

Simon J. Bronner

*“Heile, Heile, Hinkel Dreck”:*

### **On The Earthiness of Pennsylvania German Folk Narrative**

Mahlon Hellerich strode to the Pennsylvania German Society podium in 2005 to explain Pennsylvania German culture to his audience in Allentown, Pennsylvania, composed of many people like him who grew up with “Dutch” traditions. Into his 80s at that point, he was well recognized as a former president of the Pennsylvania German Society for being a speaker on Pennsylvania German topics drawing on his experience growing up in East Texas, Pennsylvania, which he described as a Pennsylvania “Dutch” hamlet. He decided to begin with a story that for him encompassed what being Pennsylvania German was about. Here is what he said:

A Pennsylvania German mother tells her daughter that she would need to go to English school to register. And she tells her daughter to take her little brother because he would need to register next year. She goes to the teacher and the teacher asks for her name. The little girl answers *Waggeraad* (“wagon wheel”). The teacher asks again, “Okay, what is your real name?” *Waggeraad*, the girl emphatically answers again. “And how did you get that name?” the teacher follows up. The little girl explains, “My mother told me that when I was born the first thing she saw out the window was a wagon wheel by the barn.” Still sceptical, the teacher tells her to go home and get a note from her mother confirming the story. The teacher then asks the boy, her little brother, to come forward. But the little girl exclaims, “Don’t bother, if she didn’t believe me, she’s not going to believe you *Hinkeldreck* (“chicken shit”).<sup>1</sup>

The story got a good laugh, and several persons in the audience glanced knowingly at each other with the comment that they had heard that one before. But it may seem at first like a strange choice to represent Pennsylvania German experience. After all, besides its off-color reference, some people may interpret its crude characterization of Pennsylvania German bumpkins as unflattering. Hellerich, however, recalled it fondly from his childhood and appreciated the way it related the ethnic identity, and especially the rural consciousness, of Pennsylvania Germans in contrast to “English” (English speaking Americans) outsiders viewed as part of the formal establishment. He lamented that this identity arising largely out of an agrarian lifestyle was on the wane.

It is a story that I had heard regularly at the annual all-male *Fersommling* (“gathering”) in Lykens, Pennsylvania, featuring an after-dinner speaker who relates humorous jokes and anecdotes to the crowd. It usually fitted into a series of narratives

that Pennsylvania Germans euphemistically refer to as “earthy” *Bauer* (“farmer”) stories revolving around the feces of farm animals, especially of chickens and horses. The anal theme of the narratives was echoed in the joyous singing of *Schnitzelbank* with various barn images, including the *Waggeraad* and manure pile.

Ist das dein Schnitzelbank? [Isn't that your carving bench?]

Ja, das ist mein Schnitzelbank? [Yes, that is my carving bench]

Oh, du schoene,

Oh, du schoene,

Oh, du schoene

Schnitz-el-bank! [Oh, you wonderful carving bench]

Ist das nicht dein Waggeraad?

Ja, das ist mein Waggeraad.

Chorus

Is das nicht dein Haufen Mischt? [manure pile]

Ja, das ist mein Haufen Mischt.

Outside of the *Fersommling* hall, the most common description of narratives I heard when I solicited them as a fieldworker was “that’s earthy stuff,” connecting an awareness of manure with farm life on the land and suggesting that the motif of animal feces was a defining feature of Pennsylvania German humor. It was what folklorists might call an “esoteric” expression, because it was intended to be communicated from one member of the group to another, rather than material to be shared with outsiders or for outsiders to relate about the Pennsylvania Germans (categorized as “exoteric”) (Jansen 1959). To be sure, it was not the sole theme, as published field collections of oral tradition made by John Baer Stoudt, Thomas Brendle, and William Troxell indicate. For public audiences, Pennsylvania German collectors might recount trickster tales of Eileschpigel, the cycle of Swabian jokes related to ethnic “moron” humor, ghost and treasure tales, accounts of stolen goods retrieved, and a number of *Parre* legends and anecdotes about notable ministers. But as I will show, there is more of a connecting thread of the feces theme among these Pennsylvania German narrative types than has been realized.

Aware of this “earthy” repertoire, I began to suspect that previously published collections, the largest of which was Brendle and Troxell’s, mostly amassed in the early to mid-twentieth century had understated or omitted the “earthy” stories because they were off-color and potentially embarrassing to Pennsylvania Germans when read by outsiders. Or the fact that the prodigious collector Thomas Brendle was a pastor might have resulted in the selection of “clean” repertoire by tradition bearers for the man of the cloth to hear. Apparently, Brendle was not oblivious to this material, for when Richard Beam mined his journals (57,124 items spread over approximately 24,000 pages) for a posthumous compendium of folklore in 1995, 29 years after Brendle’s death, he found a number of scatological expressions recorded in Brendle’s hand as “Excrementa” (Beam 1995, 47-48). Nonetheless, Brendle, or the publisher,

chose not to print the material for public consumption earlier. Brendle's linguistic comments about the abundance of terms for excrement among Pennsylvania German speakers suggest that he was thinking about a cultural connection. He found "Dreck" the most common term, but a round-shaped dropping could be called a "Gnoddle." "Scheissdreck" represented excrementa of all kinds, Brendle observed, but the "vulgar" *scheiss*, he wrote, was normally reserved for humans, while *Dreck* was reserved for animals, as is the linguistic usage in Germany. Differentiation of different *Dreck* types among Pennsylvania German speakers was made for different animals, most notably *Hinkeldreck* (chicken), *Geilsdreck* (horse), and *Kiehdreck* (cow)—connected to Pennsylvania German farm pastures and barnyards.

Brendle also noted that Pennsylvania Germans identified an abundance of manure as *Mischt* and again identified various forms such as *Geilmischt* (horse), *Ginkelmischt* (chicken), and *Haasemischt* (rabbit). The last term could also be used as a synecdoche for rabbit farms. Brendle was apparently impressed with the Pennsylvania German penchant for designating places and implements as belonging to dirt, as in *Mischthof*, that part of the barnyard reserved for the collection of manure during the year (collected in Montgomery County as *Mischtpen* or a pile of manure (also collected as *Mischthaufe*). The *Mischtbrieh* was a special name for the liquid manure which collects around rotten manure heaps. Farmers typically had a *Mischtschlidde* (a sled), *Mischtgawwel* (four-pronged fork), and *Mischtwagge* (wagon) containing *Mischtbanke* or planks. Pennsylvania German speakers also used a form of *mischt* as a verb 'to spread manure' and 'to defecate' (Beam 1995, 47-48).

Even if Brendle and other collectors had published the scatological lore, they would likely not have applied symbolic or psychological analysis. The folkloristic project of the early to mid-twentieth century for the Pennsylvania Germans was to record what they assumed was a passing tradition, reflecting the decline of a self-contained rural Pennsylvania German folklife with the coming of industrialization and urbanization. The presentational strategy was to organize stories into themes and list them under these headings as a series of relic texts associated with a once vibrant expressive culture. In the introduction to their collection *Pennsylvania German Folk Tales, Legends, Once-Upon-A-Time Stories, Maxims, and Sayings*, Brendle and Troxell comment, "We have felt the greatest service we could render toward a study of our folk stories was to make a faithful record of what we heard and thus afford a true source for future comparative study" (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 10). Although they seemed to disavow a theoretical interest, they made theoretical assumptions by organizing their collection to show the historical progression from supernatural and wonder tales, associated, they claimed, with the distant past devolving to the "humorous anecdote and the tall story" in the living tradition of contemporary Pennsylvania German culture. Because of the emphasis on their generation of Pennsylvania German scholars of recovering the past, rather than interpreting the adaptation of the present, they published what they considered the more "traditional" material of a memory culture. As Brendle and Troxell explained, "Our collection consists, therefore, in large part of stories that arose in the past and belong to the past" (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 8). The president of the Pennsylvania German Society at the time, commenting on the significance of their collection, alluded to the importance of the memory culture in his statement, "Fortunately, their work was done in the very nick of time; for, with the vanishing use of Pennsylvania German dialect, these tales will be no longer

told by the descendants of this racial group" (Borneman 1944, 6). With that lack of an expressive outlet, they implied, descendants of the farm-raised, pre-industrial Pennsylvania Germans lacked a meaningful social tie and distinctive cultural identity. The impression Brendle and Troxell gave, therefore, was that the culture had dissipated with the passing of this folklore. In their view, the "humorous anecdote and the tall story" appeared to be less important, and less aesthetically pleasing for a reading public. The new narratives, they assumed, mistakenly, to be novel rather than as part of a longstanding tradition, were presented as an unfortunate devolutionary development for the culture (see Dundes 1969).

What is the historical background for the development, evolutionary or devolutionary, of the culture? The Pennsylvania Germans, or the "Dutch" (in the dialect *Deitsch*) as they call themselves, first came in a wave of immigration in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, attracted by William Penn's promise of land and religious tolerance as his agents recruited settlers in the Palatinate Rhineland region of what is now southern Germany and Switzerland. They consisted mostly of Protestant (Lutheran and Reformed) sects and Anabaptist and Pietist groups such as Mennonites, Amish, and Brethren. Moving beyond Quaker and Welsh areas in southeastern Pennsylvania, they sought farmland in the mountain valleys further west. They followed the valleys across the Susquehanna River into western Maryland and Virginia. Many of these areas were isolated from urban centers and transportation corridors by natural mountain and river barriers. The Pennsylvania Germans formed closed communities relying on mutual aid where a dialect drawing on the German dialect of their homelands dominated, although the dialect showed regional variations from the eastern to southern parts of the culture. The concentration of their settlements and the persistence of traditional agrarian life inland helped foster the formation of a cultural region (often called the Pennsylvania Cultural Region or, more familiarly, "Dutch Country"). In the nineteenth century, as governmental efforts were made to introduce English as the standard language through compulsory public education, a cultural awareness of ethnic difference grew among the Pennsylvania Germans and organizations such as the Pennsylvania German Society became organized to document and promote the folk culture as well as raise its standing in the general public's perception. They also distinguished themselves from other German immigrants moving to the cities by their religion, dialect, arts—and folklore. Estimated at more than 300,000 in 1950, the number of active dialect speakers in 1995 was given as less than 80,000. Many nonspeakers of Pennsylvania German in the region display what is known as "Dutchified" English, also called a Dutchy or central Pennsylvania accent—featuring the use of phrases in the dialect and rhythms and grammatical formations based on Pennsylvania German patterns. A break in tradition appeared to occur during World War II, when many Pennsylvania German parents stopped teaching their children the dialect, and an out-migration of youth for industrial and professional work occurred from what was once a culture deeply rooted in the land. After the war, a number of organizations sponsored festivals and programs to revive the culture, leading to cultural tourism in Lancaster County (primarily for the Amish farmlands) and America's largest folk festival (the Kutztown Folk Festival) celebrating Pennsylvania German culture. Into the twenty-first century, Pennsylvania German identity has gained stature for its expressive arts, but still suffers, according to Pennsylvania Germans, to images of

“dumb Dutch”—referring to the perception of their backwardness because of a hold onto the folk past. Moreover, Dutchiness is often viewed as less visible than other ethnic movements in the United States, such as those racial and cultural movements for Latino, African, and Native American groups.

My purpose in this essay is to more critically analyze examples of the “humorous anecdote and the tall story” circulating in, and commenting on, contemporary Pennsylvania German culture, allowing for a reinterpretation of the extensive corpus of narratives collected by Brendle and Troxell. The service I offer is to encourage the exploration of prominent themes and symbols in the living narrative tradition to see if folklore reveals Pennsylvania German cultural attitudes, anxieties, and identities in relation to a changing surrounding society. I will focus on the *Dreck* motif because it appears to me from fieldwork to be the most conspicuous theme that Pennsylvania German tradition-bearers among themselves associate with their folklore. In addition to being found in narrative, it can also be seen visually in a number of t-shirt designs with sayings such as “*Heile, Heile, Hinkel Dreck*” proclaiming pride in Pennsylvania German identity. Significant to my thesis, these t-shirts are usually not sold to tourists, who typically do not understand the reference, but to people who grew up in the culture. While my analysis emphasizes the symbolic readings of texts within cultural contexts, there is a comparative component prompted by Alan Dundes’s characterization of continental German culture as anal by examining its prevalent satirical humor, to evaluate sources of the *Dreck* theme in Germany.

The “*Heile, Heile, Hinkel Dreck*” saying comes from a chant often reported as being used in powwowing rituals. The full text is typically, “*Heile, heile, Hinkeldreck, Bis morgen (mariye) frieh is alles weck*” or “*immer morgen (mariye) is alles weg,*” meaning “holy, holy, chicken shit, in the morning, all has gone away (on its way).” It did not have to be uttered by powwowers, judging by the accounts of Pennsylvania German informants. If a child got hurt, it was common for parents to pretend to heal it with the anally suggestive chant, much as the more oral “kissing the boo-boo” is common in American popular culture to magically heal a child’s bruise. Attention was drawn in the Pennsylvania German chant to “*Dreck,*” probably because it substituted for the use by powwowers of holy water. An example is this generally used charm using religious images:

Die Wasser und dis Feuer,  
Die Wasser und dis Feuer,  
Die Wasser und dis Feuer,  
Die ist eine grosse Dinge,  
In dies grosses geheilige Land,  
Unser yunge frau Maria,  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Amen.  
[This water and this fire,  
This water and this fire,  
This water and this fire,  
This is a big thing,  
In this big holy land,  
Our young lady Maria,  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Amen.] (Bronner 1996, 551)

Narrative evidence is provided by Brendle and Troxell who recorded the story of a *Braucher* or powwower sprinkling holy water on scrawny cattle every morning and evening to fatten them. The powwower reports to the farm servant that after three months the cattle will be free of evil and they will grow. The servant answers "Your cattle need less holy water on the outside and more feed on the inside" (*Was des do Vieh brauch is wennicher heilich Wasser uff di haut un mehner Schrod im Bauch*) (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 151-52). The story suggests the pragmatic concerns of the servant, closer to the land than to heaven. It implies, in fact, that the reference to *Hinkeldreck* as a powwow chant is itself a parody, inverting the heavenly water into earthly dirt. Not only is a symbolic opposition created between water and dirt, but between *heile* (from the German *heilig*) and *Hinkel* (from the German *Henne*).

The opposition of clean and dirty materials can be interpreted as creating separation between sacred and profane categories. This is partly necessary because the human body may be viewed as unclean and in forms of fantasy; the dirt is removed from the self and projected onto outside objects and places (Kubie 1937). Brendle notes, for example, that "*naus misse*," meaning having to defecate originally meant "to go out of the house to void the bowels." A traditional German riddle expressing the problem of differentiating dirt in the bodily interior and physical exterior, for example, is "*Was ist draussen und doch drinnen?* (What is outside and yet inside?). The answer is "*Der Dreck, wenn man sich in die Hosen beschissen hat* (Dirt when a person has shit in his pants) (Dundes 1984, 32-33). The psychological implication is, as Lawrence Kubie explains, "the body must, despite its own uncleanliness, shun as dirty anything in the outside world which resembles or represents the body's own 'dirt,' and that above all else it must never allow its own relatively 'clean' outsides to become contaminated by contact with the filthy interior of itself or of anyone else" (Kubie 1937, 39). Applying this idea to the *Hinkeldreck* image, it appears that the inside, or the human body, becomes cleaner by noting the extraordinary dirt created outside by the chickens.

The pants and the shirt act as a boundary zone between inside and outside zones. Narratives recount the efforts of people to retain a clean or stoic exterior while they are producing "mess" inside their bodies. An example bearing this out is the German-American story of an officer who is tested by facing a firing squad with guns loaded with either blanks or bullets. When they shoot, the officer does not flinch. The first round consists of blanks. He is complimented on his external display of bravery and discipline, and asked if there is anything he needs. He replies, "a new pair of pants" (Dundes 1984, 34-35). Brendle recalls a related Pennsylvania German counting-out rhyme, indicating the German "Kaiser" defecates in his pants: *Edelmann, Beddelmann, Bauer, Soldaat, Keenich, Kaiser, Hossescheisser* [Nobleman, beggar, farmer, soldier, king, Kaiser, one who defecates in his pants] (Beam 1995, 99). Moreover, the Amish game of "*Mischtball*" often played at "mud sales," suggesting the active discharge of goods, revolves around a boy in the center of a pen avoiding a ball thrown by players from corners. The boy is rewarded for staying "clean," and "out" if he is hit and falls into the mud, thereby showing dirt on his body.

Another implication of constructing a separate category of clean and dirty is between up and down, short and long, narrow and broad, with the latter in each case representing the earthy, anal side. Alan Dundes, in fact, bases his analysis of

German worldview on the German proverbial expression, “*Das Leben ist wie eine Hühnerleiter—kurz und beschissen* (Life is like a chicken coop ladder—short and shitty) (Dundes 1984, 9). In a common variation, there is a connection to infant toilet training, reinforcing a cognitive connection found in Hellerich’s narrative: “*Das Leben ist wie ein Kinderhemd—kurz und beschissen*” (Life is like a child’s undershirt—short and shitty). The ladder or life journey is metaphorically climbed step by step to success or to heaven. In one of the most popular Pennsylvania German religious broadsides called “The Broad and Narrow Way,” for instance, the broad, easy path to follow is on the earth filled with temptations of vice, while the narrow way, more difficult to achieve, is directed toward heaven (Yoder 2005). Even in Pennsylvania German baptismal certificates, often divided structurally into a clear differentiation between an earthly bottom side and heavenly top, flowers and animals associated with the land often line the bottom while angels and eagles grace the top (Bronner 1992). In the *Schnitzelbank* song still popular among Pennsylvania Germans, the lyrics emphasize some of these oppositions, related to the inclusion of the wagon wheel and manure pile mentioned earlier: “*hin und her*” (here and there), “*kurz und lang*” (short and long), and “*krumm und graad*” (crooked and straight).

Other oppositions may be implied by the holy-hinkel substitution. The patriarchal heaven is contrasted to the matriarchal chicken, often expressed as the “mother hen” laying eggs and watching her chicks (Davis 2002). The chicken as a domesticated bird controlled by humans is frequently infantilized in imagery, as it is in the designation of the little boy in Hellerich’s narrative. A Pennsylvania German folk rhyme reinforcing the infantilized feminine connection to *Hinkel* is “*Haahmekamm, Hinkelbiebs, frehlich Maedchen, du warscht hibscht*” (Cockscomb, hen peep, cheerful maiden, you were lovely) (Beam 1995, 21-22). In the case of Brendle and Troxell’s story of the scrawny cattle, the powerful *Braucher*, put into the patriarchal provider role, is bested by the subordinate servant, put into a feminine role, but shown to be more in touch with the day-to-day care of the child-like cattle. The feed has more substance than the water, and instead of having spiritual value, descends through the body to the ground as “*Dreck*.”

The symbolic opposition of the heavenly and earthly approaches can be read in another story of a farmer wanting to protect his cattle. The *Braucher* recommends closing openings in the roof *above* the cattle. But when the cows’ milk turned sour in the pots, the answer to the problem came from *below*. The pots were laid out on the manure heap and then shot to pieces with a gun. The pragmatic advice was to get new crocks and keep them clean (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 142-43). Unpublished from Brendle’s journal was a narrative he identified as an “anecdote” and commented that he heard it often:

A farmer who was unable to raise good crops went “*zum Prieschder*” [to the priest] and asked him to pray that he might have good crops. He received the answer, “*Do bade Bede nix; do muss Mischt bei?*” [Here prayers are of no avail; manure is the answer.] “*Do batt Bidde un Bede nix; do muss Mischt bei?*” [Here asking and praying are of no avail; manure is the answer.] (Beam 1995, 71-72).

If manure in the above story is shown as producing results, the anal tail of cattle and chickens appears in German lore to eject or lay bodily objects. One indication of this ejective function is the euphemism of *machen* or "making" for defecation. There may indeed be a veiled wish for a pleasant defecation experience in the typical parting phrase among Pennsylvania Germans of "*mach's gut*" (literally "make it good"). Brendle found other examples of the relation of the tail or anus to production; for instance, he collected the belief "*so as die Hinkel lege, glob uff ihre Schwenz*" [to make the chickens lay, beat on their tails] (Beam 1995, 95). Although the cow does not lay eggs, its ejective function creates manure, as in the German children's riddle "*Wie kommt Kubscheisse auf das Dach?*" [How did the cowshit get on the roof?] *Hat sich Kuh auf Schwanz geschissen und dann auf das Dach geschmissen* [The cow shit on its tail and then threw it up on the roof"] (Dundes 1984, 12). The humor derives from the manure being out of place, on the lofty roof, rather than on the ground, but there may be implied an association of the residents with the cow and its feces.

Pennsylvania German folk narrative shows ambivalence toward ritualizing manure as lowly, profane "dirt" and contrasting it with lofty, sacred "cleanliness."<sup>2</sup> To be sure, the dirt-profane association is an important way that ethical choices and cognitive categories are culturally constructed (see Bourke 1891; Kubie 1937; Sabbath and Hall 1977). But the affinity with the chicken in Pennsylvania German culture suggests a specific complicating context, since the separation of dirt and clean is more difficult to imagine with a bird thought to be immersed in its own feces and associated with living in roosts, suggesting their own community. Since the bird does not fly, it is seen as being docile, stupid, and "grounded." It is a domesticated bird not linked with the wild, but to the farm for exploitation by humans for its meat and eggs. Its feces, then, become one of its few natural defenses, since many humans would rather avoid the smell and substance of the material. For the Pennsylvania Germans, their association with raising chickens raises their self-perception of toughness, since they realize that it will be viewed as dirty and "disgusting" by outsiders. While the main motif of chickens in American popular humor is a variation of "why did the chicken cross the road?" with the catch answer "to cross the road" (suggesting the simplicity or stupidity of the animals), in Pennsylvania German folklore chickens have a role as metaphor for the farm because they were frequently described as having, in Richard Beam's words, "the run of the barnyard" (Beam 1995, 22). The implication is that indeed chickens have a kind of dominant role within the landscape, although that environment may not be recognized outside of the culture. Indeed, a difference exists between the Pennsylvania German symbolization of *Hinkeldreck* and the image of its translation of "chickenshit" in American popular culture, for the latter is associated with cowardice and lowly social status, whereas the Pennsylvania German use of the term in narrative and belief suggests "earthiness" in the sense of an ordinary person or noble *Bauer*.

The symbolic association of Pennsylvania Germans with chickens is evident from non-Pennsylvania-German versions of Mahlon Hellerich's story of *Hinkeldreck*, which typically leave out the chicken motif. An example is one I included in my collection *American Children's Folklore*:

It was the first day of school and the children filed into the classroom and took their seats. Teacher says, "All right, boys and girls. Now I want you



all to stand up one at a time and tell everybody here your name, so we will all get to know each other." First little boy stood up and said, "My name is John Brown." "Very good, John, you may be seated." Next a little girl stood up and said, "My name is Nancy Jones." "Very good, Nancy you may be seated." Next a little girl stood up and said, "My name is Pissy Smith." The teacher said, "You mustn't talk that way. We're in school, you know. Now tell us your real name." "My name is Pissy Smith," the little girl said. The teacher again reminded the little girl where she was and again asked her to give her real name. The little girl for the third time said, "My name is Pissy Smith." Okay, the teacher said, "one more chance to tell us your real name or leave." The little girl again said, "My name is Pissy Smith." "Get out," the teacher said, "until you can learn to talk right." As Pissy left the room, she said to a little boy in the back row, "Come on, Shit Head, she won't believe you either!" (Bronner 1988, 135).

Both stories revolve around the prudish authoritarian teacher sceptical about the child's name. In both stories, the first child's name belongs to a girl while the second, invariably referring to excrement, is to the little brother. There is, therefore, suggested a social hierarchy of dirt—from the feminine to the masculine, and in age from the older to the younger (presumably closer to the age of toilet training). In contrast to Hellerich's story, however, the above narrative lacks the ethnic associations of the *Hinkel* representing the farm life of the Pennsylvania Germans. Hellerich also suggests a linguistic and cultural difference, not just a moralistic one, concerning the use of German sounding names to the English teacher.<sup>3</sup>

Of significance in Hellerich's narrative is the boundary between inside and outside the house. It is not only the name that the teacher does not believe exists but the human association with earthly dirt. Inside the house in the narrative is presumably clean, while outside is dirty, but the mother relates to what she sees as the surrounding context for her onomastic texts, and perhaps implies the pre-toilet-training status of children with defecation. The wagon wheel is a clue that the teacher does not get, for as Brendle's abundant examples of excrementa showed, the wagon wheel in the yard is associated linguistically with "*Mischt*" or "mess." The *Hinkel* is significant because it, and its droppings, cover the yard. The children appear to occupy a middle position between the clean inside and dirty outside. A popular ring game known in English as "Ring around the Rosey" among Pennsylvania German children, for example, differs from the English version by its reference to *Dreck*:

Ringe, Ringe, Rosen  
Die Buben tragen Hosen  
Die Maedeln tragen Roeck  
Un fallen dann in Dreck

[Ring around a rosey,  
The boys wear pants  
The girls wear skirts  
And fall in the dirt.] (Beam 1995, 106).

In the English version, the children “fall down” rather than specifying the *Dreck* as a happy destination. The mother could be viewed relating to the *Hinkel* outside as a hen would to her chicks, but the English teacher cannot understand the inclination, and in fact, judges it negatively. In the humor, then, is an indictment of the English establishment as harshly judging or suppressing the Germans as different, to be sure, but additionally as dirty. The story absorbs the exoteric judgment and turns it into an esoteric source of pride. The name *Hinkeldreck* signals ethnic separation for the boy as a symbol for his group (and its culture handed down from his mother) and it also can be viewed as an act of verbal aggression hurling “shit” at the establishment that “looks down” on the group like dirt.

One of the traditional tales I have collected that further connects the *Hinkel* with *Dreck* and contrasts it in an indicting way with the sacred establishment concerns a man on his way home who cannot hold his bowel movement. Thinking that no one sees him, he goes to the side of the road and defecates. But a minister comes up the hill and the man quickly covers the pile with his hat. The minister asks him what he is doing on the side of the road, and the man explains defensively that he has caught one of his chicks escaping from the barnyard under his hat. The minister offers to buy the bird, and the man agrees only if the minister picks up the hat after the man is out of sight. The priest bends down to grab the bird, and gets feces on his hands (Aarne-Thompson [AT] Tale Type 1528). The AT index shows that the story was originally documented in Germany as a moral tale as early as the fourteenth century, but it is most often related in the twentieth century as a joke (Uther 2004, 2:257-58).

The other animal associated with the production of feces in the Pennsylvania German world is the horse and it, too, is pervasive in Pennsylvania German folklore. A common parody of the “Our father” prayer in the dialect, for example, is:

Unser Vadder, wer du bischt  
Marye faahre mer wider Misch  
Freidaag faahre mer die grosse Load  
Bis Samschdaag faahre der Schimmel dod

[Our father, who you are  
Tomorrow we haul manure  
Friday we haul the big load  
Until Saturday the horse is dead.] (Beam 1995, 55)

Like other references to ritualized dirt, there is a contrast to the sacred category of cleanliness as a difference between the spiritual and the earthly. Also like the chicken, the horse has benefits for humans, but people may express ambivalence toward the animal because of its being immersed in feces, and perhaps for male tellers the status of the horse as a male rival. The linguistic association in the dialect of *Geilsdreck* (horseshit) is of manure that is particularly abundant and potent. The size of the animal, and its muscular appearance, as well as fantasies about its sexual organ, give it a masculine symbolism compared to the feminine chicken.

One indication of the symbolic associations of the chicken with the feminine and the horse with the masculine affecting their characterizations in storytelling is a contemporary sounding pseudo-fable told about a chicken and a horse playing

together in a barnyard. Tellers then describe the horse falling into a pit or mudpile. The horse yells to the chicken to get the farmer to help. Unable to locate the farmer, the chicken gets the farmer's fancy car (described as a BMW, Mercedes, or Porsche) and drives it to the mud pit, throws a rope to the horse, and ties it to the car to pull him out. The horse is grateful to the chicken for saving his life. A few days later, the two animals are playing again and this time the chicken falls into the mud pit or manure pile and the chicken exclaims, "Help me, go get the farmer!" The horse says, "No, I think I can save you." The horse stretches across the mud pit and tells the chicken to grab on to his penis. The chicken clutches it, the horse stretches back, and the horse saves the chicken's life. The moral of the story, male tellers like to say, is that if you are hung like a horse you don't need a fancy car to pick up chicks. The fear that both have is of being submerged in dirt, or feces, suggesting a projection of the male teller's concerns to the animals' plight. Although both the masculine and feminine animals become lodged in the dirt, it is the masculine horse—an alter-ego for the farmer/teller—that becomes the hero.<sup>4</sup> In another way, the story is unusual in Pennsylvania German lore in its sexual content because unlike American popular culture, the German repertoire of risqué narrative emphasizes "earthy" themes of excrement and anality over phallo-centric motifs (Dundes 1984, 87).

One way that Pennsylvania German folk humor mediates between the animal as benefactor (as well as metaphor for the culture) and its association with masculinized dirt is to show the farmer's obliviousness to the *Mischt*, suggesting the normative "earthy" existence. Here, for example, are two versions of a joke about a horse stable filled with feces told to me at a Pennsylvania German gathering in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, in 2005.

A farmer was a little lazy and he didn't clean out the horse stable. The manure got so high that the horse hit his head on a beam about the door. This made the horse dizzy and he couldn't work. The farmer hired a carpenter to raise the beam so the horse wouldn't hit his head. When the carpenter asked why the farmer hadn't removed the manure, he replied, "the horse hits his head not his feet."

Bob went to see an Amish friend. When he got to the house the man's wife answered the door, "Hello Bop, what do you want?" He says, "I came to see Abie." "Vell, he's at the barn verking." Going to the barn he sees Abie on a ladder with a hatchet, chopping at the top beam of the door to the horse stable. "What are you doing Abie?" "Vell hello Bop, you see I have this horse whose ears are too long, and they rub the beam and getting sore." "Well, Abie, why don't you take some of the manure away at the bottom? You vern't listening Bop, I said his ears were too long, not his legs."

In the second narrative, although told by a Pennsylvania German male narrator in his 60s, he uses the Amish to intensify the connection to farm life and dialect of Pennsylvania Germans. Reflecting on the story after he told it, he expressed the view that the Amish are living the life that Pennsylvania Germans used to, and he felt that Pennsylvania Germans had lost their identity with the decline of the dialect and agrarian lifestyle.

The Pennsylvania German obsession with cleanliness comes up in a joke I heard frequently about a farmer dealing with the problem of a sickly horse. The farmer wants to avoid going to the veterinarian, so he goes to the neighbor (sometimes identified as non-Pennsylvania-German or "English") for help. The neighbor says, "Oh yes, he's got something that worked wonders for him." He takes a tube with him to see the sickly horse and sticks the tube in the horse's rear end. He proceeds to blow into it, but the horse still would not stand. The farmer says to his neighbor, "Here, let me try." The neighbor says, "Sure, come on back." The farmer takes the tube out of the horse's butt and turns it around. He then sticks the tube back in the horse's anus. "What did you do that for?" the neighbor asks. The farmer replies, "I wasn't going to blow in it after you had your mouth on it!" In a common variant, the farmer does go to the vet and says, "My horse is constipated." The vet suggests, "Take one of these pills, put it in a long tube, stick the other end in the horse's ass, and blow the pill up there." But he comes back the next day and he looks sick. The veterinarian asks, "what happened?" The Dutch farmer says, "The horse blew first." In both versions, reversals occur between human and animal, triggered by the insertion of a tube physically linking man and horse. In the first narrative, the theme of obliviousness to the ritualized dirt coming out of the anus recurs, while in the second narrative, this dirt, in the form of flatulence, is the expression of the animal's potency. Tracing the high number of German folklore texts confusing the oral and anal, folklorist Alan Dundes suggests that the oral action (expressed as "*Leck mich am Arsch*" or ass licking) implies "eating shit. . .the ultimate degradation" (Dundes 1984, 48). Brendle documents a Pennsylvania German children's custom that verifies this view. He observes that as children going to school passed excrement on the ground, they would spit. Children want to avoid being the last one to spit or of not spitting because they will be accused of metaphorically eating "shit" (Beam 1995, 98).

A corroborating bit of evidence of the confusion of the oral and anal in German cultural sources is the devilish character of the German character Eulenspiegel (rendered often in Pennsylvania German as Eileschpigel) traced to the meaning of the name in forms of "*Leck mich am Arsch*." According to this theory, "*Eulen*" in the first part of the name means to wipe or clean and "*Spiegel*" refers to the posterior (Collofino 1939, 1048; Dundes 1984, 49). In a Pennsylvania German story recorded by Brendle and Troxell that may be given in support of the theory (and relates to Hellerich's association of the mother with manure and the dreck-water substitution in the powwow parody), Eileschpigel is said to be baptized three times in one day. One time was by a pastor with water in the church, and the second is when his mother brought him outside and he fell into the "*Mischt*." The third is when she washed him clean (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 176).

The anal Eileschpigel appears in Pennsylvania German folklore in a variant of Tale Type 1528 mentioned earlier about the minister thinking he was getting a bird grabbing feces under a hat. Brendle and Troxell collected it from Mrs. Emma Faustner of Bath, Pennsylvania, who said:

When Eileschpijje's end drew near, he filled a box with worthless things and nailed it up tightly. Then taking the box he went to his pastor. He asked the pastor to preach a good sermon over his remains.

"As a reward for your services you will receive this box which I have

filled with things for you," said Eileschipijjel.

The pastor conducted the funeral with an eye to the reward that was coming to him. After the burial he was given the box that Eileschipijjel had made ready. He hastened home and eagerly opened the box, and found in it nothing but rubbish.

The "rubbish" in the text represents waste, and may very well have been *Dreck* originally, but was edited by Brendle and Troxell or cleaned up by the teller. Worth noting is the rhetorical strategy also found in Hellerich's story of shocking the establishment (or sacred) figure with ritual dirt, echoing an infant's act of defecation as a gift, an unwelcome gift for the mother (Dundes 1984, 34).

Eileschipigel in contests, usually with the devil, shows his superior ability with the aid of trickery to haul loads, make piles, and throw sheaves. The actions suggest an anal ejective function, and being portrayed in this way, Eileschipigel figuratively soils the profane devil and wipes himself clean. He typically gloats after completing his task, finding pleasure in his discharge, usually done, he emphasizes, without exertion. In a story that is reminiscent of the narrated confusion between oral and anal actions between human and horse given earlier, Eileschipigel goes out hunting with an old musket. As Brendle and Troxell record it,

The devil came along and seeing the musket asked, "What is that?"

Eileschipijjel answered, "A smoke pipe" [*Schmokpeiff*] and turning the end of the barrel to the devil, said, "Take a puff."

The devil took the end of the barrel into his mouth and began to suck. Thereupon Eileschipijjel pulled the trigger and the bullet and the smoke flew into the devil's mouth.

The devil, coughing and gasping for breath, spat out the bullet and said, "You—you surely use strong tobacco." (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 161)

Although Brendle and Troxell published this narrative as related by Anson Sittler of Egypt, Pennsylvania, they comment that it is told by "many others," suggesting its wide circulation. Brendle in his journal added linguistic evidence for the pleasure of defecation by noting the idiomatic phrase "*Ich muss en Tschabb schaffe*" and "*Ich muss naus*" [both of which he translated as "I must ease myself"] (Beam 1995, 68).

One theory explaining the male fascination with anality in folk narratives is that it represents ejection as a form of creation, simulating by males in fantasy the female ability to give birth (Dundes 1962). A striking part of the Pennsylvania German corpus that may invite this interpretation is the story of "The Mule's Egg" reported as "quite widely heard" by Brendle and Troxell:

Eileschipijjel came across a pumpkin and did not know what it was. As he was looking it over, a man came along and asked, "Do you know what that is?"

Answered Eileschipijjel, "I do not. I never saw anything like it."

The man said, "That is a mule's egg and if you sit on it for three weeks there will be a young mule."

Eileschijjel reflected upon the matter and decided that it would be worthwhile to sit on the mule egg for three weeks. He proceeded to sit on the pumpkin.

Becoming tired in a short time, he arose and rolled the pumpkin down the hill. The pumpkin rolled on until it hit a boulder and flew into pieces. At that very moment a rabbit that had been nesting at the boulder scurried away. Seeing the rabbit, Eileschijjel cried,

"Hee-haw little colt, here is your mammy" [Hie-ha Hutchehelli, Do is dei Mudderli] (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 169-70)

The trickster character, as such able to take risks, squats on the pumpkin in an anal position, and as he rises, the pumpkin as a kind of discharge descends toward the ground and breaks apart. There is a transformation into a rabbit, often associated with the abundant production of dung pellets.

A connection is frequently made in German lore between the taint of money and the dirt of feces, sometimes being used to link values placed on being orderly, parsimonious, industrious, and obstinate (Dundes 1984, 80). All these traits are attributed in literature and lore to Pennsylvania Germans. Alan Dundes points out that "While the money-feces equation is found outside German culture, it is nowhere more explicit than in German folklore. One thinks of the goose that laid the golden egg (Motif B103.2.1, Treasure-laying bird) or the donkey which defecates gold (Motif B 103.1.1, Gold producing ass) or perhaps even German version of Aarne-Thompson tale type 500, The Name of the Helper. In that folktale, the heroine's parent boasts that the girl can spin straw into gold—is it the straw found in the stable? If so, it would very likely contain animal manure" (Dundes 1984, 81-82). An Eileschijjel cycle that utilizes the money-feces equation is the story titled "The Devil Wants Eileschijjel's Soul" by Brendle and Troxell.

Eileschijjel sold his soul to the devil on the understanding that the devil was to fill a room with gold for him.

The devil was willing and a hole was made in the ceiling of a large room. Thereupon the devil began to pour gold into the room.

Eileschijjel, however, had made a hole in the floor of the room. When the devil found that it was impossible to fill the room, he disappeared. (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 158)

The trickster triumphs because he has directed the gold poured into the top of the room, like a mouth, through a cavity on the bottom that could be called anal. The trickster derives great pleasure from the evacuation of the room's contents, suggesting, if one accepts the metaphor of the anal cavity, an equivalence of gold and feces. The boundary crossing of the trickster adjusting the defecation process to create wealth and pleasure can be taken a sign of the culture's adaptability, particularly to an uncomfortable environment. Psychologists David M. Abrams and Brian Sutton-Smith observe in a comparison of global trickster tales that in a complex society, the trickster genre expresses an emotional ambivalence toward the success-orientation or privilege of the dominant society, and expresses a value placed on adaptability and flexibility as an alternative (Abrams and Sutton-Smith 1977, 45). This view brings

into relief Dundes's example of the chicken coop ladder as conveying ambivalence toward the drive toward success and the German signification of *Dreck* to show pleasure and independence. The violation of taboo was a particular form of culturally symbolic reversal that contributes to cultural stability, not to its downfall. As Abrams and Sutton-Smith observe, "Dealing in such symbolic contraries appears to deliver the group from the frustrations that arise out of the entrapment in a particular form of adaptation"; mocking authority figures and exaggerating trickery, the trickster remains autonomous (Abrams and Sutton-Smith 1977, 45-46).

From a psychoanalytic viewpoint, the money-feces equation is a cognitive reaction to a preoccupation with things unclean, and the cultural context of rural life, with its earthiness, intensifies the need for order. Indeed, Pennsylvania Germans, as do Germans, indicate in folk speech a sense of satisfaction or normality by saying "*alles in Ordnung*" (everything is in order). Folklore provides an outlet to symbolize the drive to be fastidious about cleanliness, perhaps deriving from early toilet training and culturally inherited values, although one desires to revel in defecation as a source of pleasure, and in the German context, often a sense of identity. In the fantasy of the story, one may read the transformation of feces as something pleasurable but dirty, into something valuable and clean. Immobility is viewed as a form of constipation and anal retention, and associated often in stories with efforts in the barnyard to force ejection. The most common type is told about horses that get stuck, and as I have pointed out, the feces produced by horses are considered especially abundant and potent in the social hierarchy of animals constructed by humans. Brendle and Troxell give six versions of a story relating the insertion of an implement into the horse or symbolically, the *rear* of the wagon, with a human falling dead to the ground. An example is one they report from Bucks County, Pennsylvania:

A farmer, hauling hay and grain to Philadelphia, found that, whenever he was passing a certain inn, his horses stopped. He was advised to take a revolver along and, should his horses to stop again at the same place, he was to get off the wagon and walk around the rear, and shoot into the hub of the hind wheel on the other side. This he did, and his horses immediately went on. The next day he learned that a man sitting in the bar-room had fallen over dead. (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 98-99)

This relates to a story of horses categorically out of place because they are out of the stable with its association with manure. In the following story, the contrast is again made with the "unnatural" *Braucher* and the "natural" movement of animal and human:

There was a farmer who found that his horses would not enter the stable when he brought them in from the fields, after a day's hard work. They refused to cross the door sill, and, though he took off their harnesses, they only entered after he had used the whip upon them.

He consulted a *braucher*, and was advised, that should they again refuse to cross the door sill of the stable, he was to take a sixteen or twenty penny nail and slowly pound it into the sill.

A short time thereafter it again happened that the horses balked against

entering the stable. Thereupon, he took a nail and hammered it into the sill, to one-third or one-half its length. He had scarcely done this before an old woman came along and told him to draw out the nail or she would die.

Thereafter the horses never balked. (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 97-98)

Related to animate objects that cannot move is the frequent reference to narratives about inanimate items stolen. Brendle and Troxell are at a loss to explain why so many narratives revolve around theft (often humorously described as the owner's misplacement of objects mistakenly thought to be the result of a burglary), when a presupposition is that the strong social bond among Pennsylvania Germans results in a trusting community. Following the previous interpretation is that the fantasy of the story reflects an anal order because the objects, like emissions that belong to one's body, are out of place. The story treats this misplacement as a serious violation not just of property but of personal well-being. In many narratives, the humor serves to remind listeners that the objects or piles of them can be easily recovered, often to the embarrassment of the neurotic owner. In supernatural tales, a wheel associated with a natural circle shape (or anus) brings the thief to return the stolen goods. In the first of four versions published of this type published by Brendle and Troxell, a farmer discovers that a bag of corn on the ear had been stolen. The farmer goes to his wheelbarrow (used to haul manure) and turns the wheel backwards. At first he moves the wheel slowly, "then faster and faster, all the while repeating some mystic words. When the wheel was revolving at its highest speed, the thief came running breathlessly from behind the barn with the bag of stolen corn" (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 177). In a more direct signification of the Pennsylvania German farmer's anality, a farmer has his purse stolen. In Brendle and Troxell's published version from Allentown, Pennsylvania,

To discover the thief, he went into the stable and rubbed balsam on the tail of his donkey.

Then he called his men together and said, "One of you stole my purse, and I am going to discover which one of you is the thief. One by one you must go into the stable and rub your hands upon the donkey's tail and when he who stole the purse touches the tail, the donkey will bray."

All the men went into the stable, one by one, and all came out, but the donkey didn't bray. Thereupon the master lined the ten men against a wall. He went along the line, took their hands and smelled at them. He came to one whose hands were free from the odor of balsam. To him he said, "You are the thief. Your hands betray you." (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 181-82)

The hands are supposed to have an earthy odor connected with the donkey, known in colloquial speech as an "ass," the same name given to the human posterior. And the recovered goods are coins kept in a sack (*Tasch*) substituted magically with anal odor, suggesting again the money-feces equation.

Another form is of guns that would not shoot, and as the previous Eileschpigel story shows, the gun, while often interpreted in psychoanalytical treatises as phallic, in Pennsylvania German stories appears anal. In the Schnitzelbank song, for example, there is a lyrical reference to a "shooting gun" (*Schiessgewehr*) playing



on the resemblance of *schiess*, or shoot, to *scheiss*, or shit. The “bank” image itself, with a craftsman sitting on the plank ejecting shavings in carving, suggests an anal ejective function (a “bank” is often associated in Pennsylvania German with a manure wagon). In Brendle and Troxell’s collected narratives, there is a force that takes away the power to shoot (*schiess*, with its symbolic equivalent of *scheiss* or shit) from the anal gun. In the following story, for example, from Perkiomenville, Pennsylvania, a woman is the culprit and her curse is eliminated by destroying a cat associated with feminine power.

In the days of muzzle loading guns, it was believed that envious people could and would “take the fire from a gun.”

Two men of the Perkiomen Valley, while out hunting, passed a cabin. An old woman who was in the yard looked at them intently, and then tucked one corner of her apron under her apron strings. The hunters went on, but had no success.

Game was plentiful, and the shots were easy, but the hunters were unable to hit whatever they shot at. They, then, concluded that the old woman had put a spell on their guns.

One of them suggested that they leave the open fields, and take to the road, and if perchance they would come upon a cat, they would shoot her; and that would restore the killing power to the guns.

They took to the road, and shot a cat. Thereafter, they easily shot whatever game they saw. (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 101-2).

Evidence of the anal metaphor is the contextual explanation given by the collectors that a charm would cause the shot to fall to the ground as soon as it left the barrel, suggesting the weakness of the ejection. A similar narrative motif is found in another version that the collectors claim is “widely heard.” A man boasts that “he could take the shot from a gun; that is he could cause the shot to drop straightaway to the ground as soon as it came from the mouth of the barrel” (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 203).

A third type of distress in this group of stories is created by cream that will not turn to butter, suggesting a bodily transformation from food churned into feces. Often the motif of a bag is introduced which magically helps the transformation and destroys the curser. In one of five versions collected by Brendle and Troxell, for instance, a family is told to take “a flour bag [*Mehlsack*] and pour a dipperful of cream from the churn into the bag and beat it well with a stout cudgel. This was done, and thereupon the cream readily turned to butter.” They subsequently discover that an “old lady” had fallen and broken a leg. The bag simulates the action of a digestive bladder that has been “stopped” by the charmer. The flour or “meal” is connected in Pennsylvania German proverbs with the fertile field, as indicated by “*Der Hawwer sucht sei Mehl uff em Feld*” [Oats looks for its flour in the field] (Beam 1995, 56).

The other side of the coin from a lack of movement in the money-feces equation is of finding treasure. But this find can also imply a lack of order, or regularity, in life, since it involves a massive change of fortune. Most Pennsylvania German stories about treasure are about fortunes buried in the ground or down a hole, again making a link to a certain earthiness and anality. And in most stories, the fortune is not found,

as if to warn against the irregularity of not only a lack of ejective production until one finds the fortune, but of soiling oneself in the process of digging. One can see the connection to concentrated defecation in the motif of maintaining silence while digging in a hole. Brendle and Troxell give seven different variants of the motif that the hidden treasure must be sought for in silence. In the first story given by Edwin Long of Geryville, Pennsylvania, searchers dutifully remain silent while digging until they look up and see the devil, identified in one version as "*dar Mann mit em Mischdhoke,*" the man with the manure hook (connected as well with the animal symbol of "*der mit de gloee Fies*" or cloven feet) (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 46). In another version showing a possible money-feces connection, the searchers open the chest after digging, and find it full of gold pieces. In a violation of anal retention, one digger is "unable to restrain his joy" and yells "Now, we'll be rich," which causes the chest to disappear (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 46).

The social hierarchy of animals in relation to literally working in the "dirt" occurs in a version from Laurys Station, Pennsylvania. In it, the added motif of the searchers digging within a ring further adds to the anal symbolism.

N.N. heard that a treasure was buried at the Sand Bank, not far from Hellertown. He and several others went to a *braucher* who told them to draw a ring around the spot where the treasure was supposed to be, and then, in absolute silence, they were to dig within the ring.

Soon after they began digging, a flock of blackbirds flew on a tree nearby. The birds whistled and sang, but the men kept on digging.

Then a hen with a flock of chicks came to the ring, but the men paid no attention to her, and kept on digging.

Then came an ugly ferocious looking boar up to the ring, and one of the men became scared and cried out, "*Huss!*" [Exclamatory word used in driving pigs]

The boar immediately vanished. The men ceased digging for they knew that it would be impossible for them to find the treasure after one had broken the injunction of silence. (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 49)

Sometimes the pigs, representing animals that root in the dirt, become replaced by money. In a story from Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, the searcher hears that he needs "seven brothers" to find the treasure. He remembers that his sow had a litter of seven. He took the seven little pigs down into the cellar and the next morning he found them torn to pieces, and on the floor lay a large pile of money (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 52, 53).

Treasures found in beds suggest defecation as the soiling of sheets or in pants, often with the mother in view. The German counting-out rhyme relates, for example, "*Herbert hat ins Bett geschissen, Gerade aufs Paradekissen, Mutter hat's geseh'n—Und du kannst geh'n!* [Herbert has shit in bed, Right on the good pillow, Mother has seen it, And you can go out]" (Dundes 1984, 33). Finding treasures in bed (suggesting feces as gifts or rewards) is known by folklorists as widely circulating tale type 1645B "Dream of Marking the Treasure." A man (e.g., farmer, poor man, miser, fool) dreams that he finds a treasure or is told (often by the devil or spirit) where a treasure is buried. It is too heavy for him to carry so he marks the place with his own excrement. In the

morning he finds that only the end of this dream was true: he has defecated in his bed. In Brendle and Troxell's collection, a Pennsylvania German narrative involves the mother guiding a daughter and subservient character to treasure:

After old mother N.N., who died at the home of her daughter, had been buried, the daughter asked her maid whether she would occupy the bedroom where the old lady had slept.

"Surely! Why not?" answered the maid. "Your mother was a good woman and harmed no one while she was living, and now she has found rest and will never come back to this world."

The first night that the maid slept in the room, she awoke around midnight and saw the mother sitting at the foot of the bed. The next morning she told her mistress, who smiled and said, "That was only a dream. Nothing more."

Several nights later the maid again saw the mother sitting at the foot of the bed and again she told her mistress. Unwilling to believe that the maid had seen her mother, because she could not understand why her mother should come back from the grave, the daughter resolved to sleep with the maid, and should her mother appear, to ask of her what she sought.

That very night the mother appeared. The daughter asked, "What is your desire?" The mother answered that the bedpost where she was sitting had been chiselled out and much money concealed in it, and then disappeared.

They searched and found a large sum of money. The old woman never reappeared thereafter. (Brendle and Troxell 1944, 54-55)

Related to this symbolic equivalence of money and feces is the linguistic use of "deposit" as both finance and excrement. Common in the United States is variation of the riddle-joke "What is the difference between a bankrupt lawyer and a pigeon? The pigeon can still make a deposit on a Mercedes." To show the German variation of the gold-feces equation, Dundes gives the following wellerism from oral tradition, "*Es is nicht alles Gold, was glänzt! Sagt der Herr—da war er in einen Haufen Kleinkinderscheisse getreten*" [All is not gold that glistens, said the man as he stepped into a pile of baby shit] (Dundes 1984, 103-4).

While this equivalence is widespread, a German distinction, according to anthropologists, is the high status accorded to the display of piles of manure. Dundes finds that the pile of manure in front of a house served as a public proclamation of wealth in Germany as early as the seventeenth century. This assessment was based on the greater amount of manure created by a family owning more farm animals. In the nineteenth century, a chronicle of Saxony announces that "boys and girls in the streets, with a barrow, broom, and shovel, gathering up the horse-dung for the increase of the much-prized muck-heap at the back of every dwelling" (Mayhew 186, 2:611). In the late twentieth century, anthropologist Ethel Nurge studying village life in the Vogelsberg region of Germany found that "One of the symbols of household wealth is the size of the manure pile. The manure pile stands in the front yard. Decades and centuries ago it must have been a more important symbol of the industry and wealth of a family than it is today but even today, when a family builds a

new house and could put their manure heap in the back by changing floor plans and work routes, they do not; they put it in the front" (Nurge 1977, 137).

Even in the twenty-first century, I heard reference from neighbors to tolerance for dog dung left in the streets in my northern Rhineland city as relating to older rural customs of status associated with animal manure. I found it strange at first that there should be such an emphasis on cleanliness in the homes and mess on the streets, until the folk explanation was given. Another related puzzle that may be solved by an understanding of anality was the insistence on tight "water closets" for toilets throughout the Rhineland. It may appear to be another example of a continental cultural construction of categories of clean and dirty zones, since this segregation of the toilet is not shared in the United States and the United Kingdom. But another possibility is that there is also a reveling in the defecation or materially representing a tight anus by being enclosed by walls in stink (even getting a chance to look at one's results in popular "platform" toilets and go through the process of focusing on it as it is wiped away). Indeed, at the Festival of the Relief of Leiden (*Leidens Ontzet*) in 2005, a water closet was featured humorously in the annual parade as a cultural icon along with windmills and wooden shoes. This information suggests that in Hellerich's narrative, the symbolic opposition of German and English in the story is made even greater by the possibility of a Rhineland attribution of value, and identity association, given to manure while the English view it as a sign of depravation.

Having argued that the Pennsylvania German "earthy" attitude toward manure as a marker of rural identity is rooted in German cultural sources, the question arises to differences between Pennsylvania Germans in the American setting and Germans in the European homeland. The essential distinction is the ethnic status of Pennsylvania Germans in the United States, and particularly the collective memory in the Middle Atlantic region of homogenous settlements where Pennsylvania German was the workaday language before modernization broke down the isolation and self-contained folklife of Pennsylvania German farming communities. Especially expressive in the onomastic details told by Hellerich and in others is the identity of Pennsylvania Germans as a linguistic community tied to the land. When performed among Pennsylvania Germans, the story serves to ask about the sources of identity once these two important markers disappear. Brendle's corpus did not reference ethnic status as much as it did a separate world apparently homogeneously Pennsylvania-German. Richard Beam observes, for example, that Brendle's collecting in 1942 in Lehigh County, "was a time when the PG culture was the dominant one in many of the rural sections of southeastern Pennsylvania." Into the twenty-first century, Beam sighs, "Among the non-sectarian Pennsylvania Dutch only the oldest generation speaks the dialect fluently and not all of those are bearers of traditional sayings and beliefs" (Beam 1995, vii, ii).

Yet a dialect folklore, rather than folklore being in the dialect, continues, because it has to, for a generation understanding its relation to a rural heritage and ethnic identity and resolving cultural conflicts through symbols in folklore's fictive plane. Without that heritage, since many Pennsylvania Germans have left the land, without the dialect, the ethnic identity revolves around the perception of cultural difference in values and the collective memory of a common historical experience. The big difference between Brendle and Troxell's corpus and mine, for example, is that the mid-twentieth century repertoire barely mentioned outsiders to the culture. The

anecdotes and jokes in today's material is preoccupied with what it means to be Pennsylvania German in relation to modern American society, symbolized as the authoritarian establishment in the center with Pennsylvania Germans at the margins, and it draws liberally therefore on earthiness as an identifying Pennsylvania German theme. The inside-outside distinction for ethnicity seems more blurred in modern consciousness and the dialect folklore acts to bring order and boundary to a non-racial status for Pennsylvania Germans. The signification of anality in modern Pennsylvania German folklore speaks to adaptability under changing conditions, and the understanding of a Pennsylvania German past to the creation of an ethnic self in modern life.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Wherever possible in the text I have used the orthographic standard for Pennsylvania-German (sometimes known as *Pennsylfaanisch* or *Deitsch* in the dialect), the Buffington-Barba system developed after the 1950s. Since the dialect is primarily an oral language and was differentiated in the culture from "High German" used in worship services, it did not develop a standard spelling for literature. However, when quoting texts published by Brendle and Troxell, and others, I have preserved their original orthography.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Dundes in his survey of scatological scholarship finds that "the bulk of scholarship has been traditionally written in German or by Germans," suggesting that this interest arises from a German obsession with *Dreck*. See Dundes 1984, 79-80.

<sup>3</sup> Alan Dundes states that "the delight in pseudo-scatological names is a longstanding tradition in Germany." He points out that Wittenwiler's fifteenth-century mock epic *The Ring* has three peasants with names referring to cow dung: *Ochsenkäs* [Ox cheese], *Fladenranft* [Cow pie] and *Rindtaisch* [Cow dung] while one of the hero's kinswomen is named Jützin Scheissindpluomen [Shit-in-the-flowers]. He also quotes wordplay by Mozart in which he described "Dutchess Smackbottom and Princess Dunghill" (Dundes 1984, 72-73).

<sup>4</sup> A similarity can be detected to another pseudo-fable collected by Alan Dundes in Germany in 1979, although it has different animals used as characters: *Eine Maus ist auf der Flucht vor einer Katze. Auf der Wiese steht eine Kuh, die gerade einen Kuhfladen macht, der glücklicherweise auf die Maus fällt. Nur die Schwanzspitze schaut noch heraus. Die Katze zieht die Maus am Schwanz aus dem Kuffladen heraus, reinigt sie und frisst sie auf.*

*Moral: 1. Nicht jeder, der dich bescheisst, meint es mit dir schlecht. 2. Nicht jeder, der dich aus der Scheisse zieht, meint es mit dir gut. 3. Wenn du schon in der Scheisse steckst, so ziehe wenigstens den Schwanz ein.*

[A mouse was being chased by a cat. A cow was standing in the meadow and was dropping a cow pie which fortunately fell on the mouse. Just the tail stuck out. The

cat pulled the mouse out by the tail, cleaned it off, and ate it. The moral of the story is (1) Not everyone who shits on you means you ill. (2) Not everyone who pulls you out of the shit means you well. (3) If you find yourself in the shit, at least pull your tail in.] (Dundes 1984, 35-36).

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