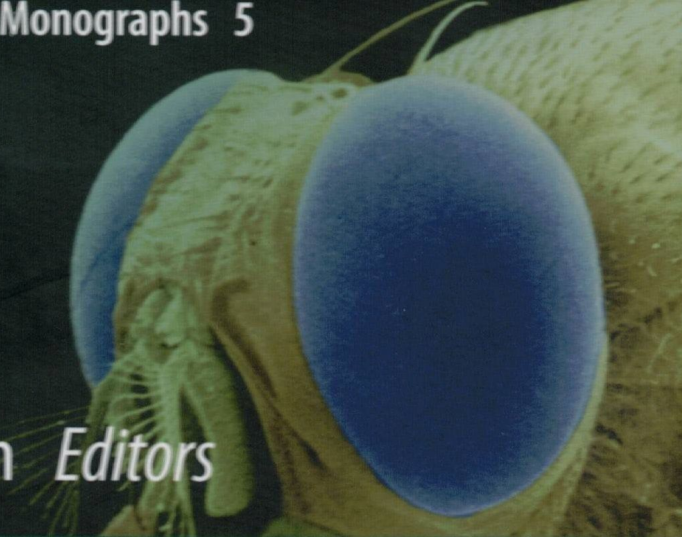



Parasitology Research Monographs 5



Sven Klimpel  
Heinz Mehlhorn *Editors*

# Bats (Chiroptera) as Vectors of Diseases and Parasites

Facts and Myths

 Springer

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Volume 5

*Series Editor:*

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Cell Biology and Parasitology

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Universitätsstrasse 1

40225 Düsseldorf

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Sven Klimpel • Heinz Mehlhorn  
Editors

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Facts and Myths

 Springer

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# Contents

<b>1 Introduction: The World of Bats</b> . . . . .	1
Heinz Mehlhorn	
<b>2 Bats: A Glimpse on Their Astonishing Morphology and Lifestyle</b> . . . .	7
Volker Waldorf and Heinz Mehlhorn	
<b>3 Bats as Potential Reservoir Hosts for Vector-Borne Diseases</b> . . . . .	25
Christian Melián, Antje Werblow, Markus Wilhelm Busch, Andrew Liston, and Sven Klimpel	
<b>4 Bat Endoparasites: A UK Perspective</b> . . . . .	63
Jennifer S. Luml and Darren R. Brooks	
<b>5 Macroparasites of Microchiroptera: Bat Ectoparasites of Central and South America</b> . . . . .	87
Raphael Frank, Julian Münster, Julia Schulze, Andrew Liston, and Sven Klimpel	
<b>6 Parasitic Bat Flies (Diptera: Streblidae and Nycteribiidae): Host Specificity and Potential as Vectors</b> . . . . .	131
Carl W. Dick and Katharina Dittmar	
<b>7 No Myth But Reality: Blood Licking Bats</b> . . . . .	157
Heinz Mehlhorn	
<b>8 Vampirism in Medicine and Culture</b> . . . . .	161
Peter Mario Kreuter and Heinz Schott	
<b>9 Unsolved and Solved Myths: Chupacabras and “Goat-Milking” Birds</b> . . . . .	173
Heinz Mehlhorn	

**10 Myth and Reality: Candiru, the Bloodsucking Fish That May Enter Humans** ..... 179  
 Heinz Mehlhorn

**Index** ..... 183

## Chapter 8

# Vampirism in Medicine and Culture

Peter Mario Kreuter and Heinz Schott

**Abstract** The aim of this chapter is multifold. Firstly, we want to show that the topic of vampirism is linked to a huge amount of misconceptions that have formed the idea of the vampire figure in Central and Western Europe for at least 100 years by analysing the role of the bat. Being a part of Southeast European vampire belief, this animal has no link to the vampire figure in Romania or Bulgaria. Secondly, the idea of vampirism in medicine and popular culture has to be explained. Finally, the link between vampirism, humoural pathology and magic medicine has to be enlightened.

**Keywords** Bat • Blood Transfusion • Folklore • Humoural Pathology • Magic Medicine • Medical History • Southeast European Folk Belief • Vampire

### 8.1 Some Remarks on the Vampire in Southeast European Folklore

The topic of vampirism is linked to a huge amount of misconceptions that have formed the idea of the vampire figure in Central and Western Europe for at least 100 years. Maybe the best example for this is the permanently repeated claim that Bram Stoker had a historical model in mind when writing his novel "Dracula". And so the Wallachian prince Vlad III the Impaler (1431–1477) became a permanent fixture in the Western popular literature about vampires in which he is always

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presented as the historical inspiration for Stoker's vampire count. Nothing could be more wrong than that. Elizabeth Miller, a Canadian specialist for the œuvre of Bram Stoker, underlined that Stoker did not know very much about Vlad the Impaler (Miller 2005). In fact, it was just his other nickname "Drăculea", which attracted him by its sound and the strange visual effect. Apart from that, Stoker did not know that much about this ruler of Wallachia because his main source for the history of nowadays Romania mixed up father (Vlad II) and son (Vlad III) calling them both just "Dracula".<sup>1</sup> The rest of the so-called historical background in the novel is merely literary invention by Stoker. Another common misconception about vampires is their predicted aversion to sunlight. It is true that Stoker's Count Dracula preferred to move around during the hours of darkness, but there are several examples in the novel where he is walking through London during daylight time. And the vampire from the Balkans may be inactive on a certain day of the week (notably Saturday or the feast of the village's saint), but sunlight itself is very rarely a danger. Like many other things, this part of the westernised vampire was invented by the cinematic adaptations of Stoker's novel (1897).<sup>2</sup>

Among those misconceptions can be found that of the role of the bat in the popular Southeast European vampire belief. At a first glance, this may surprise not only by the fact that there are some bat species sucking (or better, licking and drinking) blood but also by the general existence of the bat in the folklore in Southeast Europe. But if we take a closer look at the popular vampire belief, one can understand that the bloodsucking bat could not under any circumstances be a part of the popular belief of that part of Europe.

So let us start with vampire figure in the Balkans itself. Or maybe it is better to say "with the vampire figures," as we can clearly note that there are so many different variations of that kind of revenant that it is hard to bring them down to a more general definition. Already the name for the vampire may vary not only from country to country—"vampir" in the countries of Slavic language, "lugat" in the Albanian speaking zone or "strigoi" in Romania—but also within a country or even a region. In Bulgaria, we have a lot of similar sounding words like "fampir", "vapir", "voper" or "vipir", changing from village to village and used to replace the taboo word "vampir", in Albanian we find also "dhampir", and in Romania "strigoi" is partially replaced by "moroi" or "bosorcoi".<sup>3</sup> Like the denomination, the characteristics of the vampire figure may be full of varieties. Just to mention one as an example—there is absolutely no structured geographical distribution regarding the question whether or not a vampire is able to speak. And even the kind of wood that should be used for the stake to be driven through a vampire's heart cannot be answered without the exact definition of the region one is actually talking about. If we reduce the vampire to his very basics, we can only state that he is a dead person returning as such from the grave because he was not able to go over into the

<sup>1</sup> Miller (2005), 112f.

<sup>2</sup> Miller (2005), 45.

<sup>3</sup> Kreuter (2001), 68f.



other world. And by not belonging either to this world where he comes from and is now trapped in, the vampire causes trouble, destroys the quality of corn or fruit, mixes up and bothers the cattle or brings even diseases or maybe death to the humans. But one thing he never does—biting the humans into the neck in order to suck their blood. This element of the vampire is pure invention of novels and movies and has no origin in the popular vampire belief in the Balkans. Well, in some cases, one can read or hear people making statements like “and then the vampire came and took his blood”. But when asking how he did it, no answer can be given because he takes the blood, and that’s it. Any more detailed idea does not exist, and especially the possibility of biting and sucking is never ever mentioned or at least thinkable. It is just a description, a metaphor. And quite rare.

## 8.2 The Vampire and the Bat

Returning to the bat and its role in the Balkanic folklore, one has to state that this animal is not among those with the highest importance in the popular belief. Of course, there are traditions and beliefs in connection with the bat, but they are far away from any relation to blood and not linked to the vampire figure. And the bat’s position is very ambiguous, on the one hand a demonic animal, on the other hand linked to joy and good luck. “As among the Germans of Transylvania and the Upper Palatinate, bats were interpreted by the Albanians as omens of death. Thus, if a bat flew into a house, it was thought that someone there would die”,<sup>4</sup> is a typical interpretation of the demonical function of the bat. A similar belief among the South Slavs is linked to diseases, especially to the plague, which is thought to come to a village in the form of a bat,<sup>5</sup> even though for the Bulgarians we can state that also certain kinds of butterflies can be the bringers of the plague.<sup>6</sup> Very common is a connexion made between the bat and hair. The hair of a bat could be used in parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina for love potions if three small bat hairs are poured into the coffee of the loved one.<sup>7</sup> As the bat is seen as a blind, this animal can also be used to make a boy blind of love, if the girl is walking around him three times with a bat disguised in her clothes.<sup>8</sup> But then the bat brings also good luck and joy. In and around Sarajevo for example, bats living under the roof of a house will bring good luck to the family.<sup>9</sup> These examples show clearly that there are elements in Southeast European folklore dealing with the bat in some ways. But one thing is missing—a link to the vampire. The vampire of Serbia, Romania or Bulgaria is also

<sup>4</sup> Elsie (2001), s.v. ‘Bats’, 24.

<sup>5</sup> Bächtold-Stäubli (1930), s.v. ‘Fledermaus’, col. 1590.

<sup>6</sup> Dukova (1997), 30f.

<sup>7</sup> Bartels (1899), 249.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, 249.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, 254.

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<sup>7</sup> Bartels (1899), 249.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, 249.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, 254.

a shape-shifter, he is able to change his exterior into that of a wolf, a horse, a dog, a bird or a butterfly, but the bat is not mentioned in the reports and interviews made by folklorists. And as there are neither bloodsucking revenants nor blood-drinking bats in the Balkans, the idea of the “vampire bat” was unable to rise.

But how came the blood-drinking bats of South America to their vampiristic names and images? This is due to the widespread success the word “vampire” itself had after 1732 in the European languages. When Austrian military surgeons investigated from 1725 on several cases of pretended vampire attacks in Bosnia and Serbia, they wrote also official reports about their investigations. These reports in which the idea of blood sucking is falsely mentioned became known among the scientists of Europe through articles in newspapers, and by the reception of those journals and pamphlets within a large Enlightened debate between 1732 and 1739, the word “vampir” made its way into all languages of Central and Western Europe.<sup>10</sup> Years later, the French naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707–1788) labelled a bat scientifically known as *Desmodontidae*—vampire bat. From 1749 on, he published the “Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière” (36 volumes till 1788; an additional volume based on his notes appeared in 1789), in which he used the testimonies of travellers and naturalists, as well as his own experience. And as he implied that these bats suck the blood of humans, he named them after the vampires of Southeast Europe.<sup>11</sup>

### 8.3 Vampirism and Medical History

But what have vampirism and medical history in common and in which way they have different views? First of all, it is remarkable that in vampirism the boundary between life and death is partially abolished. This is a provocation for medicine being forced to define diagnostically whether a body is really dead or still alive. The traditional task of medical doctors was to exclude apparent death. This was a real problem until the early nineteenth century, when strict rules for necropsy were introduced. The fear of being buried alive produced bizarre devices of alarm on graves.<sup>12</sup> The idea of a “living corps”, which was actual throughout the whole history of culture, was not tolerable for modern scientific medicine. So, the brain death diagnostics introduced about 1970 was necessary for the transplantation of (vital) organs the owner of which had to be declared dead before the explantation. There is an interesting analogy between Vampirism and medicine in regard to epidemic infection. The vampire can infect healthy persons and produce epidemics especially in form of bloodsucking bugs. Probably certain epidemics in the Balkan countries in the early eighteenth century had their impact on the origin of the

<sup>10</sup> Kreuter (2012), 13–22.

<sup>11</sup> Kreuter (2001), 31f.

<sup>12</sup> Schott (2005), cols. 678–683.

vampire delusion—a problem for the contemporary learned doctors to disenchant the vampire myth in the sense of the ongoing enlightenment (Grothe 2001).

#### 8.4 Bleeding and Blood Transfusion: Vampirism and the Humoural Pathology

In the history of medicine, blood is the most important vital and therefore its red colour became the attribute for medical faculties, e.g. in regard to robes or the cover of scientific series. Blood was—besides yellow bile, black bile and phlegm—one of the four cardinal fluids or humours according to the antique humoural pathology. It was thought to have warm and dry quality; it represented dawn (aurora), childhood, spring and moreover sanguine temper originating from the heart. In general, blood symbolised the life force animating physiologically all the organs. Blood loss in a healthy body implied a vital danger, whereas bloodletting in a sick body would cure it. According to the humoural pathology corrupted fluids (humours), especially blood poisoning, would cause all possible diseases, which had to be cured by therapeutic methods of discharge.

Apart from this, there are two further medical aspects of the vampirism. On the one hand, there is a polarity between health and disease and on the other hand one between the doctor and the patient. The sucking of blood by a vampire has regarding the aspect of health and disease a double effect: It supplies the vampire with vital energy healing him by a perverse action, in contrast to the victim whose vital energy is extracted causing weakness and disease. So, a complementary relation of weakening and strengthening is established. Regarding the relation of the doctor and his patient two different procedures may occur: a good doctor helps his patient to resist all attacks of weakening powers preserving him from the loss of vital energy, whereas a bad doctor himself is a sort of vampire exhausting his patient, in particular financially.

Bloodletting was a classical therapeutic method practised since antiquity. But insofar, it was discarded the analogy to the vampirism is not quite correct; it resembled more the kosher butchering of animals. As far as I know, there was no case of a doctor really drinking the patient's blood or giving the blood to another one. But in the antiquity, fresh human blood was appreciated as a medicine and an agent of rejuvenation. So, the Roman author Plinius the Elder (1st c.) recommended to drink the blood of wounded persons, especially that of gladiators, as an aid against the falling sickness.<sup>13</sup> The drinking of the blood of children is mentioned in the literature again and again. According to the legend Pope Innocent VIII (1432–1492) is supposed to have drunken the blood of three young children to rejuvenate himself. It is also said that the famous Renaissance philosopher Marsilio Ficino, a contemporary of the Pope, recommended drinking the blood of young

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<sup>13</sup> Schott (1993), 6.

people mixed with sugar as an agent of rejuvenation. Analogously, Ficino recommended finding a healthy pretty girl to suck on breast during full moon.<sup>14</sup>

The early modern blood transfusion displays an interesting aspect. The first transfusions of animal blood were performed after the invention of the intravenous injection technique in the 1660s in Western Europe. In 1667, the French mathematician Jean Baptiste Denis and his compatriot, the surgeon Paul Emmerez transfused lamb blood to a 15-year-old patient suffering from fever who was weakened by repeated bloodlettings. The apparent success was followed by unavoidable horrible outcomes, the "sheep melancholy" as a consequence of the transfusion of lamb blood. It was questioned, whether with the blood also characteristic traits would be transferred. So, one speculated whether a sheep would become biting like a dog or vice versa whether a dog would develop wool and horns infusing the blood of a sheep. The German physician and alchemist Johannes Sigismund Elsholtz recommended even in his textbook "Neue Clystierkunst" the blood transfusion between humans to reconcile quarrelling brothers or spouses.<sup>15</sup> In this perspective, the drinking of blood for the accomplishment of a blood brotherhood can be understood as a sort of mutual vampirism to produce a sympathetically common sense.

The application of leeches was a common method of discharging in humoural pathology. The leech as a bloodsucker symbolised vampirism very impressively. Whereas the critics of the bloodletting blamed this operation as a dangerous vampirism, its supporters highlighted it as their therapeutic guideline. Because of their excessive discharging procedures many barber surgeons appeared like vampires in the early modern period taking off not only the blood but also the money from their patients cupping them in this double respect.

## 8.5 The Extraction of Life Force: Vampirism and Magic Medicine

In medicine, blood was traditionally linked with the idea of the life energy or life force of an organism. The concept of the life force (vis vitalis, German: Lebenskraft) was differently designed, e.g. as a nerve spirit (spiritus nervosus), a life spirit (spiritus animalis), archeus, fluidum, etc. The respective concepts founded the early modern magic medicine assuming magnetic-sympathetic interactions between corresponding natural things including living and dead humans. From the antiquity there is the idea, that life energy can be extracted from the human organism by certain practices producing diseases and even death. A complementary idea is the opposite procedure: to transfer of life energy to a weak organism to empower and to cure it. A special meaning has the combination of both

<sup>14</sup> Illustrierte Geschichte der Medizin (1982), 2096.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, 188.

procedures: the extraction of life energy out of the human body and its transfer to another one.

Paracelsus described this double procedure in his tract "Herbarius" (written before 1527). In the chapter on the "English Thistle" (*Angelica*, *Englische Distel*), a well-known traditional medicinal plant, he writes: This plant of the English thistle has its natural effect similar to the moon, it extracts the power from somebody and transfers it someone wearing it at the same time".<sup>16</sup> Paracelsus stressed that this was a natural process. If somebody does not use his strength, it should be taken from him and transferred to another one. He reported an example: "Once I saw a man in Alsace bearing three zentner wine in a barrel from Ruffach to Sulz a long mile away fixed on him, who was accompanied by 12 men and tired them walking, so that they could not follow him and became weak and some of them lay down weakened."<sup>17</sup> As Paracelsus explained, that the trial failed curing a sick person by surrounding him with strong people and giving him *Angelica*. This would help only when somebody worked very hard. The character of the sponsor would transfer together with his force: "it is also within himself, when a force is extracted from another one, so that the person who gets it, follows it. Is the other one a choleric, the host will it also be..."

The "gerocomics" (from Greek *geron* = old and *komeo* = to care) is a prominent example for the magical transfer of life energy throughout the ages. It was practiced since antiquity and still discussed intensively in medicine during the romantic era in the early nineteenth century. So, the German doctor Georg Friedrich Most wrote in its textbook "The sympathetic means and healing methods" (*Die sympathetischen Mittel und Curmethoden*): "One knew even in the antiquity, that living animal bodies have the ability to transfer a part of their plenty of life to others, which was fundamental for the art of gerocomics rejuvenating worn out old men by the close atmosphere of a fresh young person. That the latter are weakened by this being together is witnessed by Galen, Baco, Sydenham, van Swieten, Boerhaave and also Wurzer, Gmelin and Kluge based on own observations".<sup>18</sup> The respective conceptions of the "effectiveness of the life vapour" (*Wirksamkeit des Lebensdunstes*) and the "capacity of a sensible body atmosphere" (*Wirkungsvermögen einer sensiblen Körpersphäre*) were discussed about

<sup>16</sup>"Dise wurz des englischen distels ist dermaßen in ir natur, so sie in irer operation ist, welche gleich dem mon ist, so zeucht sie von einem andern die kraft aus und gibts dem, der sie tregt zu der selbigen zeit." Cf. Theophrast von Hohenheim (1930), 35: The *Angelica* was a Nordic drug listed in the pharmacopoes from the sixteenth until the twentieth centuries, originally recommended as a plague, later as a gastric remedy.

<sup>17</sup>"Ich hab erst mal gesehen, das ein man im Elsaß tragen hat von Ruffach gen Sulz drei zentner schwer ein lange meil wegs wein in einem faß auf sich gebunden, und 12 man zu im genomen, hat die 12 alle müd gangen, das sie im nicht haben mögen folgen und schwach hernach gangen, etlich tag hernach gar geschwecht gelegen". Ibidem, 38 seq.

<sup>18</sup>"Schon im Alterthum wußte man, daß der lebende Thierkörper die Eigenschaft besitze, einen Theil seiner Lebensfülle auf Andere zu übertragen, worauf sich ja die Kunst der Gerocomik stützte, um abgelebte Greise, durch die nahe Atmosphäre einer frischen Jugend wieder zu verjüngen. Daß letztere durch dieses Beisammenseyn aber geschwächt werden, dies bezeugen schon Galen, Baco, Sydenham, van Swieten, Boerhave [sic] auch Wurzer, Gmelin und Kluge, gestützt auf eigene Beobachtungen". Most (1842), 114 seq.

1800 particularly within the context of animal magnetism or mesmerism as it was later called. The above-mentioned Gmelin and Kluge were well-known promoters of mesmerism in Germany.

Even Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland (1797), who was a critic of animal magnetism, mentioned the gero comics as a “practice to rejuvenate and conserve old worn out bodies by the close atmosphere of a fresh flourishing youth” (die Gewohnheit, einen alten abgelebten Körper durch die nahe Atmosphäre frischer aufblühender Jugend zu verjüngen und zu erhalten). Even recently, this practice would have been used “with benefit”: “the great Boerhaave let sleep an old lord mayor of Amsterdam in between two young people [two young and virtuous women<sup>19</sup>] and states that the vivacity and powers of the old obviously had increased. And certainly, considering the influence of the life vapour of animals freshly cut open on palsied limbs these methods does not seem condemnable”.<sup>20</sup> About 1800 the experimentations with animal magnetism boomed and many experiences and phenomena of an apparent transfer of “fluidum”, as the subtle agent was called, were reported. An illustrious example should be mentioned here. The Swabian doctor and poet Justinus Kerner hosted a special patient in his household for about two and a half years: Friederike Hauffe (1801–1829), “the Seeress of Prevorst” (die Seherin von Prevorst) suffering from very severe somatic and psychic disorders getting strange experiences during her somnambulant states of consciousness. Kerner (and sometimes other members of his family) applied often the magnetic cure. His son Theobald described his own experience with the “Seeress”: “Often, when my father had to visit a patient far away and could not magnetise the Seeress at the usual time, he magnetised me before his departure, and when I charged with this subtle fluidum met her at the anticipated time I was especially welcome. I had to sit down on her bed calmly, she took my hand, and I had to stay motionlessly until she had absorbed the fluidum commissioned to me, her eyes closed, her hands relaxed; then I got up silently, slipped through the door, and avoided to see again this spider sucking my nervous power”.<sup>21</sup> These sessions and Samaritan services for the Seeress had often an evil effect. But also Justinus Kerner himself observed a similar phenomenon interacting

<sup>19</sup> *Illustrierte Geschichte der Medizin* (1982), 2096.

<sup>20</sup> “Der grosse Boerhaave liess einen alten Amsterdamer Bürgermeister zwischen zwey jungen Leuten [zwei jungen und tugendhaften Frauen] schlafen, und versichert, der Alte habe dadurch sichtbar an Munterkeit und Kräften zugenommen. Und gewiss, wenn man bedenkt, was der Lebensdunst frisch aufgeschnittener Thiere auf gelähmte Glieder, was das Auflegen lebendiger Thiere auf schmerzhaft Uebel vermag, so scheint diese Methode nicht verwerflich zu sein”. Hufeland (1797), 10 seq.

<sup>21</sup> “Gar häufig, wenn mein Vater über Feld zu Kranken mußte und die Seherin nicht zur gewohnten Stunde magnetisieren konnte, magnetisierte er mich vor seiner Abreise, und trat ich dann, mit diesem unwägbaren Fluidum beladen, zu angegebener Zeit bei ihr ein, so war ich besonders willkommen. Ich mußte mich ruhig an ihr Bett setzen, sie ergriff fest meine Hand, und ich mußte unbewegt ausharren, bis sie das mir anvertraute Fluidum aufgesogen hatte, ihre Augen sich schlossen, ihre Hände sich lockerten; dann stand ich leise auf, schlüpfte zur Tür hinaus und ließ mich womöglich den ganzen Tag nicht mehr bei der an meiner Nervenkraft saugenden Spinne sehen”. Kerner (1983), 34.



with the Seeress: “Mainly she absorbed *Pabulum vitae* [that means a nervous spirit; “Nervengeist”] from the eyes and finger tips of stronger persons which often did not feel it, but often did it very much”.<sup>22</sup> This reminds us of the concept of “Od vampirism” (*Od-Vampirismus*),<sup>23</sup> which was coined in the 1840s in regard to the at that time spectacular of doctrine of the Baron Karl von Reichenbach, a successful chemist, entrepreneur and also natural philosopher.

We may formulate a general hypothesis: The suggestive power of the vampire belief may produce a severe shock syndrome and even sudden death, because there is probably no image more dangerous than to bleed to death. At the end of the nineteenth century, US-American doctors made a weird experiment to prove the power of suggestion. The test subject was somebody sentenced to death delivered by the legal authority. They told him that they would execute him by opening his jugular vein. They blindfolded him, scratched slightly the skin, and let flow down lukewarm water, which was caught in a bowl. Within a few minutes the man was dead.<sup>24</sup>

## 8.6 Vampirism as a Metaphor: On the Social Stigmatisation of “Evil” Persons

The idea of vampires played also a role in the imagery of medicine in regard to social and political aspects. Vampires symbolised in a way parasites within the “popular body” (German: “*Volkskörper*”) exhausting and damaging it as social spongers. In the eighteenth century, the blood was focussed by the humoral pathology and became the main fluid (humour). Remarkably, “blood” became the key concept of the race biology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the Nazi ideology (“*Blut und Boden*”), the pure blood of the Aryan race had to be protected from foreign contaminations, especially by “Jewish blood”. The Nazi “Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour” (*Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre*) in 1935 penalised the sexual contact with Jews. In Sect. 8.2 it was declared: “Extramartial sex between Jews and nationals of German or allied blood is illegal”. Such blood imagery implied further metaphors correlating with vampirism: The so-called antisocial people and especially the Jews as parasitic bloodsuckers, bugs, exhausting the healthy body of the people. The “Jewish blood” seemed to threaten the German people by a final blood

<sup>22</sup> “Hauptsächlich sog sie [den ‘Nervengeist’] aus Augen und Fingerspitzen anderer stärkerer Menschen, von diesen oft nicht gefühlt, auch oft sehr gefühlt, ein *Pabulum vitae* [Lebensfutter] in sich”. Kerner (1829), 175.

<sup>23</sup> Spiesberger (1953), 64.

<sup>24</sup> Bechterew (1905), 35.

poisoning. The greatest danger would originate from it and alienate the Aryan race.<sup>25</sup> The anti-Semitism ascribed two traits to the Jews characteristic for the vampirism too: firstly the absorption of blood respectively vital power, and secondly the infection of a healthy population (folk) with a poison or germ damaging the vital power.

## 8.7 Vampirism and Esotericism: Some Remarks

Within the scope of the contemporary esotericism, especially in the field of Satanism, the vampirism appears apparently as a model for acquiring new life energies. There is a "website für paganismus" explaining under the headline: "Magic Vampirism": "I considered often practising a sort of magic vampirism, to upload my creative power with new energy. When I feel 'charged' I can perform my art considerably more easily and can produce faster and have generally more perseverance in my work. But I have such a demand of psychic power that I cannot cover the needed demand. [...] What are the experiences you have made with 'magic vampires', and is there a constructive possibility to combine the power of several gifted users? Are there methods of fast detection of potential and compatible 'hosts'?"<sup>26</sup> The same author wrote in another thread on the topic of "mental energy deficit": "I feel myself constantly weary, powerless, and grey. Is there such a thing like an auxiliary generator for this sort of power. [...] My projects on this field proceed only slowly. [...] Or is there a possibility to tap an external natural source? Perhaps similar to an incubus, I don't mean the literal translation but the respective essence in the infantile myths?"<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Schott and Tölle (2006), 189.

<sup>26</sup> "Ich habe mich schon sehr oft mit dem Gedanken auseinandergesetzt, eine Art magischen Vampirismus zu betreiben, um meiner Schaffenskraft neue Energie zukommen zu lassen. Wenn ich mich 'aufgeladen' fühle, fällt mir meine Kunst erheblich leichter und ich kann schneller produzieren und bin im Allgemeinen ausdauernder bei meinen Vorhaben. Ich habe bloss einen so gewaltigen Bedarf an Seelenkraft, dass ich das benötigte Volumen nicht mehr selbst decken kann. [...] Welche Erfahrungen habt ihr mit 'Magie-Vampiren', und gibt es vielleicht auch eine konstruktive Möglichkeit die Kraft mehrerer begabter Nutzer zusammenzuschliessen? Und gibt es ein Schnellerkennungsverfahren für potentielle und kompatible 'Wirte'?" cf. <http://www.paganforum.de/magie-allg/4672-magischer-vampirismus.html> ("Die Seite für das Heidentum"; i.e. "the website for the paganism"; 16.03.2013).

<sup>27</sup> "Ich fühle mich dauernd abgeschlagen, kraftlos und grau. Gibt es sowas wie einen Hilfsgenerator für diese Art von Kraft. . . meine Projekte auf diesem Gebiet kommen, aufgrund des eben genannten Problems nur langsam voran. . . Oder gibt es eine Möglichkeit eine Externe [sic] natürliche Quelle anzuzapfen? Ich meine vielleicht so ähnlich wie ein Incubus, ich meine nicht die wörtliche Übersetzung, sondern dieses Wesen in den infantilen Mythen [sic]?" Ibidem, 16.03.2013.

## 8.8 A Final Remark: Vampirism and Everything

We started our overview by discussing the place of the bat in the popular belief of Southeastern Europe, and we ended up with the use of “pure blood” for the stigmatisation of “others” and vampirism in the esoteric movement. How can that be?

One thing is very important to underline—the vampire figure (and vampirism as a concept) is a perfect projection screen for a large number of different topics. The vampire does not need a mad scientist to get created, he is just there, existing by factors that are natural ones or caused by other human beings without any intention. This figure is put together by a number of different elements fitting well to a lot of different moments in a man’s life or a village’s situation. He could be made guilty for a large variety of things. And vampirism as a concept is understandable in nearly all cultures over the world. Bring this together with the blood and its importance not only for the vital function of the human body but also in the conceptions of a huge number of religions and the perfect “shape-shifter” of a mythological figure is born.

Thus, the vampire can be used for nearly everything. Even to give his name to a bloodsucking bat thousands of miles away from the Balkans.

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