ST. JOSEPH'S COVENANT KEEPERS™

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Is Harry Potter Good for Our Kids?

By Vivian W. Dudro

With all of the media hype, even in the Catholic press, I could not help looking over the Harry Potter books while shopping one day. After reading a few pages, I put Potter down with a shudder. Oozing with the occult and dressed with disgusting details, these stories by J.K. Rowling are not the kind of thing I would read my little ones at bedtime. Compared with the truly great books lining our shelves at home, they are not the kind of literature I would want my 10- and 12-year-old sons to read on their own, either.

Despite my decision to pass on Potter, he has affected my children. As we were leaving the park one recent afternoon, my six-year-old daughter informed me that she and a herd of other girls her age had pretended they were the characters from the Rowling books.

"We were using sticks as magic wands, Mom," she said.

"Oh? And what were you doing with these magic wands?" I asked.

"We were casting spells and killing bugs," she answered.

"Why were you killing bugs?"

"Because they were the bad guys," she shrugged.

Her responses troubled me. How has Harry Potter become so ubiquitous that he influences the play of children too young to read about him? More importantly, why do these stories link magic, power and the killing of one's enemies in the tender imagination of little girls? To begin answering these questions, I read two of the books myself.

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"For the fascination of wickedness obscures what is good, and roving desires pervert the innocent mind."
– Wisdom 4:12

"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."
- Philippians 4:8

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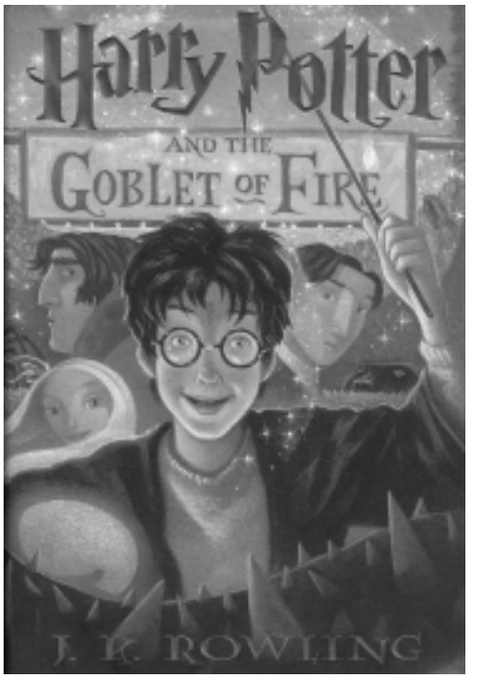
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In the very beginning of the first two episodes, Rowling's heavy-handed and sophomoric treatment of Harry's aunt, uncle and cousin disturbed me. These relatives, who become Harry's adoptive family after the murder of his parents, are narcissistic and vulgar, with no redeeming characteristics whatsoever. In one repulsive scene, Cousin Dudley belches at the breakfast table, while his fat buttocks hang over the sides of the chair. Meanwhile, with a bit of food clinging to his face, Uncle Vernon sputters forth with his customary rage. Call it a matter of taste, but these antics evoke no laughter from me. Rowling's sneers at a grasping middle-class family cannot hold a candle to the satire of Mark Twain, Charles Dickens or Jane Austen.

The most terrible feature of Harry's relations is not their churlishness, but their heartlessness toward the orphaned boy. While they spoil their own horrible son with two bedrooms, Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia assign Harry a spider-infested closet. In the second book, they lock him in a room with bars on the windows, and feed him a starvation diet through a slot in the door. The reason for their harshness, apart from their own selfishness, is Harry's magical background. This is an abnormality, they declare, that they will not tolerate.

The practice of magic can lead to the worship of nature, man, or Satan.



Tolerance, of course, is a Christian virtue based upon respect for man's God-given freedom. While Catholic children should be trained to respect those who do not profess their faith, they also should be taught that the practice of magic is a serious sin. Apart from prayer to God, the invocation of superhuman powers in order to obtain results beyond the capacity of mere nature is condemned with the strongest language in both the Old and New Testaments. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* declares the practice of magic "gravely contrary to the virtue of religion," for it involves a mistrust of God and a refusal to accept His will. The practice of magic can lead to the worship of nature, man, or Satan.

Because he is a wizard by birth, Harry is sent for by Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and is delivered from the hands of his relatives. At this boarding school, the *alma mater* of Harry's dead parents, the twelve-year old grows into his true identity. In Albus Dumbledore, the seemingly sagacious wizard who directs Hogwarts, Harry finds a mentor/father figure. Peripheral to the main unfolding of the plot, Dumbledore conveniently appears after the climax of the first two books to neatly interpret Harry's harrowing, coming-of-age experiences at school.

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There is some humor to be found at Hogwarts, which is housed in a mysterious, haunted castle. Among Harry's textbooks, for example, is "One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi" by Phyllida Spore.

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St. Joseph's Covenant Keepers

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The Trouble With Harry

By John Andrew Murray

Some Christians think Harry Potter is a hero. Others think the young wizard's best-selling adventures are simply evil.

What's a concerned parent to think?



Having sold more than 30 million copies, the four Harry Potter books released so far have created a stir in public schools across America. Some Christian parents have complained that J.K. Rowling's tales of young witches and wizards are terrifying to young children and inappropriate for classroom use. They've been rewarded for their concern with ridicule in newspapers and editorial cartoons. Complicating the matter is the fact that several Christian leaders and conservative magazines have praised the series' ability to captivate even the most reluctant young readers.

And the controversy has just begun.

Warner Bros. purchased movie rights to the books two years ago, along with the potential for building a billion-dollar franchise. Steven Spielberg has been mentioned as director of the film, and Warner will reportedly spend $45 million for special effects alone. What's more, The *Wall Street Journal* says the company is counting on big profits from sequels, TV broadcast rights, cartoon spin-offs, home-video sales, theme-park rides and interactive games.

Rowling, a single mother in Britain, has said she will write a total of seven books, the last to be released in 2003. She's already written the final chapter of the last book. (She's also made it clear that the books will grow along with the adolescent Harry–he'll discover the opposite sex, for example–and darker themes, including the death of a friend, are not off-limits.)

If you think it's bad now, in a year or two, there may be no avoiding the Harry Potter craze. That's why it's important now to understand just what sort of worldview the books present.

Lower Than a Dog

I can admit now that when I graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1990 with a degree in English and history, I had little awareness of the media's effects on children. I would have jumped at the chance to read

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"If you think it's bad now, in a year or two, there may be no avoiding the *Harry Potter* craze. That's why it's important now to understand just what sort of worldview the books present."

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Harry Potter to my sixth-grade English class. Instead, I used an old television series, Alfred Hitchcock Presents, each Monday to teach my students about plot development within a story.

One week I stopped the video before the show's end and asked the students to write their own endings. They were so excited, they wanted to read their work aloud in class. I allowed them to do so, but the slasher-film endings I heard horrified and sickened me. After about the third student, I decided to read the rest silently. There were only a few that I thought were appropriate to share with the class.

When I later expressed my concern to the students, they defended their compositions, insisting that media violence had no effect. After all, they said, they understood that the killings they saw on TV and movies were "fake." But when I asked them how they would feel if they saw a TV program in which a dog was machine-gunned, they expressed their disgust in unison.

That presented me with a chance to make a simple point: The reason they found the shooting death of a dog so horrible is because they hadn't been desensitized to it, as they were to the murder of a human. So how does this relate to teaching Harry Potter?

With the growing popularity of youth-oriented TV shows on witchcraft–Sabrina, the Teenage Witch; Charmed; Buffy the Vampire Slayer–a generation of children is becoming desensitized to the occult. But with Hollywood's help, Harry Potter will likely surpass all these influences, potentially reaping some grave spiritual consequences.

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Who is Harry Potter?

As noted above, Harry has inspired a variety of differing reactions, even among evangelicals. One Christian father of two daughters, ages 10 and 12, says that his youngest girl is "in love" with the Potter books. "They are her all-time favorites," he said. "She and her friends have read them multiple times." The father said that his daughter had grown weary of Nancy Drew mysteries–"these are all the same," she told him–and that books from Christian publishers are too "formulaic" and "will not stand the test of time as literature." He doesn't want his children to turn to television for stimulation, so he's actually pleased by the Harry Potter craze. "Even if that literature may not necessarily espouse Christian values, if it excites them in ways that compete successfully with TV, it is making a wonderful contribution to their developing worldview," he says.

What makes Harry Potter's world so attractive–even to Christians?

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, the first of Rowling's three books, introduces Harry as an orphaned baby. Readers quickly learn that Harry has survived an attack by the series' evil wizard: Lord Voldemort. Although successfully destroying Harry's parents (a wizard and witch), Voldemort mysteriously fails in his attempts to kill Harry, leaving a lightning-bolt scar on the infant Harry's forehead. Furthermore, in the process, Voldemort loses most of his power, thus making Harry an instant legend in the world of witchcraft.

Rescued by the "good wizard forces," Harry is deposited on the London suburb doorstep of his Muggle Aunt and Uncle. (Muggles are everyday people who are oblivious to the workings of the witches'

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and wizards' world.) Forced to sleep in a basement cupboard, Harry is tormented by his unloving relatives for the next 10 years–a Cinderella-like persecution that readily earns the reader's sympathy.

Upon his 11th birthday, which occurs early in the book, Harry's life takes a dramatic turn. He learns the true origin of both the lightning-bolt scar and his parents' cause of death, and is rescued from his Muggle relatives. He's enrolled in Hogwarts–the premier boarding school for "Witchcraft and Wizardry."

With Hogwarts as the main setting, Harry displays loyalty to his new friends and school, and bravery when battling the evil Lord Voldemort. "The good is always more attractive than the bad," said the father whose daughter cherishes the books. "Loyalty, honesty, charity are celebrated. Harry has friends he respects."

The Materialist Magician

If so many people like Harry Potter, what could possibly be wrong? To answer that question, it may help to look at another supernatural novel, C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*.

Framed as fictional correspondence between the high-ranking demon Screwtape and his nephew Wormwood, the book explores some of the ways that demonic forces seek to build walls between humans and God.

In the 1941 preface of his book, Lewis revealed two of the greatest mistakes in humanity's beliefs about demons: *There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased with both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.*

If so many people like the Harry Potter series, what could possibly be wrong with it?

"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased with both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight." – C.S. Lewis

An even greater error, and the one most valued by Lewis' demonic characters, is the fusion of the two errors. As Screwtape writes to Wormwood: *If once we can produce our perfect work–the Materialist Magician, the man, not using but veritably worshiping, what he vaguely calls "Forces" while denying the existence of "spirits"–then the end of the war will be in sight.*

By disassociating magic and supernatural evil, it becomes possible to portray occult practices as "good" and "healthy," contrary to the scriptural declaration that such practices are "detestable to the Lord." This, in turn, opens the door for less discerning individuals–including, but not limited to, children–to become confused about supernatural matters.

This process is already well underway in American culture. A December 1997 study published by George Gallup, taken from the Princeton Religion Research Center, revealed that 31 percent of Americans believe in ghosts, 20 percent believe in witches, 24 percent believe in astrology, 17 percent had consulted a fortuneteller and 24 percent believe in reincarnation.

Gallup found that born-again Christians–defined as those who believe God's Word to be literally true and have tried to encourage someone to accept Jesus Christ as his or her Savior–held almost the same beliefs percentage-wise as non-Christians.

What about Narnia?

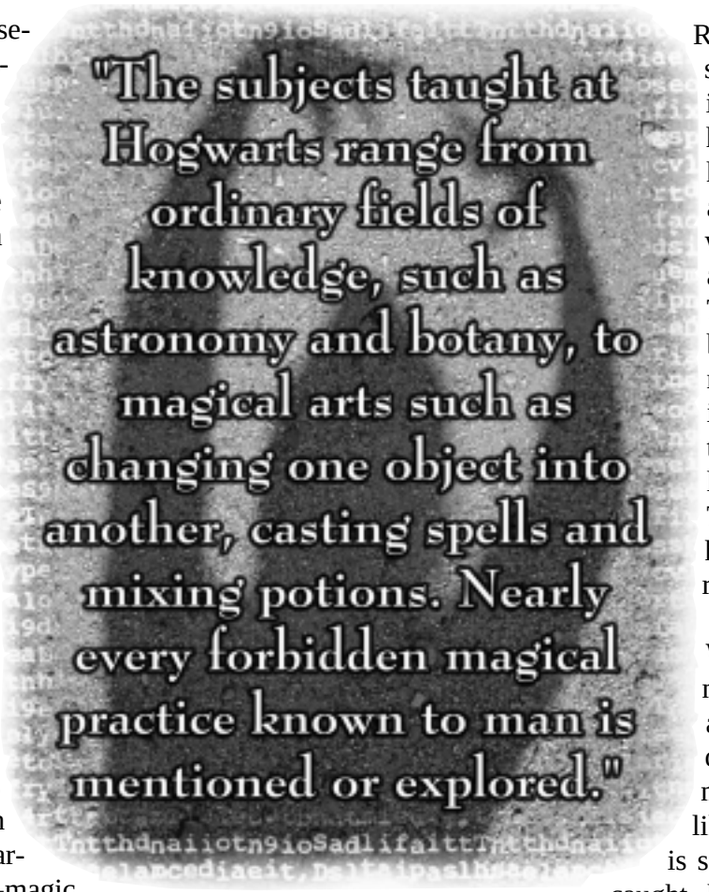
Christian fans of Harry Potter insist that the series is no different than C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia,*

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The lethal beast guarding a secret in the bowels of the castle is named Fluffy. But the overall atmosphere at Hogwarts is ominous, and many of the features of daily life there are gruesome. From a good guy eating an earwax-flavored jelly bean to a bad guy drinking unicorn blood, there is a distinct dash of the macabre.



The subjects taught at Hogwarts range from ordinary fields of knowledge, such as astronomy and botany, to magical arts such as changing one object into another, casting spells and mixing potions. Nearly every forbidden magical practice known to man is mentioned or explored. In contrast to the dull and narrow world of Harry's non-magic relatives, Hogwarts appears interesting and broadening. Looking at a drawing of the castle on the back of the second book, my 12-year-old son declared, “That looks so cool!”

On the surface, the Harry Potter tales fit right in with Goosebumps, Rugrats and that gooey cerebral-like matter designed for throwing upon walls.

On the surface, the Harry Potter tales fit right in with Goosebumps, Rugrats, and that gooey cerebral-like matter designed for throwing upon walls. Yes, pre-pubescent boys, especially, can think this stuff is pretty neat, hence there is a huge market for it. But if we want our children to love truth, goodness and beauty, then why are we buying them products that encourage their tendencies toward the grotesque?

Of course, all great literature illustrates the dark side of human existence; however, the best authors do not intend darkness itself as entertainment. Like shadows in a landscape that make the bright spots all the more brighter, evil in fiction should serve as a contrast to the good. Perversely, Rowling presents her dismal world of the occult as a circus. Worse than that, she offers it as a desirable alternative to her caricature of normalcy.

Rowling has been quoted as saying she does not believe in magic, but in God. To her credit, she places the hocus-pocus at Hogwarts in a moral framework, in which some uses of magic are good and others bad. The Sorcerer's Stone, which brings everlasting life and riches to whoever possesses it, is destroyed at the end of the first episode because, like the ring in J.R.R. Tolkien's books, the stone had become a source of corruption.

When one peels away the magic, it appears Rowling is addressing important moral questions. Often Harry must make difficult choices, and like any other school boy, he is sent to detention when he is caught breaking the rules. When Harry is in mortal danger, as he is at the end of the first two books, it is self-sacrificial love, not magic *per se*, that saves him. Harry's ultimate quest, it seems, is not so much to develop his powers as a wizard as it is to develop his character.

While I am gratified to find such themes in Rowling's books, I nevertheless consider her smorgasbord of magic, yuck, and gore an unfitting package for the truth. Moreover, her stories create the impression that some of us, like Potter and Dumbledore, could learn to handle occult powers and wield them for good. This is a grave error, for our intentions, however noble, cannot transform an objective evil into a good.

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If we want our children to love truth, goodness and beauty, then why are we buying them products that encourage their tendencies toward the grotesque?

Though the books are fantasy, young readers relate to Harry and his classmates as their own peers. The aspiring witches and wizards at Hogwarts are not otherworldly beings from some prehistoric age, such as the wizards Gandalf in the *Lord of the Rings* and Merlin in the Arthurian legends. Rather, they are ordinary boys and girls, with the exception that they have inexplicably inherited a magical gene present in the human race. By following their education, could our children's curiosity in the occult or in the bizarre be sparked? Could their spiritual defenses against certain temptations be weakened? Could their imaginations become haunts of "things that go bump in the night"?

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According to a public librarian here in San Francisco, the Potter stories already have inspired countless children to seek other books about witches, wizards, and spooks. The city's libraries have stocked their juvenile collections with this subject matter, along with Rowling's titles in order to encourage summer reading. The trend concerns me because, apart from serious sin, occultism is the main way the diabolical can enter a person's life.

Nevertheless, many, many other parents, including Catholic ones, remain untroubled. They consider the Harry Potter stories perfectly acceptable for their children. As a result, Harry Potter has become a pop culture icon. After the new sequel is released this summer, there will still be three more forthcoming episodes in the continuing Potter saga. Also lying ahead are Harry Potter movies, and spin-off Mattel action figures.

Given the enormous profitability of the young wizard, one can only guess what other magical heroes and heroines will be created next. And when all of the money made off our hunger for the supernatural has been counted, what level of literary accomplishment and what vision of spiritual reality will have been sold to our children? That remains to be seen. ■



Vivian W. Dudro is a free-lance writer and editor, and the mother of four children ages 4 to 12. Her articles have appeared in Catholic publications nationwide. Currently she writes a regular column on family life for the Catholic San Francisco.

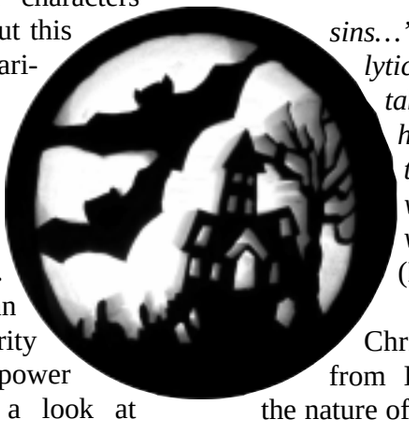
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The Trouble With Harry

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Are the Harry Potter books the same as Narnia?

a series that many Christian parents accept. It is true that both authors create parallel fantasy worlds involving young British children who encounter magical creatures. Both develop admirable characters and evil villains. But this is where the comparison ends.



The difference between the two hinges on the concept of authority. From a Christian perspective, authority and supernatural power are linked. Take a look at Mark 2, where Jesus heals a paralytic. When Jesus first sees the paralytic, He says, "Son, your sins are forgiven." This sets up the following scene:

Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow teach like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Immediately Jesus knew…that this was what they were thinking…and He said to them, "Why are you thinking such things? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins…" He said to the paralytic, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. (Mark 2:6-12a)

It is true that both authors create parallel fantasy worlds and both develop admirable characters and evil villains. But this is where the comparison ends.

Christ's power flows from His authority. That's the nature of all legitimate power–it is granted and guided by authority.

When we read Rowling's series, we find that she effectively divorces power from authority. There is no sovereign person or principle governing the use of the supernatural. Magical power is gained through inheritance and learning. It is not granted by a higher authority, because there is no Higher Authority–at least none higher than Harry's mentor, Albus Dumbledore, and the evil Lord Voldemort. The two are equal, antagonistic and unaccountable to a higher authority.

In C.S. Lewis' *Narnia*, power and authority are welded together. That authority is Jesus, in the character of the great lion Aslan–creator and sovereign ruler of Narnia, son of the Emperor Beyond the Sea. Good power is power that is bestowed by Aslan and exercised in accordance with his will. This good power is at work when the children Peter, Susan and Lucy use gifts bestowed on them by an agent of Aslan.

Evil power, on the other hand, is power that is seized or conjured–rather than bestowed–and exercised for selfish ends. Those who resist the temptation to use such power are commended, as was Digory, in *The Magician's Nephew*. But those who wield it (such as Jadis, also in *The Magician's Nephew*) and the White Witch (in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*) are eventually vanquished by Aslan.

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Despite superficial similarities, Rowling's and Lewis' worlds are as far apart as east is from west. Rowling's work invites children to a world where witchcraft is "neutral" and where authority is determined solely by one's cleverness. Lewis invites readers to a world where God's authority is not only recognized, but celebrated–a world that resounds with His goodness and care. It's a difference no Christian should ignore. ■

John Andrew Murray is an English teacher and headmaster at St. Timothy's-Hale in Raleigh, N.C.

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Citations from *A Landscape with Dragons,* by Michael O'Brien

Perversions of the Imagination

When culture is deprived of moral vision, the rise of the "diabolic imagination" is the inevitable result.

What happens when the errors come in pleasing disguises and are promoted by talented people who know full well how to use all the resources of modern psychology to make of the human imagination the instrument of their purpose?

It is tragic, therefore, that authentic literature is slowly disappearing from public and school libraries and being replaced by a tidal wave of children's books written by people who appear to have been convinced by cultic psychology or converted in part or whole by the neo-pagan cosmos. Significantly, their use of language is much closer to the operations of electronic culture, and their stories far more visual than the thoughtful fiction of the past. They are evangelists of a religion that they deny is a religion. Yet, in the new juvenile literature there is a relentless preoccupation with spiritual powers, with the occult, with perceptions of good and evil that are almost always blurred and at times downright inverted. At least in the old days dragons looked and acted like dragons.

The most pressing question that should be asked is: which kind of distortion will do the more damage: blatant falsehood or falsehood mixed with the truths that we hunger for?

About forty years ago there began a culture-shift that steadily gathered momentum, a massive influx of material that appeared good on the surface but was fundamentally disordered. It became the new majority. During this period entirely good material became the minority, and at the same time more material that was diabolically evil began to appear. There is a pattern here. And it raises the question – where is it all leading?

Which kind of distortion will do the more damage: blatant falsehood or falsehood mixed with the truths that we hunger for?

I think it highly unlikely that we will ever see a popular culture that is wholly dominated by the blatantly diabolical, but I do believe that unless we recognize what is happening, we may soon be living in a culture that is totally dominated by the fundamentally disordered and in which the diabolical is respected as an alternative world view and becomes more influential than the entirely good. Indeed, we may be very close to that condition. I can think of half a dozen recent films that deliberately reverse the meaning of Christian symbols and elevate the diabolical to the status of a saving mythology.

Christian parents allowed their young children to watch DragonHeart because they thought it was "just mythology." This is understandable naivete, but it is also a symptom of our state of unpreparedness. The evil in corrupt mythology is never rendered harmless simply because it is encapsulated in a literary genre, as if sealed in a watertight compartment. Indeed, there are few things as infectious as mythology.

We would be sadly mistaken if we assumed that the cultural invasion is mainly a conflict of abstract ideas. It is a major front in the battle for the soul of modern man, and as such it necessarily entails elements of spiritual combat. For this reason parents must ask God for the gifts of wisdom, discernment, and vigilance during these times. We must also plead for extraordinary graces and intercede continuously for our children. The invasion reaches into very young minds, relaxing children's instinctive aversion to what is truly frightening. It begins there, but we must understand that it will not end there, for its logical end is a culture that exalts the diabolical. There are a growing number of signs that this process is well under way.

In children's culture a growing fascination with the supernatural is hastening the breakdown of the Christian vision of the spiritual world and the moral order of the universe. Reason and holy knowledge are despised, while intoxicating signs and wonders increase. ■

Reprinted with permission from Ignatius Press, pages 64-65, 70, 86-87, 90-91. ***To learn how to obtain your own copy of "A Landscape with Dragons," see page 10.***

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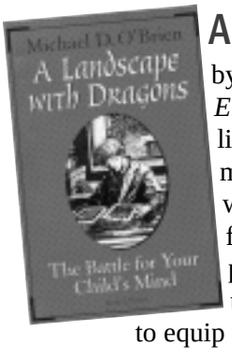
What the Catechism Says...

"All forms of divination are to be rejected:
recourse to Satan or demons…Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomena of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums…contradict the honor, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone."

"All practices of magic or sorcery, by which one attempts to tame occult powers, so as to place them at one's service and have a supernatural power over others are gravely contrary to the virtue of religion. These practices are even more to be condemned when accompanied by the intention of harming someone, or when they have recourse to the intervention of demons. Wearing charms is also reprehensible. Spiritism often implies divination or magical practices; **the Church for her part warns the faithful against it."**

- Catechism of the Catholic Church, Sections 2116-2117

Resources to Help You Discern the Harry Potter Books



A Landscape with Dragons

by Michael O'Brien, (author of *Father Elijah),* is must reading for every Catholic parent. There is a war going on for the minds and hearts of our children. So far, we are losing this war. A full seventy-five percent of Catholic teens cease practicing their faith before leaving their teen years. Catholic parents need to equip their children to withstand the multitude of subtle assaults on the Faith coming from television, movies, and books. *A Landscape with Dragons* will teach you how to raise discerning children. Michael O'Brien teaches you what to avoid and why. In addition, the book includes an extensive and invaluable list of other books you will want your children to read. On a one-to-ten scale this book is easily a twenty-five! Get it. Read it. Heed it.

There is widespread disagreement over Harry Potter among Catholic parents. When so many people disagree, it is frequently because only pieces of the overall picture are being considered. Reliable conclusions can be achieved only by learning the broader principles of evaluating children's literature in the context of our contemporary culture. The principles found in Michael O'Brien's book will enable you to definitively answer any questions you have about Harry Potter. Softcover, 261 pages. **$12.95 (#B332)**



Faith & Family Radio Live: Parental Concerns & Questions about Harry Potter

On this important tape, host Steve Wood interviews Michael O'Brien (author of *A Landscape with Dragons)*; Vivian Dudro, and Fr. Philip Scott. Each guest shares with listeners their concerns about Harry Potter, as well as answers many questions about Harry Potter. This tape is a must-have for every concerned parent!

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A Letter From: The Editor

Harry Potter reminds me of the *Dungeons and Dragons* craze a few decades ago. I'll never forget a fellow seminarian advertising in our seminary newsletter for a "dragon master." This naïve young man training to be a youth minister couldn't imagine any potential spiritual problems arising from some harmless fun with *Dungeons and Dragons*. What this seminarian failed to appreciate was the role of an entry point into the world of the occult and new age movement.

The majority of those who fool around with *Dungeons and Dragons*, toy with *Ouija* boards, listen to heavy metal rock, or read Harry Potter books, will never fall into any permanent spiritual deceptions. Yet, I can guarantee that Harry Potter will be an entry point into the demonic /New Age world for thousands of young Catholics. Many Christians scoffed at the potential dangers posed by *Dungeons and Dragons*, yet research has validated those warnings.

George Gallup reports that 44% of teen-agers say they know a person who actually tried to commit suicide. When teens were asked what they thought caused teens to think about suicide, drugs and alcohol headed the list, but 17% of teens survey said "playing with *Dungeons and Dragons*" was a contributor (*The Spiritual Life of Young Americans: Approaching the Year 2000, With Commentary and Analysis by George H. Gallup, Jr*). Any Christian youth worker that thinks *Dungeons and Dragons* is harmless to teens is simply unfit in regards to the spiritual discernment necessary for leading teens.

An August 1994 Gallup Survey reported the following beliefs of American Catholic teens (ages 13-17):

Which of the following do you believe in?

- Astrology – 58%
- Ghosts – 43%
- Witchcraft – 24%
- Vampires – 6%

Keep in mind that less than 30% of American Catholics teens believe that the Eucharist is more than a mere symbol. Why would anyone want to expose young Catholics so unsure of their faith to things like: blood-drinking, werewolves, vampires, potions, spells, sorcery, demon-like characters, and witchcraft as found in the Harry Potter series?

More Catholic teenagers believe in ghosts, than in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Many Christian parents think Harry must be okay since so many Evangelical Protestant leaders along with nationally known Catholic leaders have said that Harry Potter is okay. I warn against this misguided advice.

Until now, I have not felt the need to say much to St. Joseph's Covenant Keepers about my background dealing with the New Age, cult, and occult. Here is a brief description of my background:

1. Before my conversion to Christianity, I was involved in New Age and false religious movements that actually practiced several of the things casually described in the Harry Potter novels.
2. I have been a state representative for a national referral service that assisted families in getting their loved ones out of cults, new age groups, and satanic movements.
3. I have trained college peer leaders to combat Satanism on campus.
4. I have lead young people out of the very world described in the Harry Potter novels to a commitment to Christ.
5. I have attended training by law enforcement officials about youth involvement in Satanism and the occult. I have also assisted law enforcement officials investigating occult related crimes.
6. I have personally confronted and ministered to demonically possessed individuals involved in Satanism and the occult.

In light of this experience, I warn fathers that exposing your children to the enchanting world of Harry Potter is playing with a fire from hell. Will every child reading Harry Potter get burned? Of course not. Will some get burned? Yes, in all likelihood there will be thousands. If you want to know where the billion-dollar Harry Potter craze is going to take children, just look at the Harry Potter online bookstore web pages advertising additional books for kids interested in related works. Harry Potter is just one of the many entry points into a world where the fascination with wickedness creates an addiction that perverts the innocent mind and obscures what is good. ■ ***- Steve Wood***

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"When you come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to follow the **abominable practices** of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one … who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or **a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard,** or a necromancer. For whoever does these things is an **abomination to the Lord**; and because of these abominable practices the Lord your **God is driving them out** before you."

- Deuteronomy 18:9-12

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Steve Wood's Speaking Schedule

September 13, 2000
SJCK Men's Conference
Brandon, Florida

September 14, 2000
SJCK Men's Conference
St. Louis, Missouri

September 15, 2000
SJCK Men's Conference
Little Rock, Arkansas

December 5, 2000
SJCK Men's Conference
Grand Rapids, MI

December 6, 2000
SJCK Men's Conference
Boise, Idaho

December 8, 2000
9th Annual Pro-Life Program
Ft. Lauderdale

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