

## Twilight, Eclipse -- How vampires have become modern day gothic Buddhas.

July 5 2010

---

(PhysOrg.com) -- With the third instalment of the wildly successful vampire franchise Twilight, a University of Western Sydney expert says the series and the rise in vampirism highlights the growing phenomenon of new spiritualities based on popular culture.

Associate Professor Adam Possamai is the author of the book "Sociology of [Religion](#) for Generation X and Y", and coined the term "hyper-real" religions to describe new faiths that draw on religion, philosophy and popular culture to create their own beliefs.

Associate Professor Possamai says the growing number of "vampires", who drink blood or drain "psychic energy" for sustenance, are an example of how hyper-real religions often have more relevance to the self than traditional mass religions.

"People are becoming inspired by the characteristics of the vampire, and see them as a source of fulfilling their potential and inner abilities," Professor Possamai says.

"The vampire is no longer a monster that needs to be exclusively destroyed, it is now a superman type of character that people aspire to become to realise their full potential."

"[Dracula](#) has become a modern day gothic Buddha."

Professor Possamai says popular culture has helped create a host of new spiritualities in the past four decades.

"For example, Star Wars inspired Jediism, and the fiction of H.P. Lovecraft inspired the Church of Satan," he says.

"These hyper-real religions, or spirituality a-la-carte, thrive on the Internet, and demonstrate that [popular culture](#) can no longer be seen exclusively as a source of escapism because it's now also a platform for spirituality."

Professor Possamai says vampires have been popular figures since the 19th century, and have reflected the concerns and aspirations of the time.

"For example, the author Polidori's vampire embodied forbidden types of intimacy, Baudelaire's poems express the experience of [loneliness](#) with the advent of industrialisation, and Bela Lugosi's Dracula show the issues of being a social outcast during the American depression," he says.

"But vampires went through a radical transformation in the 1970s when they started to arouse a longing for personal transformation, and the success of Twilight has only further heightened their appeal as models for personal transformation."

"Vampires are no longer lonely creatures hiding in the underground of our cities; they live with us in the daylight in our towns and suburbs, and we had better get used to them."

Provided by University of Western Sydney

Citation: Twilight, Eclipse -- How vampires have become modern day gothic Buddhas. (2010, July 5) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-07-twilight-eclipse-vampires-modern.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.