Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Religious uses of fantasy fiction

Davidsen, M.A.; James, A.; Lavocat, F.; Kubo, A.

Citation
Davidsen, M. A. (2023). Religious uses of fantasy fiction. In A. James, F. Lavocat, & A. Kubo (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of fiction and belief* (pp. 454-466). New York: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781003119456

Version:	Publisher's Version
License:	Licensed under Article 25fa Copyright Act/Law (Amendment Taverne)
Downloaded from:	https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4208954

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

35

RELIGIOUS USES OF FANTASY FICTION

Markus Altena Davidsen

Introduction

In early 2001, a chain email urged the citizens of New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and Great Britain to put down "Jedi" as their religious affiliation in the upcoming census. Part political protest, part practical joke, the email campaign was a massive success, helped along by generous media coverage by newspapers such as *The Guardian* and by the renewed interest in *Star Wars* following the release of *Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace* in 1999 (Porter, 2006, 96; Singler, 2014, 154). With more than 390,000 self-identified adherents, Jedi came out as the fourth most common religious affiliation in Great Britain, outscoring both Judaism and Buddhism. The largest concentration of Jedi proved to live in New Zealand, where they constituted almost 1.4% of the total population (Porter, 2006, 96–98; Possamai, 2005, 72–73)—in some university cities, close to 10%. In total, more than 500,000 Britons, New Zealanders, Australians, and Canadians claimed to be Jedi.

The "Jedi Census Phenomenon" was largely a prank. The vast majority of those who put down Jedi on the census form did not seriously practice a Force-based religion. But in the years preceding the Census Phenomenon, a very real, but much smaller, community of self-identified Jedi Realists—i.e., individuals who aim to live according to the Jedi philosophy—had emerged out of the online *Star Wars* role-playing community. The Jedi Census Phenomenon inspired some Jedi Realists to *actually* create the religion to which people in the census prank had jokingly claimed to belong. These individuals who refer to themselves as Jediists (rather than Jedi Realists) have developed creeds and rituals and have successfully applied for legal recognition of their faith—Jediism—in several countries (this story is told in detail in Davidsen, 2017a; see also Davidsen, 2016a; Singler, 2014).

After journalists had uncovered the real phenomena of Jedi Realism and Jediism, scholars of religion began to research these and similar groups and to theorize the religious use of fantasy fiction.[1] The two main pioneers were Adam Possamai and Carole Cusack, who carved out a new research field with their monographs *Religion and Popular Culture* (Possamai, 2005) and *Invented Religions* (Cusack, 2010) and who subsequently took the lead in charting the field with handbook and anthology projects (Cusack and Kosnáč, 2017; Possamai, 2012a; Sutcliffe and Cusack, 2013). Besides Jediism, religions based on fantasy fiction that have been studied over the last twenty years include the neo-pagan organization Church of All Worlds, which has taken its name and several ritual practices from Robert A. Heinlein's science fiction novel *Stranger in a Strange Land* (Cusack, 2010, Chapter

DOI: 10.4324/9781003119456-39

3, 2016a); Satanists and chaos magicians who invoke the monster gods from H.P. Lovecraft's horror cycle, the so-called Cthulhu Mythos (Gonce, 2003; Hanegraaff, 2007); and various self-identified pagan, Christian, and gnostic groups that draw on J.R.R. Tolkien's literary mythology and claim to communicate with the Valar, the lower gods of Tolkien's universe (Davidsen, 2012, 2014, 2017b).

Some reflections on how to refer to religions using fantasy fiction may be needed immediately. In my own work I use the term "fiction-based religion," which I have defined as "religion in which fictional texts are used as authoritative texts" (Davidsen, 2013, 384). Possamai prefers the term "hyper-real religion" which he, inspired by the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard, has defined as a "simulacrum of a religion created out of popular culture" (2005, 79). In practice, fiction-based religion and hyper-real religion refer to the same empirical phenomena and can be treated as synonyms. However, since *all* religions can be qualified as "hyper-real" in Baudrillard's sense, namely as simulacra (or imaginations) that have come to be treated as real, it may be confusing to use "hyper-real religion" to designate a certain class of religions, namely those based on fantasy fiction/popular culture (Davidsen, 2013, 381–84). The label fiction-based religion may serve us better if we want to distinguish analytically between religions that use fantasy fiction as authoritative texts, over and against conventional religions based on narratives claiming to tell of supernatural interventions in the actual world—such as the Christian Gospels that depict Jesus' incarnation, wonderworking, resurrection, and ascension as historical events (Davidsen, 2013, 384–88).[2]

Cusack's notion of invented religions refers to a different but overlapping set of phenomena than fiction-based/hyper-real religions, namely "those religions that announce their invented status" (2010, 1). For Cusack this category includes both fiction-based religions, such as Jediism and the Church of All Worlds, and parody religions, such as Discordianism and the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster. This is problematic for two reasons. First, fiction-based religions turn out *not* to announce their invented status but to be keen on presenting themselves as "real religions" (see Singler, 2014 and Davidsen, 2017a on Jediism in this respect). Second, according to a substantive definition of "religion" as beliefs and practices that assume the existence of supernatural agents (such as gods and angels), worlds (such as heaven and the astral plane), and/or processes (such as magic or the karma law) (cf. Davidsen and Van Rijn, 2020, 93), fiction-based religions are genuine religions because they make supernatural claims, whereas parody religions are no religions at all because they, by their very nature, make no such claims.[3] By the same token, fiction-based religions—such as Jediism, which assumes the existence of the Force in the actual world—may be contrasted to fandom, including the *Star Wars* fandom, which makes no such assumption. Based on a functional and broad (rather than a substantive and narrow) definition of religion, Michael Jindra (1994) has argued that fandom *is* religion, because fandom, like conventional religion, functions as a provider of community, myth, and meaning. A weakness of Jindra's approach, however, is that it obscures the crucial difference between (fiction-based) religion and fandom, namely that religion makes supernatural claims about the actual world whereas fandom does not (Davidsen, 2013, 388–90).[4]

In the rest of this chapter, I chart the various ways in which contemporary fantasy fiction has been read and used in religious ways. I begin by distinguishing four modes of religious use of fantasy fiction, which I label the binocular, mythopoeic, cosmological, and historical modes, respectively (Section "Four Modes of Religious Use of Fantasy Fiction"). After that, I discuss the various functions that fantasy fiction may have within religious traditions (Section "Fiction Based Religion in a Strict and a Loose Sense") and the strategies used to legitimize the religious use of fiction (Section "Legitimizing Religioius Use of Fantasy Fiction"). The final section takes up the question why only some fantasy fiction, but not all, lends itself to religious use (i.e., has "religious affordance"; Section "The Religious Affordance of Fantasy Fiction").

Four Modes of Religious Use of Fantasy Fiction

Adam Possamai originally defined hyper-real religion as a "simulacrum of a religion created out of popular culture *that provides inspiration for believers/consumers at a metaphorical level*" (2005, 79; my emphasis). It is very well possible, however, to believe quite literally (rather than metaphorically) in the supernatural entities depicted in fiction. Within Tolkien spirituality, for example, it is common to believe that Middle-earth is a real place and that the Elves and Valar really exist (Davidsen, 2012, 2014, 2017b). In response to me pointing out this fact (Davidsen, 2012, 201–02; cf. Possamai, 2012b, 19), Possamai adapted his definition of hyper-real religion. It now sounds: "A hyper-real religion is a simulacrum of a religion created out of, or in symbiosis with, commodified popular culture which provides inspiration at a metaphorical level *and/or is a source of belief for everyday life*" (Possamai, 2012b, 20; emphasis added).

Expanding the simple dichotomy between metaphorical inspiration and literal belief, I have suggested the existence of several distinct religious modes in which fantasy fiction (and conventional religious narratives, too) can be used (Davidsen, 2014, 137–43). In what follows, I discuss the four most prominent modes: the binocular, mythopoeic, cosmological, and historical modes. Each mode represents a distinct way of using fiction religiously and of rationalizing such use. Of the four modes, the binocular mode ascribes the lowest level of authority to the fantasy text in question, and the historical mode, the highest.

The Binocular Mode

Individuals and groups who use fantasy fiction in the binocular mode consider the characters, the storyline, and the religious elements of the text to be wholly fictional but are, nevertheless, moved to believe that religious entities (e.g., elves or magic) *very much like* those depicted in the fictional text exist in the real world.

A good example of the binocular mode is found in neo-paganism, a broad movement encompassing, among other branches, modern witchcraft (wicca), druidry, and heathenry/asatru. Neo-pagans aim to revive the religions of Europe's pre-Christian past, and for that reason consider Celtic, Germanic, Greek, and other ancient mythologies to constitute their authentic and authoritative text base. Neo-paganism is thus no fiction-based religion, but fantasy fiction nevertheless plays a crucial role in inspiring neo-pagan belief. Reflecting on the importance of fantasy for the very emergence of neo-paganism, Graham Harvey (2000) argued "that J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* provided *metaphorical binoculars* through which the realm of Faerie became visible again" (emphasis added). In other words, it was after reading Tolkien and other fantasy novels that many to-be-pagans in the 1960s and 1970s first started asking themselves whether magic, elves, and a Faery Otherworld might exist also in the real world. These people did not believe that Tolkien wrote about real deities (if they did, they would have approached *The Lord of the Rings* in the cosmological mode—see below). But *The Lord of the Rings* inspired them to search for more authoritative myths and to go into the forest in the hope of experiencing the presence of real elves. For committed pagans, moreover, continued immersion in fantasy helps sustain a pagan worldview in which elves and magic are real (Harvey, 2006). For example, members of the Goddess movement find inspiration in Marion Zimmer Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon* (1983) and eco-oriented (British) pagans in Robert Holdstock's *Mythago Wood* series (e.g., 1984).

Fantasy (and horror) novels, movies, and role-playing games have also inspired individuals to self-identify as various non-human beings. Inspired by Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, some individuals began to self-identify as Elves in the early 1970s (Davidsen, 2014, 238–44), and from the movement of self-identified Elves emerged in the 1990s the broader Otherkin movement, whose

members may also self-identify as (were)wolves, dragons, and so on (Davidsen, 2014, 245–50). The Vampire community, whose members include both blood-drinking and psychic vampires, as well as human donors, constitutes the largest fiction-inspired identity movement. White Wolf's role-playing games *Vampire: The Masquerade* (1991), *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* (1992), and *Changeling: The Dreaming* (1995), were instrumental to the growth of the Otherkin and Vampire communities in the 1990s and later. As Lupa (2007, 50) explains,

> [T]he subject matter of the games led to the inevitable wonderings: "Well, what if this was real? What if there really were werewolves, and vampires, and faeries in our day and age?" Most players likely simply shrugged it off as a passing fancy. However, many Otherkin found that the flights of fancy could open up opportunities to discuss more serious approaches to the idea of nonhumans in a human world.

In other words: the role-playing games were approached in the binocular mode. While players recognized that the settings and story-worlds of the games were entirely fictional, the games became metaphorical binoculars that allowed players to appreciate their own "true" Otherkin identities—and prompted them to seek out authoritative, non-fictional sources that might explain and legitimize those identities (Davidsen, 2014, 250–52, 267–75; Laycock, 2012).

The Mythopoeic Mode

Individuals who use fantasy fiction in the mythopoeic mode consider the text in question to be an allegory that conveys real spiritual truths. It is important to note that not all allegorical readings are mythopoeic. Readers who interpret the One Ring in *The Lord of the Rings* as an allegorical reference to the atomic bomb—and thus interpret something supernatural as an allegory of something natural—approach the text in the fictional mode. A mythopoeic interpretation, by contrast, has a supernatural target domain for the allegory. An interpretation of Gandalf and Galadriel as allegorical references to the wiccan God and Goddess, for example, is mythopoeic. Fiction approached in the mythopoeic mode can be considered a viable basis for rituals and magical "work," as long as the text is understood properly with the right hermeneutic key. For example, wiccans may use depictions of Gandalf and Galadriel in ritual, while at the same time stressing that the supernatural entities with whom they really engage are the God and the Goddess.

Lovecraftian magic constitutes a fiction-based esoteric current entirely governed by the mythopoeic mode. Consider, for example, the use of H.P. Lovecraft in the Church of Satan. Michael Aquino wrote two Lovecraft-themed rituals for *The Satanic Rituals* (LaVey, 1972, 173–201), "The Ceremony of the Nine Angles" and "The Call to Cthulhu," together with an accompanying essay, "The Metaphysics of Lovecraft." Already prior to the publication of these rituals, LaVey had used Lovecraft-based incantations within the Church of Satan and the new rituals, too, were intended for actual use (Aquino, 1977). Even so, Cthulhu and the other Lovecraftian entities addressed in the rituals were not believed to exist in their own right but were understood merely as metaphorical references to Satan. Similarly, when influential British occultist Kenneth Grant integrated Lovecraftian themes into Aleister Crowley's system of ceremonial magic, he did so in the mythopoeic mode. Interpreting Lovecraft's stories through the lens of his own Qabalistic speculations, Grant identified, for example, Lovecraft's Yog-Sothoth (referred to in "The Dunwich Horror") with John Dee's demon Coronzon/Choronzon, whom Grant considered to be the guardian of the gateway of Daath (cf. Gonce, 2003, 102–11). Grant's mythopoeic interpretation of Lovecraft's mythos provided the theoretical rationale for the Lovecraftian magic of later groups such as the Esoteric Order of Dagon (Davidsen, forthcoming), Michael Bertiaux's Confraternity of Oblates of the Monastery of the Seven Rays (Gonce, 2003,

113–15), and the Dragon Rouge, especially its Polish "Magan" lodge (Wagenseil 2015). Chaos magicians working with Lovecraft's mythos in the tradition of Phil Hine's *Pseudonomicon* ([1994] 2004) also do so in the mythopoeic mode and have experimented with both possession and pathworking rituals (Gonce, 2003, 119; Hanegraaff, 2007, 104–06).

J.R.R. Tolkien's literary mythology, including *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–1955; paperback 1965) and *The Silmarillion* (1977), has been approached in the mythopoeic mode, too. Gareth Knight, for instance, included a Tolkien-themed pathworking ritual in his book *The Magical World of the Inklings* (1990), and declared, in a manner strikingly similar to Grant's take on Lovecraft, Tolkien's literary mythology to be a "mythopoeic creative work" (1990, 136) and "a fleshing out of Qabalistic doctrines" (1990, 114). Accordingly, Tolkien's mythology constituted, "from the magical point of view," a departure point for magical work as valid as any "'real' myth or legend" (Knight, 1990, 136). Similarly, a group within the North Carolina-based Fifth Way Mystery School, headed by Vincent Bridges, constructed a "High Elvish Working" in 1993 aiming to "explore the Truth beyond J.R.R. Tolkien's created Arda." The ritual circulated in print among pagans in the United States and New Zealand and was later published online (cf. Davidsen, 2014, 291–98). The two only fiction-based Tarot decks currently on the market, Terry Donaldson's *The Lord of the Rings Tarot Deck & Card Game* (1997; cf. Davidsen, 2014, 299–310) and Donald Tyson's *Necronomicon Tarot* (2007; cf. Cowan, 2012), are premised on a mythopoeic reading of Tolkien's and Lovecraft's fiction, respectively.

The Cosmological Mode

Using a piece of fantasy fiction in the cosmological mode entails treating it as a fictional story about supernatural agents, worlds, and/or processes that exist in the actual world in the way they are described in the text. In other words, where the mythopoeic mode is allegorical, the cosmological mode is literal. For example, members of the Tribunal of the Sidhe, Tië eldaliéva (The Elven Path), and Ilsaluntë Valion (The Silver Ship of the Valar) consider Tolkien's Valar to exist quite as Tolkien described them. All three groups engage in ritual exchanges with these fictional entities, and Tië eldaliéva and Ilsaluntë Valion have drawn up elaborate ritual calendars that dedicate each moon celebration to one of the Valar (Davidsen, 2017b). Members of Tië eldaliéva and Ilsaluntë Valion also believe that the Blessed Realm, the abode of the Valar in Tolkien's mythology, exists on some spiritual plane, and they travel there to visit the Valar (and the Elves and Maiar) in ritual. The structure of these rituals is inspired by wiccan and neo-shamanic practices, but crucially the Valar are believed to be who Tolkien says they are (cosmological mode) and not just allegories for other deities (mythopoeic mode). Similarly, Jedi Realists and Jediists consider the storyline in *Star Wars* to be fictional, but nevertheless believe that the Force exists in our world (Davidsen, 2016a, 2017a). And even though members of the Jedi Community consider Yoda and Obi-Wan Kenobi to be fictional characters imagined by George Lucas, they quote and discuss the wisdom about the Force taught by these spiritual teachers. Indeed, Jediists and Jedi Realists enlist the authority of the *Star Wars* Jedi masters both when their own Force theology aligns with the Force theology in *Star Wars* (i.e., the Force is in itself good; the "dark side" refers to the instrumental and egoistic use of the Force and has no being of its own) and when they, inspired by the notion of yin and yang in Taoism, depart from the theology in *Star Wars* (i.e., by viewing the Force in dualistic terms and considering "balance in the Force" to require equal measures of the light side and the dark side). In terms of practice, Jedi Realists and Jediists alike mediate to "feel the Force," and Jediists, who more than the Jedi Realists see the Force as a providential power with a will and a plan for the world, may also pray to the Force.

Practitioners fully committed to using fantasy fiction in the cosmological mode are rare, but it is striking that many individuals oscillate between the mythopoeic and cosmological modes. In many cases, the cosmological mode governs ritual practice (which, even when experimental or playful,

entails working with fictional entities and powers as if they were literally real), whereas individuals fall back on the more cautious mythopoeic stance when justifying the practice to themselves and others. We see this oscillation within the Jedi Community whose beliefs and rituals are taken right out of the *Star Wars* films (cosmological mode), but where members sometimes stress that the fictional Force in *Star Wars* (which Lucas created) refers only metaphorically to the *real* Force that they work with and which reveals itself in all the world's religions (mythopoeic mode; Davidsen, 2017a, 23–24). As a second example of oscillation between the mythopoeic and cosmological modes, one may consider the reception of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's fiction by Helena Petrovna (Madame) Blavatsky, co-founder of the Theosophical Society. The mythopoeic mode is at work in the passage of *The Secret Doctrine* where Blavatsky argues that Bulwer-Lytton's notion of Vril, mentioned in *The Coming Race* (1871), is a fictional reference to the real esoteric force known to the Atlanteans as mash-mak (1888, 563). But when she in a letter suggests that the Ascended Masters count the adept Zanoni, from Bulwer-Lytton's 1842 story of the same name, as one of their own, she slides into the cosmological mode (Strube, 2013, 65).[5]

The Historical Mode

As mentioned in the introduction, religious narratives proper (such as the Christian Gospels) have reference ambition, which is to say that these texts themselves *aim* to be read in the historical mode as (relatively) accurate accounts of supernatural interventions in actual history. This is so even if such texts are often *de facto* approached, especially in modern times, in the cosmological, mythopoeic, or fictional modes. Fantasy fiction, by contrast, lacks reference ambition by definition and, therefore, does not lend itself well to a historical reading. In fact, the historical use of fantasy fiction seems restricted to Tolkien spirituality, and even in this context it is a minority position. Ravenwolf Neurion, a proponent of the historical approach to Tolkien's mythology, has summed up his position as follows (spelling corrected):

> Here's what I honestly believe. Middle-earth and the core elements of Tolkien's Legendarium happened in real time on this physical world. After the flood (Days of Noah in the Bible, fall of Atlantis or fall of Númenor—all the same) there was [a] period of several centuries when Elves and magic still remained strong. […] At that point we had the full blood and half elves (like Elrond) who entered hidden realms […] We also have living people who existed through the ages right down to this present day who are of part Elf blood from people like Arwen and Aragorn's descendants and other part elves.
>
> *(Ravenwolf, 2005)*

It should be stressed that the majority of those engaged in Tolkien spirituality consider Ravenwolf's historical reading of Tolkien to be delusional and prefer to engage Tolkien's work in the mythopoeic or cosmological modes.

Fiction-Based Religion in a Strict and a Loose Sense: Fantasy Fiction as Core or Periphery in Religious Traditions

To get a grip on the different functions that fantasy fiction can play within religious traditions, it is useful to distinguish between fiction-based religion in a strict and in a loose sense. We have fiction-based religion in the strict sense when a particular corpus of a fantasy fiction serves as the narrative core of a religious tradition; when this is the case, the fantasy fiction in question will usually be approached in the cosmological or historical mode (Davidsen, 2012, 198). In Tië eldaliéva and Ilsaluntë

Valion, Tolkien's Legendarium constitutes such a narrative core. Members of these "Legendarium Reconstructionist" groups refer to *The Silmarillion* as "Our Bible," engage in meticulous Tolkien exegesis, and have crafted belief charters, ritual calendars, and magical correspondence tables that draw exclusively on Tolkien's mythology (Davidsen, 2014, 379–431, 2017b). They also tend to view other religions through a Tolkienesque lens, arguing, for example, that the gods and goddesses of the world's various pantheons are really the Valar appearing in different guises (Davidsen, 2017b, 27). (That is, they interpret Tolkien's stories in the cosmological mode and all other mythologies in the mythopoeic mode). Within the Jedi Community, we see the same, just with the *Star Wars* movies—and, for many Jedi Realists, also the novels and role-playing material from the so-called Expanded Universe—as the narrative core. It is *Star Wars* that provides the raison d'être for the Jedi Community and determines the core belief (in the Force), ritual (meditation to feel the Force), identity (as Jedi Knight), ethics (the Jedi Code), and social organization (with master and apprentices; Davidsen, 2017a). Jediists (and to a lesser extent Jedi Realists) may peruse new age, esoteric, Western Buddhist, and Christian literature for additional spiritual inspiration, but they do so within a *Star Wars* frame of reference where literature from other religious traditions is used to shed light on the deeper nature of the Force. In other words: the Legendarium Reconstructionist Tolkien groups and the Jedi Community show structural similarities to conventional religions, such as Judaism, Christianity, and Hinduism, that all, too, revolve around a more or less fixed narrative core. The only difference is that the Legendarium Reconstructionists and the Jedi Community have "adopted," as the narrative core of their tradition, somebody else's fantasy fiction.

By contrast, we may speak of fiction-based religion in a loose sense, when the fantasy fiction that inspires and sustains belief is used only as a secondary textual resource within a religious tradition that has another, non-fictional scriptural core. This is the case in various branches of neo-paganism that approach J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*, Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series, and other works of fantasy in the binocular mode as stories pointing vaguely to the reality of magic. It is also the case for Christians who read C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* in the mythopoeic mode, interpreting Aslan as a transfigured Christ (on Lewis: Stausberg, 2020, 327–36). In both cases, audiences place fantasy fiction in the periphery of a religious tradition that includes a narrative core read in the cosmological or historical modes—various pre-Christian mythologies in the case of neo-paganism, and the Gospels and more broadly the Bible in the case of Christianity. Secondary fantasy fiction interpreted in the light of primary religious narratives can either be "adopted" (Rowling and Pratchett did not intend to promote neo-paganism) or it can be written for this very purpose (Lewis intended the *Chronicles of Narnia* to introduce young people to Christianity). When fantasy fiction is written with the aim to convey a religious message, we may speak of "religious fantasy fiction." George Lucas, too, conceived of his *Star Wars* movies as religious fantasy fiction. In an interview with Bill Moyers, Lucas stated that he "put the Force into the movie in order to awaken a certain kind of spirituality in young people—more a belief in God than a belief in any particular religious system" (Moyers, 1999; cf. Davidsen, 2017a, 11). Like Lewis, Lucas intended his narratives to be consumed in the mythopoeic mode with the Force as a metaphor for God (and they often are); he did not want, nor foresee, that some people would go one step further, adopt a cosmological mode, and consider the Force in *Star Wars* to be a direct reference to a real Force in the actual world.[6]

In theosophy and ceremonial magic, as well as in their later offshoots, such as new age, Satanism, chaos magic, and wicca, we encounter a related dynamic. The textual core of these traditions is discursive rather than narrative, in the sense that the tradition-defining texts, such as Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), Spangler's *Revelation: The Birth of a New Age* (1971), LaVey's *The Satanic Bible* (1969), Carroll's *Liber Null & Psychonaut* (1987), and Gardner's *Witchcraft Today* (1954), are of an argumentative kind. It seems that religious traditions such as these, which lack a narrative core, tend to go for the second best—a narrative periphery of fantasy fiction. Again, this

fantasy fiction can be "adopted," as we have seen with theosophy adopting Bulwer-Lytton's fiction and Satanism and chaos magic adopting Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos. But religious leaders may also take the pen in their own hands and write religious fantasy fiction themselves. Some examples of theosophical, wiccan, and new age fiction of this religious-didactic sort written to complement more central non-narrative religious works include Dion Fortune's *The Sea Priestess* (1938), Gerald Gardner's *A Goddess Arrives* (Scire, 1939), and James Redfield's *The Celestine Prophecy* (1993).[7] Obviously, religious-didactic fiction may also be written by authors who do not have a leading role in a religious organization. One of the most sold and influential works of religious fantasy fiction is Paulo Coelho's new age fable *The Alchemist* (1993; cf. Stausberg, 2020, 628–36).

Legitimizing Religious Use of Fantasy Fiction

Of the various legitimation strategies employed to justify the religious use of fiction, the appeal to revelation is by far the most common. Already in *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky commented that Bulwer-Lytton's fiction "sounds more like the faithful echo of memory than the exuberant outflow of mere imagination" (1877, 285), and fifty years later, C. Nelson Stewart argued that Bulwer-Lytton's stories "Zicci" and "A Strange Story" were based on dreams of a sort which "we should now call 'astral experiences' " (1927, 17). In a similar way Kenneth Grant claimed that the *Necronomicon*, a forbidden grimoire featured in Lovecraft's fiction, in fact refers to secret lore existing in the Akashic Records which Lovecraft had unconsciously perused and worked into his tales.[8] It is for this reason, argued Grant, that Lovecraft's Mythos constitutes valid material for magical work (cf. Gonce, 2003, 102–11). Tolkien, too, has been claimed to have read the Akashic Records (Knight, 1990, 136), and Terry Donaldson, creator of *The Lord of the Rings Tarot Deck & Card Game*, has suggested that Tolkien channeled his entire work (cf. Davidsen, 2014, 307). Stephen Hoeller, the leader of the Los Angeles-based Ecclesia Gnostica, proposed that Tolkien had accessed what Henry Corbin has called the Imaginal Realm and that his narratives provide a gateway for others into this spiritual realm, an idea adopted by Tolkien-based groups such as Tië eldaliéva and Ilsaluntë Valion (Davidsen, 2014, 385, 424–25, 2017b, 25–26). Crucially, individuals involved in Lovecraftian magic and Tolkien spirituality find support for their legitimization efforts in Lovecraft's and Tolkien's letters, which contain evidence of the fervent dream lives of both authors and, in the case of Tolkien, of his experience of "reporting" or "recording" rather than "inventing" his secondary world (Davidsen, 2014, 372–74).

Practitioners of fiction-based religion committed to the cosmological or historical modes sometimes top off the appeal to revelation with additional legitimization strategies. Practitioners of Tolkien spirituality refer to their own experiences, induced by trance-work and pathworking, as proof of the existence of the Elves and the Valar, and members of the Tribunal of the Sidhe argue that Tolkien was an astral being who chose to be incarnated in human form to bring certain truths into this world, truths that he communicated in secret form through his fiction (Davidsen, 2014, 228). Other practitioners of Tolkien spirituality seek evidence for the historicity of Tolkien's narratives, for example, by comparing the coastline of Middle-earth with that of Europe before the Ice Age (Davidsen, 2014, 422). Members of the Jedi Community use an opposite strategy (Davidsen, 2017a, 23–24). Being somewhat embarrassed by the fact that they base their religion on a movie series, they do not frame George Lucas as a prophet but prefer to emphasize the similarities between the Force religion taught by Yoda and those religions they themselves deem authoritative (mainly Buddhism and Christianity). They also cite new age science publications that claim that quantum mechanics and other frontier fields of natural science have proven the ultimately spiritual nature of energy. The references to authoritative religion and authoritative science have the same function: to provide backing for Yoda's teachings about the Force from respected sources external to the *Star Wars* universe.

The Religious Affordance of Fantasy Fiction

Not all works of fantasy fiction lend themselves equally well to religious use. Religious communities and traditions have emerged from *Star Wars* and Tolkien's literary mythology, but Frank Herbert's *Dune* books have not moved anyone to emulate the religion of the Fremen, fans of James Cameron's *Avatar* do not worship Eywa, and the readers of George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* series have not felt an urge to address the Seven, the Drowned God, or the Red God R'hllor in prayer. Why this difference? Drawing on narratology and theories of how religious narratives work, I have explored this question together with colleagues in a thematic issue of the journal *Religion* (see especially Davidsen, 2016b, and compare Cusack, 2016a; Feldt, 2016; Petersen, 2016). The general picture emerging from this work is that fantasy fiction has "religious affordance," i.e., affords religious use, if it features narrative religion that can be used as a model for religious belief and practice in the actual world, and if an aura of veracity is created around that narrative religion so that it becomes detachable from its fictional frame.

We have narrative religion when human-like characters discuss religious beliefs, engage in religious rituals, or have religious visions, but also when gods and angels appear explicitly as characters in the story. Features of narrative religion that seem to increase the religious affordance of fantasy fiction include the following:

- The protagonist is explicitly involved, and easy-to-emulate rituals, gestures, and sayings are present (such as the water-sharing ritual and the greeting "Thou Art God" in Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*; cf. Cusack, 2016a).
- An extraordinary identity is provided that can make one feel special (e.g., it is cool to be a Jedi Knight or an Elf).
- The narrative religion resonates with the audience's concerns and interests and provides a new language to speak of beliefs already held (this seems to be the great strength of the concept of "the Force" from *Star Wars*).
- The divine beings with whom humans or humanlike characters exchange are benign and responsive (note: the divine beings in Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* are not).
- The divine beings are of a spiritual nature, and therefore easy to "detach" from the fictional storyworld (note: *Avatar* has all of the above—an iconic greeting ["I see you"], an extraordinary identity one can metaphorically adopt [na'vi], a fashionable moral message [warning against greed and the environmental crisis], and a benign divine being [Eywa]. But Eywa is physical and undetachable from fictional Pandora, and presumable for that reason, no *Avatar*-based religion came off the ground, but see Davidsen, 2010).

Obvious intertextual loans from existing religious traditions limit religious use to the binocular and mythopoeic modes. This is the case with religious fiction, such as Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, which is *meant* to be read in the mythopoeic mode as a Christian allegory. The explicit loans from Islam in Herbert's *Dune* and the loans from both Islam and Hinduism in Robert Jordan's *Wheel of Time* series, too, seem to stand in the way of a cosmological/literal adoption of the religion of the Fremen or of the Aes sedai similar to the Jedi Community's adoption of the Force religion of the Jedi Knights from *Star Wars*.

The religious affordance of fantasy fiction can be enhanced if an aura of veracity is constructed around the narrative religion in the work in question. This can be done in three main ways. First, authoritative teacher figures may instruct less knowledgeable characters with whom the reader can identify on religious matters. Jesus serves this function vis-à-vis the disciples in the Christian Gospels, and Yoda serves it vis-à-vis Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars* (Davidsen, 2016b, 532–33). Second,

the narrator may demonstrate that what the teacher figures preach is true, by presenting supernatural agents, places, and processes as straightforwardly real within the story-world (Davidsen, 2016b, 530–32). In Tolkien's literary mythology, we have an example of this when Eru and the Valar appear and act as characters in *The Silmarillion* (whereas they are only spoken of in *The Lord of the Rings*). Third, the author may endorse the narrative religion as true, worthy, and relevant in letters (such as Tolkien's letters on how his stories were seemingly revealed to him, discussed above) or in interviews (such as Lucas' interview with Moyers in which he said that he put the Force into the movies to make young people interested in God, also mentioned above; Davidsen, 2016b, 540–41). The author may also blur the distinction between himself and his text-internal narrator; Lovecraft does this when he draws on material from his own haunting dreams in the description of his narrator-protagonists' dream visions.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored how fantasy fiction may be used religiously, how individuals legitimize their religious use of fantasy fiction, and why certain fantasy texts have greater religious affordance than others. A few general conclusions emerge. (1) An analytical distinction can be drawn between religious narratives and fantasy fiction: both genres include supernatural elements (narrative religion), but only religious narratives claim to speak of supernatural interventions in the actual world (they have reference ambition) whereas fantasy fiction is non-referential. (2) Because fantasy fiction is recognized as fiction, readers rarely consider the *storyline* of fantasy fiction to be actual history (though some do and read fantasy fiction in the historical mode). Even so, readers often take fantasy fiction to carry some religious truth. Readers may either take fantasy fiction to point to other, more authoritative and non-fictional religious sources (binocular mode), to present supernatural entities in transfigured form (mythopoeic mode), or to be fictional stories about supernatural beings and places that exist in the actual world (cosmological mode). (3) When fantasy fiction is used in the cosmological (or historical) modes, distinct communities and traditions may arise. The best examples of such fiction-based religions are the Jedi Community based on *Star Wars* and the spiritual Tolkien milieu based on Tolkien's Middle-earth saga. (4) Religious communities that base themselves on fiction experience a greater need to legitimize their beliefs than do members of more conventional religious groups, but the legitimization strategies employed are well known: it may be claimed that the fiction is in fact based on revelation (Lovecraftian magic; Tolkien spirituality), or that the religious teachings contained in the fictional text express perennial wisdom and/or are proved by science (Jedi Community). (5) Not all pieces of fantasy fiction have the same degree of religious affordance. An explicit and engaging narrative religion with benign and responsive divine exchange partners and an extraordinary identity enhances religious affordance, as does the endorsement of the truth and relevance of the narrative religion by the author, or by a narrator or teacher figure speaking on the author's behalf.

Notes

1 I use the term "fantasy"/"fantasy fiction" as shorthand for what might more precisely be labelled supernatural fiction, i.e., fiction that features supernatural agents, worlds, and/or processes within its story-world. I thus extend the category of fantasy to include portions of horror and science fiction.

2 Because religious narratives have what Torsten Pettersson (2005) calls reference ambition, they belong to the broader category of non-fiction. This is so, even if a contemporary reader may judge the supernatural claims put forward in such texts as implausible. By contrast, fictional texts, including fantasy fiction, are "nonreferential" (Cohn, 1999, 12) because they lack reference ambition; they do not tell of the actual world, but project a fictional world of their own making.

3 The reader may compare the argument here to Cusack's discussion of her own position in relation to those of Possamai and myself (Cusack, 2016b).

4 This is not the place to rehearse in detail the debates within the study of religion on how to properly define religion (substantively or functionally; stipulatively or prototypically), and on whether defining religion is desirable at all, or even possible. A reader interested in these debates may consult Platvoet and Molendijk (1999). Schilbrack (2017) provides a philosophical argument for the position adopted here, i.e., that religion can be defined and should be defined substantively and stipulatively.
5 Since this chapter focuses on contemporary religious uses of fantasy fiction, I mention Blavatsky's use of Bulwer-Lytton's fiction only briefly. For a fascinating discussion of this case, the reader may consult Frenschkowski (2021). A briefer discussion can be found in Davidsen (2014, 90–95).
6 Another example of a religious group drawing literal inspiration from a text that was meant to carry spiritual significance only metaphorically is Ernst Bernhardt's *Gralsbewegung* (Grail Movement) which was based largely on Richard Wagner's opera *Parsifal* (Gruber, 2009, 32–34).
7 See Gilhus and Mikaelsson (2013) for an overview of early theosophical fiction written with a religious-didactic aim. Cusack (2012, 166) mentions that George Ivanovich Gurdjieff aimed to convey the message of his "Work" with his fictional trilogy *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* (1950), *Meetings with Remarkable Men* (1963), and *Life Is Real Only When 'I Am'* (1975).
8 According to theosophy and anthroposophy, the Akashic Records is a spiritual compendium which stores information on everything that has ever happened and will happen. It is believed to be located on a non-material plane.

Works Cited

Aquino, Michael A. 1977. "Lovecraftian Ritual." *Nyctalops* (May 1977): 13–15. Reprinted as appendix #74 in Michael A. Aquino. 2013. *The Church of Satan: Volume II – Appendixes*, 8th ed., 228–35. San Francisco.

Blavatsky, Helena P. 1877. *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*. New York and London: J. W. Bouton/Bernard Quaritch.

Blavatsky, Helena P. 1888. *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy, Vol. I – Cosmogenesis*. London: Theosophical Publishing Co.

Bradley, Marion Zimmer. 1983. *The Mists of Avalon*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Bulwer-Lytton, Edward. 1871. *The Coming Race*. London: W. Blackwood and Sons.

Carroll, Peter J. 1987. *Liber Null & Psychonaut: An Introduction to Chaos Magic*. Boston and York Beach, ME: Weiser Books.

Coelho, Paulo. 1993. *The Alchemist*. London: Harper Collins.

Cohn, Dorrit. 1999. *The Distinction of Fiction*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Cowan, Douglas E. 2012. "Dealing a New Religion: Material Culture, Divination, and Hyper-Religious Innovation." In *Handbook of Hyper-Real Religions*, edited by Adam Possamai, 247–65. Leiden: Brill.

Cusack, Carole M. 2010. *Invented Religions: Imagination, Fiction and Faith*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Cusack, Carole M. 2012. "Cognitive Narratology and the Study of New Religions." *The Alternative Spirituality and Religion Review* 3, no. 2: 154–71.

Cusack, Carole M. 2016a. "Fiction into Religion: Imagination, Other Worlds, and Play in the Formation of Community." *Religion* 46, no. 4: 575–90.

Cusack, Carole M. 2016b. "Invention in "New New" Religions." In *The Oxford Handbook of New Religious Movements*, Vol. 2, edited by James R. Lewis and Inga B. Tøllefsen, 237–47. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cusack, Carole M., and Pavol Kosnáč, eds. 2017. *Fiction, Invention and Hyper-Reality: From Popular Culture to Religion*. In the *Routledge Inform Series on Minority Religions and Spiritual Movements*, Eileen Barker, series editor. Abingdon & New York: Routledge.

Davidsen, Markus. 2010. "Genfødt og blå: religiøsitet baseret på James Camerons film *Avatar*." In *Religion 2.0? Tendenser og trends i det nye årtusind*, edited by René Dybdal Pedersen, 50–55. Aarhus: Det Teologiske Fakultet, Aarhus Universitet. https://samtidsreligion.au.dk/religion-20-tendenser-og-trends-i-det-nye-aartusind.

Davidsen, Markus Altena. 2012. "The Spiritual Milieu Based on J.R.R. Tolkien's Literary Mythology." In *Handbook of Hyper-Real Religions*, edited by Adam Possamai, 185– 204. Leiden: Brill.

Davidsen, Markus Altena. 2013. "Fiction-Based Religion: Conceptualising a New Category Against History-based Religion and Fandom." *Religion and Culture: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 14, no. 4: 378–95.

Davidsen, Markus Altena. 2014. *The Spiritual Tolkien Milieu: A Study of Fiction-based Religion*. PhD dissertation, University of Leiden. A monograph based on the dissertation is under preparation and will be published with De Gruyter under the title *Tolkien Spirituality: Constructing Belief and Tradition in Fiction-based Religion*.

Davidsen, Markus Altena. 2016a. "From *Star Wars* to Jediism: The Emergence of Fiction-based Religion." In *Words: Religious Language Matters*, edited by Ernst van den Hemel and Asja Szafraniec, 376–89, 571–75. New York: Fordham University Press.

Davidsen, Markus Altena. 2016b. "The Religious Affordance of Fiction: A Semiotic Approach." In "Religion in Fiction." Special issue, *Religion* 46, no. 4: 521–49.

Davidsen, Markus Altena. 2017a. "The Jedi Community: History and Folklore of a Fiction-based Religion." *New Directions in Folklore* 15, no. 1/2: 7–49.

Davidsen, Markus Altena. 2017b. "The Elven Path and the Silver Ship of the Valar: Two Spiritual Groups Based on J. R. R. Tolkien's Legendarium," including two appendices, "Tië eldaliéva", by Rev. Michaele Alyras de Cygne and Calantirniel, and "Ilsaluntë Valion", by Gwineth. In *Fiction, Invention and Hyper-Reality: From Popular Culture to Religion*, edited by Carole M. Cusack and Pavol Kosnáč, 15–39. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Davidsen, Markus Altena. Forthcoming. "Esoteric Order of Dagon." In *Brill Dictionary of Contemporary Esotericism*, edited by in Egil Asprem. Leiden: Brill.

Davidsen, Markus Altena, and Bastiaan van Rijn. 2020. "Studying Religions as Narrative Cultures: Angel Experience Narratives in the Netherlands and Some Ideas for a Narrative Research Programme for the Study of Religion." In *Narrative Cultures and the Aesthetics of Religion: Storytelling—Imagination—Reception*, edited by Dirk Johannsen, Anja Kirsch and Jens Kreinath, 91–122. Leiden: Brill.

Feldt, Laura. 2016. "Contemporary Fantasy Fiction and Representations of Religion: Playing with Reality, Myth, and Magic in *His Dark Materials* and *Harry Potter*." *Religion* 46, no. 4: 550–74.

Fortune, Dion. 1938. *The Sea Priestess*. London: Society of the Inner Light.

Frenschkowski, Marco. 2021. "Magic and Literary Imagination in H. P. Blavatsky's Theosophy." In *Fictional Practice: Magic, Narration, and the Power of Imagination*, edited by Bernd-Christian Otto and Dirk Johannsen, 133–73. Leiden: Brill.

Gardner, Gerald B. 1954. *Witchcraft Today*. London: Rider & Co.

Gilhus, Ingvild Sælid, and Lisbeth Mikaelsson. 2013. "Theosophy and Popular Fiction." In *Handbook of the Theosophical Current*, edited by Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein, 453–72. Leiden: Brill.

Gonce, John Wisdom III. 2003. "Lovecraftian Magick – Sources and Heirs." In *The Necronomicon Files: The Truth Behind Lovecraft's Legend*, edited by Daniel Harms and John Wisdom Gonce III, 2nd ed., 85–126. Boston and York Beach, ME: Weiser Books.

Gruber, Bettina. 2009. "Literature and Religion: Features of a Systematic Comparison." *Journal of Religion in Europe* 2, no. 1: 21–36.

Hanegraaff, Wouter J. 2007. "Fiction in the Desert of the Real: Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos." "Esotericism and Fiction." Special issue. *Aries* 7, no. 1: 85–109.

Harvey, Graham. 2000. "Fantasy in the Study of Religions: Paganism as Observed and Enhanced by Terry Pratchett." *Diskus* (now *Journal of the British Association for the Study of Religion*) 6. http://jbasr.com/basr/diskus/diskus1-6/harvey-6.txt.

Harvey, Graham. 2006. "Discworld and Otherworld: The Imaginative Use of Fantasy Literature among Pagans." In *Popular Spiritualities: The Politics of Contemporary Enchantment*, edited by Lynn Hume and Kathleen McPhillips, 41–52. Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Hine, Phil. (1994) 2004. *The Pseudonomicon.* 3rd revised ed. Tempe, AZ: The Original Falcon Press.

Holdstock, Robert. 1984. *Mythago Wood*. London: Victor Gollancz.

Jindra, Michael. 1994. "*Star Trek* Fandom as a Religious Phenomenon." *Sociology of Religion* 55, no. 1: 27–51.

Knight, Gareth [Basil Wilby]. 1990. *The Magical World of the Inklings*. Longmead: Element Books.

LaVey, Anton Szandor. 1969. *The Satanic Bible*. New York: Avon Books.

LaVey, Anton Szandor. 1972. *The Satanic Rituals: Companion to The Satanic Bible*. New York: Avon Books.

Laycock, Joseph. 2012. ""We Are Spirits of Another Sort": Ontological Rebellion and Religious Dimensions." *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 15, no. 3: 65–90.

Lupa. 2007. *A Field Guide to Otherkin*. Stafford: Megalithica Books.

McCormick, Debra. 2012. "The Sanctification of *Star Wars*: From Fans to Followers". In *Handbook of Hyperreal Religions*, edited by Adam Possamai, 165–84. Leiden: Brill.

Moyers, Bill. 1999. "Of Myth and Men: A Conversation between Bill Moyers and George Lucas about the Meaning of the Force and the True Theology of Star Wars." *Time*, April 26, 1999. http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,990820-1,00.html.

Petersen, Anders Klostergaard. 2016. "The Difference Between Religious Narratives and Fictional Literature: A Matter of Degree Only." *Religion* 46, no. 4: 500–20.

Pettersson, Torsten. 2005. "Bibelns relation till verkligheten: En principiell jämförelse med sakprosan och skönlitteraturen." In *Litteraturen og det hellige: Urtekst – Intertekst – Kontekst*, edited by Ole Davidsen, 219–35. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.

Platvoet, Jan G., and Arie L. Molendijk, eds. 1999. *The Pragmatics of Defining Religion: Contexts, Concepts and Contests*. Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill.

Porter, Jennifer E. 2006. "'I Am a Jedi': *Star Wars* Fandom, Religious Belief and the 2001 Census." In *Finding the Force of the Star Wars Franchise: Fans, Merchandise and Critics*, edited by Matthew Wilhelm Kapell and John Shelton Lawrence, 95–112. New York: Peter Lang.

Possamai, Adam. 2005. *Religion and Popular Culture: A Hyper-Real Testament*. Brussels: P. I. E. Peter Lang.

Possamai, Adam. Ed. 2012a. *Handbook of Hyper-Real Religions*. Brill Handbooks on Contemporary Religion, edited by Carole M. Cusack and James R. Lewis, 5. Leiden: Brill.

Possamai, Adam. 2012b. "Yoda Goes to Glastonbury: An Introduction to Hyper-real Religions." In *Handbook of Hyper-real Religions*, edited by Adam Possamai, 1–21. Brill Handbooks on Contemporary Religion, series editors Carole M. Cusack and James R. Lewis. Leiden: Brill.

Ravenwolf. 2005. "Middle-Earth: Physical or Other Plane." Post #1646 in the Yahoo! Group Children of the Varda. Posted October 9, 2005. Accessed July 26, 2017.

Redfield, James. 1993. *The Celestine Prophecy: An Adventure.* Hoover, AL: Satori.

Schilbrack, Kevin. 2017. "A Realist Social Ontology of Religion." *Religion* 47, no. 2: 161–78.

Scire [Gardner, Gerald B.] 1939. *A Goddess Arrives*. London: Stockwell.

Singler, Beth. 2014. "'See Mom It Is Real': The UK Census, Jediism and Social Media." *Journal of Religion in Europe* 7, no. 2: 150–68.

Spangler, David. 1971. *Revelation: The Birth of a New Age*. The Findhorn Foundation.

Stausberg, Michael. 2020. *Die Heilsbringer: Eine Globalgeschichte der Religionen im 20. Jahrhundert*. Munich: C.H. Beck.

Stewart, C. Nelson. 1927. *Bulwer Lytton as Occultist*. London: Theosophical Publishing House.

Strube, Julian. 2013. *Vril: Eine okkulte Urkraft in Theosophie und esoterischem Neonazismus*. Munich: Wilhelm Fink.

Sutcliffe, Steven J., and Carole M. Cusack, eds. 2013. "Invented Religions: Creating New Religions through Fiction, Parody and Play." Special issue, *Culture and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 14, no. 4.

Tolkien, John Ronald Reuel. 1954–1955. *The Lord of the Rings*. London: George Allen & Unwin. Comprised of *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954), second edition 1965 by Ballantine Books, *The Two Towers* (1954), second edition 1965 by Ballantine Books, and *The Return of the King* (1955), second edition 1965 by Ballantine Books.

Tolkien, John Ronald Reuel. 1977. *The Silmarillion.* Edited by Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Wagenseil, Christoph. 2015. "Lovecraft Goes Magick: Cthulhus Ruf in Phantastik und (neuer) Religion." [Interview with Friedemann Rimbach-Sator]. *ReMid*. http://www.remid.de/blog/2015/07/lovecraft-goes-magick-cthulhus-ruf-in-phantastik-und-neuer-religion/.