



Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace Behind the Magick

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Harry Potter books are flying off the shelves of secular bookstores at an astonishing rate. Some evangelicals are buying them, too. Should Christian parents be exposing their children to these "wizard-in-training" manuals? Is there a sinister side to Harry Potter and his pals that is spiritually dangerous for young readers? Characterized by astronomical publishing statistics, controversy and opposing voices, the Potter phenomenon begs the title question of this book: Is it a harmless fantasy or is it a dangerous fascination? The book responds by cataloguing the various forms of occultism included in the first four books, offering scriptural responses and discussing the psychological and spiritual dangers associated with the Rowling volumes.

The latter half of the book includes:

- an overview of good and evil from the Garden of Eden through cultures ancient and modern
- a mini-encyclopedia of various occult practices, with special attention to those glamorized in the Potter books
- an explanation of the difference between the Potter books and those written by C.S. Lewis or Tolkein, for instance.

Finally, the book explains why God has forbidden involvement in the occult and takes a hard look at America's present propensities for the dark side -- a fact the interest in and content of the Potter books all too obviously corroborate.

Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace Behind the Magick Details

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From Reader Review Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace Behind the Magick for online ebook

David Sarkies says

An anti-Harry Potter Book

23 July 2011

As I was scanning through my document which contains backups of all of my commentaries I discovered that this one contained only a really short paragraph which, well, explains the book, but doesn't actually tease out the themes. The paragraph is as follows: A pretty one sided look at the Harry Potter Series. Everything that he criticises the books about can be said about Star Wars, but I have never heard anybody write a book attacking those movies.

It's true, isn't it? I've seen countless of books, articles, and heard sermons as to why Harry Potter is evil and Christians should stay away from it, but nobody has ever mentioned Star Wars (and guess what, Abanes' does not mention Star Wars either, though he does mention Lord of the Rings and the Narnia Chronicles). Mind you when I said a 'pretty on sided look' I should have really said 'an incredibly one sided look' at the Harry Potter books.

Okay, I myself am not really interested in the Harry Potter books and have only ever read one of them. I might read others if I have time, but they are not high on my reading list. There are lots of books out there and Harry Potter is not really one that seems to grab my attention. Anyway, I have seen all of the movies, and while they say that the book does tend to be better than the movie, the movies of this series are good enough for me, and the only reason that I ended up seeing them is because my brother loves Harry Potter (and we don't see him rushing off and joining a Wicca Cult).

I guess what this book demonstrates is the wilful ignorance that most fundamentalist Christians seem to display and to me this is one of the reasons people are put off of Christianity. For instance, he tells the story of a man that was abused as a child and then got involved in Wicca for comfort. However when he began to feel uncomfortable, he tried to get out but nobody within the church was willing to help him, so he become more involved and ended up getting executed for a triple murder. Arbanes basically blames Dungeons and Dragons for this when if you read over this story again we discover that this man reached out to the church for help and was rejected. To me this sounds as if Abanes has such a rosey coloured view of the church that nobody, especially the leadership, can ever be blamed for the inevitable results of their sinful actions.

I suspect that this has something to do with to do with the biblical teaching of sin. If we sin then we can only hold ourselves accountable and we cannot lay the blame upon anybody else. Well, that is partially true, and anybody who uses phrases like 'the Devil made me do it' is washing their hands of self responsibility. I am a big believer in being responsible for one's own actions. However we tend to forget one of the statements that Jesus made 'if you lead one of those little one's to sin, then it is better for you to have a millstone tied around your neck and thrown into the sea.' Namely, what Jesus is saying here is that while we are responsible for our own sins, we also need to be very careful on how we relate to others. This is not just a question of tempting somebody to, say, take drugs, this is refusing to support, comfort, or help somebody who is in trouble. Many people walk away from Christianity simply because there is a lack of support within the church, and when I say lack of support, I generally suggest that the members of the church spend more time condemning than they do forgiving.

There is also another example of a Christian author targeting a popular product and suggesting that this is the cause of what is wrong with society, and that if they do not make a stand against it then society is only going to collapse. It was not all that long ago when people who took a stand against the church for its false teachings were burnt at the stake, but now this church, who was once persecuted, is doing the persecuting. To me it is an aspect of fear, a fear of the unknown, a fear of what is popular, and especially a fear of change. Yes, Jesus does talk about the road less travelled, and not doing things because everybody else is doing it, but I don't think that necessarily refers reading the Harry Potter books.

Talking about popularity: what about going along with the church (and I am not talking about the universal catholic church here, but the church of which you are a member) simply because everybody else goes along with the church, or the church tells you to do it? Take gay marriage for an instance. The church tells you that it is wrong and that homosexuality is a sin: does that mean that you should agree with what they are saying without actually questioning it? Does that also mean that you should condemn homosexuals because they tell you to? How about making a stand against such bigoted and one sided views? The problem is that the church can hold a huge amount of power, and to speak out against such things can find you being alienated from the church – that is until you repent. Then who are you repenting to, are you repenting to God or are you repenting to man? If you are repenting to man then the problem is that you are putting yourself under the power of that man. If you have sinned against another man, then sure, go and apologise, however if you have sinned against God, repent to God, not to man, because it is your relationship with God that needs restoring, and by repenting to God you are not putting yourself under the power of this one particular man.

Gabriel says

Oh, religious fundamentalism—how I really don't miss you.

Manybooks says

Honestly, but EVERYTHING I have so far read by Richard Abanes has absolutely and utterly been what can only be called reactionary, anti-enlightenment, unintelligent trash, and Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace Behind the Magick is no exception. And quite frankly (and I make absolutely no excuses whatsoever for my attitudes and my somewhat vehement negativity), while I would never ever attempt to get Abanes' oeuvre banned or censored in any way (as that would simply make me the same as him and his ignorantly brainless "ban the Harry Potter series" acolytes), I would also only ever recommend Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace Behind the Magick for an intellectual and critical perusal exercise, and then only to and for those readers who are actually both intelligent and well-read enough to realise a few main and significant truths about both Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace Behind the Magick and author Richard Abanes' religious and social worldview (his own and very troubling Weltanschauung).

For not only is (at least in my opinion) Richard Abanes with the attitudes and philosophies presented in his Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace Behind the Magick in no way even remotely a true Christian (rather the exact opposite, if you are able to catch my drift), but come on, if you have actually read J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, you would (or rather you should) know and understand that in EVERY single novel of the series, Harry Potter and his friends are actually and continuously engaged in fighting against mayhem and evil in the form of Lord Voldemort and his supporters (who is meant to represent not only a mirror image of Satan and other such entities, but has also always been for me a reflection of unreason, of anti-

enlightenment, of a racist and viciously undemocratic, dictatorial Social Conservatism that is in many ways very hugely and as much as this might enrage certain fundamentalist "Christians" such as Richard Abanes et al akin and alike to those who want to ban the Harry Potter series, to those who consider the series and author J.K. Rowling as somehow dangerous and occult-like, in other words, Richard Abanes' printed words, they always do remind me very much of Lord Voldemort himself, of Lucien Mafoy and ALL of the "keep our witches and wizards" free of Muggle blood occult-like presences, of those who desire to destroy not only Hogwarts, but the entire world).

And while Richard Abanes might indeed pontificate in Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace Behind the Magick that the Harry Potter series is destructive and a threat, sorry, but it is actually the other way around (as it is not the Harry Potter series that is a universal threat, but individuals like Richard Abanes and other extremist Social Conservatives of the so-called Religious Right, who really are Christian only in name, who really do not represent the teachings of Jesus Christ, but are, in fact, like Lord Voldemort of the Harry Potter series, the epitome of anti-Christianity, against everything that Jesus Christ and his messages of tolerance and love stood for and should stand for, and I do stand by this assessment).

Kandice says

I want to begin by saying how I acquired this book. My 7th grade son was approached by a strange child asking if he liked Harry Potter. My son answered yes, and was offered a "cool" Harry Potter book. This book.

The very first page of the actual book opens with the quote "Any time the dark side of the supernatural world is presented as harmless or even imaginary, there is the danger that children will become curious and find too late that witchcraft is neither harmless nor imaginary." Lindy Beam-Focus on the Family.

Because this book is supposed to represent the moral Christian community, it seems a bit silly that they actually believe that reading the Harry Potter series is going to turn our children into practicing, and somehow evil, witches and wizards. They can't actually believe the world Rowling has created is real. Can they?

The book was written after the publication of Goblet of Fire. The first few chapters of the book address each installment of the series. Each is dissected and references to occult, Wicca and paganism beliefs are brought to our attention. The distinction between magi"c" and magi"ck" are explored. "C" is merely sleight of hand used by stage performers and perfectly acceptable. "CK" is actually the manipulation of forces and energies and is definitely not acceptable. This manipulation can actually be attributed to Satan. WHAT?

After each of the first four volumes is deconstructed and analyzed, Abanese goes on to explain the differences between good Christian literature (Lewis, Tolkien, Carroll, etc.) and Rowling's paganistic, and evil writings. Rowling's wizards are human, whereas Tolkien's wizards are not human at all. Tolkien's represent good and evil "angels" or demons. Lewis' good and evil are allegories for Christian beliefs, and their power is derived from the "One", or God, and the "Other", or Satan. THIS is the difference? Despite an entire chapter devoted to this idea, I can't understand the distinction. They are both fantasy worlds conceived in the author's imagination. The fact that two of the authors' were practicing Christians, and one merely believes in God, makes no difference.

Abanese then goes on to lay the blame of 17 year old Sean Sellers' death sentence for three murders, on a

love of Dungeons&Dragons, which led to his Satan worshipping. Abanese admits Sellers was abandoned as a child, physically, mentally and sexually abused, but still attributes his "fall from Grace" to occult influences and compares the dangers of Harry Potter to this situation. "Be warned, lest you be damned" or some such nonsense. This seems to me to be a blatant search for blame other than circumstances. Abanese states Sellers turned again, and again to Christian leaders for help and was turned away. I find it hard to believe a game led to his murderous actions, or that loving the world of Harry Potter will, if unchecked, lead our children down this same path of destruction.

I was compelled to read this, as I have never understood the arguments against Harry Potter. Now that I have, I have an even firmer belief in the advantages Rowlings worlds have given our children. The ability to differentiate between good and evil, right and wrong, fantasy and reality. She shows them loyalty, friendship and love, and above all doing the right thing is not always the easy thing. It's our job as parents to teach our children, but Rowling gives them examples on their terms, aimed at their interests and hearts. What a great starting place. We should thank her not only for getting them reading, but for that.

The Just-About-Cocky Ms M says

This piece of utter crap holds the record for the quickest DNF ever--one hour was all I could stand of this unmitigated schlock by some semi-literate cretin affiliated with Saddleback Church. The latter is a mega-church--more properly mega-auditorium for all the spirituality it exudes--beloved by vast numbers of hysterical, deluded and largely uneducated fundamentalists, so the fact this awful--and awfully funny--book originated in such a cesspool is not surprising.

If there is research at the foundation of this book. I certainly didn't see it. If there were any cogent arguments, I missed them in the first 70 or so pages I managed before tossing my used copy--\$0.01!--in the trash. If the author finished the 10th grade, I saw no evidence amid the welter of typos, wrong words, misspellings, grammatical glitches, and creative--and incorrect--punctuation.

At the end of the day, to use a cliché, I'm happy in the knowledge that this book and its idiotic and delusional author will sink--has already sunk!--into oblivion while tens of millions of children and adults have been and will be captivated by the genius of Harry Potter. There is absolutely no "menace in the magick," but there certainly is plenty of menace in the mindset behind this screed.

Richard Harden says

Is there a rating less than one star? This book represents everything that is wrong with the fundamentalist-evangelical form of Christianity that is so prevalent in the United States. By taking a book that is benign in its intentions and miraculous in its ability to encourage young people to read, to think, to use their minds, and then turning that book into the anti-Christ, Abanes has taken a step in the direction of the Ayatollah banning Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses and placing a mark on that author's head. Everything about Rowling's work is distorted and misrepresented, and her accomplishments not just overlooked, but completely ignored.

Adam Ross says

Abanes makes some good points about real-world occultism, but none of his complaints can stick to the Potter novels. He so consistently misunderstands the Potter novels that it is clear he should stick to refuting the occult in our world.

Tiffany says

This book absolutely did not live up to its title. The title, *Harry Potter and the Bible*, implies that Abanes would go through the Harry Potter books and find examples of how the series matches up with or disagrees with what is said in the Bible. For the most part, though, there are hardly any mentions of the Bible. A couple of paragraphs in various chapters have cited the Bible, but mostly it's more about A Stereotypical Christian and the Stereotypical Christian Beliefs held by that person, and how Harry Potter IS GOING TO RUIN OUR WORLD. (Rowling researched magick! Rowling researched Wicca! The characters are witches and wizards! Those are occult and Wiccan ideas! Our children, just by reading these Harry Potter books, are signing up on Wiccan and Occult websites! It's already begun! Our children are Satan-worshippers!) It reads like just a bunch of alarmism and paranoia. I mean, I thought that even at the first pages, but then there was chapter 10: ten pages about a Satan worshiper who murdered his family. ... What else could be the point of this pretty large chunk of the book other than to not-so-subtly imply that the Harry Potter books are going to turn your precious children into parent-murdering Satanists?!? But, oh my God, this event happened *11* years before the first Harry Potter book came out, so please explain to me how that murderer is at ALL related to Harry Potter books, other than just the author's way of trying to alarm and scare the bejeesus out of parents and "good Christians."

There's also a pages-long tangent about feminist neo-pagans... Okay, it's a threat to your Christianity, but what does it have to do with Harry Potter? You may be trying to make the point that feminist neo-paganism is anti-Christian, and also that Harry Potter and it's "occultism" is anti-Christian, but that doesn't mean they should be mentioned together as even remotely connected. Again, you're just being an alarmist about everything you think is threatening "Christianity."

Abanes also seems hypocritical, or completely uncritical to the ideas that would disprove his point. For example, he spends a chapter discussing how Harry Potter is *not* in the same tradition as *The Lord of the Rings* series or Narnia books. In his explanation of why C.S. Lewis' books are okay, he says, "...the 'Christian theology' [and his use of quote marks is obviously to mock the fact that someone he quoted called the Tolkien and Lewis books Christian theology] in Lewis' fantasy is veiled beneath various characters (e.g., Aslan the Lion)." ... Wait, what? Aslan the lion is a VEILED reference to Christian theology?!? Every book I've ever read about Lewis and the Narnia books basically shout "ASLAN IS JESUS!" So, how is that veiled?!?! Abanes goes on to say that "there is no *direct* [his emphasis] association that can be made between the books and any contemporary religion. In Harry Potter, however, a *direct* link to paganism/witchcraft is made via the presentation to readers of current occult beliefs and practices." WHAT?!?! Again, "ASLAN IS JESUS!!" How is that not a direct association with Christianity, which, I believe, is a contemporary religion?? And as far as Harry Potter being a direct link to *paganism* and the occult, that was a point *you* created, sir. Not everyone believes the link; the "ASLAN IS JESUS" link is accepted by almost everyone who has read, studied, or read about the Narnia books.

If anything, this book should be called *Harry Potter and How It's Against What Hard-Core, Easily-Offended*

Christians Believe. Proportional to the length of the book and the title, there's very little reference to the actual Bible and passages in it; the book just implies what the hard-core Christians are afraid of and how Harry Potter and Rowling are totally leading your children down that exact path. Or it could be called *Harry Potter, and the Bible* because it's not often about the two things in relation to each other; there are sections about Harry Potter and then there are sections about the Bible, but very little about Harry Potter *and* the Bible.

If there were half-stars, I'd give this 1.5; but since there aren't, I have to go more on the "yuck" side than the "it was okay" side and just give it 1 measly star. I mean, there were *a few* places where Abanes makes interesting points, but mostly it was just "HARRY POTTER IS GOING TO DESTROY YOUR CHILDREN!!!"

Becky says

Ahh, right. Where to start... I have so much to say! I wish that you could all see my notebook. Aside from my atrocious handwriting, it is 12 full-size pages filled with my scribbled, jotted, many underlined thoughts, reactions and questions, as well as quotes, semi-quotes, references to quotes and page numbers for still more quotes.

It's not pretty. Really. But it WAS necessary. So many of the things that I jotted down had me rolling my eyes, thinking "Is this guy SERIOUS?". I just read this entire book, and I still don't understand most of his claims, arguments, assumptions and conclusions. I like Harry Potter, so I am obviously one of the "undiscerning" readers mentioned in Douglas Groothuis's foreword, in which he proclaims that I am about to read a "rare voice of sanity, reason and biblical discernment" regarding the Harry Potter books. Hmm. Well. Good thing he hasn't started off by annoying me or alienating me as a reader... Oh. Oops.

Anyway, offended by being called incapable of reason and insane before the book even starts, I still tried to read it objectively. From what I could see, Abanes's case comes down to several extremely repetitive points:

1) The setting of the "real world" makes it difficult for kids to differentiate between fact and fiction.

Apparently, because this is a fiction book that takes place in the United Kingdom where people actually live or can visit, it makes it nearly impossible for the reader to understand that it's not real. He makes reference to comments on message boards and letters (etc) which have kids saying things like "Wow! I wish I could do magic..." or "I wish I could go to Hogwarts..." and the like, and claims that these kids are dangerously close to becoming official occult followers. Which is utterly ridiculous and a huge logic leap. Kids whimsically wishing for something doesn't imply that they can't understand it's not real. I used to WISH I had a real My Little Pony to ride, but I didn't actually believe they WERE REAL. Kids know how mundane and normal and boring their life is. School. Homework. Bed. Repeat. They have no control over anything at this point - parents decide their lives. They just wish for some fun.

And, kids are much, much smarter than they are given credit for, in my opinion, although apparently not in the author's. Abanes seems to think that kids who read and like something will then rush off to try it with no thought. And while that may be true of some people, it is untrue of most. He gives an example in his book (after talking about how wormwood is used in HP and is an actual ingredient in absinthe) of someone looking up a recipe for absinthe online, making it and getting sick. He writes it in such a way as to insinuate that the person who did this was somehow influenced by the wormwood mention in HP. Another big leap. He also seems to forget parents, even while writing a book geared toward them. It is a parent's responsibility to teach their children, not JK Rowling's.

He goes on later in the book to say how Christian writers CS Lewis and JRR Tolkien both wrote fantasy stories involving magic, but these are OK because their magic is not HUMAN magic, and it is clearly in a fantasy world.

2) The magic described and portrayed in HP is actually representative of the Occult, which is denounced repeatedly and harshly in the bible.

Abanes's argument here seems to be that because JK Rowling researched and used real modern and historical practices, ideas, references, and substances (like wormwood above), as well as mythology and legend etc, that she is "thinly veiling" her belief in the occult, and not only introducing children to it, but grooming them towards it.

His "biblical" definition of occultism is extraordinarily all-encompassing, and ranges from astrology to conversing with spirits as a medium. Anything, essentially, that tries to understand or influence the world or ourselves that is NOT Christian in nature or done for the glory of God, is defined as being of the occult, and therefore dangerous and evil. He references many passages in the bible which denounce occultism, but never answers the ever present "WHY?" question. But hey, rules are rules, and the rule-maker need not explain, right?

Moving on, Abanes makes another huge leap in talking about the pets in HP, stating that they are familiars to their owners. Witches' familiars are defined here as a "low-level demon" in the assumed shape of an animal. He says, "Mrs. Norris, owned by the school's caretaker, exhibits some of the characteristics of a familiar. In Book III, Hermione gets her own familiar -- a cat named Crookshanks." He then quotes a renowned Wicca practitioner, Starhawk, on the tradition of familiars, and then quotes a passage from "Witchcraft In England" which rehashes again what familiars are and confirms (again) the belief that witches used them in "the later centuries of [the:] witchcraft-belief". Abanes then says, "*Obviously Harry and his friends are indeed making contact with the spiritual world.*" What? How is that obvious?

Abanes did include a very small section each to explain Paganism, Wicca and Satanism. I think he kind of shot himself in the foot if he was trying to turn people away from these, though. He failed miserably at making them unattractive, and to be honest, actually succeeded in piquing my interest in learning even more about them. Pagan and Wicca followers have a "reverence for the Earth and all it's creatures, generally see all life as interconnected, and strive to attune one's self to the manifestation of this belief as seen in the cycles of nature." Ooooh! DANGER! DANGER! (Sorry, I couldn't resist.)

I'm not going to go into the major points and details, but it is interesting, and I would recommend reading about them yourself. I did see a lot of my own "worldviews" represented in Paganism and Wicca, such as my relativism (a view that ethical truths depend on the individual or groups holding them -www.Merriam-Webster.com), which essentially means that what is good for me is not good for everyone else, and what is good for others may not be what is good for me. I'm OK with that. Abanes is not, and apparently has a problem with personal and private beliefs not in accordance with his own. He seems to feel that his way is the only way.

He did portray Satanism as being "bad", although he made clear that modern Satanism is not technically worship of Satan, but worship of the individual. Satanism "emerged when various aspects of all these (pagan, et al) traditions were blended together by persons seeking to fight Christianity's growing theological and moral influence [between 400s -1600s A.D.:]." (I got a real chuckle out of that. Apparently the Crusades and mass murders in the name of Christianity represent the "moral influence" of the faith. Best. Euphemism. EVER.)

He mentioned Sean Sellers, who was physically and sexually abused, neglected, and abandoned as a child and teen, who found himself getting involved with Dungeons & Dragons as an outlet, and later Satanism.

There he found acceptance and understanding, until things started getting too deep and cult-like, which is very different from the religion started by Anton LeVey. Sellers, fearing for his sanity, reached out repeatedly for help... his parents, their Christian ministers, church run support groups, etc, and they turned their backs on him each and every time. In the end, he immersed himself in Satanism completely, and ended up murdering three people, being arrested, sentenced to death, and becoming a born again Christian in prison. Abanes blames the D&D as the "gateway" to Satanism for his downfall, but fails completely to mention the many, many people who let Sellers down when he needed help the most. (This is just one of many examples of how Abanes cherry-picks his arguments.)

3) Vulgarity, profanity and general lack of biblical morality in the Harry Potter books. (Characters lying, stealing, cheating, cursing, drinking, etc. And the amount of "gore" in the books, including Nearly Headless Nick and the Headless Hunt.)

His point is that he doesn't feel like there is enough delineation between "good" and "evil". The good guys should be all good, or if they falter, they should pay for it immediately. Bad guys should be all bad, and should absolutely pay and fail.

But MY argument is that the world, and life, is rarely delineated in such stark, black and white terms. Good people do bad things, bad people can do good things, it's the way of the world. And the real world doesn't always mete out appropriate punishment for misdeeds based on a religious belief. The world is impartial... Religion is not.

Abanes's first example of the immorality of the children is that they disobey rules. I think this is the main stick in his craw, because so much of organized religion centers on obeying without question. He also really has a problem with the word "git", which is a derogatory word that means idiot. He claims that this is profanity, which I guess is subjective, but to me, it's slang, not profanity.

Children are children, and they ACT like children. They disobey, mouth off, curse, treat each other unkindly, hold grudges, make enemies, make up, cheat, etc. But even as they do so, they are learning. Holding them to adult standards of behavior is unrealistic and unfair, especially a religious standard that was never intended to be in the equation at all.

He also repeatedly laments the increase of "New Age Spiritualism" in modern times, causing what he calls a "Post-Christian" world, which is helped along by books, movies and media, namely "occult" books like HP, etc. He repeatedly inserts statistical data, which in itself is suspect to me, as 7 out of 8 people know that 60% of all statistics are made up on the spot (as this was... :P), so... I'm a little wary of just accepting his claims. He acts like popularity itself is cause for alarm. More than once, Abanes seems to indicate that because Rowling was poor before she wrote Harry Potter that her popularity was helped along by, if not evil, definitely occult forces. He also seems to take issue with the fact that JK Rowling has not publicly made known her personal religious beliefs. As if it matters. Her beliefs are personal, and her books are fiction. They have nothing to do with each other in my mind and opinion, but Abanes thinks that because she's not proclaimed her Christianity, that she's probably an Occultist. Again with the black and white, 'with us or against us' theme.

I think that's what bothered me most about this book. I tried to read it objectively and fairly, even though I myself am agnostic, but so many of his arguments are just statements without any basis. Comparisons which are... ridiculous. It's like he was writing this for people who think exactly as he does, but just didn't know it yet, and who wouldn't question his claims. At the end of the book, he gives practical advice for Christians (who should now have many, many concerns about the book) to go forth with gentleness and kindness when discussing the book(s) with others that they feel the need to educate. Good advice, yes, because I do not want someone calling me a "heathen" for enjoying these books, BUT this book only succeeded in making claims, not proving them.

Not only that, but as I mentioned before, he clearly, blatantly and shamelessly picked around the things that he didn't want to address, and beat into the ground the few points he did.

For instance, he mentions CS Lewis's Narnia series, and *spoiler* Aslan sacrificing himself for Edmund */spoiler*, but Lily's own sacrifice for Harry goes without mention. And he's not unaware, just to be clear, as he quotes Voldemort telling Harry that his mother died to save him, and that she will have died in vain, as well as Dumbledore's explanation of Lily's love sacrifice. He just ignores the sacrifice of the one, and lauds the sacrifice of the other, because it suits his theme.

He claims that the HP books are vulgar and full of violence etc, and that they are inappropriate reading material for children, yet ignores the fact that there is ridiculous amounts of violence and death in the Lord of the Rings trilogy. And the bible, for that matter.

He also derides the use of runes in HP, but makes no mention of the fact that Gandalf used them in Lord of the Rings. Apparently that's OK because, while runes are definitely "Real Occult", LOTR was not set in the real world.

I could go on and on, (12 pages of notes, remember?), but I think this is enough to get my point across. In the end, it seems like Abanes is saying, "Christianity is right, and anything that doesn't shout that from the rooftops is wrong. Period. End of story." That's an opinion, but it doesn't make it the right one. I think people are entitled to believe what they choose, just as readers (of all ages) are entitled to read and enjoy what they choose. Parents have a responsibility to talk to and teach their kids right from wrong, and morals and ethics, etc. That is not the job of the Harry Potter books, or ANY books. Religious texts are wonderful and useful to many people, but that does not mean that fiction and entertainment should seek only to rewrite/retell them.

Read and make up your OWN mind about books. :)

PS. Hi Brady! ♥

Alex says

I don't think Harry Potter is evil (I'm a Christian, and I think the books are wonderful), but I do understand why some people do not want to allow their children to read the books, so I picked this book up, just to see the other side of the situation. I don't feel like it was well-written at all (I feel like it was written the way I wrote papers in school...trust me, mine weren't that great, as partially evidenced by the above pretty-sure-it's-a-run-on sentence), and I think a lot of it was because he kept saying the same things over and over again. While I do appreciate some of his points (things about revenge, etc.), I don't feel like the author understands children at all. He attacks Rowling for allowing the kids to disobey their teachers and the rules set in place, but (and I'm not saying it's okay to break rules and engage in other such behavior) he doesn't seem to understand that these characters are kids. I know some of the adults break rules, but the author mostly attacks Harry and the others simply for being pre-teens/teenagers. Also, except for the Harry Potter novel, the Narnia novels, the Lord of the Rings novels, and the Bible, most of his research appears to have been done online; I don't mind a bit of online research, but I don't feel like getting all your research from newspaper articles and interviews (for a book, anyway) is really the best scholarly approach.

Nathan Willard says

This book is terrible, even on its own terms. The first half of the book goes into summaries about why each of the first four Harry Potter books works to draw people into witchcraft and present unchristian values. The second half seems to be lifted from a previous work by Abanes on the occult, as it was fairly generic "occultism is bad."

The big problems identified by Abanes in the first half of the book were:

- 1) The primary "unchristian" morality was neglect of the rules of Hogwarts by both Harry & Co and the teachers (who choose not to expel them after the Chamber of Secrets incidents).
- 2) Rowling uses famous alchemists and occultists from history as characters/inspirations in the books, showing that she is interested in drawing people into witchcraft.

There are frequent references to "prominent internet wiccans," and a fair amount of guilt-by-association. His belief that her occult obsession leads to her historical inclusions causes him to assume many of her greek references are coincidences, despite her classics degree.

So, the books are bad because people disobey strict rules and because they contain interesting historical tidbits. Showing distaste for humor, realism and education is fairly impressive, but makes for a bad, bad book.

Adriane says

Ok, so this will be a hard one to review, I gave it a one because it wasn't enjoyable to read at all, it had blatant spelling errors, and was incredibly repetitive. So the basis for the authors main argument is that kids can't tell reality from fiction, that the fact that they read Harry Potter means that they are going to go out and try to do witchcraft on their own. This is incredibly offensive to me, because I was a child once and having adults be this distrustful over something so minor was a huge annoyance, I was like Rowling pretty lucky in that my mom would generally let me read anything I took and interest in, sometimes reading the same book with me so we could discuss anything that bothered me. I'm mainly citing in this situation when as a 12/13 yr old in middle school I started reading Crichton, pretty hard core science thrillers, these diverged from my normal adult flavored Star Wars books so my mom took an interest to make sure I wouldn't get scarred.

Speaking of Star Wars, even as Avery young child, though I wished to be and pretended to be a Jedi, I knew for a fact that this dream would never come to pass. This didn't lead me down a dark path of drugs that ultimately lead me to join the Jedi religion in Australia. Assuming that all children are going to just turn against everything they know that their parents have taught them because a book gave them an idea is a bit silly. But I digress.....my point is that almost every point in this book is invalid.

Example: Abanes says that C.S. Lewis' classic Narnia series is very subtly Christian, while Harry Potter is blatantly trying to turn little children pagan. Ugh, where to start with this one, first off, Lion-Jesus isn't all that subtle, it's a great literary device and add depths to the story that it didn't have before the situation arose, but it's been pretty obvious to anyone who's read the books what the meaning is. On the other hand Harry Potter has no obvious religious anything, they're just stories about a boy in school making friends and

fighting evil...like you do. Any mention of the occult no matter how well researched is going to turn some faithful Christian kid pagan.....that's not what these books are about. And to the point above, just because a dude named Nicholas Flamel existed doesn't mean that alchemy actually works or that kids believe they can become immortal or turn lead into gold.

My review comes down to a few things, one is trust your kids, you're the one who raised them, you're the one who taught them. Right and wrong, they aren't going to forget all that just because some characters in a book are snotty to each other now and again. Next is, being reactionary about something you personally perceive as a threat shouldn't affect everyone outside of your per-view, basically, teach your kids and you'll be fine, it's not fair to try to ban a book series just because it has some things in it you don't agree with, acting like everything that everyone else likes is a personal attack on you isn't going to make anyone listen to your ideas in act it will have the opposite effect. So chill....

Cindi Blyberg says

this tome purports to explain why j.k. rowling's blockbuster novels are just pure evil(tm). you can tell by his spelling of "magick" that abanes is no fan. skip this hysterical, poorly written volume in favor of john killinger's god, the devil, and harry potter; it offers a glimpse into this dark side of harry without being so egregiously ... stoopid. read fall 2004

Swankivy says

I was curious what objections the Christians had to the *Harry Potter* phenomenon, so I read. Though the author had done his research, I was pretty appalled to see him making excuses for Christian fantasy writers (e.g., Lewis, Tolkien) and saying it was okay for them to have magic-using characters (like the elves in *Lord of the Rings*) because they were using inborn abilities while *Harry Potter* kids are studying the occult. (Er, no, the *Harry Potter* kids had natural magical abilities that they used with no training, even if they did later go to school to refine them.) Anyway. I didn't rate this book low just because I don't agree with it; I rated it low because it was so obvious to me that the author was capable of doing good research but did not do so in an honorable objective way. He was searching for evidence specifically to prove his point and skewed the evidence when necessary in order to make it say what he wanted it to. I find this very dishonest. I do think he's right (putting aside any feelings *I* have about whether it's bad for children to get into Wicca) that the *Harry Potter* books have enough references to "real" magic stuff that kids could get interested in if they were paying enough attention, but most kids who weren't going to get interested in "real witch" activities when they were older ANYWAY are not going to be persuaded to do so by these children's fantasy books.

Darcy says

Poorly argued points, and poorly researched. I can completely respect someone's opinion when differs from mine if it is logical and well argued, but that is NOT the case with this book.
