

GLAMORIZING THE PAST IN GAME OF THRONES THE TRADITIONING OF MODERNITY

Mădălina Ciornei

Universitatea „Ștefan cel Mare”, Suceava

It is my belief that the success of contemporary fantasy productions, both filmic and literary, has its roots in certain forms of entertainment that re-write and glamorize history. As popular TV entertainment looks back on the tradition of seamless editing and thus proves its resilience as a means to advance the agenda of classic cinematic storytelling, implicitly, the transposition of traditional aesthetic cinema criteria into modern blockbusters is conditioned by a historical line of conventions, principles, or attitudes. What I mean by 'traditioning of modernity' is the process of re-establishing historical (i.e. traditional) practices, which still constitute important present-day concerns. Prevailing issues such as war and hostility, the human ego, power-seeking, incest and sexuality, are substantial and typical of the human nature. In order to further develop by what means tradition is depicted in the modern era, I will consider perceptions of authenticity, knighthood and long-established customs, epitomized in George R.R. Martin's gothic fantasy A Song of Ice and Fire, and the accompanying HBO television series Game of Thrones, both of which are my primary sources.

My reading argues that both the fantasy film and literature revisit historical, yet topical traditions of war, gender roles, sexuality and hostility, while referencing the medieval past of the Western world.

Created by the executive producers and writers David Benioff, respectively D.B. Weiss, and filmed in a Belfast studio, Game of Thrones premiered on HBO in the United States on April 17th, 2011 (HBO, 2015: np.) and rapidly resulted in a tremendous success. Rooted in the mainstream stereotype of the dark ages, the television series introduces several conventions of cinematic realism (whereby I am referring to geographical features, the portrayal of the real world and the recreating of human actions and events from the past), by relying on multiple strategies of film narration. George R.R. Martin's fantasy novels present significant realistic features that help the audience identify with the narrative invention. In order to establish them, I will discuss here the elaborations of the Western tradition and the conception of the past that can be found in the essence of the epic fantasy genre.

Key words: fantasy, modernity, tradition, film

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