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

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 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.

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