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Supernatural Beliefs and the Influence of the Media

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Supernatural Beliefs and the Influence of the Media

A Thesis Submitted to the University Honors Program

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the

Baccalaureate Degree with Upper Division Honors

Department of Sociology

By

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Abstract

People and the media has had a continued fascination in the supernatural, from books and verbal stories of the past to television and movies today. The supernatural is a fascinating topic and includes paranormal phenomena, like vampires and werewolves, as well as religious supernatural phenomena, like angels and demons. The media uses these supernatural phenomena for entertainment, but there is also a belief in these supernatural phenomena. My study, Supernatural Beliefs and the Media, addresses the various supernatural phenomena that is commonly addressed and through interviews and survey data, I compared beliefs in the supernatural with supernatural media consumption. Since the supernatural is a common theme in the media of today and the media has a large impact on people's lives, there is a need to see if the media is able to influence the belief in the supernatural.

People have had a fascination with story telling and monsters since stories were passed down verbally. Even today, the people of today have an interest in monsters and within that, the supernatural. Supernatural phenomena and creatures have been in stories and in people's minds for hundreds of years. *Dracula* was written about vampires over a hundred years ago, yet the fascination with vampires is still evident in today's media with books like *Twilight* that was made into a massive movie franchise and other media that contains vampires. Compared to the extensive history of humans, widespread media is relatively new. While some of these supernatural based beliefs are not generally believed to be as true by most people (werewolves and vampires), some of these supernatural forces and creatures are believed to be true by many people (ghosts, Bigfoot, and aliens). Does the population of the United States in the current post-industrial time believe in any of the supernatural based phenomena? Are only certain types of supernatural phenomena believed by this group? How does this number of people who believe in the supernatural compare to those who do not believe but who also watch and are exposed to the media that involves said supernatural belief? Does belief in the supernatural correlate to the consumption of supernatural based media? My research will explore the belief in different forms of supernatural phenomena and compare those beliefs with the influence of the media that is based on supernatural phenomena.

For this study, I am making the distinction between types of supernatural phenomena where there are religious based supernatural phenomena, like angels and demons, and then there are the paranormal based supernatural phenomena, like Bigfoot, aliens, ghosts, zombies, and werewolves and vampires. This is a necessary distinction as there is conflicting sides in the literature as to what terms researchers use.

Literature Review

As the topic of supernatural phenomena has become popular in mass media, there has been research into the subject by various individuals. There are studies that focus on how supernatural belief and religion are related (Baker 2008; Baker & Draper 2010; Beck & Miller 2001; Draper & Baker 2011; Martinez 2013; Vail et al. 2012; Rossano 2007; Stroope 2012; Weeks et al. 2008) and there are other studies that focus on how supernatural beliefs are related to cultural aspects in current society (Cantor 2013; Davidson 2013; Eaton 2015). These studies involve topics ranging from religion to popular culture.

Religious belief can be a predictor of certain forms of supernatural phenomena and religion can also be a predictor of non-belief of other supernatural phenomena. A few of the articles focus specifically on supernatural factors within religion (angels, demons, and Satan) and the influences on the religious belief (Baker 2008; Beck & Miller 2001; Martinez 2013; Weeks, Weeks and Daniel 2008). Other studies deal with how supernatural belief in some types of religion are tied closely with communication and cooperation between people (Rossano 2007; Stroope 2012). The study conducted by Stroope focuses on US Christians in 2007 (Stroope 2007), while Rossano focuses on religion involving shamans, ancestor worship and natural and animal spirits (Rossano 2007). These two studies can be useful to help show reasons for beliefs in supernatural phenomena, but do not closely align with the topics of supernatural phenomena in my study of supernatural belief as I am focusing of people of various religious beliefs and not focusing on ancestor worship and natural and animal spirits. Many parts of religion as a whole include the belief of what happens after death as Vail, Arndt, and Abdullahi (2012) note, their

study looks at how death influences believers and non-believers alike. This topic is important due to the significance in the reasons why a person may believe one thing over another but does not specifically deal with supernatural.

Beck and Miller (2001) showed that there is a relationship in belief of the supernatural and religious beliefs. It was shown that there is a correlation between religious belief and belief in the supernatural where if the person was religious, they believed in the religion based supernatural phenomena, but not any other supernatural phenomena. People who were not religious tended to believe in both religion based supernatural phenomena and non-religious supernatural phenomena at similar rates.

Angels are often associated with religions who use The Old Testament as a religious text, but the idea of a guardian angel is also believed in by those who do not follow The Old Testament. In the US society of today, people of all religious and non-religious beliefs support the claim of a guardian angel who protects them from harm (Draper and Baker 2011). This study helps to show that there are similarities between faiths and non-believers in belief of some of the different types of supernatural phenomena.

Eaton (2015) takes a perspective on the idea of ghosts and hauntings. He studied various paranormal ghost hunting people through interviews and participant observation. Eaton (2015) found that the search for ghosts ties back to a spiritual basis where the individuals are using the search for ghosts to prove existence after death. Of all of the supernatural phenomena, belief in ghosts has one of the highest rates. Many people believe in the existence of ghosts and many of the believers have also had experiences with ghosts as well. There has been an increase in the amount of media that focuses on ghosts and hauntings. This increase of the media that involves

ghosts shows that there are widespread beliefs in the supernatural phenomena and that the subculture that has existed previously is increasing in size.

Besides their work on angels, Baker and Draper (2010) also conducted a study that looked at how belief in the paranormal is tied to various factors including age, race, SES, and whether or not the individual resided in the South. The main factor that Baker and Draper were testing were the relationship between religion and paranormal beliefs. The beliefs that were tested included the religious type beliefs (Satan, heaven, hell) as well as UFOs, psychics, and cryptozoology. The study found that there were relationships between religion and belief in the supernatural. The people who were more likely to believe in the supernatural were those who are more spiritual, who have nonexclusive religious beliefs and who have a moderate level of religious practice (Baker and Draper 2010). Cantor (2013) discusses how supernatural beliefs are tied to the current popular culture in the US. Cantor focuses on different topics of supernatural belief and some of the current TV shows that are based on supernatural phenomena including *The Walking Dead*. Cantor ties all of the beliefs of dangerous supernatural phenomena to a fear of people and a preparedness for the worst doomsday possibilities. The article focuses more on the events leading up to the current media focus on different types of supernatural phenomena which include zombies and aliens. Cantor claims that these types of supernatural phenomena have increased in the media as a way for the people to combat the way that the American Dream has developed as something dependent on the institutions that are present in the current post-industrial US since after the Second World War. He goes on to describe how people, as a society, feel confined to the typical way of life (college, marriage, American Dream) and society needed a way to distract from the rigidity. Post-apocalypse types of supernatural phenomena like alien invasions and zombie apocalypses are based in a chaotic environment where the government is

not in control (Cantor 2013). Davidson (2013) studied how fandoms influence the beliefs of individuals about various supernatural phenomena. This research is focused on how these “fiction-based religions” are forming and are based on popular works of fictions rather than a more historical basis like the other more organized religions that include religions like Islam, Christianity, Judaism, etc.

Religion influences the beliefs of people on the issues of belief in the supernatural and paranormal phenomena, but due to this occurrence of new religions based on fictions (generally focused on supernatural phenomena) is a concept that needs study to analyze the relation to supernatural belief. Since this is a relatively new occurrence, there is not an extensive amount of research and information about these “fiction-based religions”. In the article “*The Fairy Tale is True*”: *Social Technologies of the Religious Supernatural in Film and New Media* by Diana Walsh Pasulka (2016), Walsh Pasulka discusses how the media influences the beliefs of people based on the content of the media. She describes how the *Blair Witch Project* blurred the lines of fact vs fiction and it influenced people. There is the belief that people watch the media for entertainment and there is a separation between a person’s beliefs and the media they consume, but based on the evidence that Walsh Pasulka mentions, that is not always true.

Based on the research, there is a need to survey and interview people to discover if viewing supernatural based media influences the belief in the supernatural and to discover if there is a belief in the supernatural be individuals.

Theory

Belief in the supernatural is dependent on various factors and functions according to certain aspects of society. Supernatural belief is influenced by the media, religion, and the need to explain the unknown. The media creates a huge impact on people in their daily lives, and more deeply, in their beliefs. When a person is exposed to a form of media that makes an aspect of supernatural phenomena seem realistic, the person is more likely to believe that that supernatural phenomena may exist. Belief in the supernatural has not always been a mainstream concept. Though there has always been belief in the supernatural, it becomes more mainstream for some decades, whereas other decades belief in the supernatural is more present in subcultures. This is evident throughout history. Some of the times where belief in the supernatural became more mainstream are times like the Salem Witch Trials during the late 1600s and the fascination with vampires in the 1700s and 1800s. Since the early 2000's there has been an increase in the fascination with the supernatural and a massive increase in the media that involves supernatural phenomena. Some of the current forms of media that started the fascination in the supernatural include the TV shows *Supernatural*, *The Walking Dead*, and *Vampire Diaries*. The supernatural has become so mainstream that the topic of supernatural phenomena is commonly addressed in novels and movies of various genres, not just horror, like in previous decades.

The belief in the supernatural is highly linked to the media. In this regard, the media attracts attention to the supernatural through shows, books, and the internet. The media and culture are one part of the equation as to why the belief in the supernatural and supernatural topics are used in many forms of media and culture in the past few decades and likely in the near future. The Birmingham School was composed of many sociological theorists who focused on culture, media, and subcultures which all can be applied to the fascination and the belief in the supernatural.

Angela McRobbie states that the Birmingham School believes that “popular culture forms without the assumption that because they were products of a capitalist commodity system their meaning was entirely conformist and subservient to dominant values” from subordinate social groups (McRobbie 2008: 536). In this statement McRobbie discusses that though people believe that they are separate from the mainstream culture, they are still the result of a capitalist society. The factors of the capitalist society go into the popular culture and subordinate social groups. Angela McRobbie in the article “Young Women and Consumer Culture” sheds light into the background of the feminist movement particularly in the way that popular culture and the media are showing support for the feminist movement while at the same time “undoing feminism” (McRobbie 2008: 533). McRobbie shows that the media and popular culture uses the movement to profit from it. This can be seen through different ads and where the media brings attention to the movement to gain support for their profit. They are seen in a different light and gain attention while at the same time profiting from and changing the message to appear as if there is gender equality. This feminist message through the media and popular culture can be related to supernatural belief as there are messages from the media bring attention to supernatural beliefs, like ghost hunting T.V. shows, while at the same time profiting from the current fascination.

Angela McRobbie shows that the media will use various aspects of culture and movements to profit from it. There was an underlying supernatural belief culture, but before the early 2000s, the culture did not have many people who believed in the supernatural. Then in the early 2000s, there was a spark of the supernatural belief that brought supernatural belief to life in more people. At that point the media saw the message and amplified the message and profited greatly from it. By the media noticing supernatural belief in a small percentage of individuals,

the media was then able to make a larger percentage of people interested in supernatural belief and profit from this as it became popular culture. This shows that the message may be seen as a message from the individuals but is greatly influenced by the media as it is able to direct our attention.

An example of this occurrence in supernatural belief is shown in the case of *The Walking Dead*. For many years, the comic book was popular within a certain community of supernatural believers and supporters. This was a small portion of the population, but when the media decided to change the comic book into a TV show on a major TV network during primetime, there was a whole new population affected by the show. This brought the culture to the masses and there is a massive fascination with zombies and the zombie apocalypse. Around that same time and since then, there has been a large amount of interest on zombies and the supernatural and the media is profiting.

Paul Willis is another sociological theorist who was a part of the Birmingham School. In Paul Willis' "Foot Soldiers of Modernity: Dialect of Cultural Consumption and the 21st Century School" (2004), he addresses how young people are often at the beginning of a wave of change as they are often the first to experience the problems and possibilities in society. Willis also states that the adaptations made by the young people are not well understood by the adults. Young people find "meanings and identities never meant to be there and defying simple nostrums that bewail the manipulation of passivity of 'consumers'" (Willis 2004: 262). Young people may believe that they are free to choose, but marketers have different ideas as there is a blurring of the lines between production and consumption (Willis 2004). There is a belief that people are free to choose, but at the same time there is an interaction between culture and media as people

are fed things. Though people believe that they choose what they watch on T.V., but there is only so much that is available to the consumer. It provides this belief that there is free choice in consumption but that free choice only goes so far. Willis also brings up schools and the power structure that occurs in the schools. Through this power structure, there are people who use status symbols and use commodity consumption to display these status symbols. This is both influenced by popular culture and is influenced by those who are the dominant popular people or groups in these settings.

Supernatural belief also seems to be tied in with the younger population. It can be seen at the major conventions based on supernatural belief tend to be attended by a younger populous. Though many of the shows are also consumed by the older populous, the supernatural belief was brought to the attention of the media through the younger generation. Supernatural belief was tied to the younger generation and the hard believers were seen as young and very different than the rest of the populous (either nerd or goth like). Willis shows that there is the need for the people who must bring the change in beliefs or the change in culture.

Paul Willis (1997) also focuses on subcultures which can be tied to how the supernatural is tied to culture. Willis states

“a pool of styles, meanings, and possibilities are continuously reproduced and always available for those who turn in some way from the formalized and official accounts of their position and look for more realistic interpretations of or relationships to, their domination. As these themes are taken up and recreated in concrete setting they are reproduced and strengthened and made further available as resources for others in similar structural situations” (Willis 1997: 121).

Willis is stating that the meanings and symbols that exist in society are cycled through as they become official and are then recreated and strengthened. “Integration is the opposite of differentiation and is the process whereby class oppositions and interventions are redefined, truncated, and deposited within sets of apparently legitimate institutional relationships and exchanges” (Willis 1997: 125). Subcultures and non-mainstream beliefs are integrated into society to pull the beliefs of people and those people who believe in these things are brought back into society through the media rather than differentiation to separate these people even more.

The belief in the supernatural has gone from a minor belief for a small subset of people to becoming a mainstream topic in culture and beliefs through the integration that has occurred due to culture and the media. There is a cycle of subcultures with supernatural beliefs that are pulled into the mainstream. In the late 1990s, there was a spark of attention into the supernatural belief of vampires with *Buffy* though it was not as mainstream and popular as some of the main popular culture with supernatural beliefs of today. There is a difference between the supernatural belief of the late 1990s to the 2010s. There is a difference in the most popular perspectives of supernatural belief. There was a focus on vampires as bad and evil, where today many of the supernatural aspects are romanticized like in *Twilight* and in various urban fantasy novels. This shows that as the media brings attention to various aspects of the subculture, it is often brought back into the subculture and then it sometimes changes drastically. Willis’ theories involving subculture shows that there is an interaction between the subcultures and the media in a never-ending exchange of beliefs and focuses of attention.

Dick Hebdige was another theorist who was a part of the Birmingham School who focused on hegemony and subcultures. Hebdige recognized that culture is notoriously

ambiguous, in its definition to its actual part of society. There are meanings and values that are associated with society and there is a certain literary sensibility to be able to 'read' society (Hebdige 1979). Hegemony is the 'moving equilibrium' where "certain social groups can exert 'total social authority'" (Hebdige 1979). Since hegemony is an equilibrium, this state must be won by the dominating group, able to be reproduced by the group in power and be able to be sustained over time. Subcultures have secret meanings which can be used as a form of resistance by those people in subcultures.

Dick Hebdige shows that there is a power that is controlled by certain social groups. In the current society, this certain social group is the 1% who owns the media outlets. These individuals are responsible and decide what the media shows and pushes into popular culture. They take from the subcultures their ideas and beliefs as there is a profit in mass producing those beliefs. Though there is a resistance by the subcultures, the hegemony is sustained by the dominating group through its power over the media and the ability to focus the media on certain aspects that are presented by it. Overall, the belief in the supernatural may still exist in subcultures, the belief in the supernatural is primarily controlled by the media and in turn, the controlling social group.

Subcultures are a crucial part to society and are particularly significant to the belief in the supernatural. Hebdige describes "subcultures represent noise (as opposed to sound) inference in the orderly sequence which leads from real events and phenomena to their representation in the media" (Hebdige 1997: 130). Hebdige shows that the subcultures are an inference to society, but subcultures are reincorporated into society through a process of recuperation. This process

consists of “conversion of subcultural signs into mass produced objects and the labeling and redefinition of deviant behavior by dominant groups” (Hebdige 1997: 131).

Belief in the supernatural and the fascination of the supernatural have not always been considered mainstream, but over time recuperation of the subgroups into mass culture and the media. Hebdige also discusses that in the process of the subculture being reincorporated into society, though the subculture is concerned with consumption, there tends to be commercial exploitation and there are difficulties in creativity and originality. This commercial exploitation of the subcultures beliefs can be seen in the mass production and the marketing that is involved in the belief in the supernatural. There is a large amount of money that is associated with the industry which involves the supernatural, like zombies and the money involved with *The Walking Dead*. Subcultures sometimes adopt and conform to the ideas to create and adaption and empowerment by the subculture.

Stuart Hall is another one of the main theorists of the Birmingham School and was the leader of the school. Stuart Hall discussed encoding and decoding as well as the way people ‘read’ the messages that are produced by the media and culture. When looking at the encoding and decoding process, the concern of the producers of the message is the “reproduction of the ideological subject by the text.” This preferred message that is created does not affect everyone that receives the message, but this does not mean that some are unaffected completely. (watching tv audiences). The message is influenced by the readings that people receive of them based on their shared social locations. There are three readings to the message that is produced. There is the dominant reading where the audience accepts the preferred reading. This is where the people see the supernatural based TV shows and media and accept them for what the creator of the

message intended. These people can take the intended message and then they accept the belief. There is a negotiated reading. This is where the reader takes in parts of the reading while not accepting other parts. These people see the supernatural based media and accept the messages as entertainment but reject the truth and belief in the supernatural. There is also the oppositional reading where the reader rejects the message and its intended meaning. These people see the supernatural based media and reject it completely.

There is evidence that some people have accepted the preferred reading that is being presented by the media. This is evident in those who accept the reading and believe in supernatural occurrences and phenomena. These people are the firm believers in the supernatural, they believe that ghosts exist, that there will be a zombie apocalypse at some point or believe that werewolves and vampires exist. An example of the person who would have the preferred reading is a white young adult in the United States. There are also those who negotiate the reading as view the entertainment rather than actuality or fact. This can occur where the person enjoys the shows but sees these supernatural phenome and occurrences as impossible. These people could include the middle aged white individuals in the United States who accept the show as purely entertainment and nothing more. The last type of reading is the oppositional reading. These individuals are those who reject supernatural phenomena and occurrences as false and refuse to even view the shows. These people are the older retired people in the United States who are very religious. These people grew up in a different generation and refuse to believe in the supernatural as the Bible does not allow for these beliefs or even to be around these types of things. The belief in the supernatural is based on how individuals view and look at various readings presented by the media.

The belief in the supernatural can be pointed to various theories particularly those that are associated with the interactions between the media/culture and the audience. The audience sees the message and can adjust it or accept it. The belief in the supernatural is reproduced through the media, but also through subcultures. The subcultures have ideas and messages that are incorporated into society which can pull the message into mainstream. This message is then coded for the audience to decode. This process is known as recuperation to Hebdige. The messages are read differently by the audience based on shared social locations.

Methods

In this study, a mixed methods approach was used, with eight 45-60 minute in depth qualitative interviews (see Appendix A) and 806 quantitative surveys (see Appendix B). My research question is to evaluate whether the media has an impact on individual's belief in the supernatural and if belief in various supernatural phenomena is related to the belief in other supernatural phenomena.

Sample Design. The intent of the study is to be able to generalize the results to the population. The survey was distributed to people in a foundations to sociology course, sociology students, and people through social media. The sample has a mixture of people from various backgrounds which is useful for the study as it allows for more generalizable results to the population. The only problem with the sample from the survey is that there are mostly women respondents (? Women).

Measurement Design. The survey is composed of 11 questions which ask various questions about belief in the supernatural and demographic questions. Supernatural phenomena that is

addressed in the survey include religious based supernatural phenomena of angels and demons as well as paranormal based supernatural phenomena of aliens, werewolves and vampires, zombies, ghosts, and bigfoot. The questions which asked belief in the various supernatural phenomena was on a five-point Likert scale of highly likely to highly unlikely. Demographic questions for the survey include age, religion, and gender. The options for religion in the survey include Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Catholic, Atheist/Agnostic, and other.

Sample Data. The sample was composed of mostly women (93.1%). The religious beliefs of the participants varied with Christian at 35.2%, Other at 25.4%, Atheist/Agnostic at 25.2%, Catholic at 11.4%, Jewish and Buddhist at .8%, Muslim .4%, and Hindu at .3%. The ages of the respondents ranged from 18 to 87, with the mean of 40.31, median of 40, mode of 21, and a standard deviation of 13.146. Most participants watched some sort of supernatural based TV show or movie (77.0%).

Interview Sample Data. Interviews were conducted with six individuals. Many of the individuals considered themselves to be religious to some extent. The religiousness of the individuals ranged from super religious of always attending church and reading the bible on a daily basis to others not reading the bible and not generally attending church. Ages ranged from 21 to 54 and were mostly female. All participants watch supernatural based media on a regular basis.

Findings

Belief in supernatural phenomena varies from person to person, but overall, people on average believe in ghosts, aliens, and angels and demons more than in zombies, Bigfoot, and

werewolves and vampires. This is based on the average score based on respondent’s beliefs, but this can also be seen in the mode and in the quartiles based on the responses. This is shown in the chart below. Belief in the supernatural was rated on a scale of one to five, with a one being that the supernatural phenomena definitely exists.

Statistics

		Do you believe that ghosts exist?	Do you believe that aliens from space exist?	Do you believe that Zombies can ever exist or a Zombie apocalypse could occur?	Do you believe in angels and demons?	Do you believe in Bigfoot or the yeti?	Do you believe in the existence of vampires and werewolves?	Do you watch supernatural based media?
N	Valid	768	767	768	768	768	769	769
	Missing	1	2	1	1	1	0	0
Mean		2.23	2.24	3.91	2.31	3.35	3.97	.7698
Median		2.00	2.00	4.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	1.0000
Mode		1	2	4	1	4	5	1.00
Std. Deviation		1.228	1.068	1.063	1.362	1.203	1.070	.42121
Variance		1.509	1.141	1.131	1.854	1.447	1.145	.177
Percentiles	25	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	1.0000
	50	2.00	2.00	4.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	1.0000
	75	3.00	3.00	5.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	1.0000

People believe more in some supernatural phenomena than in other supernatural phenomena. After the data was recoded into belief vs non-belief of individuals, 84.5% of respondents believe in aliens, 79.2% of respondents believe in ghosts, 74.2% of respondents believe in angels and demons, 34.6% of people believe in Bigfoot and the Yeti, 14.2% of respondents believe in zombies or that a zombie apocalypse might occur, and 13.7% of people believe in the existence of werewolves and vampires. These results are slightly surprising as there was a time that most people believed in angels and demons, whereas now more people believe in aliens and ghosts than angels and demons. This is a change in the trends of society as there is a decrease in the belief of religious based supernatural phenomena and an increase in the belief of paranormal based supernatural phenomena. Within the interview sample, there was a

variety in the belief in various supernatural phenomena. Belief in aliens, ghosts, and angels and demons were common. When asked about the existence of aliens, one participant stated

“I don’t know if I necessarily believe in them, but I think that it is conceited to think that we are the only forms of life in the galaxy. Earth is such a small portion of the universe and somehow we are the only place that has life, I don’t really think that is possible.” (interviewee #5).

This shows that though there is no current proof of the existence of intelligent life in the universe other than on earth, people realize that the universe is just so big that it is statistically improbable that only one place in the universe is able to contain life. Another interviewee, who considers herself to be very religious, was also asked about the existence of life outside of earth stated “I think that it is possible because maybe god didn’t just make this planet and us. Obviously, there are angels and they live some place other than here. So, I would say yeah in some ways.”

(Interviewee #2). This shows that not only non-religious people believe that there could be intelligent life. Another supernatural phenomena that the interviewees believed in at a higher percentage were ghosts. The rate of belief in ghosts is higher in the United States and has been increasing. There are more and more shows that are on television that are reality based shows where people are ghost hunters, but there are also other shows that have people telling their stories of their experiences with ghosts. One of my participants who believed that ghosts were possible stated that

“There is just so much that we just don’t know, to completely discount it, it is a bit of a jump. I just don’t know. I have had friends who have had experiences, she really believes that it happened. She would wake up with bruises and doors would

shut on their own. It sounded really scary. I don't know if you would qualify that as a ghost or a spirit, I just don't know." (Interviewee #4).

None of the participants interviewed had first hand encounters, but most of them had known a person who had experiences with ghosts. This shows that the belief in ghosts is widespread. Though these people had not had the experience themselves, they knew of multiple people and multiple ghost stories. This interaction between people and communication on the topic of ghosts is normalizing the belief in ghosts and allowing for more people to be willing to accept the existence of ghosts.

The next two charts are of the correlations between various supernatural beliefs. The first chart shows the comparisons between the different variables with the responses that vary from 1 to 5 with 1 being the belief that the supernatural phenomena addressed definitely exists. The second chart shows the correlations between the various supernatural phenomena after the variables were recoded into belief and non-belief. The numbers in both of these correlation tables are similar, but there is a slight difference when just comparing between believers and non-believers. This shows that when people who are undecided are taken out, some of the correlations become weaker, but are generally still significant. This can mean that who believe in other supernatural phenomena are slightly less unbelieving than other people. There are correlations between the beliefs in various supernatural phenomena, which include relationships between ghosts and aliens (weak), ghosts and zombies (weak), ghosts and angels and demons (weak), ghosts and Bigfoot (moderate), ghosts and vampires/werewolves (weak), aliens and zombies (weak), aliens and bigfoot (weak), zombies and bigfoot (weak), zombies and werewolves/vampires (moderate), angels/demons and bigfoot (weak), angels/demons and werewolves/vampires (weak), and bigfoot and vampires/werewolves (moderate). These

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correlations represent that there is a higher likelihood that a person who believes in one form of supernatural phenomena, they have a higher chance of believing in another form of supernatural phenomena.

		Do you believe that ghosts exist?	Do you believe that aliens from space exist?	Do you believe that Zombies can ever exist or a Zombie apocalypse could occur?	Do you believe in angels and demons?	Do you believe in Bigfoot or the yeti?	Do you believe in the existence of vampires and werewolves?	What is your religious belief?
Do you believe that ghosts exist?	Pearson Correlation	1	.328**	.316**	.431**	.499**	.396**	-.043
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.236
	N	768	766	767	767	767	768	764
Do you believe that aliens from space exist?	Pearson Correlation	.328**	1	.259**	-.022	.331**	.217**	-.219**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.543	.000	.000	.000
	N	766	767	766	766	766	767	763
Do you believe that Zombies can ever exist or a Zombie apocalypse could occur?	Pearson Correlation	.316**	.259**	1	.175**	.292**	.491**	-.186**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	767	766	768	768	767	768	764
Do you believe in angels and demons?	Pearson Correlation	.431**	-.022	.175**	1	.339**	.316**	.398**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.543	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	767	766	768	768	767	768	764
Do you believe in Bigfoot or the yeti?	Pearson Correlation	.499**	.331**	.292**	.339**	1	.504**	.020
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.577
	N	767	766	767	767	768	768	764
Do you believe in the existence of vampires and werewolves?	Pearson Correlation	.396**	.217**	.491**	.316**	.504**	1	-.113**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.002
	N	768	767	768	768	768	769	765
What is your religious belief?	Pearson Correlation	-.043	-.219**	-.186**	.398**	.020	-.113**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.236	.000	.000	.000	.577	.002	
	N	764	763	764	764	764	765	765

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		Recode ghosts into belief and non belief	recoded belief in aliens into belief and nonbelief	belief in zombies recoded into belief vs nonbelief	belief in angels and demons into belief vs nonbelief	Belief in bigfoot recoded into yes and no	Belief in werewolves and vamires recoded into belief and non belief	Do you watch supernatural based media?
Recode ghosts into belief and non belief	Pearson Correlation	1	.337**	.187**	.499**	.432**	.200**	-.073
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.074
	N	607	479	500	538	446	503	607
recoded belief in aliens into belief and nonbelief	Pearson Correlation	.337**	1	.110*	-.039	.250**	.125**	-.051
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.013	.376	.000	.005	.217
	N	479	593	500	509	447	496	593
belief in zombies recoded into belief vs nonbelief	Pearson Correlation	.187**	.110*	1	.140**	.223**	.382**	-.081*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.013		.001	.000	.000	.039
	N	500	500	643	545	489	560	643
belief in angels and demons into belief vs nonbelief	Pearson Correlation	.499**	-.039	.140**	1	.333**	.235**	-.037
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.376	.001		.000	.000	.339
	N	538	509	545	652	486	549	652
Belief in bigfoot recoded into yes and no	Pearson Correlation	.432**	.250**	.223**	.333**	1	.426**	-.029
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.485
	N	446	447	489	486	569	495	569
Belief in werewolves and vamires recoded into belief and non belief	Pearson Correlation	.200**	.125**	.382**	.235**	.426**	1	-.070
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.005	.000	.000	.000		.077
	N	503	496	560	549	495	644	644
Do you watch supernatural based media?	Pearson Correlation	-.073	-.051	-.081*	-.037	-.029	-.070	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.074	.217	.039	.339	.485	.077	
	N	607	593	643	652	569	644	769

The main intent of this study was to analyze if the consumption of supernatural based media influences the beliefs of individuals. Shown in the chart below are the results of a t-test comparison between individuals who watch supernatural based media. The data shows that there is a significant difference in the beliefs of individuals who watch supernatural based media based on the belief in ghosts, aliens, and zombies ($t=2.291, p<.05$; $t=2.726, p<.05$; $t=3.292, p<.001$). The data shows that watching supernatural based media does not significantly influence the belief in angels and demons, Bigfoot, or werewolves and vampires.

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		Independent Samples Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
									Lower	Upper	
Do you believe that ghosts exist?	Equal variances assumed	3.582	.059	2.291	766	.022	.240	.105	.034	.446	
	Equal variances not assumed			2.202	273.376	.029	.240	.109	.025	.455	
Do you believe that aliens from space exist?	Equal variances assumed	1.552	.213	2.726	765	.007	.250	.092	.070	.429	
	Equal variances not assumed			2.679	277.585	.008	.250	.093	.066	.433	
Do you believe that Zombies can ever exist or a Zombie apocalypse could occur?	Equal variances assumed	2.756	.097	3.292	766	.001	.298	.091	.120	.476	
	Equal variances not assumed			3.510	321.372	.001	.298	.085	.131	.465	
Do you believe in angels and demons?	Equal variances assumed	1.127	.289	1.725	766	.085	.201	.117	-.028	.430	
	Equal variances not assumed			1.688	280.335	.092	.201	.119	-.033	.435	
Do you believe in Bigfoot or the yeti?	Equal variances assumed	1.421	.234	1.118	766	.264	.115	.103	-.087	.318	
	Equal variances not assumed			1.084	276.802	.279	.115	.106	-.094	.324	
Do you believe in the existence of vampires and werewolves?	Equal variances assumed	.811	.368	1.565	767	.118	.143	.092	-.036	.323	
	Equal variances not assumed			1.667	320.783	.096	.143	.086	-.026	.312	

Conclusions

People are influenced by the media, whether they are aware of it or not. Based on the evidence from the survey, there is a direct correlation between the belief in various supernatural phenomena and the consumption of supernatural based media. My data also shows that there is a large belief in the supernatural with most people believing in ghosts, aliens, and angels and demons. These three supernatural phenomena were believed in by a majority of the sample which shows that the belief in the supernatural is wide spread. The belief in angels and demons was likely higher in the past as most people in the United States believed in god in the past. The result of only three out of four people believing in heaven and hell was surprising based on this fact. There has been shown trends in the United States of decreased belief in religion, so this result makes more sense with this change. The fact that there is such a large percentage of belief

in ghosts and in aliens is interesting as these have not always been easily accepted as believable things.

As the media shows more and more content that has to deal with the supernatural, these phenomena are normalized. As shown with the interviews, there are many people who have heard of other people's experiences with ghosts. There are also more people who believe in ghosts now than in the past. As different supernatural phenomena become normalized and less taboo to be a believer of, there will be more and more people who believe in these.

There were different rates of belief in the supernatural when comparing the interviews to the survey. This can be a result that some people will be less likely to admit that they believe in various supernatural phenomena in person, whereas a survey is easier to admit belief in the less accepted supernatural phenomena. Though there are many examples of the supernatural phenomena that is addressed in this study in the media, it is still seen as taboo to be a true believer in werewolves, vampires, and zombies. The dooms-day preppers for the zombie apocalypse are still seen as a joke to many individuals. Over time, this may change, but according to Cantor (2013), the belief in the zombie apocalypse or other post apocalyptic situation is related to the way the world is going for people. There are more and more people who live on the earth every year as the population increases. The human population of the world is not taking care of the earth and it looks likely that the world will become inhabitable in the near future. This is scary for many people, so they will focus on something else, which for many people is preparing for the inevitable end.

This study has its limitations. The survey sample is not a true random sample as the participants are from a midwestern college and from various Facebook groups. Other limitations

are the interview sample as there is not a large variation in the beliefs of the participants. For future research on the topic, a more representative sample and a revised survey would be useful. More interviews with more variation would allow for a better explanation of the belief in the various supernatural phenomena addressed in the study. One future research question would be to compare the supernatural media on the fact if it is reality based or if it is fiction based. Reality based supernatural media include shows like *Ghost Hunters*, where fiction based supernatural media includes shows like *The Walking Dead*.

Overall, this research is a significant contribution and adds to the literature on supernatural beliefs because this is a relatively unstudied area. The results of this study show that there is a correlation between watching supernatural based media and the belief in the supernatural. The results also indicate that there is a large number of people who believe in ghosts and aliens, which is different than in the past. This shows that there is change that is occurring in the belief patterns of people in the United States. Research like this study is useful as there are more and more shows and movies that are based on the supernatural and it is useful to know the impact that this increase in the supernatural based media has on people and their beliefs.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

- 1) Have you ever experienced anything paranormal or supernatural in nature?
 - a) Did this/ these experience(s) influence your belief in the supernatural?
 - b) What was the situation where the paranormal phenomena occurred?
- 2) What are your religious beliefs?
 - a) Does your religion follow the Old Testament?
 - b) Do you believe in angels, demons, Heaven and Hell?
 - c) Does your religion allow for belief in various supernatural phenomena?
- 3) Do you watch any TV show/ movie or read any books that involve supernatural events or creatures?
 - a) What do you watch or read?
 - b) What supernatural phenomena are addressed?
 - c) Have your beliefs changed due to the supernatural phenomena in the movies, TV shows, and books?
- 4) Do you believe that ghosts exist?
 - a) Does anyone in your family believe that ghosts exist?
 - b) Have you ever watched a ghost-based show or movie?
 - c) Has the media influenced your beliefs about the existence of ghosts?
- 5) Do you believe that zombies will ever exist or that a zombie apocalypse can occur in the future?
 - a) If you believe that a zombie apocalypse can occur, how soon do you believe that it can happen?
 - b) Do you watch any zombie-based shows or movies?
 - c) Have these forms of media influenced your beliefs about zombies?
- 6) Do you believe that aliens from space exist?
 - a) Do you believe that area 51 exists?
 - b) Do you believe that aliens have visited us?
 - c) Have you experienced or seen any proof of aliens or UFOs?
 - d) Do you watch any movies or shows that involve aliens?
- 7) Are there any other types of supernatural or paranormal phenomena that you believe in?

- a) Have you experienced anything in relation to these types of paranormal phenomena?
- b) Are there any show, movies, books, or anything else that makes you believe in said paranormal or supernatural phenomena?

Appendix B: Survey

1. Are you male or female?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Other or gender neutral
2. What is your religious belief?
 - a. Christian
 - b. Jewish
 - c. Muslim
 - d. Hindu
 - e. Buddhist
 - f. Catholic
 - g. Atheist or Agnostic
 - h. Other or prefer not to answer
3. What is your age?
4. Do you believe that ghosts exist?
 - a. Definitely yes
 - b. Probably yes
 - c. Maybe
 - d. Probably not
 - e. Definitely not
5. Do you believe that aliens from space exist?
 - a. Definitely yes
 - b. Probably yes
 - c. Maybe
 - d. Probably not
 - e. Definitely not
6. Do you believe that zombies can ever exist, or a zombie apocalypse can occur?
 - a. Definitely yes
 - b. Probably yes
 - c. Maybe

- d. Probably not
 - e. Definitely not
7. Do you believe in angels and demons?
- a. Definitely yes
 - b. Probably yes
 - c. Maybe
 - d. Probably not
 - e. Definitely not
8. Do you believe in Bigfoot or the yeti?
- a. Definitely yes
 - b. Probably yes
 - c. Maybe
 - d. Probably not
 - e. Definitely not
9. Do you believe in the existence of vampires and werewolves?
- a. Definitely yes
 - b. Probably yes
 - c. Maybe
 - d. Probably not
 - e. Definitely not
10. What supernatural and paranormal shows and movies do you watch? If you do not watch any, write none.

Appendix C: Interview Transcriptions

Interviewee #1: SB

- Do you believe in any supernatural phenomena?
 - I definitely believe in angel, demons and evil spirits
- Have you always believed in these?
 - I would say yes,
- Has your belief in this decreased or increased over time?
 - Definitely increased with my spiritual faith I have studied the bible more and had more experience
- Are you a part of any supernatural fandoms?
 - I have a bunch of Pinterest boards for teen wolf and other stories that I read, court of thorns and roses, fairy tales,
- Do you believe in the supernatural phenomena that is addressed in these fandoms?
 - No
- What tv shows or movies or books have you read that deal with supernatural phenomena?
 - I watch teen wolf, acotar, twilight,
- What are the general themes that these involve?
 - Vampires werewolves, grim (fairy tales)
- Have your beliefs changed after watching and reading these?
 - I have read Shadowhunter's and stuff and they talk about Nephilim, which are half human and half angel, and according to the bible, that might have been a thing. So, after that yeah, I would say so.
- Do you believe in ghosts?
 - Not necessarily. I do believe in demonic spirits and forces I do not necessarily believe that the spirit of someone would stay here
- Why do you not believe in ghosts?
 - I don't feel that it is biblical, I don't feel that it is scientific. I mean that I know that there is a scientific gathering behind it but most of the scientific community feels that it debunks it.
- Do you know of any haunted places and the stories behind why they are haunted?

- I watched stuff and I have heard stories. I don't know any where specific. I work in a hospital and the particular floor that I work on has a lot of death, I know one night we had two patients die within six hours of each other. If anywhere would be haunted it would be a hospital, there is so much death there.
- Do you know if any of your family or friends have had any experiences with ghosts?
 - My mom has. Her dad passed away and she says one night she was at her house. She came out of her room, to go and get a drink of water and she say something standing there. She believes that it was him. He was yellow and glowing it was not demonic or evil, it was calming. She believes that it was him telling here that he was ok. He had accepted Jesus and had gone to heaven.
- Do you watch any shows or movies that involve ghosts?
 - I used to watch scooby doo all the time, I loved it. I've seen frighteners,
- Do you think that these would be representative of ghosts if they were to exist?
 - No
- Do you believe that the media has influenced your belief in ghosts?
 - I would say so. The media puts its own twist on things, and not others. The public is very led by what the media has to say.
- Do you believe that zombies can exist or that a zombie apocalypse can occur?
 - No
- If there were a zombie apocalypse, what would you do?
 - Go to my friend's house.
- Do you watch any zombie-based shows or movies?
 - Yes, warm bodies, books, do not like the walking dead. It has great graphics and stuff, but just seems highly unrealistic
- Do any of these shows have a realistic representation of what zombies would be if they existed?
 - I would say so. The walking dead does an excellent job of what zombies would be. The ones in warm bodies, not so much.
- Do these shows and movies make you believe in zombies more or less?
 - Probably less
- Do you believe that there is life outside of earth, aliens?

- No, bacteria yes.
- So, you do not believe that there is any other intelligent life outside of earth?
 - I would agree with that. I believe that there is bacteria and stuff, but that is about it.
- Do you or have you watched any tv shows or movies that involve aliens?
 - Yes,
- Are these accurate representations of aliens?
 - I don't think so, no. I have watch alien, fourth wave, the host, I don't think any of these are an accurate description. Why would they look much different from us?
- Do these shows make you believe more or less in aliens?
 - The ones that they look ridiculous, less.
- Have you watched any shows that involve vampires?
 - Yes twilight, I've seen shadow hunters, others, underworld,
- What characteristics of vampires seem realistic or possible?
 - I think the fact that they are stronger and live longer seem to be, if vampires were real, seem likely. And the fact that they drink blood.
- Do any of these shows or movies believe more or less in vampires?
 - It would depend on the movie. I don't think that they are real per say, but I could be convinced. On a scale of one to ten with a one being they do not exist and a ten that they absolutely do, I would say that I am a two or a three.
- Has anything changed your beliefs in vampires?
 - I don't think so. I definitely don't think that they sparkle.
- Have you watched any shows or movies that involve werewolves?
 - Yes. A movie called blood and chocolate, I've watch underworld, I've watched twilight. Teen wolf, the tv show not the movie.
- Do werewolves in the shows you watch have any realistic qualities or seem realistic?
 - I think the fact that they appear more dog like, not fully dog. It seems appropriate that they have a heightened sense of smell, they are faster. They would have a combination of the species. If they were real, these are the characteristics that they would have.
- Do these shows and movies make you believe more or less in werewolves?
 - About the same as the vampire answer.

- Have you always believed or not believed in werewolves?
 - Always been the same
- Have you watched any shows or movies that involve magic?
 - Supernatural magic or illusion magic?
- Harry potter like magic.
 - I have watched harry potter, I love once upon a time. Last witch hunter, Hansel and Gretel
- Do you believe that it is possible for magic to exist?
 - In a way, yes. I believe that Satan gives power to his followers. And it appears to humans as magic though.
- Do you believe that people are able to manipulate magic?
 - Yeah. I do believe that Satan gives power to his followers and he lets them use the power to drive people away from god, so he is going to do big things, showy things.
- Do you believe that witches could exist like the Salem witch trials?
 - They are the ones holding the magic. I definitely believe that there are women who classify themselves as witches, like potions, herbs and brewing things.
- What makes you believe or not believe in magic?
 - The bible talks about how there is a specific story in Moses, where Moses causes miracles and the pharos scientists of the day were doing “the same”. They were able to perform the same miracles as Moses was. I would call that satanic magic.
- Do you believe that big foot or the yeti could exist?
 - No.
- Do you believe that these tall tales are based on real people or a creature?
 - I think people, big foot and yeti are in the wilderness and the cold and people can get to a state of bodily need of dehydration and hypothermia and they are seeing something that they cannot exactly explain. It may be a delusion, or they see snippets of something real and they believe they saw something.
- What stories have you heard of the bigfoot or yeti?
 - People say they see him all of the time. Kind of the lochness monster. It matters who you ask and the story changes person to person.

- Do you believe in any religious based supernatural phenomena?
 - Absolutely yes.
- Do you believe in heaven and hell?
 - Yes
- Do you believe in angels?
 - Yes
- Do you believe in demons?
 - Oh yes.
- Have you had any experiences with these?
 - Personally, I think yes. I think depression, yes there is a scientific explanation, but I believe that Satan brings that about on a person. We are able to prove it scientifically, which debunks more about god, which makes him happy anyway. I do believe that he puts that on people. I believe he brings stress, anxiety, on people.
- Do you consider yourself to be religious?
 - Yes
- What religion do you follow?
 - I am nondenominational Christian
- Does your religion allow for the existence and the belief in the supernatural, other than religious supernatural phenomena?
 - I do believe that it would allow for witches, not really anything else. Maybe ghosts as in demonic spirits.
- Anything else that you would like to talk about today?
 - You should talk about the lochness monster. There are a lot of stories that involve the lochness monster. The lochness lake is vast and it is entirely possible that there is a creature that we have not discovered yet.

Interviewee #2: TB

- Do you believe in any supernatural phenomena?
 - I definitely have my faith in god. I believe in angels and demons.
- So, you have always believed in these?
 - Not always
- What made you increase your belief in these?
 - Gathering more information and talking to people. Reading more going to church more. Not just on a whim. I gathered information and researched. I don't think that if you have faith or belief in anything, you are going to need input and data because when other people ask you, you should be able to explain why.
- Are you a part of any supernatural fandoms?
 - Oh heavens no.
- What tv shows or movies or books have you read that involve supernatural events or creatures?
 - Twilight harry potter, lord of the rings, Grimm, heroes,
- What are the supernatural phenomena addresses?
 - Good vs evil, good winning
- Have your beliefs changed as a result of these?
 - No.
- Do you believe that ghosts exist?
 - That is a really tough question, I believe that demons exist. Demons and ghosts would be accredited with the same type of things. I would say demons exist because they work for the evil one. But I don't know if a person dies, like you or I, that our spirit would come and walk around and stuff like that. I just don't know if I believe in that. But that doesn't mean that if I die, I go to heaven, and an angel in my stead would come and watch over you. I don't know. But I don't think that dead people walk around here.
- Do you know of any haunted places and the stories of why they are haunted?
 - Yep. There is one in Durand. I was told about it from a guy who grew up around here. And some farmhouse was supposedly haunted by a dog. Him and his friends went there one time and they felt very uncomfortable. Maybe there is an evil that stays there or something, but that doesn't mean that there are dead people there.

- Do you have any family or friends that have had experiences with ghosts?
 - My dad told me that he had an experience with a ghost that he felt. Back in the day, when I was just a baby. My parents had just bought a house and were living there. My dad worked second shift and when he got home from work, the house was a two-story house with the two bedrooms upstairs and the living room and the kitchen were downstairs. Well he fell asleep on the couch. He woke up in the middle of the night and he says the house was pitch dark and he swears he believed that there was a dog in the living room running around. The sound of a dog. The dog stopped right in front of him and panted in his face. He was so scared, he couldn't do anything but run upstairs and got in bed with my mom and he never wanted to sleep on the couch again. And he swore you could hear people walking up and down the stair when no one was there. Sometimes I believe that a person's imagination can get the better of them.
- Do you watch any shows or movies that involve ghosts?
 - I've seen Casper and haunted mansion. Disney films, I guess there are ghosts in Harry Potter.
- Do you think that any of these could be realistic representations of ghosts?
 - If they existed, I would say yes. Since I don't believe in ghosts, I would say that they don't exist.
- Do you believe that zombies exist, or a zombie apocalypse can happen?
 - No.
- If there were a zombie apocalypse, what would you do?
 - I guess I would try to get my family to safety and find other humans, so we could pool our resources. And try to do what we could to eliminate or cure and do what we need to do, like in that zombie show, Warm Bodies.
- Do you watch any other zombie-based shows or movies?
 - My husband watches The Walking Dead, he started watching it and I watched a couple with him but shows like that are very repetitive. It is a vicious circle. Different day different people getting eaten.
- Do any of these shows have an accurate description of zombies?
 - I would think so. The Walking Dead would be a pretty good example if that were to happen, if it were possible. But I don't believe they do.

- Do these shows make you believe in them less?
 - I don't think so. It doesn't affect me either way, it is purely entertainment.
- Do you believe that there is life in the universe other than on earth?
 - I think that it is possible because maybe god didn't just make this planet and us. Obviously, there are angels and they live some place other than here. So, I would say yeah in some ways.
- Do you believe that there is other intelligent life?
 - I think that it might be possible yes. I wouldn't be surprised if there wasn't, but I don't want to close the door on what god can do. Maybe he didn't tell us about it because it doesn't really concern us.
- Why haven't these other creatures been discovered by us or attempted communication?
 - Perhaps it isn't possible
- Have you seen any proof of the existence of aliens or UFOs?
 - No
- Do you watch any shows or movies that involve aliens?
 - Oh yes, absolutely. Aliens, Star Wars, star trek, men in black, Independence Day, I like sci-fi.
- Do these shows make you believe more or less in aliens?
 - Neither no effect. Purely entertainment.
- Have you always believed in aliens?
 - I have never believed in aliens, but I have always believed in the possibility I guess, but I don't have many thoughts about aliens
- Have you watched any shows that involve vampires?
 - Yes, I have watched twilight, there is blade, underworld, of course some of the old ones, the black and whites, the wolfman meets Frankenstein. I never have thought that there were vampires, I have never believed in that at all. It is purely entertainment
- What characteristics of vampires could be realistic if they were to exist? What characteristic are just so ridiculous?

- I guess because when I was first introduced to vampires, I feel that the original characteristics like can't be in the sun, sleep in a casket, stake through the heart, traditional vampires seem more along the lines of vampires, not the things of today.
- Have you watched any shows or movies that have werewolves?
 - Oh yeah, teen wolf, I was a teenage werewolf, black and white teenage werewolf, black and whites like wolf man meets Frankenstein.
- What qualities of werewolves are more realistic?
 - Life longevity ability to heal, change shape
- Have you always not believed in werewolves?
 - Yeah, I mean as a child you have those fears, but once I had the mind that I could think about those types of things I definitely have not believed in them. Yeah, no that is not true, no way.
- Do you watch any shows or movies that involve magic?
 - Realistic magic with magic tricks. Do I believe that magic is an entity and it is possible, no, I don't.
- Do you believe that there could be witches like in the Salem witch trials?
 - I believe that people believe that they are witches. I believe that when a person is really wrapped up in evil, I believe that you can get involved with demons. God has given powers to people, but the devil can also give powers to peoples, but they are selling a lot to the devil for the little bit that they are able to get. But yeah, I think it is possible.
- What makes you not believe?
 - It is not logical scientifically. Plus, it would not be a god thing.
- Do you believe in bigfoot or the yeti?
 - We discover creatures all the time, who says we haven't discovered it yet. I mean look at the loch ness monster, she got trapped and just has longevity.
- Tall tales based on people or a creature?
 - I would say both, people have probably seen a guy that was super hairy like the bearded lady. Maybe they saw a super hairy person with the same genes as her. Maybe this is where we got the stories of werewolves. People who had a birth defect.
- What stories have you heard about bigfoot?

- Nothing
- Do you believe in any religious based supernatural phenomena?
 - Absolutely
- Do you believe in heaven, hell, angels and demons?
 - Yep
- Have you had any experiences with these?
 - I think so yeah. Sometimes, people look for a sign that they have gotten a message. My sign has always been a deer, so throughout many years after I pray about something, he will send me a deer, I will see a deer. As an example, I miscarried 4 babies, a baby, a baby, and a set of twins. When my daughter was young, we had her birthdays at this farm that had pony rides. We would have her party on a Saturday and there would be a lot of people around. I was thinking of my kids and how they were and stuff like that. We were standing at the pony ring. In the field nearby, there was a deer and it stopped. The guy who was running the ring was like “look at that, we never see deer when there are this many people around” that would never happen. I thought that that was cool, and he was sending a deer for my daughter’s birthday. Suddenly another deer approached and stopped by the first deer. Then two deer approached together and stopped by the first two. They stayed there for a little bit and they all four ran off together. And I was just like that was such a personal thing for my baby, my baby, and my twins. It was just, it was okay, everything was okay.
- Do you consider yourself to be religious?
 - Don’t really like that word. I have faith in Jesus Christ. Absolutely, when people say religious, they mean man made stuff, like “I go to a Lutheran church I go to a catholic church” I don’t want to worship religious things, I just want to worship god.
 - I want religion/ 24/7. I want him a part of my life all the time because that is what he wants.

- Interviewee #3: DS
- Do you believe in any supernatural phenomena?
 - Yes. Mostly angels and demons, ghosts. anything more, not really
- Have you always believed in these?
 - Yes
- Has your belief changed
 - Increased
- Are you a part of any supernatural fandoms?
 - No
- What tv shows or movies have you watched that involve supernatural events or movie?
 - Supernatural, twilight, teen wolf, once upon a time, more
- What are these shows and movies about
 - Angels demons more superficial supernatural like werewolves and vampires and stuff like that.
- Have your beliefs changed after watching or reading these?
 - No
- Do any shows or movies make you believe more in the supernatural?
 - Not really
- Do you believe that ghosts exist?
 - Yes
- Have you had any experiences with ghosts?
 - I have not, but my family has had experiences.
- Could you elaborate on this?
 - My cousin has seen a ghost of a little girl in his bedroom. My aunt slightly after her dog passed away had seen the ghost of her dog around the house. My dad has been to a haunted hotel in Arkansas that actually has ghost activity.
- Have your beliefs in ghosts ever been dissed by non-believers?
 - Yes
- do you watch any tv shows or movies that involve ghosts?
 - Ghost busters, Casper

- Are any of these realistic representations of ghosts?
 - No
- Has the media influenced your beliefs?
 - No
- Do you believe that zombies exist or that a zombie apocalypse could occur?
 - I don't know. Possibly, but I don't know how it would happen
- If a zombie apocalypse did occur, what would you do?
 - Retreat to family and make do with what we can and do whatever to survive
- Do you watch any supernatural based shows or movies?
 - Walking dead, world war z
- What shows, or movies have an accurate representation of zombies?
 - None since it hasn't occurred
- Do these show or movies make you believe more or less?
 - Hasn't affected me
- Do you believe that there is life outside of earth?
 - Yes
- Do you believe that there is other intelligent life?
 - Yes
- Why haven't these creatures been discovered or made contact with us?
 - They could have, and the government could be covering it up.
- Have you seen any proof or had any experiences with aliens or UFOs?
 - No
- Have you watched any shows or movies that involve aliens?
 - Star gate, star trek, Star Wars
- Do these shows make you believe more or less?
 - Doesn't really influence me.
- Have you always believed in aliens?
 - No. mostly changed through research when other things come up, based on religious scriptures and stuff.
- Have you watched any shows that involve vampires?

- Van Helsing, twilight, kid's movies
- What characteristics of vampires seem realistic or possible?
 - More nocturnal part, maybe heightened strength and senses
- Do these shows and movies make you believe more or less in vampires?
 - In the middle, doesn't influence me either way
- Have your beliefs changed?
 - No
- Do you watch any shows or movies that involve werewolves?
 - Teen wolf, underworld.
- Do werewolves seem realistic or have realistic qualities?
 - They are not realistic. They would pick up senses of wolves, heightened senses
- Do these shows and movies make you believe more or less in werewolves?
 - Less
- Have you always not believed in werewolves?
 - Yes
- Do you watch any shows or movies that involve magic?
 - Lord of the rings, once upon a time, charmed, harry potter
- Do you believe that it is possible for magic to exist?
 - Possible
- Do you believe that it is possible for someone to manipulate magic?
 - Possible
- Do you believe that there could be witches?
 - There could be
- What makes you believe or not believe in magic?
 - We do not use our entire brain, so it is possible that we could if we could use it all
- Do you believe that bigfoot could exist?
 - Possibly
- Are the tales based on people or a creature?
 - Probably from people,
- Do you believe in any religious based supernatural phenomena?

- Healing of body by god,
- Do you believe in heaven and hell?
 - yes
- Do you believe in angels?
 - yes
- Do you believe in demons?
 - yes
- Have you had any experiences with these?
 - No
- Do you consider yourself to be religious?
 - Yes
- What is your religion?
 - Christian
- Does your religion allow for the belief in the supernatural?
 - no

- Interviewee #4:DS
- Do you believe in any supernatural phenomena?
- Spirits, demons
- Have you always believed in these?
- No
- How has your belief changed?
- When my friend gave me her firsthand belief from her experience in a house that she believed was haunted, I believed in them more.
- So, your belief has increased over time
- Yes
- Are you a part of any supernatural fandoms?
- I don't really follow news, but I really watch the tv shows
- What tv shows or movies have you seen that involve supernatural events or creatures
- Supernatural, charmed, teen romance novels like twilight, Danny phantom
- What are these shows and movies about?
- Witches, most supernatural phenomena, ghosts, vampires
- Have your beliefs changed after watching these?
- No
- Do you believe that ghosts exist?
- Maybe
- Have you had any experiences with ghosts?
- No
- Why do you believe that ghost maybe exist?
- There is just so much that we just don't know, to completely discount it, it is a bit of a jump. I just don't know. I have had friends who have had experiences, she really believes that it happened. She would wake up with bruises and doors would shut on their own. It sounded really scary. I don't know if you would qualify that as a ghost or a spirit, I just don't know.
- Do you know of any haunted places?
- Off the top of my head no, but of have watched shows that are about haunted places
- Do you know of any other family or friends that have had experiences with ghosts?

- I have a few friends that have had experiences that I have been told of.
- Do you watch any shows or movies that involve ghosts?
- I watch charmed, ghost busters, Casper, Danny phantom, ghosts of girlfriend's past
- Are any of these accurate representations of ghosts?
- None are realistic representations
- Do you believe that the media has had an impact on your belief in ghosts?
- No
- Do you believe that zombies exist or that a zombie apocalypse could occur?
- No
- If a zombie apocalypse did occur, what would you do?
- Find people who are more well versed in zombie prep and take over a Walmart
- Do you watch any zombie show or movies?
- Warm bodies and call of duty
- Do any of these shows or movies make you believe more or less in zombies?
- No
- Do any of these show an accurate representation of zombies?
- No
- Do you believe that there is life outside of earth?
- No, I do not believe in aliens. There are possible bacteria.
- Do you believe that there is other intelligent life?
- No, I do not believe that there is intelligent life.
- Have you watched any shows or movies that involve aliens?
- Zenon, Star Wars, power rangers,
- Do these shows make you believe more or less
- Have not influenced me
- Have you watched any shows or movies that involve vampires?
- Vampire diaries, charmed, supernatural, twilight
- What characteristics of the vampires seem realistic
- They are pale, didn't understand the liking of blood,
- Do these shows and movies make you believe more or less

- They do not affect my beliefs
- Do you watch any shows or movies that involve werewolves?
- Supernatural
- If werewolves were real, what qualities seem realistic
- Super strength
- Do shows and movies make you believe more or less
- Neither, but possibly less
- Have you always not believed in werewolves?
- Yes
- Do you watch any shows or movies that involve magic?
- Charmed, Sabrina the teenage witch, Harry Potter, Sense 8, others
- Do you believe that it is possible for magic to exist?
- No
- Do you believe that it is possible for witches to exist?
- No
- What makes you not believe in magic
- There is no proof. I believe that science is magic and there is nothing beyond that.
- Do you believe in Bigfoot or the Yeti?
- No
- Are these tales based on people?
- Probably
- Are there any stories of these that you know?
- Only what there is on the TV show Finding Bigfoot on the Discovery Channel, which should not be on that channel since they do not exist
- Do you believe in any religious based supernatural phenomena?
- I don't know.
- Do you believe in heaven and hell?
- Yes
- Do you believe in angels?
- No

- Do you believe in demons?
- No
- Have you had any experiences with these?
- No
- Are you religious?
- Yes
- What religion do you follow?
- Non-conformist
- Does your religion allow for the belief in the supernatural?
- No?

- Interviewee #5: CP
- Do you believe in any supernatural phenomena?
- No
- Are you a part of any supernatural fandoms?
- No
- What tv shows or movies have you seen that involve supernatural events or creatures?
- Halloween town, Sabrina the teenage witch, the craft, charmed, horror films
- What are these shows and movies about?
- Magic, witches, ghosts, demon possession
- Have your beliefs changed as a result of these?
- No
- Do you believe in ghosts?
- No
- Why do you not believe in ghosts?
- It is stupid. Ghost stories seem more coincidences rather than a ghost
- Do you know of any haunted places?
- Not that I know of
- Do you have any friends or family that have had experiences?
- One of my friends said that she had an experience with a Ouija board, but I think that she lied.
- Do you watch any ghost movies or shows?
- Mostly horror movies or anything that I have previously mentioned.
- Do you think that any of the characteristics of ghost portrayed in movies seem realistic?
- No not really, especially not something like Casper.
- Do you believe that zombies could exist, or a zombie apocalypse could occur?
- No
- What would you do if a zombie apocalypse did occur?
- In my high school there was a zombie apocalypse club in school.
- Do you watch any zombie-based shows or movies?
- I have seen a few, resident evil
- What shows or movies have an accurate representation of zombies?

- I don't know. None really
- Do these shows and movies make you believe more or less in zombies?
- No
- Do you believe that there is life outside of earth?
- Yes
- Do you believe that there is other intelligent life?
- Yes
- Why have these other creatures not attempted communication with us?
- Because we are dumb.
- Have you experienced or seen any proof of UFOs or aliens?
- No
- Do you or have you watched any shows or movies that involve aliens?
- I have seen signs, I have seen a spoof of that movie
- Do any of these shows or movies make you believe more?
- No
- Have you always believed in aliens?
- I don't know if I necessarily believe in them, but I think that it is conceited to think that we are the only forms of life in the galaxy. Earth is such a small portion of the universe and somehow we are the only place that has life, I don't really think that is possible.
- Have you watched any shows or movies that involve vampires?
- Twilight, my babysitter is a vampire, interview with a vampire, queen of the damned
- What characteristics of vampires seem realistic?
- I don't know
- Do these shows and movies make you believe more or less?
- I don't believe so they don't really change my beliefs
- Has anything changed these beliefs?
- No
- Have you watched anything that involve werewolves?
- Twilight and wizards of Waverly place.
- Do werewolves seem realistic or have any realistic qualities

- No
- Do these shows and movies make you believe more or less in werewolves?
- Less.
- Have you always not believed in werewolves?
- Yes
- Has anything changed your beliefs?
- I grew up
- Do you watch any shows or movies that involve magic?
- Charmed, Sabrina,
- Do you believe that it is possible for magic to exist?
- To an extent,
- Do you believe that it is possible for people to manipulate magic?
- Maybe
- Do you believe that there could be witches?
- Maybe.
- Do you believe in magic?
- Sure
- Do you believe in the bigfoot?
- No
- Do you believe that the tales are based on real people?
- I think that they originally were based on someone who was really hairy before we knew about the disorder
- Do you believe in any religious phenomena?
- No
- Do you believe in heaven and hell?
- No
- Do you believe in angels and demons?
- No.
- Do you consider yourself to be religious?
- No

- Anything else you would like to add?
- Why wasn't the Loch Ness monster added?