

## ***Sinister Spirit***

*Tracing the Spirit of Antichrist Through Current Events*

By Timothy Zebell

### **Appendix C.3**

#### Paranormal Gateways to Vampirism, Wicca, and the Occult

People tend to emulate their role models. This has given rise to such fads as spandex, sagging pants, twerking, and Tebowing. It has also spawned celebrity advertisements and product placement in popular entertainment. Therefore, it should not be surprising to learn that some people even seek to emulate the paranormal qualities of their favorite fictional characters. What begins as fiction often spills over into reality.

A 2000, *BBC* article titled “Buffy draws children to witchcraft,” reports that paranormal entertainment such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, and *Harry Potter* encourage an interest in witchcraft among children. According to the report, “The Pagan Federation, which represents druids and witches, says it has been ‘swamped’ with calls following teenage programmes featuring good witches.”<sup>1</sup> According to a *This is London* article titled “Potter fans turning to witchcraft,” the Pagan Federation “deals with an average of 100 inquiries a month from youngsters who want to become witches, and it claims it has occasionally been ‘swamped’ with calls.”<sup>2</sup> “It is quite probably linked to things like Harry Potter, Sabrina The Teenage Witch and Buffy The Vampire Slayer,’ explains the Federation’s media officer, Andy Norfolk. ‘Every time an article on witchcraft or paganism appears, we had a huge surge in calls, mostly from young girls.’”<sup>3</sup> Because of this, “The Pagan Federation has appointed a youth officer to deal with a flood of inquiries following the success of the Harry Potter books which describe magic and wizardry.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Buffy draws children to witchcraft.”

<sup>2</sup> “Potter fans turning to witchcraft,” *This is London*, August 4, 1999, Source: Kjos, “Book Review.”

<sup>3</sup> “Potter fans turning to witchcraft,” *This is London*, Aug. 4, 1999, Source: “Harry Potter and Witchcraft.”

<sup>4</sup> Kjos, “Book Review.”

Steve Wohlberg<sup>5</sup> of *White Horse Media* and author of *Exposing Harry Potter and Witchcraft* was asked the question, “Where do you see evidence that Harry is causing an upswing in the popularity of Wicca/Witchcraft?” He answered:

The evidence is all around us. Here are just a few examples. During one radio interview (Live from Seattle, KGNW, WA) with me as the guest a caller named Melissa phoned the show and told host Thor Tolo and me that her 14-year-old daughter read the first Harry Potter book and then promptly went back to the bookstore to purchase books about Wicca. A friend of mine has a daughter who works at a Barnes & Nobel bookstore in Nashville, TN. She said that many young people purchase both Harry Potter and Wicca books together. Another teenage friend told me that she met a Wiccan in an internet chat room who confessed that it was Harry Potter that first created his interest in spells and magic. The founder of a large internet witchcraft school has publicly stated in a press release that Harry Potter teaches Wiccan philosophy and is aiding the Wiccan cause – big time.<sup>6</sup>

Paranormal entertainment has proven to be a popular gateway into genuine Occultism. Perhaps this is because it ignites the imagination and fuels curiosity. Perhaps it is because the fictional accounts often rest upon a solid foundation of historical witchcraft and Occultism. In fact, during a 1999 radio interview on *The Diane Rehm Show*, J.K. Rowling “admitted that fully one third of her material is based on actual occultism.”<sup>7</sup> Richard Abanes, author of *Harry Potter and the Bible*, notes that J.K. Rowling has “an extremely well-developed and sophisticated knowledge of the occult world, its legends, history, and nuances.”<sup>8</sup> According to HarryPotterPower.com:

Practically every symbol and object used by actual witches is found in these books. This includes spells, spell books, curse and bewitchment formulas, magic words, exorcism, wands, robes, cauldrons, flying brooms, and all the rest. All the weird and vicious animals, and mythical creatures of ancient centuries (such as elves, goats, banshees, owls, and dragons), are added to present a picture of extreme witchery. ... These books instruct the reader in the actual practices of witchcraft. These books do more than merely talk about witches, they explain in detail their training program and how they carry on their magic.

*Information from the actual instructional books for witches in training are here, providing entry-level instruction.*

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<sup>5</sup> Steve Wohlberg’s ministry is Seventh Day Adventist, which is a denomination that denies some critical doctrines among the Evangelical, Baptist, and Reformed denominations. Included in these doctrines is the doctrine of salvation. Seventh Day Adventists teach that a person is saved by grace, but their salvation is kept—or maintained—by the Law. This is not to deny the salvation of all Seventh Day Adventists, but in order to embrace the doctrine of salvation by grace alone, apart from works, one cannot fully adhere to Seventh Day Adventist doctrine.

<sup>6</sup> Avoid Harry Potter, “Where do you see evidence that Harry.”

<sup>7</sup> *The Diane Rehm Show*, WAMU, October 20, 1999, Source: Harry Potter Power, “The Harry Potter Books are Witchcraft.”

<sup>8</sup> Abanes, *Harry Potter and the Bible*, 24.

The *Ordo Anno Mundi* (OAM) Series are books for *professional* witches. They contain instruction only slightly in more detail than the Rowling books. *The OAM Series contains complete witchcraft instructions—yet is little different than the Potter books!* Here is a comparison between the professional witchcraft training series and the Harry Potter books:

OAM has seven degrees of “Magical Training,” and includes classes strikingly similar to those offered at Hogwarts, Harry Potter’s school.

OAM General Education primer: “Ancient Runes.” Here is an example from the Harry Potter books: “Those are my books for . . . Divination, the Study of Ancient Runes” (*Prisoner of Azkaban*, p. 57, original edition).

OAM First Degree: “Divination.” An example in Harry Potter: “We will be covering the basic methods of Divination this year” (*Prisoner of Azkaban*, p. 103).

OAM First Degree: “Spellcasting.” An example in Potter: “All students should have a copy of *The Standard Book of Spells, Grade 1*” (*Sorcerer’s Stone*, p. 66).

OAM Fourth Degree: “Animal Transformation (witches also call it “transfiguration”).” An example from the Potter books: “Transfiguration is some of the most complex and dangerous magic you will learn at Hogwarts” (*Sorcerer’s Stone*, p. 134). “My transformations in those days were—were terrible. It is very painful to turn into a werewolf . . . [My friends] could each turn into a different animal” (*Prisoner of Azkaban*, pp. 353–354).

OAM Fifth Degree: “Magical Lore.” An example from Potter: “Their very last exam was History of Magic” (*Sorcerer’s Stone*, p. 263).<sup>9</sup>

Paranormal entertainment has proven to be an ideal primer into the world of genuine Occultism. In his book *Harry Potter and the Bible*, Richard Abanes observes, “Ultimately, only a short distance needs to be covered in order to cross over from Harry’s world into the realm of real occultism.”<sup>10</sup>

Of course, not every person who reads Harry Potter or watches *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* will pursue the Occult. Just as not every person who drinks alcohol becomes an alcoholic, so also not every person who is exposed to the Occult will become engrossed in it. However, it is difficult to know in advance how each individual will respond. Lindy Beam, a youth culture analyst, warns us, “Any time the dark side of the supernatural world is presented as harmless, there is the danger that children will become curious and find out—too late—that witchcraft is neither harmless nor imaginary.”<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps a more extreme example of people emulating fictional paranormal characters is the werewolf. Internet werewolf chat forums are filled with people who either believe themselves to be werewolves, or who

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<sup>9</sup> Harry Potter Power. “The Harry Potter Books are Witchcraft.”

<sup>10</sup> Abanes, *Harry Potter and the Bible*, 173.

<sup>11</sup> Abanes, *Harry Potter and the Bible*, 1.

desire to become a werewolf.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, there are many who believe themselves to be vampires. Despite the fact that vampires do not exist as they are portrayed in paranormal fiction, there is a burgeoning community of “real life vampires.” A 2009 ABC News article titled “Coming Out of the Coffin: Vampires Among Us” reports, “Throughout the country and all over the world, a hidden subculture of people believe they are real vampires. They claim to have an ‘energy leak,’ which makes them feel sick and lethargic. To offset this energy imbalance, they say they need to feed on other people’s energy or blood.”<sup>13</sup>

*National Geographic*, *20/20*, *Fox News*, *NBC News*, and *The Washington Post* have also reported on “real life vampires.” In a 2011 *Fox News* report titled “Night Neighbors,” Sean Hannity reports:

Now in this day and age it seems impossible that anyone can believe in this nonsense, but in pop culture vampires are making a comeback in a big way. The blockbuster movie, *Twilight* is setting box office records on the big screen, while HBO’s *True Blood* is heating up the small screen ... But vampires aren’t just tinsel town moneymakers, there’s actually a vampire subculture that exists in the United States right now and spreads into almost every community in this country.<sup>14</sup>

Some of these vampires have mimicked the vampire of the silver screen. They sport long hair, colored contact lenses, and gothic makeup and clothing. Some have even had their teeth filed or wear custom-fit fangs.<sup>15</sup> Others appear normal in every sense of the word. Reporting on a growing number of vampire clans in Australia, a 2009 *Sunday Mail* article records the words of a self-professed vampire, “We’re real, we’re alive, we live and work in cities, we hold jobs, we’re your next-door neighbor, we have families – but we just have a different understanding.”<sup>16</sup> Likewise, self-professed vampire and author of *The Psychic Vampire Codex*, Michelle Belanger told *Fox News*, “There are people who identify as real vampires everywhere and

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<sup>12</sup> Examples:

- “PLEASE BITE ME, I WANNA BE A WEREWOLF!!!!”  
(Bryan, “Response.”)
- “I really want to turn in to a were wolf I been trying for five years if some one really knows how please write back I need to know how I understand what I’m getting myself into so any one plzzzzzzz”  
(Destany, “Response.”)
- “Please help me. I want to know how to become a werewolf, even if it brings pain. I have a friend that is a werewolf but doesn’t want to help me out at the moment. I need real answers. Thank you.”  
(SilverShadow97, “I Am A Real Werewolf.”)
- “I want to be a werewolf just like you,it’s not a cursed but a gift,I dreamed of it since I was a kid and the dreams just become stronger over the years,iknow I wasn’t born one but I’m alone no family,no groups,no nothing but only friends who be around cause of how pittty I look,can you please make the dream real and let me become one of you,I seek for a pack, a family.”  
(IBelieve1, “I Am A Real Werewolf.”)

<sup>13</sup> Martinez-Ramundo, “Coming Out of the Coffin.”

<sup>14</sup> Hannity, “Night Neighbors.”

<sup>15</sup> Herman, “Interview With a Vampire’s Dentist.”

<sup>16</sup> Marie-Christine, “Fangs for the tickets.”

in every walk of life. They could be your next door neighbors. ... It could be your doctor. It could be your lawyer. It could be the nurse.”<sup>17</sup> Still another self-professed vampire told *Fox News* about the vampires that he knows, “I know business owners. I know teachers. I know nurses. I know one doctor. I know two lawyers. I know an anthropologist. I know two psychologists. I know someone who teaches witchcraft for a living. ... I know a couple people who design web pages for a living, people who work in government buildings—the post office.”<sup>18</sup>

Real life vampires have become so prolific that there now exists vampire clubs and even vampire organizations such as The Vampire Society and the Atlanta Vampire Alliance. Of course, not every real life vampire is seeking to emulate the vampire of paranormal fiction, but many are. A *Vampire Research Society* blog warns:

Vampiroids identify with the imagery of the vampire and become totally seduced by its mythology, having almost no regard for what is fact and what is fantasy. The more extreme examples of vampiroidism, known as ultra-vampiroids, have no problem with the fact that in reality vampires are biocidal and destroy all life-forms. Hence, within the supra-individual level of the psyche, they respond utterly to the vampire archetype.

Despite the very high percentage of relatively harmless poseurs in most vampiroid clubs, there can nevertheless occasionally be found a small number of extreme types. These can vary in levels of psychotic behaviour from proto-vampiroids, eg the UK’s David Austen, a self-confessed Satanist and sexual deviant of many years, to ultra-vampiroids like America’s Rod Ferrell, who committed two gruesome murders and is now awaiting execution as the youngest person on death row. Both have belonged to vampiroid clubs.”<sup>19</sup>

Not everyone who reads and watches paranormal entertainment will become a real life vampire. However, when vampirism is portrayed as attractive and sexy, it does influence people’s behavior. This is particularly true of teenagers. In a 2010 *Washington Post* article titled “How ‘Twilight,’ other dark fiction affect teen brains,” Maria Nikolajeva, the first Director of the Cambridge/Homerton Research and Training Center for Children’s Literature, explains, “Inside the teenage brain, synapses are breaking and reforming, and the chemistry keeps changing. Teenagers can’t make decisions in the same way adults can...”<sup>20</sup> Because of this constant restructuring of the brain’s nerves, teenagers tend to become extremely engaged with what they read and see:

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<sup>17</sup> Hannity, “Night Neighbors.”

<sup>18</sup> Hannity, “Night Neighbors.”

<sup>19</sup> Vampirologist, “Vampiroidism.”

<sup>20</sup> Strauss, “How ‘Twilight,’ other dark fiction affect teen brains.”

[The] [a]dolescent brain goes through a significant and rapid change; everything that affects it leaves deep imprints. Very dark fiction creates and amplifies a sense of insecurity, which is typical of adolescence; but it can also be a liberation, when readers “share” their personal experience with that of fictional characters. So yes, all readers’ brains are changed after they have read a book, but teenage brains are especially perceptive and therefore vulnerable.<sup>21</sup>

An example of the confusion that can arise as a result of glamourizing vampirism can be found in a **2010** *NBC News* report, “Teenagers obsessed with the ‘Twilight’ vampire saga, or those simply fascinated with fangs, reportedly have been biting each other – hard – and then licking or sucking the blood. ‘These are kids who think they are real vampires,’ said Dr. Orly Avitzur, the medical advisor to Consumers Union, the agency that publishes *Consumer Reports* magazine.”<sup>22</sup>

Despite the evidence that America’s obsession with paranormal entertainment has resulted in an increase in vampirism, Wicca, and the Occult, many Christians find themselves defending these forms of entertainment. Often this is because they themselves have become overly attached to the stories and characters, and they don’t wish to relinquish them.

Like it or not, America’s obsession with paranormal entertainment is reshaping its view of reality. This is not to say that we must fear or ban paranormal entertainment, but it does mean that we should stop trivializing its potential impact. Before we as Christians pursue and defend the next paranormal fad, we should pause and seriously consider whether the benefits truly outweigh the potential risks. By minimizing spiritual powers and glamorizing sin, these forms of paranormal entertainment pose a serious threat to our spiritual well-being.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Aleccia, “Love Bites.”