The Familiar and the Fantastic A Study of Contemporary High Fantasy in George R. R. Martin's A Song of Ice and Fire and Steven Erikson's Malazan Book of the Fallen

Master thesis

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Abstract
This thesis deals with fantasy as a literary genre, as well as its subgenre "high fantasy," and contemporary genre theorizing. It examines how the cycles A Song of Ice and Fire by George R. R. Martin and The Malazan Book of the Fallen by Steven Erikson exemplifies this. It mainly deals with the theorizing of Brian Attebery, Richard Mathews and Brian Stableford, and looks at how the view of the concept of genre" in relation to fantasy fiction and its attempts of establishing a framework for critical study of the genre. Attebery's theorizing on "formulaic" fantasy has its origins in the success of Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings, and the commercial mass-production of fiction that resembled this work. Furthermore, the thesis examines how the concept of a formula can be problematic in relation to genre, and how the recent years' fantasy fiction seems to abandon stereotypes and traditional narrative techniques. The thesis also examines different aspects of the fictional worlds presented by Martin and Erikson, and if they offer perspectives on our own reality. It also deals with how literary techniques and narrative strategies are used in these works, how they break from or adhere to the generic framework, and what consequences these differences or similarities have.

Martin is a self-proclaimed fan of the Lord of the Rings’ sweeping story-telling. There are fantasy writers who have devoted their careers to laying bare what they believe to be Tolkien’s moral hucksterism (most vocally Michael Moorcock, creator of the great anti-hero Eric of Melniboné). Martin is not a member of the club. “His books had enormous influence on me,” Martin said of Tolkien several years go. The point is that fantasy has never been black and white and the idea that George RR Martin owes it to his readers to be soul-searingly grim all the time is built on a false premise. He loves his derring-do, his shiny knights with banners, as much as the next former Dungeons and Dragons player. The story of A Song of Ice And Fire PDF sets in a fantasy world where there are seven kingdoms in the Westeros and there are five major kingdoms to the east. To the North, there are wilding lands across the wall and a major threat is on behest since the Wight Walkers are gathering their army. The main story starts with King Robert Baratheon ruling the Iron Throne. He has friends to the north, the Starks, a noble house whose Lord is Ned Stark. All the previously released books have scored rating higher than 4 which is an evidence for the greatness of this book series. A Song Of Ice And Fire Novel Series: A Game of Thrones (1996). A Clash of Kings (1998).