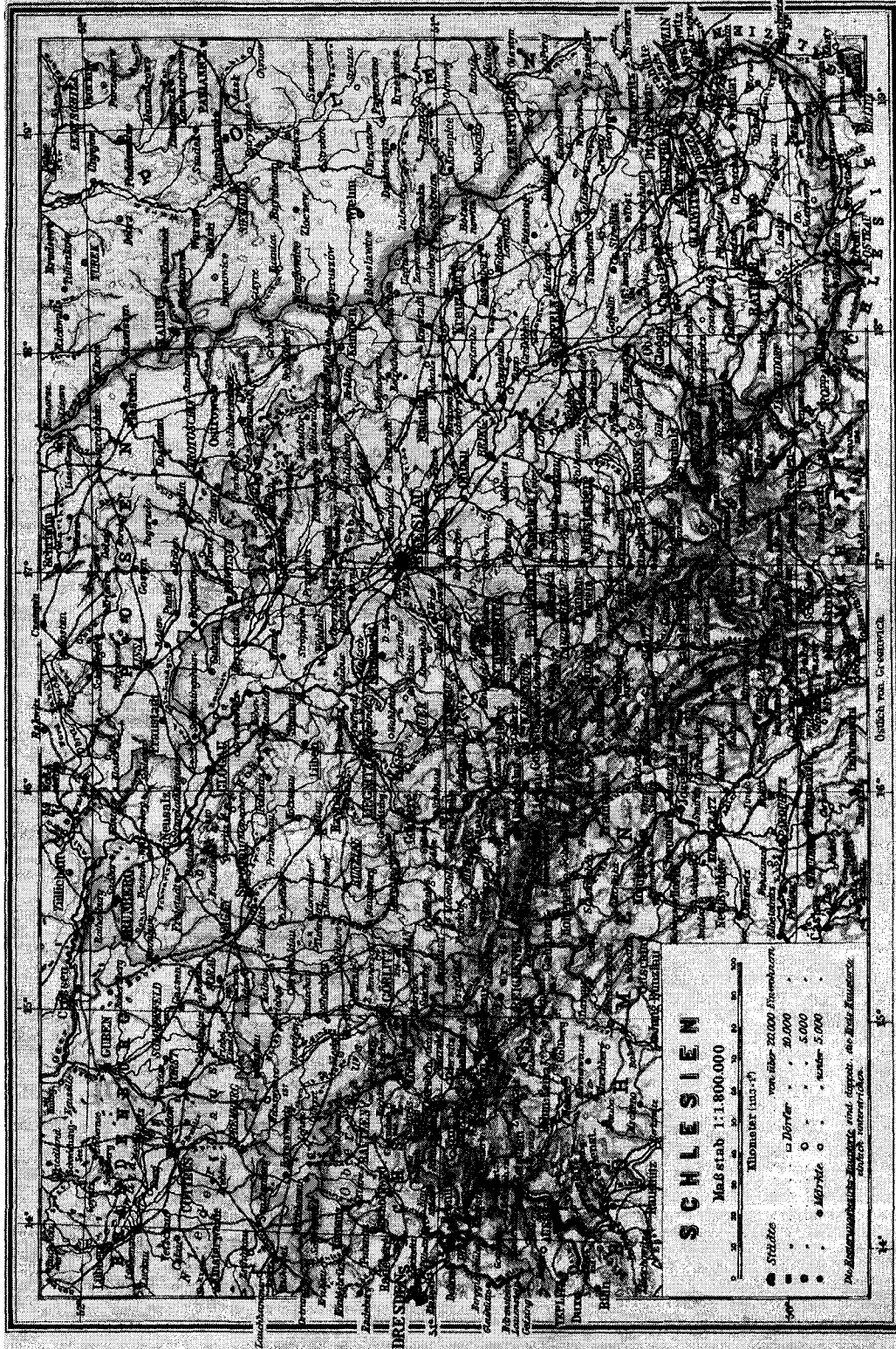
Map 4: Prussia before 1905, showing Silesia (lower, southeast corner of the map)



The map was found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Prussia_%28political_map_before_1905%29.jpg

It was originally printed in the 5th edition of *Meyers Konversationslexikon* (1893-1897). Its copyright has expired, and is in the public domain according to German copyright law (§ 64, § 66, § 72 or § 5 UrhG).

Map 5: Silesia, 1905



Map 5 was found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Schlesien_1905.png

The map was originally printed in *Bibliothek allgemeinen und praktischen Wissens für Militäranwärter*, volume 1. (Deutsches Verlaghaus Bong & Co: Berlin 1905). Its copyright has expired, and is in the public domain according to German copyright law (§ 64, § 66, § 72 or § 5 UrhG).

APPENDIX 2
Photographs

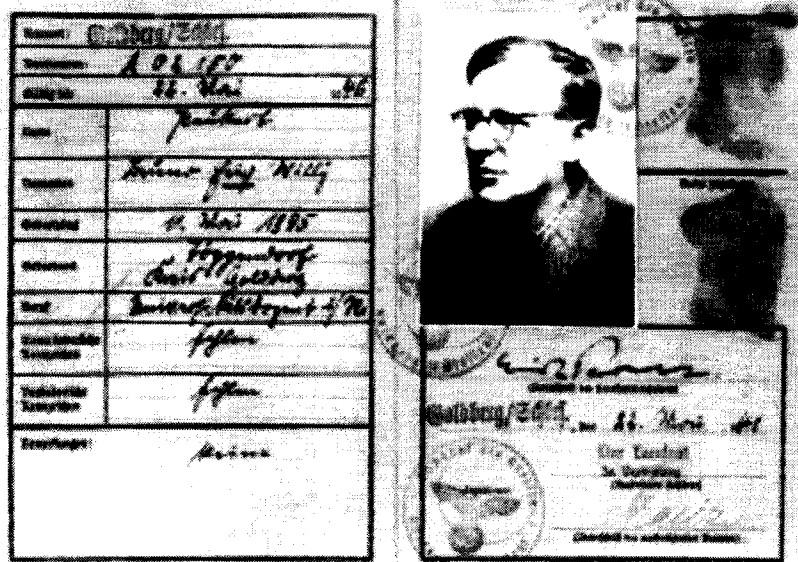


Photo 1: Will-Erich Peuckert's passport, dated May 22nd, 1941
Cod. Ms. Peuckert B4/B5

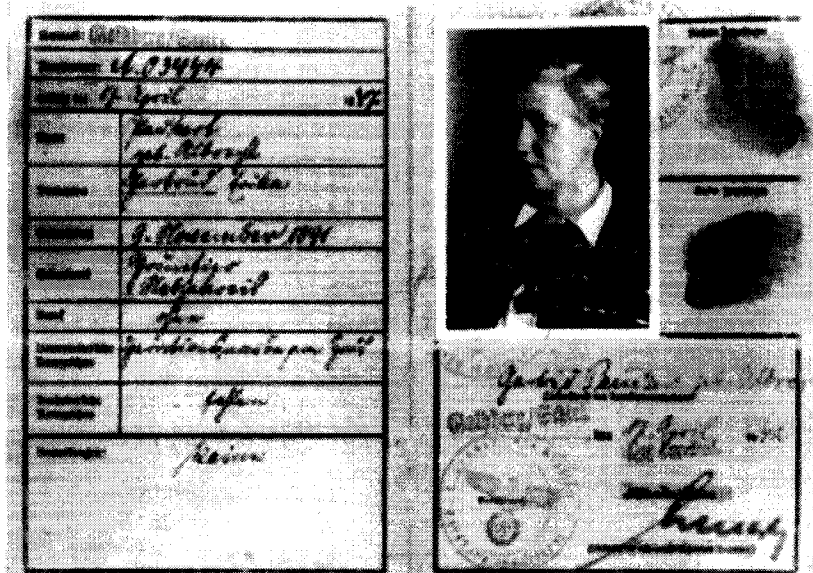


Photo 2: Gertrud (Albrecht) Peuckert's passport, dated April 17th, 1942
Cod. Ms. Peuckert B4/B5



Photo 3: Young Peuckert (undated, after the war)
Cod. Ms. Peuckert B36/37



Photo 4: Theaterplatz 7, Göttingen
Photo courtesy of Johanna Jacobsen Kiciman

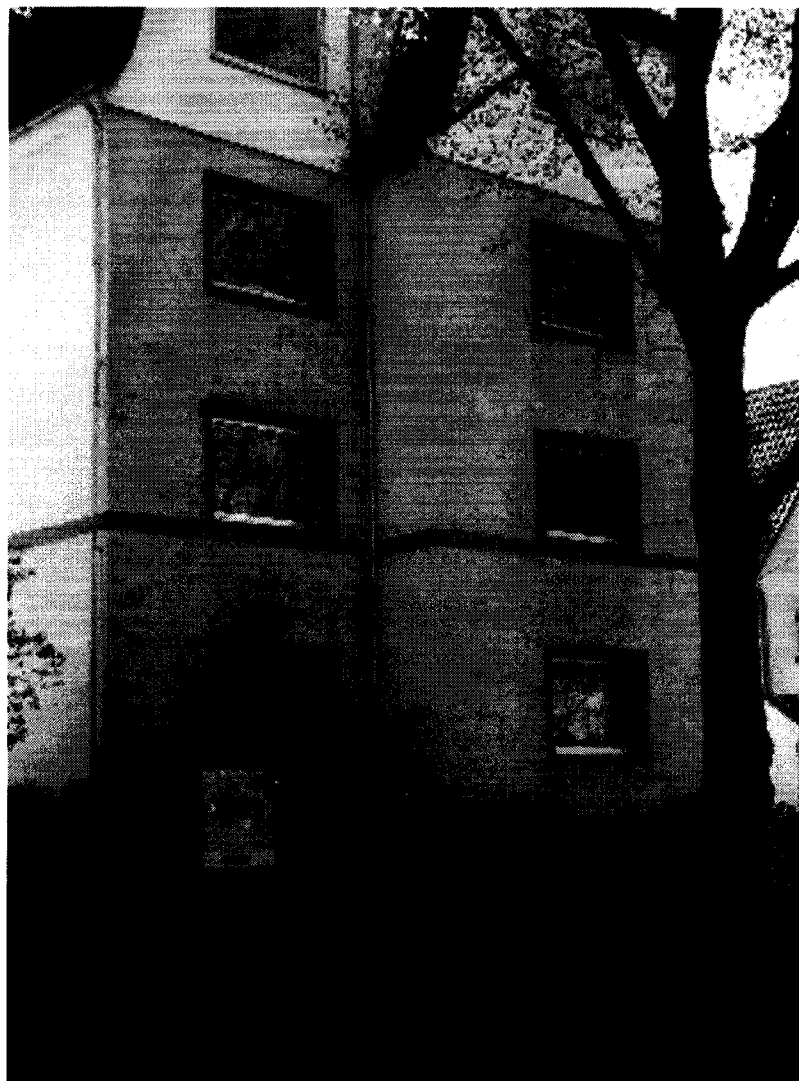


Photo 5: Lotzestr. 43, Göttingen
Photo courtesy of Johanna Jacobsen Kiciman



Photo 6: Hainholzweg 58, Göttingen
Photo courtesy of Johanna Jacobsen Kiciman



Photo 7: Hainholzweg 64, Göttingen
Photo courtesy of Johanna Jacobsen Kiciman

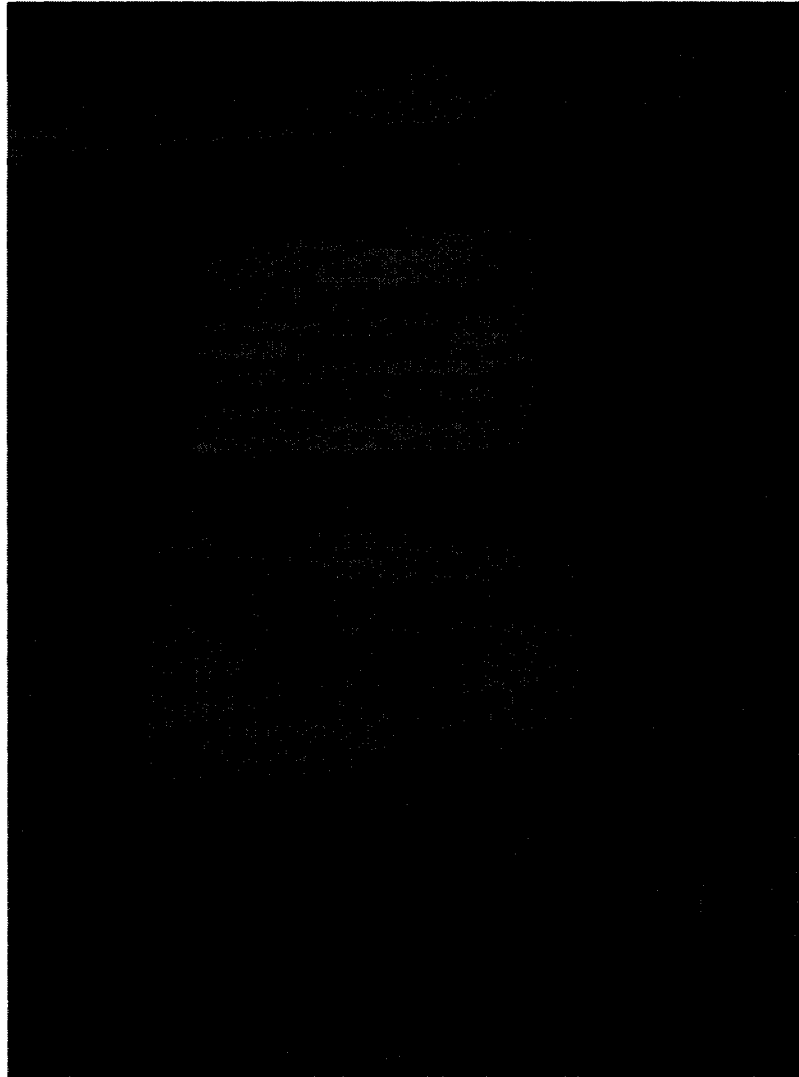


Photo 8: Memorial Plaque at Hainholzweg 64
Photo courtesy of Johanna Jacobsen Kiciman



Photo 9: Peuckert, retirement (undated)
Cod. Ms. Peuckert B36/37

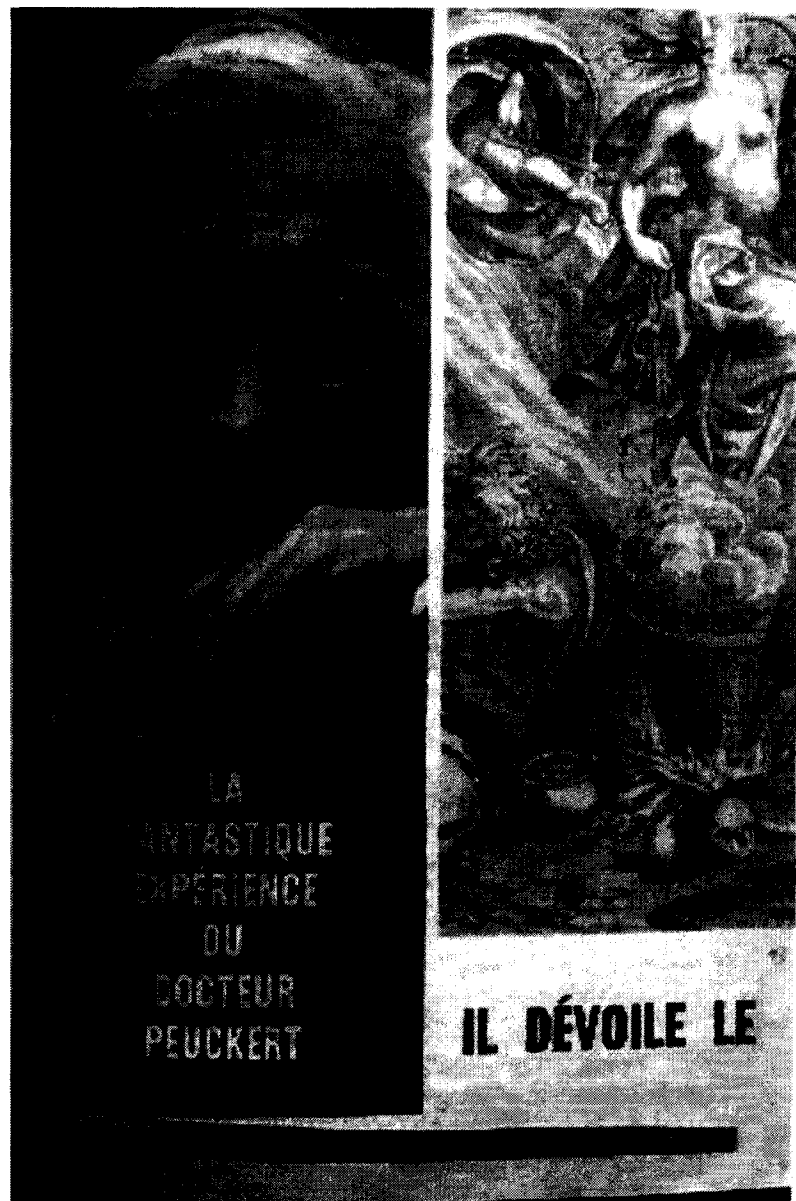


Photo 10: La fantastique expérience du Docteur Peuckert
Cod. Ms. Peuckert A455



Photo 11: Peuckert, NDR still shot, December 12th, 1967
Cod. Ms. Peuckert B36/37



Photo 12: Peuckert, NDR still shot, December 12th, 1967
Cod. Ms. Peuckert B36/37



Photo 13: Peuckert, NDR still shot, December 12th, 1967
Cod. Ms. Peuckert B36/37

APPENDIX 3: Peuckert timeline

	<u>Personal</u>	<u>Book-length Publications</u>
1895	Born on May 11 in Töppendorf, Kreis Goldberg-Haynau as Willi Erich Bruno Peuckert.	
1900	The Peuckert family moves to Kaiserswaldau.	
1911- 1914	Studies for 3 years at the Teachers Preparatory School in Bunzlau.	
1914	Peuckert voluntarily enlists in the air force; from December 1914 through March 1915, he serves as weatherman in the “Luftschiffbataillon Liegnitz”.	
1915	Peuckert is released from the air force in the spring. Teaches Spring 1915 through Fall 1915 at a <i>Volksschule</i> , an elementary school, in Groß-Iser in the Iser Mountains. Drafted into the infantry in the fall.	
1916	Released in the spring near Lida (Russia), due to illness. Marries Gertrud Albrecht from the village of Grünfier by Filehne (near Schneidemühl).	
1916- 1921	Peuckert returns to teaching in Groß Iser in the Iser Mountains.	
1919	Birth of his son Hanns Peter	

Passion: Ein Drama. Dresden: Neue Schaubühne.

Personal

- 1920 Joins Schlesische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde, the Silesian Society for Volkskunde.
- 1921 Goes to Breslau to study German and Prehistory, Volkskunde and *Völkerkunde*.
- 1924
- 1926
- 1927 Under the supervision of Professor Dr. Hermann Reincke-Bloch, Peuckert completes his dissertation summa cum laude.
- 1928 Gets a job as a Academic Assistant (*Wissenschaftlicher Hilfsarbeiter*) at the Deutsches Institut, Universität Breslau, on October 1.

Book-length Publications

Die brennende Nacht. Berlin: Reiß.

Apokalypse 1618. Jena: E. Diederichs.

Landfahrer. Ein Wander- und Reisebuch im Riesengebirge. Langensalza: Wendt und Klauwell.

Das Leben Jakob Böhmes. Jena: Diederichs.

Andreas Hofer oder Der Bauernkrieg in Tirol. Alten und neuen Berichten nacherzählt. Jena: Diederichs

Peuckert's dissertation, *Die Entwicklung Abrahams von Franckenberg bis zum Jahre 1641* is published as part of *Die Rosenkretzer: Zur Geschichte der Reformation*. Jena: Diederichs.

Personal

Book-length Publications

1929

Zwei Lichte in der Welt. Geschichten aus dem Walde. Jena: Diederichs.

1930

On May 1, 1930, he transfers to the new Pädagogische Akademie Breslau as a docent.

2nd edition of *Rosenkreutzer in: Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart.* Tübingen.

1931

Volkskunde des Proletariats. Bd. I. Aufgang der proletarischen Kultur. Frankfurt: Neuer Frankfurter Verlag.

Maria in der Ackerstraße. München: Kaiser.

1932

F. Ranke habitates Peuckert in Volkskunde at the Universität Breslau, and Peuckert begins spending summers in Haasel.

1932-
1935

Peuckert teaches at the Deutsches Institut, including courses on general Volkskunde, but also courses on Magic, on Customs, and on religious Volkskunde.

1933

Nazi Book Burnings: Peuckert's *Volkskunde des Proletariats* is among those books burned.

1934

Die goldenen Berge. Ein deutscher Heldenzug. Leipzig: List.

Personal

Book-length Publications

1935 Peuckert loses his right to teach because of political unreliability. He is also accused of being a pacifist and a

Judenfreund, a friend of the Jews.

Peuckert goes into early retirement, and moves indefinitely to Haasel in the Bober-Katzbach Mountains with his wife Gertrud.

1936

Pansophie: Ein Versuch zur Geschichte der weissen und schwarzen Magie. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

1937

Schlesisch. München: Piper.

1939

Die Spur im Heubusch. Eine Jungengeschichte von der polnischen Grenze. Berlin: Wiking Verlag.

1940

Schwarzer Adler unterm Silbermond. Biographie der Landschaft Schlesien. Hamburg.

1941

Peuckert accuses a fellow scholar, Ludwig Englert, of plagiarism, and thus is more closely scrutinized by the *Reichsschriftumskammer*.

Liebe, Fahrte und Abenteuer des Trompeters aus der Zips. Berlin: Wiking.

So lange die Erde steht. Leipzig: List.

Personal

- 1942 On July 24th, Peuckert is issued a *Rezensionsverbot*; that is, he is no longer allowed to review books.
- 1943 Wins the Paracelsus Prize.
- 1944
- 1945 February of this year Peuckert and his wife flee Schlesien and end up in Bavaria.
- 1945-1946 Gertrud and Peuckert lease a farm, the Holzmühle by

Book-length Publications

Theophrastus Paracelsus. Stuttgart-Berlin: Kohlhammer.

Deutscher Volksglaube des Spätmittelalters. Stuttgart: Spemann.

Kleines deutsches Sagenbuch. Potsdam: Rütten & Loening Verlag.

Heimatgemeinde Birkigt. Heitere Erzählungen. Leipzig: Bohn & Sohn.

Nikolaus Kopernikus, der die Erde kreisen liess. Leipzig: List.

Sebastian Franck, ein deutscher Sucher. München: Piper.

Theophrastus Paracelsus. 2nd edition. Stuttgart-Berlin.

Theophrastus Paracelsus. 3rd edition. Stuttgart.

Personal

Bärnau, in Bavaria.

1946 Called to Göttingen to teach.

1947 His wife Gertrud Peuckert (née Albrecht) passes away in a terrible car accident. Peuckert himself is badly wounded and loses most vision in his right eye.

1948 Marries his caretaker Lore-Marie Hanckel from Osnabrück.

1949

1950

1951

Book-length Publications

Nicolaas Copernicus, die de aard liet draaien. Amsterdam. [translation into dutch]

Die große Wende. Das apokalyptische Saeculum und Luther. Geistesgeschichte und Volkskunde. Hamburg: Claassen.

Wiedergeburt. Gespräche in Hörsälen und unterwegs. Berlin-Frankfurt/M.: Weidmann.

Schlesien. Biographie einer Landschaft. New edition of *Schwarzer Adler unterm Silbermond.* Hamburg: Claassen & Goverts.

Schlesisch. Expanded edition. München: R. Piper & Co.

Geheim-Kulte. Heidelberg: C. Pfeffer Verlag.

Personal

Book-length Publications

- | | | |
|------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1952 | | <i>Ostdeutsches Sagebüchlein.</i> Hamburg. |
| | | <i>Ostdeutsches Märchenbüchlein.</i> Hamburg. |
| | | <i>Volkskunde: Quellen und Forschung seit 1930.</i> [in cooperation with Otto Lauffer]. |
| | | <i>Schlesien: Biographie der Landschaft.</i> New edition. Hamburg. |
| 1953 | | <i>Schlesische Volkskunde.</i> Kitzingen/Main: Holzner Verlag. |
| 1954 | | <i>Ostdeutsches Sagenbüchlein.</i> 2. edition. Kitzingen/Main. |
| | | <i>Bayerische Sagen und Bräuche.</i> [editor]. Göttingen. |
| 1955 | | <i>Ehe. Weiberzeit, Männerzeit, Saeterehe, Hofehe, Freie Ehe.</i> Hamburg: Claassen. (FF Communications, 158). |
| | | <i>Lenore.</i> Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia. |
| 1956 | | <i>Pansophie. Ein Versuch zur Geschichte der weissen und schwarzen Magie.</i> 2nd expanded edition. |
| | | Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag. |
| 1958 | | <i>Der unbekannte Eichendorff. Vom Schwärmen zur Bewährung.</i> München: Bergstadtverlag Korn. |
| 1960 | Goes into retirement on October 31st. | |

Personal

Moves to the farm Engelsmühle in the Odenwald near Darmstadt-Mühlthal

Receives the Johann-Heinrich-Merck-Ehrung from the city of Darmstadt.

1961 Death of his son due to an accident

1962

1966

Book-length Publications

Astrologie. Stuttgart.

Verborgenes Niedersachsen. Untersuchungen zur niedersächsischen Volkssage und zum Volksbuch mit einem Grußwort von Kurt Ranke zum 65. Geburtstag. Göttingen.

Das Leben Jakob Böhmes. 2nd edition. Stuttgart.

Rosenkreutzer. New, reworked edition. Tübingen.

Europäische Sagen, vol. 1-6. (editor). Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag.

Handwörterbuch der Sage. vol. 1-3. (editor). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Schlesisch. München.

Die große Wende. Unchanged reprint of the 1948 edition.

Personal

- 1967
- 1968
- 1969 Peuckert passes away, October 25, 1969

1971

1973

1974

1976

Book-length Publications

Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Gabalia. Ein Versuch zur Geschichte der magia naturalis im 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts. Part 2 of the Pansophie. Berlin: Schmidt Verlag.

Schlesische Volkskunde. Unchanged reprint. Darmstadt.

Die schlesischen Weber. I. Vom rohen Flachs bis zum Fabriksturm. 2. Aufgang der proletarischen Kultur. Darmstadt: Bläschke Verlag.

Das Rosenkreutz. 2nd, revised edition, with an introduction y Rolf Christian Zimmermann. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag.

Rübezahl. (editor). Darmstadt.

Die große Wende. 2nd, unchanged edition. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Pansophie. Reprint of the 2nd, revised and expanded edition. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag.

Theophrastus Paracelsus. Reprint of the Stuttgart 1944 edition. Hildesheim-New York: Olms.

Theophrastus Paracelsus. (editor). Darmstadt:

Personal

Book-length Publications

1978

Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Schlesische Volkskunde. Unchanged reprint of the 1928 edition. Frankfurt/M.: Weidlich

APPENDIX 4:
Courses Taught by Will-Erich Peuckert¹

Pädagogische Akademie Breslau

Summer Semester 1929

- Heimatliche Volkskunde (Volkskunde of the Homeland)
- Aberglaube und Zauberei (Superstition and Magic)

Winter Semester 1929/30

- Faust (Faust)
- Der Bauer (The Peasant)
- Probleme der Sagen- und Märchenforschung (with Hans Ahrbeck) (Problems of Legend and Fairytale Research)

Summer Semester 1930

- Grundfragen des Deutsch- und Gesamtunterrichts (with Hans Ahrbeck) (Fundamental Questions concerning German-Class and Overall Education)
- Volkskunde der Großstadt (Volkskunde of the City)
- Die deutsche Volkssage (Übung für Fortgeschrittene) (The German Volk Legend: Exercise for Advanced Students)
- Siedlungskunde (Übung für Anfänger) (The Study of Settlements: Exercise for Beginners)
- Antrittsvorlesung: "Leben im Volk" als Ausgang- und Zielpunkt der Erziehung (Inaugural lecture: "Life among the Volk" as the Denouement and Goal of Education)

Winter Semester 1930/31

- Methodik des Deutschunterrichts (with Hans Ahlbeck) (The Methodology of Instruction for German Class)
- Praktische Übungen im Deutschunterricht. Besprechungen im Anschluß an Unterrichtsversuche (with Hans Ahlbeck) (Practical Exercises in German-Class. Discussions following Attempts at Instruction)
- Das Dorf als Erziehungsgemeinde (The Village as a Community for Education)
- Volkskunde des Kinderlebens (Übung) (The Volkskunde of the Life of a Child)
- Das Heimatbuch (nach besonderer Verabredung) (The Heimatbuch -- [book about one's hometown or village])

Summer Semester 1931

- Methodik des Deutschunterrichts II (with Hans Ahlbeck) (The Methodology of Instruction for German-Class II)

- Volkskunde des Bauern, Bürgers und Arbeiters (The Volkskunde of the Peasant, the Middle-Class, and the Worker)
- Aberglaube der Gegenwart (Übung für Anfänger) (Present-Day Superstitions: An Exercise for Beginners)
- Mutter Erde. Glaubensäußerungen und Kulte des Bauerntums (Übungen für Fortgeschrittene) (Mother Earth: Expressions of Belief and Cults of the Peasantry. An Exercise for Advanced Students)

Winter Semester 1931/32

- Methodik des Deutschunterrichts (with Hans Ahlbeck) (The Methodology of Instruction for German-Class)
- Die menschliche Gemeinschaft (Soziologie der primitiven Kulturen) (Human Community, the Sociology of Primitive Cultures)
- Die Eschatologie des deutschen Volkes (The Eschatology of the German Volk)
- Übungen an schlesischen Volksmärchen (Exercises concerning Silesian Fairytales)

Deutsches Institut of the Universität Breslau

Winter Semester 1932/33

- Faust und die Magie des 16. Jahrhunderts (Faust and the Magic of the 16th Century)
- Die Vorstellungen des Volkes vom Tode und vom Jenseits (Volkbeliefs concerning Death and the Afterlife)
- Volkskundliche Übungen über Fausts Höllenzwang (Exercises in Volkskunde concerning Faust's Höllenzwang)

Summer Semester 1933

- Kindervolkskunde (Children's Volkskunde)
- Vegetationskulte und -bräuche (Vegetationcults and customs)
- Volkskundliche Übungen zum Leben des Bauern im Mittelalter (Exercises in Volkskunde concerning the Life of the Peasant during the Middle Ages)

Winter Semester 1933/34

- Siedlungskunde (Flur, Dorf, Haus) (The Study of Settlements: Hallway, Village, House)
- Sage und Märchen (Legend and Fairytale)
- Volkskundliche Übungen zur Wielandsage (Exercises in Volkskunde concerning the Wielandlegend)

Summer Semester 1934

- Religiöse Volkskunde (Religious Volkskunde)
- Volkskunde der nicht-bäurischen Schichten (Volkskunde of the non-Peasant Classes)
- Übungen zur deutschen Kaisersage (Exercises concerning the German Kaisersage)

Winter Semester 1934/35

- Ostdeutsche Volkskunde (Eastgerman Volkskunde)
- Religiöse Volkskunde II (Religious Volkskunde II)
- Literarische Einflüsse in der bäuerlichen Kultur (Literary Influences on Peasant Culture)
- Die geistige Welt des Handarbeiters. Übungen zur Volkskunde nicht bäuerlicher Schichten (The Intellectual World of the Craftsman. Exercises concerning the Volkskunde of non-Peasant Classes)

Summer Semester 1935

- Magie und Zauberei unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Fausts (Magic and Enchantment with special consideration of Faust)
- Niedere "Mythologie" der deutschen und skandinavischen Welt (Lower "Mythology" of the German and Scandinavian World)
- Übungen zum Hexen- und Zauberwesen des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit (Exercises concerning Witchcraft and Enchantment during the Middle Ages and Modernity)

Universität Göttingen

Summer Semester 1946

- Grundlegung der Volkskunde und vorbäuerliche Volkskunde (The foundations of Volkskunde and pre-peasant Volkskunde)
- Übung: Historische Volkskunde (Exercise: Historical Volkskunde)
- Kolloquium: Volkskundliche Fragen des Flüchtlingswesens (Colloquium: Questions in Volkskunde concerning Refugees)

Winter Semester 1946/47

- Bäuerliche Volkskunde (Volkskunde of the Peasantry)
- Volkskundl. Seminar: Geburt, Hochzeit, Tod im Brauchtum und Aberglauben (Seminar: Birth, Wedding, Death in Custom and Superstition)
- Eschatologie (Eschatology)

Summer Semester 1947

- Bäuerliche Volkskunde I. Teil (Volkskunde of the Peasantry Part I)
- Praxis der Volkskunde (The Praxis of Volkskunde)
- Wirtschaftsleben der Naturvölker (through Dr. Nippold) (The Economic Life of the Naturvölker)
- Völkerkunde von Afrika (through Dr. Blome) (The Völkerkunde of Africa)
- Übungen zur völkerkundl. Bücherkunde (through Dr. Nippold and Dr. Blome)

Winter Semester 1947/48

- Volkskunde der bürgerlichen und proletarischen Kultur (The Volkskunde of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Cultures)
- Volkskundl. Seminar: Das Märchen von der weißen und schwarzen Braut (Seminar: the Fairytale of the white and the black Bride)
- Die Volkssage (The Volklegend)
- Übungen an Hand völkerkundlichen Sammelmaterials (through Dr. Blome) (Exercises with [anthropological] collections)
- Gesellschaftsleben der Naturvölker (through Dr. Nippold) (The Social Life of the Naturvölker)

Summer Semester 1948

- Volkskunde der bürgerlichen und proletarischen Kultur (The Volkskunde of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Cultures)
- Volkskundl. Seminar: Das Märchen von der weißen und schwarzen Braut (Seminar: the Fairytale of the white and the black Bride)
- Die Volkssage (The Volklegend)
- Religion der Naturvölker (through Dr. Nippold) (Religion of the Naturvölker)
- Interpretationen völkerkundl. Sammelmaterials (through Dr. Blome) (Interpretation of [anthropological] collections)

Winter Semester 1948/49

- Vorbäuerliche Volkskunde (Pre-Peasant Volkskunde)
- Volkskundl. Seminar: Deutsche Volkssage Sibylle Weiss (Seminar: German Volklegend Sibylle Weiss)
- Volkskundl. Proseminar: Altersklassen und Männerbünde (Proseminar: Age groups and Male Federations)
- Technik der Naturvölker (through Dr. Nippold) (The Technology of the Naturvölker)
- Übungen über Religion der Naturvölker und andere ausgewählte Kapitel (through Dr. Nippold) (Exercises concerning the Religion of the Naturvölker and other selected Chapters)

Summer Semester 1949

- Volkskunde der bäuerlichen Kultur I (Volkskunde of the Peasant Culture I)
- Proseminar: Herder und das Volkslied (Proseminar: Herder and the Volksong)
- Seminar: Vegetationskulte (through Dr. Nippold) (Seminar: Vegetationcults)
- Übungen am Sammlungsmaterial (through Dr. Nippold) (Exercises using Collections)

Winter Semester 1949/50

- Volkskunde der bäuerlichen Kultur II (Volkskunde of the Peasant Culture II)
- Proseminar: Dorf und Flur (Proseminar: Village and Hallway)
- Seminar: Historische Befunde aus volkskundlichen Quellen (Historical Evidence through Sources within Volkskunde)
- Gesellschaftsleben der Naturvölker (through Dr. Nippold) (The Social Life of the Naturvölker)

Summer Semester 1950

- Volkskunde der bäuerlichen Kultur III (Volkskunde of the Peasant Culture III)
- Proseminar: Niedere Mythologie (Proseminar: Lower Mythology)
- Seminar: Historische Befunde aus volkskundlichen Quellen (Seminar: Historical Evidence through Sources within Volkskunde)

Winter Semester 1950/51

- Volkskunde der bürgerlichen und proletarischen Kultur (Volkskunde of the Middle Class and the Proletariat)
- Probleme der Volksliedforschung (Problems in the Research on Volksongs)
- Ketten- und Rätselmärchen (Chain and Riddle Tales)

Summer Semester 1951

- Volkskunde der vorbäuerlichen Kultur (Volkskunde of the pre-peasant culture)
- Das Volksbuch des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts (The Volksbuch of the 18th and 19th Centuries)
- Volkskundliche Erscheinungen am bürgerlichen Menschen des 18. Jahrhunderts (The Volkskunde of the Middle Class of the 18th Century)

Winter Semester 1951/52

- Volkskunde der bäuerlichen Kultur I (The Volkskunde of the Peasant Culture I)
- Spukwesen (Spookcreatures)
- Die Hexe (The Witch)

Summer Semester 1952

- Volkskunde der bäuerlichen Kultur II (The Volkskunde of the Peasant Culture II)

- Flurformen (The Shape of Hallways)
- Mutterrecht (Motherright)

Winter Semester 1952/53

- Die Ostdeutsche Kontaktzone (Vorlesungsreihe der Philosophischen Fakultät: "Deutscher Osten und Osteuropa") (The Eastgerman Zone of Kontakt)
- Volkskunde der bäuerlichen Kultur III (Volkskunde of the Peasant Culture III)
- Die bäuerliche Ehe (The Peasant Wedding)
- Kirchliche Volkskunde (Volkskunde of the Church)

Summer Semester 1953

- Volkskunde der bürgerlichen und proletarischen Kultur (Volkskunde of the Middle Class and Proletariat)
- Die Lenoren-Sage (The Lenoren Legend)
- Magia naturalis

Winter Semester 1953/54

- Vorbäuerliche Volkskunde (Pre-peasant Volkskunde)
- Science fiction
- Verstädterung (Urbanization)

Summer Semester 1954

- Ostdeutsche Volkskunde (Einzelvorlesung, Öffentliche Vorlesung für Hörer aller Fakultäten) (Eastgerman Volkskunde)
- Volkskunde der viehbäuerlichen Kultur (The Volkskunde of the Livestock-Raising Peasant Culture)
- Präanimistische Systeme (Preanimistic Systems)
- Die Maibraut (The May Bride)

Winter Semester 1954/55

- Volkskunde der bäuerlichen Kultur (Volkskunde of the Peasantry)
- Viehbäuerliches Gemeinschaftsleben (The Community Life of the Livestock-Raising Peasantry)
- Die Geschichte des Märchens von den Gebrüder Grimm (The History of the Tales of the Brothers Grimm)

Summer Semester 1955

- Sitte und Brauch im Volksleben (Custom and Practice in Folklife)
- Der erste Bauer (aettesogor) (The First Peasant)
- Die nordwestdeutschen Nachbarschaften (The Neighborhoods of northwest Germany)

Winter Semester 1955/56

- Die Gestalten des Volksglaubens (The Characters in Volkbelief)
- Weihnachtsbrauchtum (Christmas Customs)
- Astrologische Grundbegriffe (Basic Astrological Terminology)

Summer Semester 1956

- Volkskunde der bürgerlichen und proletarischen Kultur (Volkskunde of the Middle Class and the Peasantry)
- "Rätsel der Sphinx" (Albsagen) (The Riddle of the Sphinx)
- Das Hallenhaus (Meitzen bis Arensberg) (The Hallenhouse)

Winter Semester 1956/57

- Volkskundliche Erscheinungen der frühen und der weiberzeitlichen Kulturen (Expressions of Volkskunde of the early and the matriarchal Cultures)
- Das französische Volksmärchen (with Kellermann) (The French Folktale)
- Die Ehe in den sozialistischen Kulturen (Marriage in Socialist Cultures)

Summer Semester 1957

- Die niedersächsische viehbäuerliche Welt (The World of the Lower Saxon Livestock-Raising Peasantry)
- Spiel und Tanz (Game and Dance)
- Heilzauber im 6./7. Buch Mosis (The Healing Magic in the 6th/7th Book of Moses)

Winter Semester 1957/58

- Das bäuerliche Jahr und seine Ordnungen (The Calendar Cycle of the Peasantry and its Organization)
- Die Entstehung der Pflugkultur (with Prof. Jahnkuhn) (The Origins of the Plowcultures)
- Dorfhirten und Schäfer (taught by assistants) (Village Herdsmen and Shepherds)

Summer Semester 1958

- Astrologie (Astrology)
- Jugendliche Gruppen und Feste (taught by assistants) (Youth Groups and Celebrations)
- Götter und Dämonen der germanischen Zeit (with Prof. Jahnkuhn) (Gods and Demons of the germanic Time)

Winter Semester 1958/59

- Der städtische Mensch (The City Person)

- Sitte und Brauch (Advents- und Weihnachtsbräuche)
- Das Rätsel (taught by assistants)

Summer Semester 1959

- Volkskunde früher Kulturen (The Volkskunde of Early Cultures)
- Männerbündische Probleme (Problems of Male Cooperatives)
- Aberglaube (Superstition)

Winter Semester 1959/60

- Volkskunde der mutterrechtlichen und viehbäuerlichen Kulturen (The Volkskunde of the Matriarch and Livestock-Raising Peasant Cultures)
- Mana und Tabu (Mana and Taboo)
- Volksmedizin (taught by assistants) (Volkmedicine)

Summer Semester 1960

- Volkskunde der viehbäuerlichen Kulturen (The Volkskunde of the Livestock-Raising Peasant Cultures)
- Sage als geschichtliche Aussage (Legend as Historical Document)
- Soziologische Fragen der Volkskunde (Nachbarschaften usw.) (taught by assistants) (Sociological Questions concerning Volkskunde: Neighborhoods etc.)

Winter Semester 1960/61

- Astrologie (Öffentliche Vorlesungen für Hörer aller Fakultäten) (Astrology: open lectures for all Departments)
- Deutsche Eschatologie (German Eschatology)
- Berufsgenossenschaften (taught by assistants) (Work Cooperatives)

Summer Semester 1961

- Astrologie
- Laienastrologie: Übungen zum Problem des Absinkens der Wissenschaft (Lay Astrology: Exercises concerning the Problem of the Deterioration of Science)

Winter Semester 1961/62

- Mythisch-magisches Denken und Aufklärung (Mythical-magical Thought and Enlightenment)
- Luthers Sagenwelt (Luthers Legendworld)

Summer Semester 1962

- Geschichte der Zauberei und Magie (The History of Enchantment and Magic)
- Magische Texte des 16. Jahrhunderts (Magical Texts of the 16th Century)

Summer Semester 1963

- Sagenlandschaften (The Landscape of Legendry)
- Rübezahl (Übung)

APPENDIX 4 ENDNOTES

¹ The list of courses is a reproduction and translation of the list of courses painstakingly culled together by Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich and Rolf Wilhelm Brednich in *“Volkskunde ist Nachricht von jedem Teil des Volkes”*. *Will-Erich Peuckert zum 100. Geburtstag, 189-194* (Göttingen: Schmerser, 1996).

APPENDIX 5

Dissertations Supervised by Peuckert at the Universität Göttingen, 1946-1961

1946

Meder, Benita. *Der Strukturwandel in der baltischen Lebensart um die Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts.*

1947

Kothe, Heinz. *Zur Entstehung und Geschichte des Pfluges.*

1948

Jacobeit, Wolfgang. *Das Joch. Entwicklung, Alter und Verbreitung vornehmlich für den mitteleuropäischen Raum.*

Winter, Ernst. *Die Stellung Adalbert von Chamisso in der Entwicklung der Volkskunde und Völkerkunde.*

Zippelius, Adelhard. *Der Hausbau der Hallstatt- und Latenezeit in seiner Beziehung zum heutigen.*

1949

Konrad, Walter. *Friedrich Ratzel.*

1950

Utsch, Johanna. *Wolfgang Hildebrand und die Magia naturalis.*

Ziegler, Charlotte. *Die literarischen Quellen des Zupfgeigenhansl. Eine volkscundliche Untersuchung.*

1951

Lühning, Arnold. *Die schneidenden Ertegeräte. Technologie, Entwicklung und Verbreitung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Nordwestdeutschlands.*

Rumpf, Marianne. *Rotkäppchen. Eine vergleichende Märchenuntersuchung*

1952

Meier to Bernd, Heinz. *Das Zweite Gesicht im Volksglauben und in Volkssagen.*

Schauer, Ulrike. *Gestaltende und erhaltende Kräfte im neuere deutsch-österreichischen Volksschauspiel, untersucht an vier Spielen aus Krimml (Salsburg).*

1953

Dageförde, Heinrich. *Das Oldenburger Horn.*

Frenzel, Rudolf. *Der deutsche Bauer in der ersten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts.*

Hartmann, née Ströhm, Ingrid. *“Das Meerhäschen” (Grimm KHM 191). Eine*

Vergleichende Märchenuntersuchung.

Weber, Richard. *Philosophia adepta. Eine Untersuchung der frühen Schriften Theophrasts von Hohenheim, gen. Paracelsus.*

1954

Hagen, Rolf. *Der Einfluß der Perraultschen Contes auf das volkstümliche deutsche Erzählgut und besonders auf die Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm.*

Kleine, Ingrid. *Der Überzählige.*

Meyer, Helga. *Die Hackelbergsage.*

Möller, Helmut. *Untersuchungen zum Funktionalismus in der Volkskunde.*

Weißer, Herbert. *Die unterbäuerliche Schicht in der deutschen Volkssage.*

1955

Harsing, Freidhard. *Formmodel für Marzipan und Honigkuchen im westlichen Niederdeutschland.*

1956

Schoutz, Josef. *Volkskundliche Studie über das Bandwesen des "Schwarzen Marktes".*

1957

Fließ, Ulrich. *Das Hauswesen des Nürnberger Handwerker um 1500.*

1958

--

1959

Jacob, Mechthild. *Die Hexenlehre des Paracelsus und ihre Bedeutung für die modernen Hexenprozesse. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Entwicklung des Hexenglauben seit dem Mittelalter unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Überlieferung aus dem Raum Gifhorn.*

1960

Wolfersdorf, Hans Peter. *Der Bergmönch mit der ewigen Lampe. Eine Untersuchung über Ursprünge und Entwicklung der Oberharzer Bergmönch-Sage.*

1961

Dalwigk, Vera von. *Die kirchlichen Einstellungen bei Studentent. Eine faktorenanalytische Studie.*

APPENDIX 6
Major Publications by Peuckert

For a complete bibliography of Peuckert's works, cf. Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich and Rolf-Wilhelm Brednich's "*Volkskunde ist Nachricht von jedem Teil des Volkes.*" *Will-Erich Peuckert zum 100. Geburtstag* (Göttingen: Schmerser Verlag, 1996). Listed below are Peuckert's major book-length publications.

1919

Passion. Ein Drama. Dresden: Neue Schaubühne.

1920

Die brennende Nacht. Drei Bücher Lieder. Berlin: Reiß.

1921

Apokalypse 1618. Jena: Diederichs.

1924

Das Leben Jakob Böhmes. Jena: Diederichs.

Luntroß. Jena: Diederichs.

1926

Andreas Hofer oder Der Bauernkrieg in Tirol. Jena: Diederichs.

1927

Die Entwicklung Abrahams von Franckenberg bis zum Jahre 1641. Leipzig: Spamer.
Breslau Phil. Diss. from October 14, 1927.

1928

Die Rosenkreutzer: Geschichte einer Reformation. Jena: Diederichs.

Schlesische Volkskunde. Leipzig: Quelle/Meyer.

Von schwarzer und weißer Magie. Berichte aus einem vergessenen Jahrhundert.
Berlin: Wegweiser Verlag.

1929

Zwei Lichte in der Welt. Geschichten aus dem Walde. Jena: Diederichs.

1931

Volkskunde des Proletariats. Band I: Aufgang der proletarischen Kultur. Frankfurt:
Neuer Frankfurter Verlag.

Maria in der Ackerstraße. München: Kaiser.

1934

Die goldenen Berge. Ein deutscher Heldenzug. Leipzig: List.

1936

Pansophie. Ein Versuch zur Geschichte der weissen und schwarzen Magie. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

1937

Schlesisch (Was nicht im Wörterbuch steht). München: Piper.

1938

Deutsches Volkstum in Märchen und Sage, Schwank und Rätsel. In Series: *Deutsches Volkstum*, 2. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co.

1939

Die Spur im Heubusch. Eine Jungengeschichte von der polnischen Grenze. Berlin: Wiking.

Glückskind in Krakau. Berlin: Wiking.

1940

Schwarzer Adler unterm Silbermond. Biographie der Landschaft Schlesien. Hamburg: Goverts.

1941

Liebe, Fahrten und Abenteuer des Trompeters aus der Zips. Berlin: Wiking.

So lange die Erde steht. Leipzig: List.

1942

Deutscher Volksglaube des Spätmittelalters. Stuttgart: Spemann.

Kleines deutsches Sagenbuch. Potsdam: Rütten und Loening Verlag.

1943

Nicolaus Kopernikus, der die Erde kreisen liess. Leipzig: List.

Sebastian Franck, ein deutscher Sucher. München Piper.

Theophrastus Paracelsus, 2nd edition.

1944

Theophrastus Paracelsus, 3rd edition.

1946

Nicolaas Copernicus, die de aarde liet draaien. Amsterdam.

1948

Die grosse Wende. Das apokalyptische Saeculum und Luther. Geistesgeschichte und Volkskunde. Hamburg: Claassen.

1949

Wiedergeburt. Gespräche in Hörsälen und unterwegs. Berlin: Weidmann.

1950

Schlesien: Biographie der Landschaft. Hamburg: Claassen & Goverts. New edition of *Schwarzer Adler unterm Silbermond.*
Schlesisch. München: R. Piper & Co.

1951

Ostdeutsches Sagenbüchlein. Hamburg: Flemmings.
Ostdeutsches Märchenbüchlein. Hamburg: Flemmings..
Geheim-Kulte. Heidelberg: C. Pfeffer Verlag.
with Otto Lauffer. *Volkskunde: Quellen und Forschungen seit 1930.* Bern: A. Francke.

1952

Schlesien. Biographie der Landschaft. New edition. Hamburg: Claassen.

1953

Schlesische Volkskunde. Kitzingen/Main: Holzner Verlag.

1954

Ostdeutsches Sagenbüchlein. 2nd edition. Kitzingen/Main: Holzner Verlag.

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APPENDIX 7
Norddeutscher Rundfunk TV Transcript

What follows is the German transcript of the interview Peuckert gave in 1968 for a *Norddeutscher Rundfunk* television show entitled “*Zauber, Magie, Glaube: Hexen- und Gespensterwahn in der Gegenwart.*” It first aired January 21st, 1968.

“Wie ich zur Hexensalbe gekommen bin, daß ist eine ganz kurze und einfache Geschichte. Wir haben eine Reihe von alten Nachrichten, nach der, die Hexen nach den Blocksbergfesten oder ähnlichen Festen bewußtlos gefunden worden. Daß man sie krank nach Hause brachte, und es mußte also irgendetwas gegeben haben, was jenseits des Schmausens, jenseits des Tanzens, den Hexen ins Blut geschlagen ist. Nun gibt es eine Reihe von alten Nachrichten, daß Hexen Menschenfleisch aßen, das steht nicht nur in Grimmschen Märchen, das ist auch wirklich in alten Gesetzen bekannt, und wir haben dann auch später Nachrichten daß Hexen sich Salben aus Leichenteile bereiten haben mit denen sie sich salbten. Das kann ganz gewiß stimulierend gewirkt haben. Aber dann ergab sich sehr merkwürdiger Weise beim weiteren Studium der Hexenakten und die alte Nachrichten über die Hexen, daß tatsächlich von Hexen Salben gebraut worden sind, mit denen sie sich einrieben, und daß sie auf Grund diesen Einreibungen auf phantastische Träume oder wie man das auch nennen will kamen. Wenn ich ganz kurz die Salbe beschreiben soll: Sie besteht aus Eleuselimum, das ist höchst wahrscheinlich Selerie, aus Hyaciamus, das ist Bilsenkraut, aus der Tollkirsche, aus Pappelknospen, die auch betäubend wirken, Mohnsamen und ähnlichen Dingen. Als wir das gelesen haben, habe ich mit einem Freund zusammen versucht, eine solche Salbe herzustellen.’

‘Die Pappelknospen bittschön machen Sie doch ab. Das Eleuselimum das haben wir ja schon aufgelöst. Und das, den Weihrauch, den können wir vorläufig bei Seite legen, den nehmen wir dann.’

‘Wir kochten Hyaciamus Blätter ab und fügten diese anderen Ingredienzien zu, und goßen das ganze in ein Fett, verieben das ganze in eine Salbe, und damit war die Hexensalbe fertig. Bis auf die Frage funktioniert sie. Das mußten wir ausprobieren. Das haben wir ausprobiert, obwohl es ja ein etwas gefährliches Spiel war. Denn Hyaciamus ist ebenso wie Tollkirsche ebenso wie Belladonna, wie Nachtschatten, starkes Gift. Wir haben es trotzdem gewagt, haben uns die Schläfen, uns die Achselhöhlen eingerieben, und haben im Stuhl gesessen, schiefen ein, und haben wahrhaftig die tollkünstigen Rauschträume erlebt. Stundenlange Rauschträume. Erst flogen wir durch die Luft, wie man auch im Traum manchmal fliegt, dann wahren wir bei großen Festen, bei Jahrmärkten, ..., und schließlich mündete das Ganze mit mehr oder minder erotischen

Abenteuern aus, in dem wir, ich möchte sagen, das Bewusstsein verloren. Wir haben lange Zeit in unseren Stühlen gelegen, und als wir reihum am Morgen aufwachten, haben wir von einander getrennt unsere Erlebnisse aufgeschrieben, und es ergab sich, daß wir ungefähr das gleiche erlebt haben. Also genau diese Dinge die ich Ihnen jetzt erzählte. Das war ein rein wissenschaftlicher Versuch, wenn er auch in einem Privathause stattfand, ohne Labor. Ich habe von diesem Versuch, im Zusammenhang mit meinen anderen Untersuchungen zum Hexenwesen lange Zeit geschwiegen, weil ich erst Alles zusammenfassend publizieren wollte. Bin aber dann so unklug gewesen und habe es in einem Vortrag mal gesagt, wir hätten die Salbe probiert, und sie hätte ihre Wirkungen gehabt. Leider hat man es nicht begriffen, daß es sich um ein wissenschaftliches Experiment handelte, sondern man nahm an, ich mache für irgendeine Salbe Reklame, und hat mir in tausend und abertausend Zuschriften Geld geboten, um von diese Salbe etwas zu erhalten. Ich hätte eine ganze Fabrik aufmachen können, ich hätte wahrscheinlich in dieser Fabrik absolut genügend Beschäftigung gehabt, wenn ich diesen Bitten hätte nachkommen wollen.”

A NOTE ON SOURCES AND NOMENCLATURE

Primary Sources Consulted:

1. *Handschriftenabteilung* of the *Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek* in Göttingen, Germany: Cod. Ms. Peuckert A - Cod. Ms. Peuckert F.
2. *Bundesarchiv*, documents from the Berlin Document Center, in Berlin-Lichterfelde, Germany: BA-RK IO455.
3. *Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste* in Berlin, Germany: Carl Hauptmann Archiv k281.
4. *Volksliedarchiv* in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany: Korrespondenzenband 55 (since circa 1934).

* * *

The most important source-material on Will-Erich Peuckert is at the *Handschriftenabteilung* of the *Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek* (the Department of Handwriting at the State and University Library of Lower Saxony), in Göttingen, Germany.¹ Donated to the archives by his daughter Sylphia Peuckert sometime after 1995, the material consists of over 25 “running meters” (“*laufende Meter*”) of boxes and folders, categorized as follows:

1. Letters (Cod. Ms. Peuckert A)
 - 1.1. General Correspondence
 - 1.2. Correspondence with Publishers, Bookstores, and the Press
 - 1.3. Subject-specific Correspondences
2. Personal (Cod. Ms. Peuckert B)
3. Manuscripts, Data Collections, and Book reviews (Cod. Ms. Peuckert C)
4. Unpublished Manuscripts and Data Collections (Cod. Ms. Peuckert D)
5. Lecture Manuscripts (Cod. Ms. Peuckert E)
 - 5.1. Lecture Manuscripts (University)
 - 5.2. Undated Lecture Manuscripts (University)
 - 5.3. Dated Lecture Manuscripts (Conferences etc.)
6. Miscellaneous (Cod. Ms. Peuckert F)
 - 6.1. Collections belonging to W.-E. Peuckert
 - 6.2. Manuscripts of Others

Throughout the dissertation, primary source material from this collection is referenced in endnotes by the catalogue numbers listed above, and, wherever possible, with the pagination the archivists have added to the sources.

Save for a few select texts which have previously been studied -- specifically, Peuckert's habilitation on *Sibylle Weiss*, previously believed to be missing -- this dissertation is the first effort to thoroughly examine this set of data.² The quotes from this collection (and others) used in this dissertation, unless otherwise noted, were translated by myself.

Another important set of sources on Peuckert are located at the *Bundesarchiv* (the National Archives) in Berlin-Lichterfelde, Germany.³ These sources belonged to the set of materials formerly part of the Berlin Document Center. The Berlin Document Center, in turn, consisted of documents seized by the allies in 1945 and put onto microfilms and microfiches: among other things, they had archived the correspondences of the Nazi party, member ID cards, personnel files of members of the SS and the SA. In 1994, these sources were turned over from the allies to the German state, and in 1996 they were incorporated into the Bundesarchiv.

There is one main file on Peuckert in the Bundesarchiv with the call-number BA-RK, I0455. It consists of a set of data gathered by both the *Reichskulturkammer* and the *Reichsschriftumskammer* on and about Peuckert; bureaucratic examinations, in other words, about Peuckert's political, literary, and academic life, evaluations of his work in light of its political nature.⁴

A third set of sources is at the *Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste* (the Foundation Archive of the Academy of Arts) in Berlin, Germany.⁵ Peuckert's daughter Sylphia referred me to this archives, which specializes in, among other things, the

history of the *Akademie der Künste* (Academy of the Arts) in Berlin since 1696, the emigration of artists during National Socialism, and the art and the politics of art of the German Democratic Republic (the DDR).⁶ It owns the written estate of Carl Hauptmann (1858-1921), the Silesian author and poet, and brother of the Nobel prize winning author Gerhart Hauptmann (1862-1946); Peuckert was close friends with both Carl and his wife Maria, whose letters are also in the Archiv der Akademie der Künste. Peuckert and Maria had a long correspondence between circa 1924 to 1939, and these letters are to be found at the archives. This source of data is invaluable, as it is the only personal material from and about Peuckert from the 1920's and 1930's; the only material from when he was a young man.

Finally, there is some source material on Peuckert in the *Deutsches Volksliedarchiv* (the Folksong Archive), in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany.⁷ This archive, founded 1914 by the German Studies and Folklore professor John Meier (1864-1953) in order to compile a complete, academic edition of German folksongs, houses, among other things, the correspondence between Meier and Peuckert, and between Meier and other scholars *about* Peuckert.

For more information on source material on Peuckert's early career in Silesia, please refer to pages 325-328 in Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich's *Volkskundliche Forschung in Schlesien: Eine Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 1994). It is important to note that the numbering system at the Berlin Document Center (Bönisch-Brednich refers to it as the BDC) have changed since she did her research, as have the call numbers at the Handschriftenabteilung of the Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Göttingen. The call numbers used throughout this dissertation are current as of August 2004.

* * *

Whenever possible, this dissertation used the original German nomenclature. Instead of translating the term *Volk*, or *Volkskunde*, as “folk” or “people”, it was easier to use the terminology Peuckert himself used. The first use of a German term is italicized; any subsequent use of the same term is not.

NOTE ON SOURCES AND NOMENCLATURE ENDNOTES

¹ For more information on the Handschriftenabteilung der Niedersächsischen Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, please refer to their webpage:
http://www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/ebene_1/1_hssa.htm

² Please refer to Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich and Rolf Wilhelm Brednich, editors, *‘Volkskunde ist Nachricht von jedem Teil des Volkes’: Will-Erich Peuckert zum 100. Geburtstag* (Göttingen: Schmerse Verlag, 1996), for at least one article which relies on primary sources from the Handschriftenabteilung der Niedersächsischen Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek. I refer here specifically to Heike Bilgenroth and Maren Röber, “Will-Erich Peuckert und seine Habilitationsschrift ‘Sibylle Weiss.’” In *‘Volkskunde ist Nachricht von jedem Teil des Volkes.’ Will-Erich Peuckert zum 100. Geburtstag*, edited by Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich and Rolf Wilhelm Brednich (Göttingen: Schmerse Verlag 1996), 45-70.

Note as well that Regina Bendix and Michaela Fenske have begun a project which also examines the *Handwörterbuch der Sage (HdS)*, entitled *“Enzyklopädie als Wissensformat: Das Beispiel der Erzählforschung [1955-1975].”* Bendix and Fenske will examine the files at the Handschriftenabteilung that concern the *HdS*.

³ For more information on the Berlin Document Center, please refer to their webpage:
http://www.bundesarchiv.de/aufgaben_organisation/abteilungen/reich/00340/

⁴ The Reichskulturkammer was an overarching organ headed by Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda under Hitler. Its goal was to insure that there were no discrepancies between state propaganda and cultural expressions (film, music, theatre, press, literature, art, and radio). The Reichsschrifttumskammer was one of the seven suborgans of the Reichskulturkammer, responsible for literature and writing. To be allowed to work under the Nazi regime meant, as an artist, to have to have a membership with one of the suborgans; without such a membership, the artist would not be allowed to work in his or her chosen domain. Practically speaking, not belonging meant a ban from one’s profession.

⁵ For more information on the Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste, please refer to their webpage: http://www.adk.de/deutsch/ged_arch_fst.html

⁶ Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich, *Volkskundliche Forschung in Schlesien: Eine Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 1994) did not refer to these materials nor reference them, even though they date to the 1920s and 1930s, the scope of her work.

⁷ For more information on the Deutsches Volksliedarchiv, please refer to their webpage:
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INDEX

- Abrahams, Roger: 148, 189-190
Agricola, Christiane: 185
Albrecht, Gertrud Erika ---> See Peuckert, Gertrud
Alltagsbericht ---> See Personal Experience Narrative
Alltagserzählung ---> See Personal Experience Narrative
Alzenau: 35
Arbeitervolkskunde: 133, 136, 137, 139
Ash, Mitchell: 12-13
Assion, Peter: 91, 100, 101, 102, 112, 133, 134, 139
Autobiographies, Peuckert (Unpublished): 16, 21, 22, 33, 41, 74, 77, 81, 82, 201, 202,
225, 231, 232, 234-235, 236, 237, 238, 241
- Balys, Jonas: 185
Ballymenone: 23, 31
Bärnau, Oberpfalz: 65
Bauern ---> See Peasantry
Bauman, Richard: 189-190
Bausinger, Hermann: 2, 30, 77, 103, 133, 150, 158, 159, 173, 176, 203, 204, 253
Ben-Amos, Dan: 1, 10, 246
Bendix, Regina: 1, 31, 138, 139, 236, 243, 247, 253, 255
Benfey, Theodor: 175, 183
Berger, Peter: 12
Blood and Soil: 100
Blut und Boden ---> See Blood and Soil
Boberg, Inger Margarethe: 176
Boleslawiec ---> See Bunzlau
Bolte, Johannes: 179, 183, 192
Braun, Maximilian: 185
Bourgeoisie: 100, 106, 107, 108, 126, 127, 128, 134, 140, 141
Brepohl, Wilhelm: 77, 176
Breslau: 20, 45, 51, 52, 53, 55, 57, 58, 63, 66, 69, 76, 84, 89, 106, 113, 114, 116, 118,
119, 120, 125, 141, 142, 143, 144, 199
Bromfield, Louis: 185
Bunzlau: 34, 43, 63
Burde-Schneidewind, Gisela: 77, 176-177
- Cammann, Alfred: 77, 82, 177, 185

Caro Baroja, Julio: 216, 225, 226
Cartographic Method: 186
Castaneda, Carlos: 217-218, 219
Claaßen, Eugen: 59, 63, 86
Clifford, James: 22
Community: 10, 14, 101, 104, 107, 108, 109, 111, 126, 128, 139, 140, 147, 162, 165,
177, 186, 232
Courses and Lectures, Peuckert: 52, 70, 90, 120-123, 123-125, 127, 131, 132, 151, 163-
170
Crapanzano, Vincent: 24-25
Culture Complexes: 19, 134
Curriculum Vitae, Peuckert: 80, 82, 87, 121, 134, 146

Dachverbände ---> See Umbrella Organizations

Dal, Erik: 77, 177

Darnell, Regna: 9, 13-14, 18

de Kleyn, J.: 185, 186

de Vries, Jan: 185

Dégh, Linda: 77, 231

Denazification: 157, 160-161

Denazification Procedure: 160-161

Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung: 79-80

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft: 60, 76, 77

Deutsches Institut, Universität Breslau: 51, 52, 57, 84, 114, 118, 119, 141, 144

Deutschnationale Partei: 49, 84, 142

Diasio, Nicoletta: 188

Disciplinary History: 9, 10, 91, 92, 146, 148, 158, 184, 192, 202, 203, 205, 248, 249

Doering-Manteuffel, Sabine: 188

Döring, Alois: 188

Dundes, Alan: 23-24, 83, 138

Empirical Cultural Studies: 2, 30, 138, 159, 246

Empirische Kulturwissenschaften ---> See Empirical Cultural Studies

Englert, Ludwig: 61-62

Entnazifizierung ---> See Denazification

Entnazifizierungsverfahren ---> See Denazification Procedure

Erinnerungen ---> See Autobiographies, Peuckert (Unpublished)

Erixon, Sigurd: 77, 166, 173, 189

Erlebnisbericht ---> See Personal Experience Narrative

Europäische Ethnologie ---> See European Ethnology
Europäische Sagen ---> See European Legends, Series on
European Ethnology: 2, 30, 138, 153, 159, 246
European Legends, Series on: 6, 76, 179-181
Europeanization: 7, 12, 165, 166, 171, 178, 179, 183, 184
Evacuation: 62-63

Fabula: 84, 189
Fenske, Michaela: 13, 18-19, 25-26, 31, 243
Fink, F.A.K.: 186
Flüchtlinge ---> See Refugees
Folk Atlas Mapping ---> See Cartographic Method
Folklife Studies: 7, 166
Folklivsforskning ---> See Folklife Studies
Folklore Fellows: 176, 198
Folklore Fellows Communications: 176
Folklore, Children's: 38
Frazer, James: 41
Fuchs, Erich: 128-130, 145

Geiger, Paul: 77, 177
Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft: 109, 140
Gemeinschaft ---> See Community
Genre: 6, 60, 70, 93, 122, 125, 166, 232, 233
Gesellschaft: 140
Getuppelt: 32, 51, 80, 81
Giant Mountains: 40
Glassie, Henry: 23, 31
Goebbels, Joseph: 85, 142
Görlitz: 39
Göttingen: 4, 5, 6, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 27, 30, 66-68, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77, 84, 86, 88, 90,
121, 123, 131, 132, 134, 138, 149, 151-154, 159-161, 162-170, 181, 183, 195,
204, 207, 208, 209, 247, 248, 251
Greverus, Ina-Maria: 78, 177
Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm: 76, 77, 99, 102, 147, 175, 179, 183, 192, 204, 205, 247
Groß-Iser: 44, 45
Große Wende, Die: 4, 8, 59, 76, 134, 178, 182, 198
Grottkau: 63
Grundmann, Günther: 128-130

Gustav-Adolf Akademie: 79

Gyr, Ueli: 188

Haasel: 5, 8, 20, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 74, 84, 85, 86, 119-120, 144, 251

Habilitation: 4, 51, 152, 195

Hanckel, Lore-Marie ---> See Peuckert, Lore-Marie

Hand, Wayland D.: 78, 177, 178, 184

Handwörterbuch der Sage: 6, 31, 77, 88, 243

Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens: 3, 48, 78, 79, 84, 88, 220

Hanika, Josef: 78, 177

Hanssen, Georg: 98

Hauptmann, Carl: 21, 48, 53, 54, 64, 119, 144

Hauptmann, Gerhart: 53

Hauptmann, Maria: 21, 46, 53-56, 64, 65, 67, 116, 119, 120, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144,
215

Hauptmann, Monona: 54

Hauschild, Thomas: 171, 183, 206

Heilfurth, Gerhart: 30, 75, 78, 88, 137, 171, 177

Heimatroman: 60, 84

Heimatvertrieben: 129, 191

Hekker, Robert C.: 185, 186

Helsloot, John: 188

Helwig, Werner: 82, 243, 244

Hempel, Heinrich: 185

Herder, Johann Gottfried: 98-99, 138, 175, 183, 192, 204, 205, 247

Herder-Forschungsrat: 79

Hexenprozess: 228

Hexensalbe ---> See Witches' Unguent

Himmler, Heinrich: 151

Hitler Jugend ---> See Hitler Youth

Hitler Youth: 163

Hitler, Adolf: 150

Honko, Lauri: 147, 232

Horkheimer, Max: 156

Hufford, David: 213, 220-221, 230

Huxley, Aldous: 218, 219

Ideology: 11, 12, 17, 30, 49, 58, 60, 89, 102, 133, 139, 150, 158, 160, 172, 173, 203,
251

Ideology and Utopia: 11
Industrialization: 99, 102, 109-110, 112
Institut Havrais: 79, 81
International Society for Folk Narrative Research: 189
Internationalization: 149, 162, 165, 175, 176, 178, 179, 181, 184, 185, 186, 188, 189,
190, 191, 192, 193
Iser Mountains: 44
ISFNR ---> See International Society for Folk Narrative Research

Jacobeit, Wolfgang: 4, 8, 78, 100, 103, 133, 139, 147, 157, 158, 164, 177, 178, 181
Jauer: 63
Jessen, H.: 88
Jerusalem, Wilhelm: 11
Johann-Heinrich-Merck Award: 80

Kaiserswaldau: 36, 37, 39, 40
Kalevala, The: 147
Karasek, Alfred: 78, 177
Karlinger, Felix: 88, 180
Knowledge Production: 12-13, 17, 25, 27, 113, 200, 201, 202, 203, 211, 214, 236, 241,
242
Kontaktzone ---> See Zones of Contact
Korff, Gottfried: 133, 137
Kothe, H.: 185
Kowary ---> See Schmiedeberg
Krohn, Kaarle: 176
Kühn, Ernestine Pauline Emilie ---> See Peuckert, Ernestine
Kühn, Johanne Christina (née Hoberg): 35
Kuhn, Thomas: 11, 14, 93-94, 96, 108, 135
Kuhn, Walter: 86
Kullerrädel: 38
Kulturanthropologie: 138, 153
Kulturanthropologie und Europäische Ethnologie (KA/EE): 2, 30, 138, 153
Kulturkreise ---> See Culture Complexes
Kuopatnik ---> See Töppendorf

Language Island Research: 86
Lauffer, Otto: 7, 30, 178, 184

Lectures, Peuckert ---> See Courses and Lectures, Peuckert
Legnica ---> See Liegnitz
Lehmann, Emil: 172

Liegnitz: 39, 63
Lilja, Agneta: 188
Liljeblad, Sven: 78, 177
Liungman, Waldemar: 78, 177
Löfgren, Orvar: 148, 189, 191
Lönrot, Elias: 147
Loorits, Oskar: 185
Löwenberg: 63
Lower Silesia ---> See Silesia
Lüben: 35
Lubin ---> See Lüben
Lübke, Heinrich: 205
Luckmann, Thomas: 12
Lüthi, Max: 78, 177
Lutz, Gerhard: 78, 177
Lysaght, Patricia: 188

Magic ---> See Supernatural, the
Magic, Contagious: 41
Mannheim, Karl: 11-12, 156
Marcus, George: 22, 242
Marx, Karl: 138, 142
Masuch, Ferdinand: 228
Mattiati, Eugen: 152, 153, 154, 204
Maus, Heinz: 78, 156-157, 158, 159, 171-172, 173, 174, 178, 182, 188, 190
Mazower, Mark: 183, 184
Macpherson, James: 98
Meder, Benita: 87
Meertens, P.T.: 185
Meier, John: 58, 117, 142, 151, 153, 157, 172, 173, 182, 183
Memorates: 42, 232
Meuli, Karl: 78, 177
Meyer, Elard Hugo: 124, 140
Mitteilungen der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde: 5, 113, 114, 141
Möller, Helmut: 78, 177
Moritz, Johanna: 4

Möser, Justus: 97
Mugneini, Fabio: 188
Muri, Gabriela: 188

Nachbarn, Die: 76, 171, 172, 174, 175, 177, 178, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 187,
189, 190, 192, 193, 203
Nachlass: 16-17, 75, 77, 251
National Socialism: 12, 20, 28, 32, 44, 48, 49, 57, 58, 62, 79, 84, 89, 102, 114, 119, 133,
143, 150, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 166, 168, 170, 172, 173,
174, 182, 183, 184, 203, 204, 247, 248
Nationalism: 49, 103, 129, 142, 148, 196
Naumann, Hans: 139
Norddeutscher Rundfunk: 227, 239

Ohrvik, Ane: 188
Oicotype: 186
Okmiany ---> See Kaiserswaldau
Olrik, Axel: 176
Ossian: 98
Ozawa, Toschio: 180-181

Pädagogische Akademie Breslau: 51, 106
Paracelsus Prize: 62
Paracelsus, Theophrastus: 61
Paredes, Américo: 189-190
Paternostro, Sandro: 209-210
Patriotism: 43, 103
Paukstadt, Eberhard: 72, 78, 177
Peasantry: 5, 8, 59, 90, 91-103, 104, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 114, 122, 123,
124, 125, 128, 134, 137, 138, 139, 142, 150, 169, 182, 205
PEN Literary Club: 71, 79
Performance Studies: 19, 238
Personal Experience Narrative: 231-233
Peuckert, Erna: 36
Peuckert, Ernestine Pauline Emilie (née Kühn): 35
Peuckert, Ernst August: 35, 36
Peuckert, Gertrud Erika (née Albrecht): 5, 16, 20, 43, 54, 55, 56, 59, 64, 65, 67, 68, 71,
74, 120, 144, 161-165

Peuckert, Hanns Peter: 45, 73, 87
Peuckert, Lore-Marie: 72-73
Peuckert, Martha: 36
Peuckert, Sylphia (Sylvia): 21, 25, 45, 72-73, 74, 83, 145, 171, 222
Pfeiffer, Martha (née Peuckert) ---> See Peuckert, Martha
“Praxis der Volkskunde” ---> See Courses and Lectures, Peuckert
Probleme einer Soziologie des Wissens: 11
Proletariat ---> See Working Class
“Proletarische Vk.” ---> See Courses and Lectures, Peuckert
Public Accountability of Volkskunde Scholars: 22, 23, 24, 26

Radcliffe-Browne, A.R.: 82
Radio, Peuckert interviewed on: 200, 212, 213, 214, 224, 238, 241
Ranke, Friedrich: 51, 57, 84, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 141, 142, 143, 144, 172
Ranke, Kurt: 77, 78, 84, 88, 177, 212
Refugees: 67, 167, 168, 190, 197
Regional Cultural Research: 139, 159
Regional Variation ---> See Oicotype
Regionale Kulturforschung ---> See Regional Cultural Research
Regionalism: 196, 205
Reichministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda: 60, 61, 62, 85
Reichministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung: 61, 85
Reincke-Block, Hermann: 45, 82, 115
Reflexive Turn in Ethnography: 22, 31
Restored Behaviour: 238
Riehl, Wilhelm Heinrich: 100-101, 102, 104, 124, 135, 139
Riesengebirge ---> See Giant Mountains
Röhrich, Lutz: 78, 177
Roma, Josefina: 188
Romantic Nationalism: 7, 97-100, 102, 138, 147, 175, 192
Rosenberg, Alfred: 151
Rosenkreutzer, Die: 46, 76
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques: 98
Rühle, Otto: 137
Ruppert, Wolfgang: 137

Sapir, Edward: 13-14
Schechner, Richard: 238
Scheler, Max: 11, 31

Schilling, Heinz: 188
 Schlesien ---> See Silesia
 Schlesische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde (SGV): 58, 113
Schlesische Volkskunde: 50, 51, 76, 84, 104, 106, 113, 139, 140
 Schmiedeberg: 40
 Schnell, Heinz: 228
 Schöffler, Herbert: 68, 160, 161
 Schreiberhau: 53, 55, 64
 Schundromane ---> See Trashy novels, Peuckert's research on
 Schweizer, Bruno: 185
 Segalen, Martine: 188
 Serendipity: 14-15
 SGV ---> See Schlesische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde
 Siebs, Theodor: 113, 114, 115, 141
 Silesia: 1, 27, 54, 59, 63, 65, 80, 104, 105, 109, 112, 129, 130, 167, 191, 196, 226
 Sinnbildforschung: 153
 Sinninghe, Jaque R. W.: 185, 186
 Smend, Rudolf: 159, 161
Social Construction of Reality, The: 12, 31
 Social Democratic Party Germany ---> See SPD
 Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands ---> See SPD
 Spamer, Adolf: 101, 104, 107, 115, 135, 139, 151
 SPD: 43-44, 118, 142
 Sprottau: 63
 Staatenkunde: 95, 98
 Statistik: 95, 98
 Steinitz, Wolfgang: 137
 Steller, Walther: 57-58, 114-119, 129, 141, 142, 143, 144
 Stickers, Kenneth: 11, 31, 147
 Stocking, George: 9, 13, 90-91
 Stoudt, John Joseph: 66
 Strack, Adolf: 101, 104, 107, 135
 Strehlen: 63
 Striegau: 63
 Süddeutscher Rundfunk: 212
 Supernatural, the: 41-43, 75, 82, 200, 212, 221, 230, 231, 232, 236, 237, 238, 241
 Szövérfy, Josef: 185

Taylor, Archer: 178-179
 Television, Peuckert interviewed on: 2, 3, 200, 202, 214, 225, 226, 227, 239

“Thirds”: 22, 24-25
Toelken, Barre: 23
Tönnies, Ferdinand: 109-110, 140
Töppendorf: 33, 36
Trashy novels, Peuckert’s research on: 121, 127-128
Tschofen, Bernhard: 188
Turner, Edith: 216-217, 219
Turner, Victor: 216

Umbrella Organizations: 142, 145
Unabhängige Sozial Demokratische Partei (USPD): 43-44, 118, 142
Universität Breslau --> See Breslau
Universität Göttingen ---> See Göttingen
Upper Silesia ---> See Silesia

v. Zaborsky, Oskar: 185
venia legendi: 58, 90, 161, 173
Vergangenheitsbewältigung: 158-159, 188, 249
Verne, Jules: 38
Vico, Giambattista: 98
Volk, 19th century definitions of: 93, 96-100
Volk, 20th century definitions of: 101-103, 152
Volks-Kunde, first use of term in Germany: 96, 138
Volkskunde des Proletariats: 5, 20, 27, 28, 31, 44, 51, 52, 57, 58, 84, 89, 103-112, 120, 134, 140, 146, 173, 174, 200, 248, 250
“Volkskunde der bürgerlichen und proletarischen Kultur” ---> See Courses and Lectures, Peuckert
Volkskunde, Comparative Work: 162, 177, 183, 185, 188, 189, 190, 192, 204
von Archenholz, Johann Wilhelm: 95
von Sydow, Carl Wilhelm: 176

Walz, Gustav: 116, 143
Weber, Richard: 185
Weigel, Karl Theodor: 153
Weiser-Aal, Lily: 58
Weiss, Richard: 132-133
Wielka-Izera ---> See Groß-Iser
Wilgus, D.K.: 88

Wirth, Herman: 12, 153
Wissenssoziologie: 9, 10, 11, 13, 31
Witches' Unguent: 1, 2, 11, 15, 20, 21, 27, 29, 30, 206, 207, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213,
215, 216, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 229, 230, 231, 233, 236,
237, 239, 240, 241, 250, 251
Wölfling, Chr.: 138
Working Class: 5, 20, 31, 52, 90, 91, 92, 100, 101, 102, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109,
110, 111, 112, 114, 117, 120, 122, 125, 126, 127, 128, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134,
135, 136, 137, 139, 140, 250
World War I: 43, 44
World War II: 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 19, 20, 26, 27, 28, 30, 34, 44, 49, 68, 71, 73, 87, 91, 92, 94,
103, 104, 129, 148, 149, 150-155, 157, 158, 160, 167, 172, 173, 181, 183, 188,
202, 204, 206, 207, 247, 248, 250

Zauber ---> See Supernatural, the
Zech, Jaromir: 78, 177
Zender, Matthias: 77
Zgorzelec ---> See Görlitz
Zimmermann, Rolf-Christian: 8, 47, 70, 184, 205, 207
Zimmermann, Harm-Peer: 96-97
Zones of Contact: 179, 183, 188, 189, 190
Zumwalt, Rosemary Levy: 13, 18