

Supernatural Teen Television: Spiritual Lessons for Teen Viewers?

Clare Diviny

Abstract

Supernatural teen television is a popular and recent phenomenon attracting millions of viewers worldwide. Part of the appeal of these programs is the combination of teen genres, teen culture and supernatural elements. Like a range of different teen media texts, supernatural teen television adheres to these conventions but adds another element. The supernatural often functions as a metaphor for deeper spiritual lessons, issues and themes. Characters, narratives, generic tropes and discourses convey more profound and mystical meanings than in other teen genres. A close textual analysis of *The Vampire Diaries* and *Teen Wolf* demonstrates the ways in which these shows portray a surprising number of spiritual themed concepts and ideas. A genre analysis reveals that it is the combination of the lighter more entertaining elements with the more philosophical spiritual ones that offers teen viewers a more holistic and satisfying experience.

Introduction

For centuries cultures have been using supernatural symbols and concepts to depict spiritual and religious meaning. Supernatural elements in texts have continued to endure across different mediums, genres and audiences. However, since the early nineties an unprecedented volume of supernatural television programs has been produced in the United Kingdom and the United States. Interestingly a large proportion of these shows are aimed at a teen/young adult audience. Some popular examples of these shows include; *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Charmed*, *Supernatural*, *American Horror Story*, *Being Human* (UK version), *The Vampire Diaries*, *The Secret Circle*, *Teen Wolf* and *Wolfblood*. Some of these programs are extremely popular attracting high television ratings and millions of fans world-wide both on and offline. For example, *Supernatural* entered its tenth season in 2015 and has 15.2 million Facebook fans. *The Vampire Diaries* entered its sixth season in 2015 and has 23 million Facebook fans.

At first glance the fascination with these programs to teen viewers is evident. Supernatural teen television draws heavily on the teen television genre which depicts teen centric characters, storylines, issues and events. Another appealing element of these shows is the taboo nature of the supernatural. Clarke argues that teenagers are frequently attracted to anything which may challenge or rebel against authority figures (5 – 6). However, it is questionable as to whether the allure of the forbidden would be enough to sustain such loyal viewership over so many years. It is interesting to note that the supernatural might also have appeal beyond that of testing boundaries with authority figures. There are a surprising number of additional layers of meaning conveyed by the supernatural discourses in these shows. The supernatural elements in these texts convey profound theosophical and spiritual meanings with which the viewer could engage. Certainly most teen viewers are not tuning in to supernatural teen television to contemplate existentialist and theological philosophy, or are they? In order to better understand the popularity and appeal of these programs I will now define and discuss the supernatural teen television genre.

Supernatural Teen Television Genre

The supernatural teen television genre is comprised of a number of different genres such as; the teen mystery genre, the teen television genre and the supernatural genre. The teen mystery genre has its roots in adventure fiction with classics such as Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. These classic adventure stories spawned a plethora of child and young adult fiction. By the early twentieth century an offshoot to this adventure genre had emerged. These exciting tales now included a mystery to be solved, a secret to be discovered or a conundrum to

be cracked. A popular example of this genre is the animated series *Scooby-Do, Where Are You?* Unlike other types of mystery and suspense texts, the teen mystery draws inspiration from gothic fiction. Problems, mysteries and secrets are all shrouded in the supernatural and are often conveyed via “ruined mansions, eerie goings-on, and spooky accoutrements” (Brunsdale 261). In *Buffy* characters call themselves ‘the Scooby gang’ or the ‘Scoobies’ (Mandala) referring to the television series *Scooby-Do, Where Are You?*

The second generic element is the teen television genre which features teen/young adult main characters who deal with issues relevant to adolescents (García-Muñoz & Fedele 134 – 135). Teen issues are depicted in a soap opera style. Storylines are often based on personal relationships and emotional exchanges are heavily featured. Characters frequently use the current vernacular familiar to teens and drop numerous popular cultural references. Teen television regularly presents the latest teen fashions, music, technology and pastimes and functions as a vehicle for teen consumer culture (Ross & Stein 7-8). Another key aspect of teen television is humour. Sarcastic responses, mocking, exploiting embarrassing moments and making light of serious situations are all common devices to counter the soap opera and teen culture elements. The mode of delivery in these programs is also tongue in cheek. Strange and obscure supernatural phenomena is presented in seemingly contradictory ways; simultaneously in a mocking tone yet at the same time presented in genuine ways expecting viewers to take it seriously. Finally, another signature of this genre is the absent or flawed parental characters. As the main focus is on the teen characters, their guardians need to have limited screen time. Therefore, these characters are conveyed as either absent, hands-off, abusive or at least flawed. This then justifies little or no parental interference in the teen characters’ lives.

Supernatural teen television acknowledges the supernatural by including supernatural beings and events. Some examples include; witches, werewolves, angels, demons, ghosts, goblins, fairies, vampires, mummies, dragons, sorcerers, warlocks, psychics, shapeshifters, spirits, possessed creatures and objects, deities, unicorns, centaurs, griffins, trolls and gremlins. Some examples of supernatural events and acts includes; physical transformation, objects moving on their own, magic, clairvoyance, clairaudience, clairsentience, channelling spirits and/or information, supernatural beings appearing and performing various acts, voodoo, sudden and inexplicable changes in weather, living things growing or dying at an unexpected rate, miracles, events changing course, sudden and unexplained changes in people’s demeanour and/or appearance.

There is one final signature of the genre that is worth noting here and that is the gendered depiction of key supernatural characters. One of the most notable is the witch figure. Throughout cinematic history the witch character has regularly been portrayed as female (Edwards 131). In television there are numerous examples of witches¹ presented as feminine². However, the preference for female characters³ is not just restricted to the witch. There is an array of different types of central protagonists in the genre that are portrayed by young girls and women⁴ and further information on this pattern can be found in Beeler and Biddinger. As a result of this gendered depiction young women are portrayed in conflicting yet ultimately empowered ways. Due to their supernatural gifts and abilities they are presented as disrupting the hegemonic positivistic worldview favoured in many Western societies. Characters are shown to confound and defy traditional scientific explanation via their mystical talents. Ultimately these ‘super power’ characters usually thwart the bad guy, find the missing artefact and save the day which vindicates their seemingly disruptive position to the status quo. However, these victories are not without compromise. Frequently characters are in difficult positions justifying their unusual and quirky behaviour. The genre resolves this tension in one of two ways; with humour or poignant reflection. Overall, the message this genre conveys via these characters is an empowering one for women. Although some emphasis is placed on their physical beauty, characters are shown to draw strength from their inner gifts. Aside from their supernatural abilities, characters are depicted as fostering qualities such as intelligence, strength, kindness, healing abilities, sacrifice, strategy and stealth.

These are the four core generic elements that make up the supernatural teen television genre. A perfect example of how these generic elements work together can be found in *The Vampire Diaries*. The central protagonist Elena Gilbert starts out as a high school student recovering from the loss of her parent’s death. She meets and falls in love with a 165 year old vampire Stefan Salvatore. By falling in love and dating him, Elena unknowingly endangers herself, her friends and the town. The show incorporates the supernatural with regular teenage issues and problems. The supernatural elements come from the supernatural mythology, characters and narratives via the vampires, Bonnie the witch and Mayor Lockwood the werewolf. As the program progresses through the seasons there are a greater variety and number of supernatural beings. There are always new problems of a mystical nature to be solved and these are depicted using teen mystery signifiers. Bonnie casts a spell in a graveyard, the Salvatore brothers live in a big gothic-style mansion and there are mystical artefacts to be discovered, destroyed and activated. The more mundane issues surrounding dating, friendship, school life and family are addressed in a soap opera

style. For example, in season one when Bonnie tells Caroline that she is a witch it is during a sleep over at Elena's house. The gendered depiction of the central protagonist is also present in *The Vampire Diaries*. In the first couple of seasons the focus is centred on Elena and early in the series the characters know one another through Elena. However, as the series progresses the focus shifts and the characters are depicted more as an ensemble which is a mixture of both male and female characters.

How does the Supernatural relate to Spirituality?

The supernatural is intrinsically linked to religious and spiritual rituals, practices and beliefs. Hultkrantz argues that religion cannot "be defined without reference to the concept of the 'supernatural'" (231). All religions and spiritual practices have some type of supernatural elements whether they are supernatural creatures (such as angels, gods or demons) or events (such as miracles or magic). Supernatural elements aid in the understanding of more complex and esoteric concepts such as parallel worlds or places (such as nirvana and hell), the afterlife and a transcendent or divine being. Popular cultural texts conveying supernatural themes are more frequently being cited as a source for potential spiritual exploration. One television program which has provoked a glut of academic investigation is *Star Trek*. Works by Jenkins, Jindra, Porter and McLaren have all explored fans' spiritual/religious connection with the show. In their seminal study of teen witches Berger and Ezzy acknowledge how texts such as *Buffy*, *Charmed* and *The Craft* popularised witchcraft and have been instrumental in teenagers wanting to explore Wicca (37). There exists a long and rich tradition of using supernatural elements to convey more esoteric and even spiritual elements.

In order to better understand how supernatural teen television has the potential to function as a catalyst for spiritual contemplation I will analyse some scenes from *The Vampire Diaries* and *Teen Wolf*. Historically, vampires have been depicted as hedonistic creatures that serve only their bloodlust and use humans for food and sexual gratification (Cardow 2-3; Tyree 31-32). However, over time there has been a variety of different incarnations of the vampire in contemporary popular culture (Auerbach; Cardow; Trow; Tyree). In more recent versions there are depictions of the vampire that are less dark and sinister and more relatable. One such example is the 'gentleman' vampire figure (Tyree 32) and some examples include; Edward Cullen in *Twilight*, Angel in *Buffy*, Bill Compton in *True Blood* and Stefan Salvatore in *The Vampire Diaries*. The gentleman vampire character is constantly fighting against his monstrous true self. As a result he is seemingly more complex as he offers the best of both worlds. These figures are depicted as being more romantic and chivalrous than a traditional vampire, yet their dangerous doppelganger is never too far away, lurking underneath. This more tempered incarnation of the vampire figure allows viewers to engage with the character and even consider more profound issues. Vampires represent the delicate balance between life and death. These characters also raise questions about the quality of life, what it means to be human and life after death.

In *The Vampire Diaries* two of the central characters, the Salvatore brothers Stefan and Damon, are portrayed as distinctly different types of vampire. Damon is depicted as the hedonistic, rebel who unapologetically feeds on, kills and has sex with anyone he chooses. In contrast Stefan avoids hurting humans, feeds on animal blood and uses his vampire powers to help people. As the seasons progress, each of the brothers take turns in these roles as they alternate losing and then regaining their humanity. However, in a season one episode called 'Haunted' Stefan tries to help Vicki, who Damon has turned into a vampire. As Stefan passes her a mug of animal blood, he explains that vampires don't have to kill humans to survive. Damon tells Vicki that she should just feed on someone trashy and erase their memory. Damon mocks Stefan's attempts to convince Vicki that a less hedonistic and destructive lifestyle is possible. Damon says to Stefan: "Ooohhh Count Deepak. I'm out of here". The reference here to the Indian/American New Age writer Deepak Chopra indicates to viewers that Damon believes Stefan is going against his inherent nature as a vampire and striving to be something he cannot; an enlightened being. This scene aligns Stefan with Deepak Chopra who is a spiritual man dedicated to living his life in a spiritual way. Clearly this scene is about right and wrong but it is also about what it means to be human and the type of life you lead. Stefan is depicting a more difficult life path, one that respects human life even though it comes at a cost. The cost here is that drinking animal blood is not as satisfying as human blood. Furthermore, it puts Stefan at a disadvantage because it makes him physically weaker than vampires who feed on human blood.

Teen Wolf is another popular supernatural teen television program. It centres on teenage high school student Scott McCall who gets bitten and becomes a werewolf. The werewolf figure is used to raise several important issues in this show such as the tension between nature versus culture; primal forces versus civilised society and issues of low self-worth and loyalty. In her book *The Curse of the Werewolf*, Du Coudray examines the history and

many forms of the werewolf figure in popular culture. Based on Slavoj Žižek's concept of monsters, Du Coudray argues that werewolves act as "a bridge between nature and culture, by exceeding both categories and representing the slippages between them" (3). Žižek's concept is played out via the characters in *Teen Wolf* as it uses the werewolf to explore concepts of humanity, right and wrong and what is regarded as civilised behaviour in our current society. In the show there is a family of werewolf hunters the Argents. They only kill werewolves because werewolves kill humans and they are zealous in their hatred and pursuit of werewolves. In season one an alpha male werewolf is slaughtering various people in the town. For this reason, the hunters are after any werewolf including Scott. The Argents chase Scott, shoot him twice and try to run him over with their cars. What is interesting is that they operate in accordance to a moral code but their behaviour is depicted as not always being beyond reproach.

Initially the show portrays the Argents as being opposite to werewolves and as battling evil. These two facts easily lead the viewers to assume that the characters are 'good'. However, throughout season one it becomes obvious that this early assessment of the Argents may be premature. Their actions are a little extreme, they are not above harassing people they suspect and they attempt to kill Scott without establishing whether he has killed anyone. In season one it comes to light that Kate Argent killed innocent people when she set fire to a house because there was one werewolf inside. She justified her act that she was there to kill a werewolf and that's what she did. To further complicate this moral conundrum (the Argents have saved lives but their actions are morally questionable) Scott McCall is not a scary, evil werewolf. The werewolf is a monster and monsters are traditionally depicted as being a threat to good people and deeds (Bodart; McMahon-Coleman and Weaver). In *Teen Wolf* Scott is a different type of monster because his new found powers do give him great advantages but also come with huge liabilities. *Teen Wolf* portrays Scott as a sympathetic werewolf. Although he tries to kill his best friend Stiles when in wolf form he learns from the experience. In the episode 'Heart Monitor' Stiles helps Scott to discover what triggers his shapeshifting and how he can learn to control turning into a werewolf. The moral ambiguity in the show allows teens to consider what they would do in a similar situation. Are morally dubious acts ok if you believe that you have the right intentions? These kind of thorny moral questions are at the heart of determining our own moral compass which is an important aspect of spiritual development.

Conclusion

Beneath the slick surface of the sarcastic teen vernacular and the frothy emotion filled teen angst, this genre offers viewers a spiritual smorgasbord. It is important to note that spirituality is a complex notion and the *raison d'être* of supernatural teen television is not to explore the ontology of spiritual philosophy. However, the generic elements, characters, narrative and discourses of this genre present teen viewers with a range of profound philosophical and spiritual meanings in complex ways. It is in fact the gloss and the froth of the teen television genre that facilitates these deeper and more mystical meanings. Without these generic tropes, the more profound elements would not be as successful. For example, *Teen Wolf* breaks up the monotony of moral conundrums and supernatural mythology with more emotional fantasy and teen consumerist elements. In the first two seasons the sidekick character Stiles can't get a date and the program follows his turbulent journey of near misses, rejection and unrequited love. Teen romance is a common and a popular feature in these types of texts and it functions as a contrast to the fantastic supernatural aspects of the show. Presenting more every day teen centred issues provides welcome relief and makes the show more relatable for teen viewers. The teen consumerist parts of the text function in a similar way. Both *Teen Wolf* and *The Vampire Diaries* use music frequently to appeal to teen tastes. In the case of *Teen Wolf*, as MTV produces the show, the song details even appear on screen to facilitate viewer purchase.

Although these texts oscillate between entertainment and more esoteric concepts, it is the esoteric, the mystical and spiritual that make these programs noteworthy. The supernatural mythology functions as a metaphor for larger issues about what it means to be human, right and wrong and life and death. The vampires, werewolves and witches of these shows function to provide viewers with opportunities to better understand their adolescent growing pains, flesh out identity issues and contemplate larger issues beyond their own immediate worlds. Topics are presented in complex and sometimes contradictory ways in an attempt to capture the multi-layered and intricate nature of issues faced in daily life. Teen characters are conveyed as being placed in difficult situations and being empowered to fumble their way through, make mistakes, resolve a crisis and sometimes even fail. The key message is that regardless of the outcome these characters still learn along the way. These texts thrust young characters into adult worlds often compelling them to make important and profound decisions that many adults are portrayed as unable to make. All of these discourses present the viewer with a rollercoaster ride of various elements that satisfies on a number of different levels. There are cool clothes, engaging characters with an array of different pleasing

attributes (such as good looking, funny, intelligent, naïve etc. . .), the latest teen culture accoutrements, soap opera emotional moments, action and supernatural mysteries. Finally, there are the moral conundrums, difficult life changing decisions, sacrifices, challenges and spiritual quests which make for great adventures and even better spiritual exploration. However tempting it might be to dismiss the significance of the spiritual for contemporary teenagers living in a Western consumerist society, spiritual matters can and sometime are a significant part of adolescent development. Supernatural teen television delivers the opportunity to engage in these spiritual lessons whilst simultaneously enjoying the more carefree elements of the genre.

Bibliography

- Auerbach, Nina. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Print.
- Beeler, Karin. *Seers, Witches and Psychics on Screen: An Analysis of Women Visionary Characters in Recent Television and Film*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2008. Print.
- Berger, Helen, and Douglas Ezzy. *Teenage Witches: Magical Youth and the Search for the Self*. New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2007. Print.
- Biddinger, Megan. *Saints, Seers, and Sorceresses: Femininity and the Spiritual Supernatural in Contemporary U.S. Film and Television*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2012. Print.
- Bodart, Joni. Richards. *They Sick, They Bite, They Eat, They Kill: The Psychological Meaning of Supernatural Monsters in Young Adult Fiction*. Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2012. Print.
- Brunsdale Mitzi. *Icons of Mystery and Crime Detection: From Sleuths To Superheroes, Volume 1*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2010. Print.
- Cardow, Andrew. "Blood Sack to Sacks of Blood: The Social Acceptance of the Vampire in Popular Culture." *Social Science Research Network*, 2010. Web. 8 February 2012 <http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1694259>.
- Clark, Lynn Schofield. *From Angels to Aliens: Teenagers, the Media and the Supernatural*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Print.
- Du Coudray, Chantal Bourgault. *The Curse of the Werewolf: Fantasy, Horror and the Beast Within*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2006. Print.
- Edwards, Emily. *Metaphysical Media: The Occult Experience in Popular Culture*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005. Print.
- Feasey, Rebecca. Watching Charmed: Why Teen Television Appeals to Women. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 34:1 (2006): 2 - 9. Print.
- García-Muñoz, Nuria, and Maddalena Fedele. "Television Fiction Series Targeted at Young Audience: Plots and Conflicts Portrayed in a Teen Series", *Communicar*. 37:19 (2011): 133-140. Print.
- Hultkrantz, Åke. "The Concept of the Supernatural in Primal Religion", *History of Religions*, 22:3 (1983): 231 - 253. Print.
- Jarvis, Christine. Becoming a Woman Through Wicca: Witches and Wiccans in Contemporary Teen Fiction. *Children's Literature in Education*, 39:1 (2008): 43-52. Print.
- Jenkins, Henry. *Textual Poachers* London: Routledge, 1992. Print.
- Jindra, Michael. "Star Trek Fandom as a Religious Phenomenon", *Sociology of Religion*, 55:1 (1994): 27 - 51. Print.
- . "Star Trek to Me is a Way of Life 'Fan Expressions of Star Trek Philosophy.'" *Star Trek and Sacred Ground. Explorations of Star Trek, Religion, and American Culture*. Eds. Jennifer Porter and Darcee McLaren. Albany: State University of New York, 1999. 217 - 230. Print.
- . "It's About Faith in our Future: Star Trek Fandom as Cultural Religion." *Religion and Popular Culture in America*. Eds. Bruce David Forbes and Jeffrey H. Mahan. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. 159 - 173. Print.
- Mandala, Susan. (Solidarity and the Scoobies: An Analysis of the -Y Suffix in the Television Series Buffy the Vampire Slayer. *Language and Literature*, 16:1 (2007): 53 - 73. Print.
- McMahon - Coleman, Kimberley, and Roslyn Weaver *Werewolves and other Shapeshifters in Popular Culture: A Thematic Analysis of Recent Depictions*. Jefferson: McFarland, 2012. Print.
- Moseley, Rachel. Glamorous Witchcraft: Gender and Magic in Teen Film and Television. *Screen*, 43:4 (2002): 403 - 122.
- Porter, Jennifer, and Darcee McLaren, eds. *Star Trek and Sacred Ground. Explorations of Star Trek, Religion, and American Culture*. Albany: State University of New York, 1999. Print.
- Ross, Sharon Marie, and Louisa Stein. (2008) "Introduction: Watching Teen TV" in S.M. Ross and L.E. Stein (eds), *Teen Television: Essays on Programming and Fandom*. Jefferson: McFarland & Co: 3 - 26.
- Rossiter, Graham. "Science, Film and Television: An Introductory Study of the 'Alternative' Religious Stories that Shape the Spirituality of Children and Adolescents", *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 1(1): (1996): 52 - 67. Print.
- Sanders, H. 2007. Living a Charmed Life: The Magic of Postfeminist Sisterhood. In: Tasker, Y. & Negra, D. (eds.) *Interrogating Post Feminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Trow, Meirion. *A Brief History of Vampires*. Philadelphia and London: Running Press Books, 2010. Print.
- Tyree, J.M. "Warm-Blooded: True Blood and Let the Right One In", *Film Quarterly* 63(2): (2009): 31 - 37. Print.

Filmography

Film

- The Covenant*. Dir. Renny Harlin. 2006. DVD. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2011.
- The Dead Zone*. Dir. David Cronenberg. 1983. DVD. Force Video.
- The Sixth Sense*. Dir. M. Night Shyamalan. 1999. DVD. Buena Vista Home Entertainment.
- Warlock*. Dir. Steve Miner. 1989. DVD. Lionsgate Films. 2005.

Television

- American Horror Story*. Crea. Brad Falchuk and Ryan Murphy. FX Network. 2011 - 2015. Fox Home Entertainment. DVD.
- Being Human*. Crea. Toby Whitehouse. BBC. 2008 - 2013. ABC Video. DVD.
- Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Crea. Joss Whedon. WB Television Network. 1997 - 2003. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment. DVD.
- Charmed*. Crea. Constance M. Burge. WB Television Network. 1998 - 2006. Paramount Home Entertainment. DVD.
- Dead Like Me*. Crea. Bryan Fuller. The Showtime Network. 2003 - 2004. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment. DVD.
- Eastwick*. Crea. Maggie Friedman. Warner Bros. Television. 2009 - 2010. ABC Productions. DVD.
- Every Witch Way*. Dir. Clayton Boen. Nickelodeon. 2014. Nickelodeon. DVD.

The Ghost Whisperer. Crea. John Gray. CBS. 2005 – 2010. Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment. DVD
 'Haunted.' *The Vampire Diaries*. Crea. Julie Plec and Kevin Williamson. The CW Network. 29 October, 2009. Warner Home Video. DVD.
Hex. Dir. Brian Grant. Sky One. 2004 – 2005. Sony Pictures. DVD
Highway to Heaven. Dir. Michael Landon. NBC. 1984 – 1989. Con Dios Entertainment, 2012. DVD.
Joan of Arcadia. Writ. Barbara Hall. CBS. 2003 – 2005. Sony Pictures. DVD
 'Let the Right One In.' *The Vampire Diaries*. Creat. Julie Plec and Kevin Williamson. The CW Network. 8 April, 2010. Warner Home Video. DVD.
Medium. Crea. Glenn Gordon Caron. NBC, U.S.A. 2005–2009; CBS U.S.A. 2009–2011. Paramount Home Entertainment. DVD
Sabrina the Teenage Witch. Crea. Jonathan Schmock and Nell Scovell. ABC, 1996–2000; The WB Network, 2000–2003. Paramount Home Entertainment, 2007. DVD.
Sabrina the Teenage Witch Show. Dir. Hal Sutherland. Filmmation Associates, 1971 – 1974. Classic Media, 2008. DVD.
Saving Grace. Crea. Nancy Miller. Fox Television Studios, 2007 – 2010. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment. DVD.
The Secret Circle. Crea. Andrew Miller. The CW Network, 2011 – 2012. Netflix. Web.
Supernatural. Crea. Eric Kripke. The CW Network, 2005 – 2015. Warner Bros. Television. DVD.
Teen Wolf. Crea. Jeff Davis. MTV, 2011 –2015. MGM Television Entertainment. DVD.
Touched by an Angel. Crea. John Masius. CBS, 1994 – 2003. CBS. DVD.
True Blood. Crea. Alan Ball. HBO, 2008 – 2014. HBO. DVD.
The Vampire Diaries. Creat. Julie Plec and Kevin Williamson The CW Network. 2009 – 2015. Warner Home Video. DVD.
Witchblade. Crea. Marc Silvestri and Michael Turner. Blade TV Productions, 2001 – 2002. Warner Home Video. DVD.
Witches of East End. Crea. Maggie Friedman. Fox 21, 2013 – 2014. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment. DVD.
Wolfblood. Crea. Debbie Moon. BBC, 2012 – 2015. ZDF Enterprises. DVD.

Endnotes

¹ Some of these television examples include; *Bewitched*, *Sabrina the Teenage Witch Show*, *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, *Buffy*, *Charmed*, *Hex*, *True Blood*, *The Vampire Diaries*, *Eastwick*, *The Secret Circle*, *American Horror Story*, *Witches of East End* and *Every Witch Way*.

² Although it is beyond the scope of the current discussion, there is a rich body of academic research on the empowering function of the witch character in media texts. Moseley argues that there is a strong historical connection “between witchcraft and feminism in practice and theory” (409). There is a canon of research acknowledging the witch character as empowering female audiences not only to explore their spirituality but also as an inspirational figure of feminist power (Moseley; Feasey; Berger & Ezzy; Sanders; Jarvis).

³ It needs to be noted that although overwhelmingly there is a pattern of female characters there are exceptions to this rule. Texts such as *The Dead Zone*, *Highway to Heaven*, *Warlock*, *The Sixth Sense*, *The Covenant*, *Supernatural* and *Teen Wolf* all feature male characters as the central protagonist.

⁴ Some supernatural television programs featuring central female characters include; *Touched by Angel*, *Buffy*, *Witchblade*, *Joan of Arcadia*, *Dead Like Me*, *Ghost Whisperer*, *Medium*, *Saving Grace*, *True Blood* and *The Vampire Diaries*