

“Reducing the Ornaments of Fable to the Standard of Truth:” Tylor, Vampires, and the Anthropology of Religion

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“After all, it scarcely seems to the lower animistic philosophy that the connexion between body and soul is utterly broken by death.” E. B. Tylor¹

Introductory courses on the anthropology of religion frequently begin with the work of E. B. Tylor, whose theory of “animism” is typically regarded as the genesis of the field. Curiously, Tylor’s *Religion in Primitive Culture* cites the work of Dom Augustine Calmet six times,² yet this name is now unknown to most anthropologists. Calmet was a French Benedictine monk and has been called, “the greatest exegete of the 18th century.”³ However, Tylor never cites any of Calmet’s acclaimed works of Biblical exegesis. Instead, all of his references cite a treatise on vampires written in 1746: *Dissertations sur les apparitions des anges, des demons et des esprits, et sur les revenants et vampires de Hongrie, de Boheme, de Moravie, et de Silesie*. While the Enlightenment was underway in France, “vampire panics” were occurring in Eastern Europe.⁴ Calmet collected stories of vampires and similar phenomena and attempted to interpret them both scientifically and theologically. Written near the end of his life, his *Dissertations* became

1. Edward B. Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture* (New York, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), 13.

2. *Ibid.*, 32, 36, 42, 115, 273, 274.

3. Arnold Ages, “Calmet and the Rabbis,” in *The Jewish Quarterly Review* (Vol. 55, No. 4 1965): 340–349.

4. The most famous of these panics occurred Medwegya, Serbia in 1727, where it was rumored that a soldier named Arnold Paule had become a vampire. In 1731, Austrian authorities began to investigate stories of vampires in Medwegya. This date is often regarded as the beginning of Western interest in vampires. Massimo Introvigne, “Antoine Faivre: Father of Contemporary Vampire Studies,” in Antoine Faivre and Richard Caron (eds.) *Ésotérisme, gnosés & imaginaire symbolique: mélanges offerts à Antoine Faivre*, (Walpole, Mass: Peeters Publishers, 2001): 595–610.

something of an embarrassment to his colleagues—including Voltaire, who felt he gave too much credence to stories of vampires. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* does not even mention this text in its article on Calmet.⁵ Nevertheless, *Dissertations* was an influential book: it went into many editions in the later half of the eighteenth century and has been called, “the source of all modern vampirology.”⁶ Tylor clearly found it a fascinating text as did the American anthropologist George Stetson. Stetson found a copy in Boston’s Athenaeum library and called it, “a mine of wealth for all modern encyclopedists and demonologists.”⁷ Calmet actually appears alongside Tylor in an article on demonology in an early twentieth century edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.⁸

Although Calmet objected to the reality of vampires on both scientific and theological grounds, many of his contemporaries misread his treatise as endorsing the existence of vampires.⁹ One reason that *Dissertations* has been so misunderstood as a text is that it defied the disciplinary categories of its day: Calmet states he is writing neither as a philosopher nor as a divine but trying to incorporate both of these perspectives.¹⁰ He also uses a curious strategy of laying out all of the stories he has collected about ghosts and vampires before he begins to express any skepticism. I suggest that Calmet may have structured his writing in this way in order to foreground his analysis with a sympathy for the perspective of believers—believers that other Enlightenment thinkers had dismissed as simply superstitious, backwards, or medically insane. Ruth Benedict remarked that, “Anthropology was by definition impossible as long as these distinctions between ourselves and the

5. F. Bechtel, “Calmet, Dom Augustine,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, ed. Charles George Habermann et al. (New York, New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1913), 189.

6. Massimo Introvigne, “Satanism Scares and Vampirism from the 18th Century to the Contemporary Anti-Cult Movement” (Paper presented at the World Dracula Conference, Los Angeles, 1997), available online at http://www.cesnur.org/testi/vampires_wdc.htm, (accessed 1 December, 2009).

7. George R. Stetson, “The Animistic Vampire in New England” In *American Anthropologist* (Vol 9, No. 1, Jan. 1896): 1–13.

8. Northcote W. Thomas, “Demonology” in *Encyclopedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition* (New York, New York: Encyclopedia Britannica Company, 1910): 7–8.

9. Introvigne, “Satanism Scares and Vampirism.”

10. Augustine Calmet, *Dissertation upon the Apparitions of Angels, Daemons, and Ghosts and Concerning the Vampires of Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, and Selifia* (London: M. Cooper, 1759), vii.

primitive, ourselves and the barbarian, ourselves and the pagan, held sway over people's minds."¹¹ In this sense, I argue that Calmet's research into vampires was a sort of proto-anthropology.¹²

It is even possible that *Dissertations* had a significant effect on Tylor's thinking and, by extension, the entire Western project of the anthropology of religion. Not only does Tylor dedicate several pages of *Religion and Primitive Culture* to the subject of vampires, but the most important elements of his theory of animism are present in *Dissertations*. Tylor's theory of primitive religion is founded on a hypothetical situation in which the primitive philosopher contemplated the states of living and dead, waking and dreaming.¹³ This is exactly the same approach pursued by Calmet in trying to explain belief in vampires. *Dissertations* explores numerous scenarios in which bodies in various states of unconsciousness, death, and decay could be misinterpreted as the undead. In fact, Calmet's conclusion that belief in vampires is a misunderstanding of naturally occurring phenomena foreshadowed Tylor's notion of the primitive philosopher and his "error of reasoning." Tylor's interpretation of vampires as an explanation of a wasting disease is essentially an expansion on the theory Calmet proposes in *Dissertations*. Tylor then expands this interpretation of vampires into an animistic theory of all supernatural beings.

A Brief Biography of Calmet

Augustine Calmet was born at Méné-la-Horgne, near Commercy, Lorraine in 1672. He was educated at the Benedictine priory of Breuil and later became a Benedictine himself. In 1696, he was appointed to teach

11. Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston, Mass: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989), 3.

12. Belief in vampires also interested Jean-Jacque Rousseau, who is famously quoted, "No evidence is lacking—depositions, certificates of notables, surgeons, priests, and magistrates. The proof in law is utterly complete." See Philip Cole, *The Myth of Evil: Demonizing the Enemy* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006), 80. Cole argues that Rousseau, like Calmet, did not actually believe in vampires. Rather, he saw the power of this belief as an index of the very real control that religion had over the public. It has been proposed that Rousseau was a proto-anthropologist as well. See Christopher Frayling and Robert Wolker, "From the Orang-utan to the Vampire: Towards an Anthropology of Rousseau," in *Rousseau After Two Hundred Years: Proceedings of the Cambridge Bicentennial Colloquium*, ed. R. A. Leigh (Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press, 1982): 3–22.

13. Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture*, 12.

philosophy and theology at the Abbey of Moyen-Moutier. His first work of Biblical exegesis, *Commentaire littéral sur tous les livres de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament*, was published in twenty-three volumes from 1704 to 1716.¹⁴ Calmet reportedly had a good relationship with his publisher, Antoine Urbaine Coustelier, who both looked up references for Calmet and lent him rare books.¹⁵ The work went into a second edition as well as a Latin translation, receiving praise from Catholics and Protestants alike.¹⁶

The Catholic Encyclopedia credits Calmet with creating a new method of Biblical exegesis: Where other exegetes incorporated allegorical and moral interpretations of the Bible, Calmet was interested only in literal interpretations.¹⁷ He appears to take a similar approach to vampires, seeing them as manifestations of some sort of actual phenomena rather than invented or symbolic of something else. In this sense, Calmet's work resembles modern anthropological readings of vampire legends rather than the psychoanalytical readings of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Ernest Jones.¹⁸ In 1719, Calmet was elected abbot of St-Léopold at Nancy and¹⁹ Ten years later, he became abbot of Senones where Voltaire sometimes stayed as his guest. According to Massimo Introvigne, a leading authority on Calmet, Voltaire was primarily interested in using the library at Senones to research his anti-Catholic polemics. Calmet was aware of this, but hoped to use this opportunity to convert his guest.²⁰ Pope Benedict XIII wished to make Calmet a bishop, but he declined, preferring the life of a monk.²¹ He died on October 25, 1757.²²

14. Bechtel, "Calmet, Dom Augustine," 189.

15. David T. Pottinger, *The French Book Trade in Ancient Regime: 1500–1791* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1958), 45.

16. Bechtel, "Calmet, Dom Augustine," 189.

17. *Ibid.*

18. For a review of the psychological literature on vampires, see Alan Dundes, "The Vampire as Bloodthirsty Revenant: A Psychoanalytic Post Mortem" in ed. Alan Dundes, *The Vampire: A Casebook* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998).

19. Bechtel, "Calmet, Dom Augustine," 189.

20. Introvigne, "Antoine Faivre," 605.

21. F. Bechtel, "Calmet, Dom Augustine," 189.

22. J. Gordon Melton, *The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead* (Detroit, Michigan: Visible Ink, 1999), 87.

The Context of Vampire Panics During the Enlightenment

Traditions of vampires and vampire-like creatures originate in Eastern Europe, particularly among the Slavic countries and in Greece. Bruce McClelland argues that the vampire most likely has its roots in the pre-Christian traditions of the Balkans and assumed its more familiar form under the influence of the Orthodox Church. He points out that many of the attributes of the vampire—drinking blood, antagonism to the church, and so on—were accusations used by the church against Jews, pagans, and heretics.²³

Typically, illnesses and other mundane misfortunes could be blamed on vampires and experts would be called upon to remedy the situation. The grave of a vampire could be detected by various forms of divination or by exhuming the body and searching for “signs” that confirmed vampirism such as seemingly fresh blood or limbs that had remained supple. Folk remedies were used to trap the vampire in its grave or the corpse could be ritually “slain” through means such as cremation, beheading, or a stake through the heart.

Current anthropological thinking has arrived at a structural-functional theory of vampires in Eastern Europe. Drawing parallels to E. E. Evans-Pritchard’s study of witchcraft among the Azande, it is now widely thought that vampires served as a “scapegoat” mechanism for social stress.²⁴ Vampire slaying in Eastern Europe seems to have served much the same social function that witch burning did in Western Europe. Furthermore, Introvigne has written an interesting essay noting the similarities between the vampire panics of the eighteenth century and the moral panic over alleged “Satanic ritual abuse” in the 1980s and 1990s.²⁵ It could even be argued that vampire slaying is a more highly adapted form of scapegoating as the object of persecution is already dead: the social mechanism can be carried out without the arrest, torture, or execution of living people.

23. Bruce McClelland, *Slayer's And Their Vampires: A Cultural History of Killing the Dead* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 31–48.

24. Harry Senn, *Were-Wolf and Vampire in Romania* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 11; McClelland, *Slayer's And Their Vampires*, 50. Senn has actually buttressed this theory with fieldwork of contemporary fieldwork in Romania.

25. Introvigne, “Satanism Scares and Vampirism.”

However, vampire hunting could also be highly disruptive to the social fabric of the community. One of the most famous accounts of a “vampire panic” was recorded by the French botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort. In his memoir *Relation d'un Voyage du Levant* (1717), he describes his stay on the Greek island of Mykonos where he encountered a village dealing with a *broucolack*—a local variety of vampire. De Tournefort explains that the trouble started when a villager, who was never well liked, was found murdered in a field. After his burial, villagers reported seeing him stalking about at night. Next, the murdered corpse was further accused of knocking things over, grabbing people from behind, and other nuisance activities. Concerned citizens eventually exhumed the corpse, had a mass said over it, removed its heart, and reburied it. Unfortunately, this only seemed to aggravate the problem. More serious crimes were attributed to the vampire such as beating people, smashing doors and windows, and stealing large quantities of alcohol. (De Tournefort implies that several individuals were using the situation as an opportunity for petty larceny.) As the phenomenon worsened, debate continued over what sort of rituals would permanently dispatch the vampire. Local clerics apparently took no initiative, but obliged the villagers by supplying requested masses and administering copious amounts of holy water. At the height of the panic, some families left for the countryside, while others fled the island entirely. De Tournefort concludes his account, “After this instance, is it possible to deny, that the modern Greeks are no great Grecians, and that nothing but ignorance and superstition prevails among them?”²⁶

Stories such as this began making their way west in the early eighteenth century, where they carried an obvious cultural resonance with the practice of witch-trials.²⁷ In fact, one of the first treaties on vampirism was written by a lawyer. In 1706, Charles Ferdinand de Schertz published

26. Calmet, 252–258.

27. McClelland notes that the idea that vampirism is “contagious” is not evident in early folklore and appears to be a product of Enlightenment literature. He concludes that this aspect of vampirism is the result of a sort of cross-fertilization with West European notions of witchcraft. He writes, “It is the contact of Eastern European vampire beliefs with Western witchcraft beliefs, I propose, that germinates the notion that vampires, like witches or sorcerers, can themselves bring other vampires into existence.” (McClelland, *Slayers and their Vampires*, 90).

Magia Posthuma.²⁸ The word “vampire” was not yet known in Western Europe, however, Schertz was concerned with the broader belief in *magia posthuma* or harmful magic from beyond the grave. Cases where the corpses of suspected witches or revenants were exhumed and burned for harming the living occurred in Transylvania and Hungary intermittently from 1337 to 1732.²⁹ Schertz included several stories of vampires from Bohemia and Moravia and, though acknowledging that exaggeration had occurred, considered them mostly believable. As a lawyer, he advised against desecrating bodies without due process before a court of law, involving expert advice by doctors and theologians. He argued that burning the bodies of suspected vampires should not be left to ignorant peasants, but should be carried out by authorities following a decision by a court.³⁰

From a modern perspective, debate over the reality of vampires seems completely beyond the limits of what can be debated in court. However, this was not the case in the early eighteenth century. These sorts of “trials” are actually described by Calmet. He writes:

Witnesses are generally summoned, and depositions taken: the arguments on both sides are weighed, and the bodies dug up and inspected, to see if they have the common marks of vampirism, which are, a pliancy and flexibility of limbs, a fluidity of blood, and unputrefied flesh. If these symptoms are discovered, the bodies are delivered to the executioner to be burnt. Notwithstanding which, it sometimes happens that the spectres are seen three or four days after the execution. Sometimes they delay burying suspected persons for six or seven weeks.³¹

It is also notable that under English common law, the bodies of those who committed suicide were to be buried at a crossroads with a stake driven through the heart. While this was later justified as a logical way of punishing someone who was already dead, the original intention of this practice was probably to keep the ghost of the suicide from rising again. This manner of

28. Introvigne, “Satanism Scares and Vampirism.”

29. Wolfgang Behringer, *Witches and Witch-hunts: A Global History* (Cambridge, Mass: Polity Press, 2004), 154.

30. Introvigne, “Satanism Scares and Vampirism.”

31. Calmet, *Dissertation upon the Apparitions*, 197.

burying suicide victims still occurred in England until the early nineteenth century, when it was banned by King George IV.³²

Introigne indicates that Schertz's account in *Magia Posthuma* was taken quite seriously in Italy, Germany and France, and was still quoted as an authoritative source well into the 19th century. He argues that Schertz must have been widely believed because so many scholars and skeptics made a point of attacking him. The greatest of these was Johann Heinrich Zedler who published the *Universal-Lexicon* between 1732–1754 in Leipzig. Zedler concluded that vampire scares are essentially the result of psychiatric illnesses, having almost no basis in empirical reality. The only non-psychological factor that Zedler considers is the soil of Eastern Europe, which he argues might explain why some corpses appear fresh long after burial.³³

Magia Posthuma also sparked controversy in the Roman Catholic Church over the existence of vampires. In Italy, monsignor Giuseppe Davanzati (1665–1755) archbishop of Trani, wrote *Dissertazione sopra i vampiri* in 1743, denying that vampires existed at all. This was apparently a refutation of cardinal Schtattenbach, the bishop of Olmutz, who found *Magia Posthuma* convincing. Davanzati's work was praised by Pope Benedict XIV (1675–1758), who censured East European bishops who believed in vampires as superstitious. Introigne quotes a letter from Benedict XIV to the Polish archbishop of Leopolis, in which he opines that “possibly there are priests who support belief in vampires in order to obtain from gullible peasants the payment of exorcisms and Masses.”³⁴

Calmet entered this debate a little too late to be taken seriously. He was writing at a time of early secularization in which the state as well as scientific discourse were becoming “emancipated secular spheres.”³⁵ The thoughts of a monk were increasingly unwelcome in the legal and scientific debates over the existence of vampires. By his own account, he was discouraged from writing on the subject. He writes that he:

32. Richard L. Greaves, *Society and Religion in Elizabethan England* (Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), 534.

33. Introigne, “Satanism Scares and Vampirism.”

34. Ibid.

35. Jose, Cassanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 19.

Found that there was little in it [stories of vampires] which could be depended upon as certain. This consideration, joined to the advice of some judicious and respectable persons who I consulted, made me give over my design entirely, and quit a subject exposed to so many contradictions.³⁶

However, he goes on to explain that he ultimately reconsidered and wrote his treatise in order to “undeceive the public.”³⁷ Unfortunately, he finished his work shortly after the Sorbonne condemned all reports of vampires and the desecration of corpses. Calmet was attacked for taking vampires seriously.³⁸ In 1755, Maria Theresa, Empress of Austria issued a decree forbidding “posthumous magic.” The following year, she passed the “Imperial and Royal Law Designed to Uproot Superstition and to Promote the Rational Judgment of Crimes Involving Magic and Sorcery.”³⁹ This legislation formally placed the matter of dealing with such reports under civil authority rather than clergy. These edicts went into effect just before Calmet’s death in 1757.⁴⁰

Voltaire in particular poked fun at Calmet and his interest in vampires throughout his *Philosophical Dictionary*.⁴¹ Introvigne points out that many have assumed Calmet was a believer in vampires based on Voltaire’s comments. In reality, while Voltaire thought stories of vampires were too ridiculous to be taken seriously, he held Calmet, “in some regard for his prodigious erudition in historical and theological matters.”⁴²

While *Dissertations* was censured by the intellectual elites, it was eagerly consumed by a growing market for occult books and went into numerous editions.⁴³ Occultists like Montague Summers and others seeking vampire lore found *Dissertations* invaluable.⁴⁴ Marie Hellene-Huet argues that in as much as he collected and disseminated ghost stories, Calmet

36. Calmet, *Dissertation upon the Apparitions*, vi.

37. *Ibid.*

38. Melton, *The Vampire Book*, 86–87.

39. McClelland, *Slayers and their Vampires*, 86.

40. *Ibid.*

41. Voltaire, “Vampires” in *A Philosophical Dictionary, Part 2*, trans. J.P. Mendum (Whitefish, Mont: Kessinger Publishing, 2003), 371–372.

42. Introvigne, “Satanism Scares and Vampirism.”

43. Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 75.

44. Montague Summers, *The Vampire: His Kith and Kin* (Whitefish, Mont: Kessinger Publishing, 2003), 26.

was actually the predecessor to horror writers like E. T. A. Hoffmann, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, Edgar Allan Poe, and Bram Stoker.⁴⁵ The fact that *Dissertations* has served this role, despite Calmet's objections to the reality of vampires, is probably due to Calmet's earnest attempt to present vampires through an emic perspective—i.e. the perspective of the villagers who reported vampires—before subjecting the idea to criticism.

Calmet as Proto-Anthropologist

Dissertations actually contains two distinct documents. The first deals with stories of ghost and apparitions. The scope of this study, much like Tylor's in *Religion in Primitive Culture*, is global and includes stories of ghosts and spectral phenomena from all cultures and periods. Calmet draws heavily on his scholastic background to include accounts of ghosts from Biblical as well as classical literature. Interestingly, Calmet specifies that he is interested in the history of ideas rather than evidence of the supernatural. He specifies that he quotes classical sources, "only as witnesses of the opinions which generally prevailed in their time."⁴⁶

The second treatise is concerned with vampires and the related belief of excommunicated corpses rising from the grave. Unlike ghosts, Calmet saw vampires as a regional phenomenon occurring only in certain parts of Eastern Europe including Hungary, Moldavia, Poland, and Greece.⁴⁷ Furthermore, he saw belief in vampires as a recent idea, with no precedent in the ancient world. He writes, "It is certain, that nothing of this sort was ever seen or known in antiquity. Search the histories of the Jews, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, and you will find nothing that comes near it."⁴⁸

All of *Dissertations* proceeds in a sprawling, somewhat inchoate fashion as Calmet tries to include every story and anecdote. In doing this, he draws on a variety of modern sources including newspapers, second hand witnesses, and letters. Due to the nature of Calmet's writing, there has been confusion as to whether he ultimately affirms the existence of vampires. However, careful readers will discern that Calmet finally argues against this

45. Marie-Hélène Huet, "Deadly Fears: Dom Augustin Calmet's Vampires and the Rule Over Death," in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 21.2 (1997): 222–223.

46. Calmet, *Dissertation upon the Apparitions*, ix.

47. *Ibid.*, iv.

48. *Ibid.*, 180.

possibility on both scientific and theological grounds. His greatest scientific objection is the problem of how a vampire could emerge through six feet of earth and then return to it without disturbing the soil.⁴⁹ Theologically, he argues that only God has the power to resurrect the dead.

In considering Calmet as a proto-anthropologist, I will draw attention to four aspects of *Dissertations*: First, *Dissertations* does not fit neatly into any of the disciplines of its day. Calmet tempers Enlightenment rationalism with an epistemological modesty that seems to be rooted in his theological assumptions. The result suggests the emergence of a new field of inquiry with greater sympathy for “irrational” perspectives. Second, the text appears to contain a theory of culture and regards vampires as a cultural institution. This was a drastic departure from skeptics like Zedler, who regarded belief in vampirism as a mental illness. Third, Calmet assumes that supernatural beliefs are not acausal. Rather, he argues that they have a basis in empirical reality but have been misinterpreted through what Tylor would call an “error of reasoning.” This approach, which is rooted in his Biblical exegesis, requires him to imagine phenomena through the perspective of another culture. Although this frequently amounts to reductionistic explanations, it is an important first step towards apprehending the worldview of another culture. Fourth, *Dissertations* contains profound implications about the power of social knowledge. In suggesting that belief in vampires could cause an individual to die of fright, Calmet makes an observation about the social construction of reality that I argue was not fully developed until Durkheim.

Interdisciplinary Analysis

What is most interesting about *Dissertations* is the ambiguity of Calmet’s role. He seems at various times to be a theologian, a forensic scientist, and a psychologist. Furthermore, Calmet is aware that he is straddling different spheres of interpretation. He writes:

I had a mind to see how far this matter was certain, or uncertain; true, or false; known, or unknown, clear, or obscure.... I shall therefore examine this question as an historian, as a philosopher, and as a divine. As an historian, I shall endeavor to discover the truth of the facts; as a philosopher, I shall consider their causes and

49. *Ibid.*, 28.

circumstances; and lastly, the light which theology affords will enable me to draw from it some consequences with a view to religion.⁵⁰

This does not sound so different from a proposal for an interdisciplinary project in modern academia. An effect of modernity, which began during the Enlightenment, was the separation of the spheres of science and the state from religion. Vampires, however, appear to be one of the last ideas to be differentiated in this fashion: In the eighteenth century, no one was certain if vampires were a scientific or religious problem or what sort of expert was qualified to speak on the matter. Calmet describes how the emperor of Hungary arranged a delegation to investigate cases of vampirism that included military officers, lawyers, physicians, chirurgeons, and clergy.⁵¹

Calmet's religious vocation seems to have affected his investigation in some unexpected ways. First, unlike other skeptics in the Catholic Church, Calmet does not seem especially interested in combating superstition. He writes that:

I do not expect to cure the errors of the superstitious, or the prejudices of the people, nor even to correct the abuses which spring from their unenlightened belief, or to answer all the objections which may be made against apparitions, or to distinguish myself and acquire fame, or divert myself.⁵²

That Calmet should assume such a passive stance is hardly surprising, considering that he rejected an influential position as bishop in order to continue his writing as a monk. What is significant for our purposes is that although Calmet's writing was religious, he was not a missionary. Missionaries have typically been regarded as "the enemy" by anthropologists. Furthermore, Evans-Pritchard has suggested that many of the early writers on the anthropology of religion, including Tylor, had an animosity toward revealed religion.⁵³ Calmet made no attempt to distance his interpretation of vampires from his theological assumptions. However, he was also not interested in changing the culture where these beliefs occurred.

50. *Ibid.*, iv–vii.

51. *Ibid.*, 199.

52. *Ibid.*, vii.

53. Claude E. Stipe, et al., "Anthropologists Versus Missionaries: The Influence of Presuppositions [and Comments and Reply]" in *Current Anthropology*, vol. 21, no. 2, (1980): 165–179.

Second, Calmet had a sort of epistemological modesty that appears to be rooted in his theology. The front matter of *Dissertations* contains an endorsement by doctor De Marcilly of the Sorbonne who comments that, “His judicious reflections will display with equal lustre his critical abilities, and will undoubtedly secure the reader from a vain credulity, which disposes men to believe everything, and from a dangerous skepticism, which disposes them to doubt of everything.”⁵⁴ Calmet saw himself as neither a skeptic nor a believer but attempted a “middle way” that he called the “voie raisonnable” (“reasonable way”).⁵⁵ This balance between credulity and skepticism appears to be rooted in the axiom, “*Scrutator majestatis opprimetur a Gloria*” or “He that pries too far into the majesty, shall be confounded with the glory.”⁵⁶ Whereas Enlightenment thought is typically characterized by the idea that all things can be known through reason, Calmet believed that there are some things mankind was not meant to know. He writes, “It would be rash to pronounce decisively upon matters, which God has not thought fit to reveal to us.”⁵⁷ This epistemological modesty may have led him to suspend his disbelief about vampires long enough to cultivate a sympathy for believers.

Finally, it is significant that Calmet assumes the existence of a unified human nature. This too is a theological assumption with anthropological implications. Carla Musi writes that Calmet was, “still tied to the myth of human nature having a divine origin and therefore identical in various societies.”⁵⁸ This is not so different from Tylor’s notion of “psychic unity.” Calmet’s strange mix of Enlightenment rationalism and theological piety made an anthropological project possible. Somehow he was able to approach the beliefs of others without materialist skepticism or by condemning them as superstition or heresy. In this sense, it could be argued that *Dissertations* set an important precedent for future anthropological approaches to religion and folklore.

54. Calmet, *Dissertation upon the Apparitions*, xiii.

55. Introvigne, “Satanism Scares and Vampirism.”

56. Calmet, *Dissertation upon the Apparitions*, 10.

57. *Ibid.*, viii.

58. Carla Musi, *Shamanism from East to West* (Budapest: Akaemiai Kiado, 1997), 66.

A Theory of Culture

Prior to Calmet, most skeptics appeared to interpret belief in vampires as a medical illness. Zedler's critique of *Magia Postuma* dismissed accounts of vampires as the hallucinations of diseased minds. Similarly, de Tournefort wrote of his experience on the island of Mycone, "Everyone's imagination was struck: and those with the most rational mind were struck just like the rest; it was a true brain disease, as dangerous as mania and rabies."⁵⁹

Calmet occasionally falls back on this explanation. He writes that some aspects of supernatural phenomena can only be explained as, "the silly whimsies of a disturbed brain."⁶⁰ However, he consistently argues throughout *Dissertations* that vampires are the product of a different culture. In fact, Calmet actually begins his treatise on vampires with what appears to be a theory of culture. He writes:

Every age, nation, and country has its particular prejudices, diseases, fashions, and inclinations which seem to distinguish their several characters, and having had their day, go off, and succeeded by others: and it frequently happens, that what was the object of admiration at one time, is treated with contempt and ridicule in another.⁶¹

Thus, "truth," for Calmet, is relative in terms of both space and time. While vampires do not "exist" in France, they do in places such as Hungary, Moravia, Poland, and Greece—at least for the time being. Furthermore, he suggests that this cannot simply be because the people of these regions are intellectually inferior. He asks, "Can it be supposed, that a whole nation shall not afford a single man of sense, who is free from such whims?"⁶² He never answers this rhetorical question. However, the implication is that belief in vampires cannot be attributed merely to "a lack of sense." This argument is related to Calmet's assumption of a form of psychic unity.

At one point, he attempts to solve this problem by suggesting that regional climate and diet predisposes East Europeans to hallucinate. This is the approach of Johann Zedler and others who saw belief in vampirism as a medical problem. However, Calmet abandons this idea almost immediately.

59. Calmet, *Dissertation upon the Apparitions*, 146.

60. *Ibid.*, 110.

61. *Ibid.*, 179.

62. *Ibid.*, 290.

He writes, “The coarse food of the inhabitants renders them susceptible to certain indispositions, which take their rise from a bad climate, and wholesome nourishment,” however, in the same sentence he adds that these indispositions, “are prodigiously increased by prejudice, fancy, and fear.”⁶³ In other words, climate and diet are insufficient of themselves to account for belief in vampires.

Calmet’s comments also suggest that “reason” is limited by cultural context and that what seems “reasonable” in France may not seem so in Eastern Europe. He writes:

Whence again is it, that these scenes are so frequently acted over again in these particular countries, that these prejudices of the inhabitants are never to be rooted out, and that daily experience, instead of putting a stop to these fancies, serves only to increase and strengthen them?⁶⁴

He states elsewhere, “In Poland, they are so fully convinced of the existence of vampires, as to look upon those that deny it as little better than heretics.”⁶⁵ Ultimately, belief in vampires is not a medical phenomenon but a cultural one. In as much as Calmet realized this, but did not advocate acting to change the culture of Eastern Europe, he was ahead of his time.

The “Error of Reasoning” Hypothesis

Like many Enlightenment thinkers, Calmet attempted to find rational explanations behind stories of vampires. For example, he explains that the “groans” corpses appear to make when pierced with a wooden stake are actually gas escaping the body.⁶⁶ He also brings up many cases of individuals appearing to die and being resuscitated to argue that vampirism may be a kind of sleeping sickness.⁶⁷ While such an approach seems reductionistic and dismissive to modern cultural theorists, it was an important step forward from purely medical interpretations that saw belief in vampires as evidence of hallucination, madness, or mental deficiency. For instance one of Calmet’s contemporaries, Costano Grimaldi, suggested that belief in vampires was

63. *Ibid.*, 289.

64. *Ibid.*, 284.

65. *Ibid.*, 327.

66. *Ibid.*, 214.

67. *Ibid.*, 291.

entirely reducible to drinking habits, arguing that vampires only appear in countries where peasants drink beer rather than wine.⁶⁸

In the front matter of *Dissertations*, Calmet writes that, “I must further desire my reader to make a distinction between the facts themselves which are related, and the manner of their being brought about, since the former may be certain, and the latter wholly unknown.”⁶⁹ Thus, he assumes that the seemingly irrational beliefs of other cultures are not acausal, but rather can be understood by imagining how phenomena might look through the perspective of another time and place. Calmet first began to develop this approach through his work as a Biblical scholar. He was one of the first exegetes of the Enlightenment to attempt an explanation of Biblical miracles in terms of the scientific understanding of ancient times. Using the same approach, Calmet argues that stories of vampires can be “explained and confuted at the same time” by reducing, “the ornaments of fable to the standard of truth.”⁷⁰ This is essentially the same assumption used by Tylor with his defense of animists as “primitive philosophers.”

Furthermore, Calmet takes this approach further than many Enlightenment thinkers by stating explicitly that his own culture has been guilty of such “errors of reasoning” in the past and may still be misinterpreting cause and effect. He writes of the European witchcraft trials that, “The ignorance of that age attributed several natural events to supernatural causes.”⁷¹ In fact, the memory of witch trials may have been the unspoken “elephant in the room” that motivated so many Enlightenment thinkers to debunk stories of vampires. McClelland argues that, “It was incumbent on the rationalist scientists, coming away from centuries of horrifically unjust persecution and torture of so-called witches, to refute any argument by any authorities that vampires could exist by any supernatural causes.”⁷²

This modesty regarding his own scientific understanding appears again when Calmet discusses the phenomenon known as “St. Elmo’s fire” in which ships at sea appear to be covered with blue flame. He writes that, “Philosophers consider it as a natural phenomenon, and nothing more than

68. Introvigne, “Antoine Faivre,” 609.

69. Calmet, *Dissertation upon the Apparitions*, viii.

70. *Ibid.*, x.

71. *Ibid.*, 267.

72. McClelland, *Slayers and Their Vampires*, 89.

an inflamed vapor: an opinion which I shall not contest, but only observe, that the ancients looked upon these fires as supernatural and divine.”⁷³ What is striking about this passage is that while Calmet does not believe St. Elmo’s fire is a supernatural phenomenon, he also admits that he does not understand how it is explained by the physics of his day.⁷⁴ This admission of ignorance implies a sympathy for “the ancients” and suggests that their powers of reasoning were not inferior to his own.

The Power of Social Knowledge

Calmet’s theory that the vampire phenomena is caused by an “error of reasoning” ultimately leads him to conclude that individuals thought to have been killed by vampires actually died of fright. He writes:

It may readily be allowed to be possible that the blood of human bodies, even after they have been buried several days, should still retain its fluidity, and issue from the canals of the carcass. Add to this, how easy it is for some people to fancy themselves to be sucked by vampires, and for the fear which must naturally attend to this opinion, to cause in them so great a commotion, as to deprive them of life. Their imagination being possessed all day with the fear of these pretended spectres, it is not to be wondered at, that the same ideas should present themselves in sleep and occasion so great a fright as to make some persons die immediately and others in a few days.⁷⁵

The idea that psychological stress can induce a heart attack or otherwise cause someone to “die of fright” was made famous by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s story *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. In 2001, an article appeared in the *British Medical Journal* evaluating the plausibility of the “Hound of the Baskervilles effect.” A study found that Chinese and Japanese rates of cardiac mortality peaked on the fourth day of the month. The explanation offered is that in Chinese and Japanese cultures the number four is associated

73. *Ibid.*, 62.

74. St. Elmo’s fire is now considered to be ionized air created by the discharge of electrons created by a strong electromagnetic field. See John S. Friedman, *Out of the Blue: A History of Lightning* (New York, New York: Random House, 2008), 123–134. Eighteenth century philosophers, with only a rudimentary understanding of electricity and magnetism could not possibly have understood this. In this sense, Calmet’s hesitation to endorse the “inflamed vapor” theory was warranted.

75. *Ibid.*, 205.

with death and that psychological distress over this association contributes to a higher level of fatal heart attacks on the fourth day of the month.⁷⁶

Medical speculation aside, these ideas carry heavy implications for a theory of culture. Calmet's suggestion that a cultural fear of vampires can cause someone to die of fright—an idea which clearly sparked the Western imagination—demands that “superstitions” and indeed all cultural institutions have consequences in physical reality. The full ramifications of this claim for anthropology were not developed until Durkheim in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Durkheim's study of how the “impersonal forces” of aboriginal religion could cause actual sickness and death is similar to Calmet's observation about vampires. Durkheim famously wrote that the forces of aboriginal belief, “behave like real forces. In a sense they are even material forces that mechanically generate physical effects.”⁷⁷ In this sense, I argue that Calmet's claim that vampire panics could cause believers to die of fright anticipated Durkheim's claim that, “There are no religions that are false.”⁷⁸

Calmet's Influence on Tylor

Tylor clearly saw Calmet as a useful scholarly source. In fact, he remarks that moderns are often less skeptical than Calmet in his analysis of fantastic stories.⁷⁹ Both writers draw on many of the same sources such as the Greek epics, the writings of Augustine, and hagiographies of the Catholic saints. In some cases, Tylor's examples are taken directly from Calmet.⁸⁰ It is impossible to say with certainty exactly how Calmet influenced Tylor's thinking either directly or indirectly. However, there are some interesting similarities between Tylor's work and the theory of culture in *Dissertations*. I will first speculate as to why Tylor may have been reading Calmet in the

76. David C. Phillips et al., “The Hound of the Baskervilles effect: natural experiment on the influence of psychological stress on the timing of death” in *British Medical Journal* 323 (2001): 1143–1146. The methodology of this article was called into question in a subsequent issue of the Journal. See Gary Smith, “Scared to Death?” in *British Medical Journal* 324 (2002): 1442–1443.

77. Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Carol Cosman (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 141–142.

78. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms*, 2.

79. Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture*, 274.

80 *Ibid.*, 32, 36.

first place, and then outline some of the shared assumptions between the two writers as well as account for certain differences.

Vampires are one of the elements of culture that Tylor chooses to include in *Religion in Primitive Cultures*. He argues that the belief in supernatural beings is a manifestation of animism used to explain, “the living causes of universal life.” Furthermore, he argues that these explanations are not something to be condemned but a source of joy for the primitive philosopher.⁸¹ In the case of vampires, animism is used to explain wasting diseases.⁸² Vampires are a good choice for making this argument, because they show a clear and cogent example of Tylor’s “error of reasoning.” Furthermore, the belief in vampires reinforces Tylor’s larger argument that animism arises from the primitive philosopher contemplating the distinction between living beings and corpses. However, I suspect that Tylor may have had a personal interest in vampires and the supernatural that ultimately led him to Calmet.

Although Tylor cites Calmet, his account of what a vampire is actually bears little resemblance to the creatures described in *Dissertations*. For Tylor, vampires are disembodied souls—either of living wizards or of corpses—that leave their bodies, absorb the blood of people as they sleep, and then return to their bodies.⁸³ Certainly, Calmet did not consider vampires to be disembodied: His primary objection was that they could not emerge from the grave without disturbing the ground. Tylor’s model of vampirism certainly makes better fodder for this theory of animism, but where did he get it? Sadly, no citation is given.

I suspect that Tylor took this idea from the writings of the French Spiritualist Z. J. Piérart. In his journal *La Review Spiritualiste* published in 1861, Piérart argued that vampire legends could be explained as a form of “bicorporeal existence” in which body and spirit become detached.⁸⁴ According to this theory, the body—which is not completely dead—remains in the grave while its spirit departs to drain the blood of the living. This disembodied soul then deposits the stolen blood into the comatose body,

81. *Ibid.*, 270–271.

82. *Ibid.*, 278.

83. Tylor, 279.

84. Z. J. Piérart, *Review Spiritualiste* (Paris: Bureaux, 1861), 106.

maintaining a state of suspended animation. Piérart speculated that such an existence could be caused by the trauma of being buried alive.

We know that Tylor had an interest in Spiritualism. His notebooks from 1872 describe his investigation of séances. Indeed, this is the only anthropological “fieldwork” Tylor ever did.⁸⁵ He also makes oblique references to Spiritualism in *Religion in Primitive Culture*. He could have read Piérart’s theory of vampirism in his study of Spiritualism but felt it was not scholarly enough to cite. At the time, Piérart was being quoted primarily by the Theosophical Society who were busy formulating their own occult theories of vampirism.⁸⁶ Tylor may not have wanted to make it known that he was reading the same books as the likes of Madame Blavatsky. However, there is another reason why Tylor may not have cited any of the nineteenth century vampire literature: His entire theory of “primitive philosophy” yielding to science is seriously compromised by the existence of modern “animists” among the educated classes of America and Western Europe.⁸⁷ In fact, it was occultists like Piérart and the Theosophical Society, and not the villagers of *Dissertations*, who developed the truly “animistic” vampire described by Tylor.

Wouter Hanegraaff argues that Tylor probably regretted the way that science killed older, analogical thinking.⁸⁸ Similarly, Paul Radin in his forward to *Religion in Primitive Culture* speculates that animism not only had a definite value for Tylor, it had personal meaning.⁸⁹ We have then a plausible portrait of Tylor as a sort of “closet animist” with a substantial interest in the supernatural and the occult. Tylor may have read Calmet initially for pleasure rather than as grist for his theory of animism. He mentions that Calmet is a good entrée into “a whole literature of hideous vampire-stories,”⁹⁰ which he was probably familiar with. Prior to Tylor,

85. George W. Stocking, Jr., “Animism in Theory and Practice: E. B. Tylor’s Unpublished ‘Notes on Spiritualism,’” *Man* 6, no. 1 (1971): 88–104.

86. Helena Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled* (Point Loma: Aryan Theosophical Press, 1919), 453; Henry S. Olcott, “The Vampire” in *The Theosophist: October 1890–April 1891* ed. Henry S. Olcott (Whitefish, Mont: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 385–393.

87. Stocking, “Animism in Theory and Practice,” 102.

88. Hanegraaff, “The Emergence of the Academic Science of Magic,” 258.

89. Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture*, xiv.

90. *Ibid.*, 278.

pleasure was apparently the reason that most people read Calmet.⁹¹ In fact, Tylor's attitude towards the supernatural—which Hanegraaff describes as “skeptical curiosity”⁹²—is not unlike that of Calmet himself. It is certainly conceivable that Tylor's interest in ghosts and vampires is what ultimately led him to his theory of animism, rather than the other way around.

There are several aspects of Tylor's theory of animism that could have been inspired by *Dissertations*, the most significant being the “error of reasoning” hypothesis. Tylor's interpretation of vampires—which he sees as a prime example of how animistic belief works—was foreshadowed by Calmet's argument that vampires represented an attempt to explain natural effects with supernatural causes. Tylor's exact words, “Vampires are not mere creations of groundless fancy, but causes conceived in spiritual form to account for specific facts of wasting disease” sounds as if it came directly from quasi-theological, quasi-rational terminology of *Dissertations*.⁹³

Furthermore, Calmet seems to have had an awareness, as did Tylor, that we too make errors of reasoning as did ancient peoples. Recall Calmet's statement that, “It frequently happens, that what was the object of admiration at one time, is treated with contempt and ridicule in another.”⁹⁴ This has implications for both the ideas of the past and the present: Not only should ancient people be forgiven their imperfect understanding of the world, but the knowledge that we presently admire will likely be ridiculed one day as well. Compare this with Tylor's comment, quoted by Hanegraaff, that, “No doubt will our own modern philosophy one day, be had out, old and blind, to make sport for the Philistines of the future.”⁹⁵ James Frazer also built on this idea in *The Golden Bough*, albeit in a somewhat more condescending fashion than Tylor. He writes:

After all, what we call truth is only the hypothesis which is found to work best. Therefore in reviewing the opinions and practices of ruder ages and races we shall do well to look with leniency upon their errors as inevitable slips made

91. Huet, “Deadly Fears, 222.

92. Wouter J. Hanegraaff, “The Emergence of the Academic Science of Magic: The Occult Philosophy of Tylor and Frazer” in *Religion in the Making: The Emergence of the Sciences of Religion*, ed. Arie L. Molendijk and Peter Pels (Boston, Mass: Brill, 1998): 253–276. Hanegraaff, “The Emergence of the Academic Science of Magic,” 257.

93. Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture*, 278.

94. Calmet, *Dissertation upon the Apparitions*, 179.

95. Hanegraaff, “The Emergence of the Academic Science of Magic,” 269.

in the search for truth and to give them the benefit of that indulgence which we ourselves may one day stand in need of.⁹⁶

A final interesting similarity between Tylor and Calmet is their distaste for “magic” as something distinct from religion. Hanegraaff has written on the inconsistencies of how magic is defined in Tylor and Frazer. He writes that Tylor minimizes any relationship between religion and magic, and perceives the later entirely in terms of “pseudo-science.”⁹⁷ The sympathy Tylor has for “the primitive philosopher” is apparently suspended when it comes to magic. Interestingly, Hanegraaff attributes this inconsistency to Tylor’s inability, “to break with the western heritage of looking at ‘the occult’ as the antithesis *par excellence* of all true and decent religion, rationality, and science.”⁹⁸ It is perhaps not surprising then that we see a similar discrepancy in Calmet, Tylor’s Western predecessor. Calmet, who seems to have put his reputation on the line to study what others have dubbed “superstition,” writes on “magic:”

It was instantly taken for granted, that there was such a thing as magic, or an art, consisting of infallible rules discovering certain secrets... But upon a strict inquiry into this pretended magic, it turns out to be nothing but an art of poisoning, accompanied with superstition, ceremonies, and gross imposture.⁹⁹

The most significant difference between Calmet and Tylor is the way that they use archival evidence. A diachronic, evolutionist perspective seems to be the missing element that distinguishes Tylor’s theory of animism, from the approach in *Dissertations*. Like Tylor, Calmet was interested in the history of ideas regarding souls and the supernatural. Again, both writers cite some of the same sources, however, Calmet seems to have turned to ancient sources in part to buttress his own theological convictions. Consider the following passages:

96. James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion, Volume 3* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1911), 422. Frazer’s lesser-known work *On Burial Customs as Illustrative of the Primitive Theory of the Soul*, contains a discussion of vampires. Like Tylor, he argues that practices intended to keep the dead from rising indicate an early animistic philosophy (James George Frazer, *On Burial Customs as Illustrative of the Primitive Theory of the Soul*, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1885), 66).

97. Hanegraaff, “The Emergence of the Academic Science of Magic,” 257.

98. *Ibid.*, 264.

99. Calmet, *Dissertation upon the Apparitions*, 267–7.

“It is of consequence to show, that the ancient Greeks and Romans held, that the souls of men were immortal, that they existed after the death of the body, and that there was another life, in which they received the reward of their good actions, or the punishment of their crimes.”¹⁰⁰

“I only quote these authors to show, that the apparitions of souls, after the death of the body, is an uninterrupted and ancient tradition, founded upon facts.”¹⁰¹

Taylor’s preoccupation with origins is absent here, as are the teleological ideas about the history of ideas.¹⁰²

I attribute this innovation to two causes: First, Tylor and Calmet are separated by the works of G. W. F. Hegel and Charles Darwin. Hegel set the stage for evolutionary thinking and Mary Douglas argues that Tylor was influenced by Darwin’s *Origin of the Species*.¹⁰³ For Tylor, Calmet’s use of classical sources was not evidence that the soul existed, but rather fodder for a grand theory of where this idea of the soul originated.

Second, Tylor had the luxury of writing in a time when Western Europe was not suffering from rumors of vampires. It is far easier to think about vampires as a “survival” or as evidence of a grand historical narrative if the rumors of vampires are not currently being debated in courts or investigated by law enforcement. Vampire panic returned to Western Europe in March 1970, when rumors of a vampire caused a mob of self-appointed slayers to swarm London’s Highgate cemetery, defiling graves and corpses, and inflicting immense property damage. The cost to repair damaged tombs far outweighed Highgate’s funds and in 1981, this famous cemetery—the final resting place of Karl Marx—was sold to private investors for only fifty pounds.¹⁰⁴ A far milder panic occurred in Boston in March 2009 when police were summoned to Boston Latin Academy to quell rumors of vampires. The police response only encouraged the rumors. Eventually, a

100. *Ibid.*, ix,

101. *Ibid.*, 34.

102. For a postmodern critique of the Victorian interest in the origin of religion see Tomoko Masuzawa, *In Search of Dreamtime: The Quest for the Origin of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

103. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Boston, Mass: Ark Paperbacks, 1984), 13.

104. Bill Ellis, *Raising the Devil: Satanism, New Religions, and the Media* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 123–125.

letter was sent to all faculty, students, and parents emphasizing that were no vampires at Boston Latin Academy.¹⁰⁵ Had Tylor lived to see such things, his approach to vampires may well have been similar to Calmet's—that is, seeking a synchronic explanation of the present rather than a diachronic theory of the past.¹⁰⁶

Conclusions

So far I have noted the similarities between Calmet and Tylor in order to suggest that Calmet's vampirology may have influenced Tylor's theory of animism. It is widely recognized that during the Enlightenment, steps were taken in a number of fields towards what ultimately became anthropology. In addition to Montesquieu, French thinkers such as Buffon, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Helvetius, and Diderot have all been recognized as important forerunners of modern anthropology.¹⁰⁷ Calmet, thus far, has been left out of this story.

Calmet's investigation of vampires demanded a larger theory of culture and human nature, but due its subject matter *Dissertations* was relegated to the category of "occult" literature. However, the somewhat ghoulish appeal of Calmet's work caused *Dissertations* to go into many editions and to reach a significant audience, particularly among Victorians. *Dissertations* was read by Theosophists and Spiritualists as well as the merely curious. As a result, Calmet may have had an influence on Victorian ideas about the origin of religion that has gone largely unnoticed. Tylor's use of Calmet, as well as a few other citations, may be the only concrete evidence of Calmet's influence in scholarly circles.

105. Martin Finucane and Maria Cramer, "Boston Latin officials seek to quash 'vampire' rumors." in *Boston Globe*, March 26, 2009. Available online at http://www.boston.com/news/local/breaking_news/2009/03/boston_latin_of.html, (accessed 9 December, 2009).

106. Interestingly, Stetson was aware that corpses in his native New England and in his own century had been exhumed and their hearts cut out. While he remained a strong supporter of Tylor, he was forced to abandon Tylor's progressive teleology in favor of a model of intellectual progress and regress. He writes, "As in the financial and political, the psychologic world has its periods of exaltation and depression, of ebb and flow, of confidence and alarm" See Stetson, "The Animistic Vampire in New England," 3.

107. Michele Duchet, *Anthropologie et Histoire au siecle des Lumieres: Buffon, Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius, Diderot*, (Paris: Maspero, 1971).

In closing, it is worth noting that “primitive religion” is still associated in the public consciousness with demons, superstition, and the fear of the supernatural. The allure of the demonic attracted the vampire scholars of the Enlightenment to contemplate other cultures and seems to have held a similar fascination for Victorians like Tylor and Frazer. Theorists like Emile Durkheim and Mary Douglas went to great pains to dispel the idea that *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor*.¹⁰⁸ Perhaps this is because buried beneath the foundations of the anthropology of religion lies the forgotten discipline of vampirology.

108. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms*, 348.