

Open graves, open minds
Representations of vampires and
the Undead from the Enlightenment
to the present day

Edited by Sam George and Bill Hughes

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The vampire as dark and glorious necessity in George Sylvester Viereck's

House of the Vampire and

Hanns Heinz Ewers's *Vampir*

Lisa Lampert-Weissig

Evil has its right to live, just like everything else — only the petty are hateful/ugly.¹

Vampires embody paradox: they are simultaneously living and dead, attractive and repulsive, immortal yet still vulnerable. It is perhaps fitting, then, that the figure of the vampire can help us to understand the intertwined stories of two equally paradoxical humans, George Sylvester Viereck (1884–1962) and Hanns Heinz Ewers (1871–1943). Each openly supported the National-Socialist regime in Germany while simultaneously maintaining that he was 'philo-Semitic'. How can one be a 'pro-Jewish' Nazi? The cognitive dissonance required to maintain such self-deception could be seen as the psychological equivalent of the liminal vampire state. I want to suggest that the portrayals of vampires by Viereck and Ewers provide some insight into how they could support Hitler's brutal regime.

Ewers, a German, and Viereck, a German-born US citizen, came to know one another in New York while working together for the German cause prior to the American entry into the First World War. The two prolific and prominent men of letters had much else in common. Both styled themselves as literary provocateurs whose works included explorations of sexuality and 'perversity', features included in the vampire novels each penned, Viereck's 1907 *House of the Vampire* and Ewers's 1920 *Vampir: ein verwilderter Roman in Fetzen und Farben* (*Vampire: An Overgrown Novel in Scraps and Colours*). Viereck and Ewers were also both admirers of Swinburne, Wilde and Poe. The Satanist Aleister Crowley and the sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld were among their shared associates.

⁷⁶ 'The Work of Art', p. 232. Benjamin is referring to the experience of the actor transcending self here so it seems fitting to use it for *Twilight*, where Robert Pattinson has become the commodity 'Edward Cullen' through the medium of film.

⁷⁷ David Skal draws some useful comparisons between Wilde and Stoker biographically and thematically in terms of their work in *Hollywood Gothic*, pp. 59–65; and Christopher Frayling comments on their Anglo-Irish connections, their friendship and shared intellectual and literary circles (*Vampires*, pp. 65–6).

⁷⁸ Auerbach, *Our Vampires*, p. 82.

⁷⁹ 'Thank you for reviving my thoughts about non reflection. I recently had an exhibition of my painting with the photographs of William Eggleston at Peder Lund in Oslo. I discovered that painting and photography look especially good together at the moment because both are freshly outmoded media — there's a *Twilight* connection. Rather than killing painting, the vampire's kiss of photography has made it the immortal beloved. I hope there are more shows combining photography and painting' (David Reed in correspondence, 8 May 2011).

My approach to the vampires of Viereck and Ewers follows the work of critics such as Nina Auerbach, Erik Butler, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Ken Gelder in examining the vampire as a culturally specific representation that embodies the political and historical contexts in which it is created.² Viereck and Ewers create vampires whose superiority to those around them justifies the 'collateral damage' they cause in the name of higher principles of genius and nation.³ In *House of the Vampire*, Viereck's charismatic vampire, Reginald Clarke, sucks the creativity and even the sanity from his victims, but this parasitism allows him to create powerful and immortal works of genius. Ewers's *Vampir* portrays vampirism as serving the cause of German nationalism: Frank Braun's blood drinking propels him to oratorical heights for his country. Those from whom Braun draws blood become necessary sacrifices to a great nation, whether they wish to sacrifice themselves or not. Viereck's and Ewers's portrayals of the necessity of doing evil in the cause of something beyond good and evil provide, I believe, some clues as to how these 'philo-Semitic' writers could support Hitler despite awareness of the brutal anti-Semitism of National Socialism.⁴

House of the Vampire

Like Elizabeth Braddon's 'Good Lady Ducayne' (1896) or Harriet in Florence Maryat's 1897 *The Blood of the Vampire*, Reginald Clarke saps his victims' energy rather than their blood. Clarke draws talented male and female artists into erotically charged relationships and then slowly drains his protégés' creative essences in order to create brilliant works of art that he claims as his own. After the gifted young writer Ernest Fielding moves into Clarke's house, Clarke slowly robs the young artist first of his ideas and then of his sanity. Fielding finally exits Clarke's doors as 'a dull and brutish thing, hideously transformed, without a vestige of mind' (189).

As the novel progresses Ernest gradually becomes aware of his impending ruin. Through a relationship with one of Clarke's former lover-victims, the painter Ethel Brandenbourg, Ernest learns Clarke's true nature. As the two contemplate their mutual fates, Ethel describes to Ernest the traditional myth of the blood-sucking vampire: 'They are beings, not always wholly evil, whom every night some mysterious impulse leads to steal into unguarded bedchambers, to suck the blood of the sleepers and then, having waxed strong on the life of their victims, cautiously to retreat' (144). Ernest cannot believe that such beings can exist in modern times. He points out to Ethel that vampires prey on the body rather than the soul, asking "How can a man suck from another man's brain a thing as intangible, as quintessential

as thought?" She replies: "you forget, thought is more real than blood" (147–8).

When Ethel asserts that 'thought is more real than blood', she advances the novel's portrayal of creative genius as a kind of natural force. Clarke sees himself as a 'chameleon' that absorbs 'the special virtues of other people' (112). Ethel imagines him as a 'sea-monster ... whose thousand tentacles encircled her form' (103). He is like a 'snake' (109), a 'carnivorous flower' (126) and 'charged with the might of ten thousand magnetic storms that shake the earth in its orbit and lash myriads of planets through infinities of space' (184). He is also 'the reverse of radium, with unlimited absorptive capacities', a quality Edith directly equates to Clarke's ability to drain creativity from others (117). By depicting Clarke as a force of Nature, Viereck relieves his character of much responsibility for his actions; Clarke operates in a natural realm beyond human morality.

Perhaps more significantly, Viereck's vampire does not only evil but also good. He does not simply absorb what he takes from his prey; he makes this energy and talent into something truly transcendent. He is driven to do so like '[t]he high-priest of some terrible and mysterious religion, demanding a human sacrifice to appease the hunger of his god' (114). His absorptive genius makes Clarke part of a pantheon of great men. As Ernest Fielding stands in Clarke's study, he is struck by a 'curious family resemblance' between Clarke and the busts of Shakespeare, Balzac and Napoleon that adorn the space. All exhibit 'the indisputable something' that marks those who are chosen to give ultimate expression to some gigantic world-purpose ... They seemed to him monsters that know neither justice nor pity; only the law of their being, the law of growth' (162). While *House of the Vampire* vividly portrays the turmoil and suffering that Clarke inflicts on Ernest, Ethel and others, it simultaneously emphasises Clarke's greatness. The works Clarke creates elevate his vampirism into the necessary mechanism of genius.

For his part, Clarke sees himself not as a vampire or a thief but as a vessel for a greatness that flows through him. He lectures Ethel about 'giants who attain greatness' (117) and when accused by Fielding of stealing others' art Clarke responds: 'You err. Self-love has never entered into my actions. I am careless of personal fame. Look at me, boy! As I stand before you I am Homer, I am Shakespeare ... I am every cosmic manifestation in art. ... I have a mission. I am a servant of the Lord. I am the vessel that bears the Host' (183). Clarke makes his lovers into unwilling acolytes of the cult of genius; an initiation for which he believes that they should be grateful: 'It is through me that the best in you shall survive, even as the obscure Elizabethans live in him of Avon. Shakespeare absorbed what was great in little men – a greatness

that otherwise would have perished – and gave it a setting, a life' (183). Clarke sees his cultural vampirism as a gift of immortality to his victims and believes that they understand on some level the larger enterprise of which they have become a part: 'The very souls that I tread underfoot realize, as their dying gaze follows me, the possibilities with which the future is big ... Eternally secure, I carry the essence of what is cosmic ... of what is divine' (185).

Clarke is Viereck's vampiric version of Nietzsche's *Übermensch*.⁵ Creating a version of the *Übermensch* that likely would have been unrecognisable to Nietzsche, Viereck portrays Clarke as a figure whose ability to achieve greatness can justify the sacrifice of lesser beings in the name of a higher cause. Viereck expressed his theories about genius not only in *House of the Vampire* but also in essays, arguing that genius is 'primarily a collective function'.⁶ 'The mind of the man of genius', he argues, 'differs from others by its extraordinary developed power of absorption'.⁷ Viereck saw this kind of genius as specifically vampiric:

The vampire mind appears in all branches of life. Rockefeller possesses the genius of absorbing gold even as Napoleon possessed the genius of absorbing power. The founders of the great world-religions have never been what is commonly known as original thinkers. Messiahs have come and gone and the same message has been reiterated again and again in the flights of the eons.⁸

Viereck's novel, inspired by Oscar Wilde's tale of decadence and creative destruction, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, centres on art and aesthetics. This artistic focus reflects the early part of Viereck's career as a writer; he had been hailed as a *Wunderkind* in both the US and Germany with the 1906 publication of his first book of poems, *Nineveh*. But, as his references to Rockefeller and Napoleon show, Viereck's conception of genius extends far beyond the artistic realm, reflecting his later sense that he lived in 'a political, not a literary age'.⁹ Viereck later came to see Hitler as a genius of this age.

Viereck's 1930 *Glimpses of the Great* collects interviews he conducted with a range of prominent figures, including Bernard Shaw, Sigmund Freud, Henry Ford, Benito Mussolini and Albert Einstein. In the collection's introduction, entitled 'To What Tune Danceth The Immense?', Viereck describes himself as a 'Lion-Hunter', a bold collector of the greatest specimens of his age (p. 1). Notably absent from the book, however, is Viereck's 1923 interview with Adolf Hitler.¹⁰ As numerous of his writings attest, Viereck was clearly 'dazzled' by Hitler and saw him as a messiah for Germany after its crushing defeat in the Great War.¹¹ Viereck had long been a prominent pro-German activist, following in his father's footsteps by editing the journal *Fatherland*, which had 65,000 subscribers in 1914. Viereck worked tirelessly to rally support for the

Germans in the lead-up to the USA's entry into the First World War.¹² These wartime activities greatly damaged his reputation and nearly ruined him financially.¹³ Viereck's subsequent work for the National Socialists can be in part attributed to financial causes, but his motivations were also ideological.¹⁴ He saw the rise of National Socialism as a movement essential for restoring the German nation after the calamitous end of the Great War.

When criticised for his vigorous support of Hitler's regime, Viereck responded that 'I did not, then, and do not, now, conceal my admiration for the epoch-making genius of Adolf Hitler', whom Viereck credited with 'astonishing achievements'.¹⁵ In an article entitled 'Hitler or Chaos', Viereck writes that the National Socialist's 'methods are, at times, a trifle rough. But who can make a revolution with bon-bons? With bon-bons you cannot even win a woman'.¹⁶ He concludes by asserting that 'even his foes realize that there is no choice for Central Europe save Hitler or Chaos'.¹⁷ Viereck's portrayal of the vampire Reginald Clarke and his defence of Hitler are strikingly similar: Clarke reduces Ernest Fielding to a 'gibbering idiot', but in doing so he creates magnificent art (*House* 190). Similarly, Hitler's methods are a 'trifle rough', but they create a 'New Germany' from the ashes of the First World War.¹⁸

In a private letter of 1939, Viereck bemoans the fact that Germany has lost its colonies and argues in favour of Hitler's leadership: '[i]t is not a question of ethics; a great nation must live ... Hitler, whether he wills it or not, is the heir of the Hapsburgs as well as of the Hohenzollern. He out-Napoleons Napoleon, but he does so without shedding a drop of blood'.¹⁹ Viereck's linkage of Hitler to Napoleon is reminiscent of the pantheon of genius adorning Reginald Clarke's study. Viereck portrays both as men of genius who, almost in spite of themselves, must inflict some damage the service of a great cause. The idea that some causes can transcend the 'question of ethics' also echoes the novel's defence of Clarke and his pursuit of genius.

Viereck was well aware, though, of the anti-Semitism of Hitler's regime and treated this topic in numerous writings, always from a defensive posture. As evidence that he is not an anti-Semite, Viereck references *My First Two Thousand Years*, a novel he co-wrote with Jewish author Paul Eldridge about the legendary Wandering Jew, proclaiming that 'I am not, nor ever will be, an anti-Semite'.²⁰ Viereck saw Nazi anti-Semitism as 'only one phase, to my mind, a regrettable one, of Germany's resurrection', again drawing on the idea of necessary damage for a greater good.²¹ His evocation of German 'resurrection' recalls his quasi-mythical portrayal of Clarke's cult of genius and indeed, Viereck's political writings praise Hitler's 'new mystical conception of the state of which he is the spokesman'.²²

Viereck continually maintained that he did not want a totalitarian regime in the United States, as demonstrated in his 1937 allegory of *The Temptation of Jonathan*, in which a typical American man is tempted by both Communism and Fascism, but ultimately chooses democracy. The tract's treatment of Germany features a schoolroom scene in which Jewish children 'sit listlessly²³ in a corner, ostracised solely because of their race:

'What have these poor kids done?' Jonathan asked.

The stranger replied: 'They have Jewish parents.'

'Oh,' said Jonathan, but he did not understand. 'Where I come from we all played together and went to school together and nobody bothered much if we were Jews or Gentiles.'

'That,' the stranger replied icily, 'is race pollution.'²⁴

Viereck did not always figure the Jews as hapless victims, however. Writing critically of international Jewish boycotts of Germany, he blamed these actions for inflaming German hatred.²⁵ Following the end of the war and his 1947 release from prison, he sometimes referred to what he called 'professional Jews', and 'internationalists', groups he maintained had destroyed his career.²⁶ (He was convicted as a Nazi agent in 1942 and was in prison from 1942 to 1947.)

Viereck once wrote of himself: 'I fought for what I deemed the right. / I saw the Truth. I was her knight.'²⁷ Viereck's contemporary, the writer Upton Sinclair, saw Viereck very differently. In an open letter in *The Nation*, Sinclair charged that Viereck must have, on some level, realised that he had killed his own literary legacy.²⁸ Sinclair sums up Viereck's hypocrisy:

Somewhere in the depths of your perverted soul hides a shy and sensitive poet – for you were a real poet, even though you chose to embrace 'the roses and raptures of vice.' That poet is sitting in contemplation of what you are and what you are doing, and shudders with horror at what you have become. That poet knows that if there is anybody in America who is doing Satan's work you are the man. (551)

Viereck's support of Hitler and National Socialism despite its evils forever shattered any aspirations he had to join the vampire Clarke's pantheon of great men. A biographer concludes that 'the record of his life's work betrays a pattern of self-diffusion and moral anarchy'.²⁹ Viereck's portrayal of Clarke provides some insight into how he might have been able to sustain a belief that, far from doing 'Satan's work', he was rather serving a noble cause, despite public and private criticism and ample contradictory evidence.

Vampir

Because he was a German national living in Germany, Ewers's support for Hitler might not seem as challenging to understand as Viereck's. Given, however, Ewers's frequent declarations of philo-Semitism and his controversial, provocative writings about sexuality and the occult, his embrace of the National-Socialist regime and his belief that the Party would accept him in return still seem surprising. Ewers was widely known in Germany for his work in literature, film, cabaret and travel literature. *Vampir* is a *Zeitmännchen* (period novel) of the First World War, loosely based upon Ewers's own experiences. Frank Braun, a German who is in the United States as the First World War breaks out, becomes an activist for the German cause. Viereck appears to have been the inspiration for the character of Tewes, an editor who directs Braun's activities. After being released from his US imprisonment for wartime activities, Ewers returned to Germany and became increasingly involved in politics. He renewed contact with the German-Jewish nationalist Walther Rathenau, whose politics resonated with the idea of German-Jewish union celebrated in *Vampir*. Rathenau's 1922 assassination led to Ewers's move away from support of the Weimar Republic and increasingly toward right-wing politics and eventually National Socialism.³⁰

Ewers joined the Nazi Party in 1931, despite the reluctance of some Party functionaries, and threw his talents into developing the myth of Nazi 'martyr' Horst Wessel. However, as Party members delved into works like *Vampir* and *Fundtögel*, a novel about a sex-change operation, most of Ewers's work was banned and he was expelled from the Party despite his protestations. He died in obscurity from illness in 1943. Like Viereck's, Ewers's legacy has been permanently stained by his support for National Socialism.

Vampir is the last part of a trilogy that also includes *Der Zaubertlehrling* (*The Sorcerer's Apprentice*) (1910) and *Alraune* (1911), Ewers's best-known novel. In *Der Zaubertlehrling*, Braun conducts a 'will to power' experiment on a tiny mountain village. He purposefully encourages the villagers to form a fanatic religious cult that ends in the crucifixion of Braun's young lover, who is carrying their unborn child. In *Alraune*, Braun and his uncle experiment, again capriciously and willfully, with artificial insemination. They impregnate a prostitute with the sperm of a condemned criminal to create a beautiful but deadly woman. Her lethal sexuality threatens even the formidable Braun, but does not ultimately conquer him.

Throughout the trilogy, Braun flouts conventional morality, always seeing himself as above the crowd and acting accordingly. As Ullrike Brandenburg has asserted, Ewers believes that history can be shaped by the power of thought,

a perspective that echoes Viereck's view of the importance of the intellectual realm (36). Braun has always viewed himself as part of an elite group of talented and cultivated individuals, as a member of an elite 'Kulturnation' ('nation of culture') rather than as a patriotic German.³¹ This 'Kulturnation', however, has never required anything of him. Braun's awakened patriotism at the end of *Vampir* parallels Ewers's own story. *Vampir* chronicles the change in Braun from one who serves only his own interests to one who harnesses his powers in the service of a greater calling, the future of Germany.

The novel begins with Frank Braun voyaging from South America on a ship ravaged by yellow fever. Braun finally makes entry into the United States just as Germany and England have declared war. Braun chooses not to travel home to Germany, believing this can only lead to death or imprisonment at British hands. He instead becomes an activist for the German cause in the US, speaking at rallies, travelling to Mexico to try to manipulate Francisco 'Pancho' Villa to German advantage, and also courting American debutante Ivy Jefferson in order to keep her fortune away from the British.

Throughout his adventures Braun suffers from a strange malady that often saps his strength. The illness remains incurable despite medical intervention and Braun's frequent recourse to drugs such as arsenic, opium and peyote. Braun experiences relief from his symptoms only through close human contact, especially with his German-Jewish mistress, Lotte Lewi. Mysteriously, Lotte's state of health always seems the inverse of Braun's: when he improves she exhibits weakness and pallor and vice versa. Braun suspects that Lotte is draining him of blood, but it turns out that just the reverse is true: Braun is the vampire. Lotte has been giving him blood, not only out of devotion to him but, more significantly, out of her devotion to the German cause. Other women involved with Braun, Ivy, a young dancer, and an opera diva, reject him once they discover that he drinks blood. Lotte, in contrast to all of the others, sees Braun as a hope for Germany and willingly sacrifices herself to keep him fit for the task of helping his country. She is ultimately responsible for transforming him from an individual adrift and irresponsible into a devoted supporter of the German cause.³²

This transformation is at the centre of the novel. At the beginning of the novel, as his fellow Germans attempt to return to Germany to enlist, Frank Braun holds back. While those around him are willing to sacrifice themselves to the last drop of blood, Braun remains unmoved by feelings of patriotism.³³ He does not see himself as German and does not want to become a small goblet of flesh in the giant body of the *Volk*.³⁴ To do so would be to join the herd, a move that would rob him of everything and 'would make him – like all the others – into a fleck of dust, into a pitiful, tiny scrap of flesh in the

bleeding body of the *Volk*. Death was to him – what life was to the others.³⁵ Braun sees himself as not simply different from others, but as opposed to them as life is to death. Others are willing to be part of the body of the people (*Volk*) and to shed blood for it. Braun cannot surrender to this fate, and, indeed, he will transcend it even as he works for the German cause. As a *völkischer* vampire he will literally take others' blood in order that he might serve the nation with his rousing words, giving speeches he experiences as coming from somewhere beyond himself.

Braun's transformation into a champion of his nation is the result not of his vampiric disease but of its management by Lotte Lewi. Lotte sees herself as absolutely bound to Germany and the German cause, despite the fact that she is an American citizen and despite her Jewish heritage. In fact (and this is surely part of what disturbed the Nazis about Ewers's writings) Lotte is devoted to Germany *because* she is Jewish. Lotte explains that she is a 'half-blood' (*Halblut*) devoted to two *Völker*; her awakened sense of being German comes from the war (128). She invokes Disraeli as a great believer that the world belongs to her two peoples, 'both together, closely united, the Germanic and the Jewish'.³⁶ Two bloods flow through her veins, mixed together; she is German and Jew alike. Braun's vampirism causes him to consume the potent German-Jewish essence contained in Lotte's blood and it is this essence that allows him to reach oratorical heights for Germany.

In *Vampir*, identity is consistently expressed through the language of blood and through a blood mythology that links Germans and Jews.³⁷ Lotte asserts, 'Through my veins flow, well mixed together, both bloods. I am simultaneously German and Jew. And I, I found the prophecy of my people's mission for this time – long live my German, long my Jewish *Volk*!'³⁸ Lotte, who is extremely wealthy, possesses the original breastplate of Aaron, the story and meaning of which she has been studying diligently. She has determined that the original colours of the flag of the ancient Israelites are the same as that of the German flag – black, white and red. This is no coincidence, but a sign that informs her fervent belief that Germans and Jews have a shared destiny that justifies any sacrifice (133).

At the novel's end Lotte allows Braun to drain her of blood almost completely. Indeed, she orchestrates this dangerous move in order to cure Braun of his vampirism. She does this, she tells him, not only because she loves him but also because she believes firmly that he can be a saviour for the German cause. She has set up his work as a spokesman for Germany from the beginning (93). When Braun returns from prison he goes to her. She has been slowly recovering from loss of blood, but is still weak. Braun, in contrast, is fully recovered, his healthful appearance has returned despite his

imprisonment. What's more, Lotte tells him, his appearance has changed in other ways; he seems more German: 'German! You took the path I led you – the path home [*Heimat*]. Took it – with me – for me. You became German: my blood flows in you.'³⁹ Lotte Lewi's German-Jewish blood has cured Braun of a disease that she believes not only he, but the entire world suffers from during the world war (605). Throughout the novel the war has been discussed in terms of blood, a metaphoric connection goes beyond the fact that combatants are willing to shed blood for their cause. 'The war itself is a '*Blutwahn*' (666), a coinage that could be translated as 'blood frenzy' and that implies a sense of the nightmarish, a blood mania void of reason, a nightmare of blood akin to Braun's own attacks of vampirism, which come upon him in a kind of dream state and which he cannot later recall.

Ewers brings this blood and war imagery together with notions of disease to form a unique depiction of vampirism. His vampirism is a type of malaria. Braun discusses his symptoms with a doctor who is struggling to diagnose Braun's illness. The doctor has read in a scientific journal of the spread of a '*Kambalemmalaria*' ('cannibalistic malaria') transmitted through bat bites. Braun, the doctor suggests, may have been so infected while he was visiting the South Seas, where, it is stressed, cannibalism is practised. The doctor suggests that Braun should seek treatment at the renowned Hamburg Institute for Tropical Diseases, the only place that might be able to help him. Braun denies having a taste for human flesh but finally concedes that the Institute might be able to help him if only he could travel to Germany. Then he adds:

Don't you think that all of Europe is stricken with this disease, and a good part of the rest of the world to boot? ... How about disclosing your theory to the *Völker* of the world ...? To make known to the Germans and English, Russians, French, Turks and all of society that all of this was merely a regrettable error, only the resulting symptoms of a highly infectious South-Sea illness, which awakens cannibalistic desires and would force them to devour each other? If the *Völker* realized that, the war would end tomorrow.⁴⁰

Braun speaks in a jesting way, but when pressed, he says his joking is based in truth. His suggestion that the whole world is infected with a raging bloodlust again touches on the novel's central metaphor: the Great War is a form of vampirism.

The tropical origins of this disease are part of Ewers's imperialist view of the world. Through contact with 'primitive savagery' in places such as Haiti, where the novel depicts Braun as having witnessed ritual child sacrifice, Europe and then the entire world have become infected with '*Blutwahn*'. The

depiction of *Tropenkiller* ('tropical madness') is a recurring theme in German popular literature at the turn of the century which depicted 'superior' Germans becoming infected through contact with colonial 'primitives'.⁴¹ Braun originally journeyed to the tropics to cure his European 'malaise', but instead he becomes infected with a tropical 'disease of impulsiveness', bringing it with him to the metropole.⁴² Lotte Lewi turns the potentially disastrous consequences of this infection into a boon for her beloved Germany. In this way we can see Ewers's representation of vampirism as part of his racialised understanding of the world and its peoples. This disease that comes from the tropics to infect 'superior' cultures can be managed and defeated only through co-operation by two 'superior' peoples, the Germans and the Jews.

Lotte's heroic sacrifices for her two peoples are revealed only at the novel's end. Despite this exchange with the doctor and numerous other clues, Braun does not realise that he himself is the vampire until the novel's last scenes. He suspects Lotte of draining his blood, wondering if she is the embodiment of the bloody goddess, Astarte, connected in the novel's mythology with the Haitian priestess who sacrifices her own child. Instead it turns out that Lotte is making herself the sacrificial victim. In the rather confused Christian imagery of the novel, Lotte is both Virgin and Christ. Lotte refers to herself as a both a mother and lover to Frank at numerous points.⁴³ Finally when Braun almost drains Lotte of blood and she lies near death she tells him, 'I am your wine – you drank so much milk, by dear boy. So much red milk'.⁴⁴ She is like a mother, feeding her child, but also like Christ, whose blood and body nourish through the eucharist. To emphasise this, there are several references to Lotte's antique signet ring, which bears a medieval symbol of Christ, a pelican opening its breast to feed its young.

Lotte Lewi may have been based on Ewers's lover Adele Guggenheimer-Lewisohn, to whom the book is dedicated, but Lotte is also a literary type, a '*schöne Jüdin*' figure.⁴⁵ The '*schöne Jüdin*' or 'beautiful Jewess' type, the lovely Jewess who falls in love with a Christian man, dates back into medieval narrative, but is perhaps best known through characters such as Shylock's daughter, Jessica, in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* or Rebecca of York in Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*. As this type developed over centuries it divided into what Charlene Lea has called '*la belle juive*', the good Jewess, and '*la juive fatale*', the Jewish femme fatale (61). The sensual attractions of the latter, like those of Ewers's deadly Alraune, are deadly for her conquests. The novel continually plays with the dichotomous tensions inherent in the '*schöne Jüdin*' figure. Is Lotte a '*juive fatale*', a figure with strong affinity to literary depictions of the deadly, seductive female vampire? Or is she instead a lovely

prize for her Christian lover, like Shakespeare's Jessica, additionally endowed with the maternal and sacrificial instincts of the most famous Jewess of them all, the Virgin Mary.²⁶

Despite the 'philo-Semitic' assertion of a mythic connection between Germans and Jews, the novel taps into anti-Semitic myth to develop the suggestion that Lotte is a vampiric '*juive fatale*' who aims to suck him dry. Near the novel's end, as Braun struggles to grasp what is happening to him, he recalls visiting Lincoln Cathedral as a boy and learning there the medieval tale of 'The Jew's Daughter', who uses an apple to lure a little Christian boy into a tower, where she then stabs him to death.⁴⁷ While elsewhere in the novel Ewers has presented a very dramatic picture of Slavic anti-Semitism and pogroms and the Russian/Slavic use of ritual murder accusation, here he himself draws upon the image of the bloodthirsty Jew, linking Jew and vampire as Braun struggles to figure out what has been happening to him (136–7).

In *Vampir*, Jews can either be bloodthirsty, vampiric murderers or sacrificial victims. Finally, though, Lotte is not a *juive fatale*, but a *belle juive* with Marian overtones. She is both mother and lover to Braun and literally gives him her blood – her red milk – by extension giving this milk to Germany. If Lotte represents the Jews, then these good German-Jews are willing to sacrifice everything, body and life for Germany. The Jew is, for Ewers, like all other non-Germans, a type of Other with both good and evil aspects. Lotte is associated with the ancient Israelites, a great beauty linked to occult icons, like the breastplate of Aaron, and to the frequently misspelled Hebrew lettering that adorns the chapter headings. These numerous misspellings reveal more than Ewers's pretension.⁴⁸ More significantly, they show that Hebrew as a functioning language is not important for Ewers; Hebrew is used to signify magic and exoticism. Likewise, Jews and Judaism on their own terms are not of importance; they are symbols for the author to manipulate as much as vampires are. Lotte the Jewess is a sacrificial victim to Braun the vampire; both serve the cause of Germany.

This instrumental use of the Jew as symbol, as well as the novel's depiction of sacrifice for a higher cause, helps us to understand how Ewers could eventually support National Socialism despite his self-proclaimed 'philo-Semitism' and despite close ties to individual Jews. And, of course, his 'philo-Semitism' should be understood not as the opposite of anti-Semitism but as part of a larger system that connects them both to each other and to other forms of racism. Ewers's views on the Jewish *Volks* are based not on recognition of human equality or universal human rights but on generalised conceptions of Jews and Judaism. As Marco Frenschkowski has put it, Ewers

was 'ein massiver Rassist'.⁴⁹ This is made clear through not only his fiction but such declarations on 'racial equality' as this:

Thus appears to me the closest possible assimilation of these two races as highly desirable, for us Germans as well as for the Jews. I recognize in no way the equal rights of all races in general[.] I am, on the contrary, quite aware of the full superiority of my race. I treat the Yellow and especially the Nigger as something beneath my standing[.] yes, I don't even recognize the Latin as of equal rights, unless he has, like the French or the Northern Italian, a very strong dash of Germanic blood. I am by no means a chauvinist, I have rather only purchased my patriotism during long voyages to all parts of the world[.] yes, I must say that I only fought my way through ingrained [*eingefleischte* – which invokes the body] 'humane thoughts of mankind' to my Germanness over years. The only race, however, which I have to recognize as equal to mine is the Jewish one – if I disregard small splinters like Basques, Celts, Finns, and so on.⁵⁰

For Ewers, some Jews are worthy equals because, using terms that connect to the depiction of a '*Kulturnation*' in *Vampir*, the Jews are a '*Kulturvolk*'.⁵¹ Not all Jews, however, fall into this privileged category. Ewers considered the so-called '*Ostjuden*', recent immigrants to Germany from Eastern Europe, to be a 'lead weight' around the feet of German-Jewry, or 'our Jews' as he refers to them.⁵² Therefore not only is Ewers's seeming elevation of the Jewish *Volks* part of a broader hierarchy but Jews themselves are divided into levels within this larger racist scheme that is ultimately readily compatible with the white supremacist ideology of Nazism.

Conclusion

Nina Auerbach has observed that 'every generation creates and embraces its own' vampires.⁵³ Ewers and Viereck created the types of vampires they seemed to need, figures that justified the superiority of some humans over others, a strategy in keeping with their views on colonialism, nationalism and the '*Gleichberechtigung aller Rassen*' ('the equality of all races').⁵⁴ If every age gets the vampires it 'deserves', then we could also say that Ewers and Viereck have got not only their justly deserved vampires but also the tarnished literary legacies that go with them. The vampires Clarke and Braun believe that they can justify evil not only because of their connection to a superior calling but also because of their own superiority. It is in this way that these vampires perhaps most resemble their respective creators. The published and unpublished writings of Viereck and Ewers reveal the deeply self-aggrandising

postures that each adopted toward himself and his work. The sense each had not only of belonging to a superior group but of being himself a figure of genius and greatness comes out strongly through their vampire characters.

These vampire avatars could be seen merely as exercises in egotism, but, when examined alongside their creators' support of Hitler's murderous regime, they seem to be much closer to Upton Sinclair's charge of 'Satan's work'. Sinclair expresses certainty that Viereck 'shudders with horror' at what he 'has become', a sentiment that calls to mind Anne Rice's portrait of Louis, the self-loathing vampire. Ewers died before the end of the Second World War, but he does appear to have had some remorse over his past. His last recorded words were apparently spoken to his secretary, '*Jennylein, was war ich für ein Esel!*' ('Little Jenny, what an ass I was!').⁵⁵ It is not clear, however, exactly what he regretted. Viereck, who was released in 1947 from a US prison for his wartime activities, remained defensive about his past. Likewise, Ewers's and Viereck's vampires also do not 'shudder' at their own deeds. Clarke revels in his and any doubts Braun experiences are washed away by Lotte's interpretations of her own blood sacrifice. Viereck's and Ewers's vampires provide insight, however, into how an individual could justify a recognised evil in the name of a mythical greater good, an insight relevant not only to the generation of Ewers and Viereck but to our own as well.

Notes

¹ 'Das Böse ... habe sein Recht zu leben, wie alles andere auch – Nur was klein ist, ist hässlich' (Ewers, *Der Zauberehring*, p. 27). I am grateful to Sören Fröhlich, who was invaluable in assisting with research and translation. I also thank Kathryn Hodson of the University of Iowa Library and Bruce Kirby of the Library of Congress for their help in accessing unpublished materials.

² Auerbach, *Our Vampires*; Butler, *Metamorphoses*; Cohen, 'Monster Culture'; Gelder, *Reading the Vampire*.

³ The question of nation in these novels is a complex one, potentially complicated by the idea of a vampire nation that would create tension between figures such as Frank Braun and his German *Vaterland*. Both Viereck and Ewers, however, focus on the vampire as a singular individual and do not follow through the implications of vampires creating their own nation within their respective novels.

⁴ Numerous scholars have noted literary and political connections made between the figure of the vampire and representations of Jews and Judaism. My forthcoming book, *The Once and Future Jew: Anti-Semitism in Medieval and Modern Narrative*, will deal with the medieval roots of these connections as well as modern manifestations.

⁵ David Skal calls *House of the Vampire* 'a delirious love note to the ghosts of Wilde and Nietzsche, in which art itself was presented as the vampiric province of a

master race' (*Hollywood Gothic*, p. 62). On Viereck's acknowledgement of Friedrich Nietzsche's influence, see Johnson, *George Sylvester Viereck*, pp. 10, 130, 144, and also Viereck's own *Confessions of a Barbarian*, p. 132. On Ewers's 'Nietzscheanism' in the Frank Braun trilogy, see Layne, 'Uncanny Collapse', pp. 144–5, and Ruthner, 'Andererseits', p. 175. See also Kugel, *Der Unverwundliche, passim*. Ewers's contemporary Soergel refers to Frank Braun's 'Nietzschean tone' in his 'Siebentes Kapitel', p. 820. Ewers's short story 'Der Tod des Barons Jesus Maria von Friedel' references Nietzsche's sister, Elisabeth. On interpretations of Nietzsche and National Socialism, I have found Penzo useful: 'Zur Frage der "Entnazifizierung" Friedrich Nietzsches'.

⁶ Viereck, 'The Absorptive Nature of Genius', p. 53.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Viereck, 'Letter to Elmer Gertz', 29 March 1939.

¹⁰ Viereck, 'No Room for the Alien'.

¹¹ See Keller, *States of Belonging*, p. 176.

¹² See Kupsky, '"The True Spirit of the German People"', p. 91.

¹³ On Viereck's early fame, see Keller, 'George Sylvester Viereck', p. 70. For biographical information on Viereck, I have found Neil Johnson, 'Pro-Freud and Pro-Nazi'; Keller, 'George Sylvester Viereck'; and Kupsky, '"The True Spirit" especially useful.

¹⁴ On Viereck's financial ties to Nazi Germany, see 'Viereck Got \$2000 from Nazi Consul', and Keller, *States*, pp. 179–81.

¹⁵ Viereck, 'Mr. Viereck Protests'; 'Letter to the Editor', *New York Times* (7 June 1934), p. xi.

¹⁶ Viereck, 'Hitler or Chaos', p. 11. Kupsky dates this document to early 1934 ('"The True Spirit"', p. 73).

¹⁷ *Ibid.* See also discussion in Kupsky, '"The True Spirit"', p. 73.

¹⁸ Viereck, 'Mr. Viereck Protests'.

¹⁹ Viereck, 'Letter to Elmer Gertz', 29 March 1939.

²⁰ Viereck, 'Mr. Viereck Protests', p. 111. The fact was not lost on his contemporary critics, however, that Viereck did not protest when this book was banned in Germany. See 'Viereck Kisses the Rod', p. 460.

²¹ Viereck, 'What I Saw in Hitler's Germany', p. 9.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²³ Viereck, *The Temptation of Jonathan*, p. 15.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

²⁵ Viereck, 'The German-Jewish War'. He references a 'Jewish-Communist reign of terror' in the United States in his 'Letter to Elmer Gertz', 5 November 1938.

²⁶ Kupsky, '"The True Spirit"', p. 91.

²⁷ Viereck, *Spreading Germs of Hate*, p. xiv.

²⁸ Sinclair, 'To George Viereck (Personal)', p. 551.

²⁹ Keller, *States*, p. 186.

30 On Ewers's politics, see Kugel's immensely detailed biography, which is excellent for providing background despite its apologetics: *Der Unverantwortliche*, pp. 262–5 and 398–400.

31 'Aber es gab über allen Völkern ein anderes Volk, höher, edler und grösser. Die Kulturration hatte er es genannt – ihr gehörte alles an, was hinausflog über die Massen. Und er kannte sie gut, fand ihre Bürger überall in der Welt. Es war da, dieses Volk, ganz gewiss, ohne jeden Zweifel' ('But there was, above all *völkern*, a different *volk*, higher, nobler and greater. He had dubbed it the "nation of culture" – to it belonged all that, which outshone the masses. And he knew it well, found its citizens everywhere in the world'), p. 26. See also pp. 426–7.

32 The novel refers to Frank Braun as 'the irresponsible one' ('Er war der Unverantwortliche'), p. 109, which is also the title of Kugel's biography.

33 ('bis zum letzten Blutstropfen'), p. 47.

34 ('kleinstes Teilchen nur in dem Riesenleibe des Volkes') (48). The German '*volk*' can be translated as 'people', but the concept is far more complex. See Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, pp. 13–30.

35 The English translation is deliberately stilted here to try to capture the feel of Ewers's prose: 'Würde ihm – wie die andern alle – zu einem Stäubchen machen, zu einem jämmerlichen Fleischfetzchen im blutenden Leibe des Volkes. Tod war für ihn – was für die andern Leben war' (pp. 47–8).

36 'beiden zusammen, eng vereint, dem germanischen und dem jüdischen' (p. 133).

37 Ewers is by no means alone among his contemporaries in this understanding of blood. See Biale, *Blood and Belief*, pp. 123–61.

38 'Durch meine Adern fliesst, gut vermischt, beider Blut, ich bin Deutsche und jüdin zugleich. Und ich, ich fand die Deutung von der Sendung meines Stammes für diese Zeit – lange lebe mein deutsches – lange lebe mein jüdisches Volk!' (p. 134).

39 'Deutscher! Du gingst den Weg, den ich dich führte – den Weg zur Heimat. Gingst ihn – mit mir – für mich. Deutsch wurdest du: mein Blut fliesst in dir' (p. 605). Like the concept of '*volk*' the German concept of '*Heimat*' has a complex history. See Blicke, *Heimat*.

40 '[D]ieucht Sie nicht, dass ganz Europa von dieser Krankheit befallen ist und ein guter Teil der andern Welt noch dazu? ... Wie wäre es, wenn Sie Ihre Theorie den Völkern der Erde bekannt gäben ...? Den Deutschen und Engländern, Russen, Franzosen, Türken und der ganzen Gesellschaft kund und zu wissen täten, dass das alles nur ein bedauerlicher Irrtum sei, nur die Folgerscheinung einer sehr ansteckenden Südseerkrankheit, die kanibalistische Gelüste erwecke und sie zwänge, sich gegenseitig aufzufressen? – Wenn die Völker das einsehen, ist morgen der Krieg zu Ende' (pp. 290–1).

41 Poley, 'Ant People', pp. 83–5.

42 *Ibid.*, pp. 74, 83. Poley has also convincingly argued that *Lampir* represents a reaction to 'colonial loss', the same loss to which Viereck also reacted, p. 121. See also Arata, 'The Occidental Tourist'.

43 See pp. 77, 86, 586.

44 'Ich bin dein Wein – trink – so viel Milch trankst du, mein lieber Junge? So viel rote Milch' (p. 593).

45 Soergel in his critique of the first Frank Braun novel, *Der Zauberlehrling*, in which Lotte first appears and expresses a desire to have Braun's child ('Siebentes Kapitel', p. 820). For background on the '*schöne Jüdin*', see Lampert, 'O My Daughter!':

46 I am researching connections on the deadly vampiric seductress and the figure of the Jew as part of a larger project. For an introduction into the vampire seductress in the late nineteenth century, I have found Bram Dijkstra, *Evil Sisters*, extremely illuminating.

47 Ewers, *Lampir*, pp. 572–4. The Scottish version of the ballad appears in the 1934 American edition, pp. 334–7. On the American translation of *Lampir*, see Wilkoff, 'Hanns Heinz Ewers' *Lampir*'. There is a substantial literature on the 'Jew's Daughter' ballad. For a version of the ballad, see Child, *Popular Ballads*, vol. 3, pp. 233–54. On ritual murder and child sacrifice in Ewers's work, see also Poley, 'Ant People', pp. 147, 154.

48 The novel is divided into fifteen chapters titled with the names of stones that roughly correspond to the twelve stones on the breastplate of Aaron that Lotte possesses. Each chapter heading includes the name of the stone in Hebrew and also features an image of a sign of the zodiac and an astrological glyph although an exact system of symbolism remains unclear. The chapter headings and their obscure epigraphs are amusingly skewered in Reimann's 1922 parody of *Lampir*, which names each chapter after a type of cheese.

49 Frenschkowski, 'Von Schemajah Hillel', p. 145.

50 'So erscheint mir die möglichst enge Assimilation dieser beiden Rassen sehr erwünscht, sowohl für uns Deutsche, wie für die Juden. Ich erkenne in keiner Weise die Gleichberechtigung aller Rassen überhaupt an, ich bin mir im Gegenteil der völligen Ueberlegenheit meiner Rasse durchaus bewusst. Ich behandle den Gelben und gar erst den Nigger als etwas under mir Stehendes, ja ich erkenne nicht einmal den Romanen als gleichberechtigt an, sofern er nicht, wie der Franzose oder der Norditaliener einen sehr starken Schuss germanischen Blutes hat. Ich bin durchaus kein Chauvinist, ich habe vielmehr meinen Patriotismus erst auf langen Reisen in allen Weltteilen erworben, ja ich muss sagen, dass ich mich gegen eingefleischte "humane Menschheitsgedanken" erst in Jahren zu meinem Deutschtum durchgekämpft habe. Die einzige Rasse aber, die ich der meinen als gleichberechtigt anerkennen muss, ist die jüdische – wenn ich von kleinen Splittern wie Baken, Kelten, Finnen usw. abschen will.' 'Judentaue', p. 37. Cited in Frenschkowski, 'Von Schemajah Hillel', pp. 145–6.

51 Ewers, 'Die Lösung der Judenfrage', p. 33.

52 Ewers, 'Judentaufen', pp. 37–8.

53 Auerbach, *Our Vampires*, p. vii.

54 Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, pp. 87–8.

55 Kugel, *Der Unverantwortliche*, p. 379.