

Babeş-Bolyai University

Faculty of Letters

Doctoral School of Linguistic and Literary Studies

Comparative Literature

DOCTORAL THESIS

The Many-Faced Monster

George R.R. Martin's Fantasy Universe

Abstract

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Cluj-Napoca

2023

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Keywords: George R.R. Martin, *fantasy*, medievalism, monster, humanity, violence, conflict, torture, otherness.

Abstract

This doctoral thesis is based on the five novels written by the American author George R.R. Martin and it focuses on analyzing a series of monstrous typologies as they are represented through the characters imagined by the writer. I began my analysis from Arthur Schopenhauer's concept of *Natürliche Schlechtigkeit* better known as the inherent wickedness that only humans can exhibit. After defining a whole series of concepts that I use throughout my paper, the contextualization and exemplification of each typology ensue. In the order of my chapters, these are the human monster and the fantasy one, the torturer and his victims, the sadist and the unruly, the warrior and the executioner, the fanatic and the wizard, and lastly the cannibal and the rapist. Each of these human faces is illustrated using one or several of the characters from *A Song of Ice and Fire*, but their interpretation goes beyond the literary boundaries into anthropology, sociology, history or even philosophy at times.

In my opening chapter, I list all the concepts which I use throughout my analysis, dividing them into three categories: fantasy, medievalism, and violence. As far as Martin's novels go, they are without a doubt part of what we refer to as fantasy literature, comparisons between him and Tolkien or Lewis being quite frequent. In defining this literary genre, I began with Tzvetan Todorov's *The Fantastic – A structural approach*, where he divides this genre into four different subcategories, most relevant for Martin's case being the hyperbolic and exotic ones. Likewise, using Corin Braga's point of view expressed in *The Morphology of Possible Worlds (Morfologia lumilor posibile)*, I define the plane of everyday reality in opposition to the textual one, a dichotomy often used in my study whenever I switch between the two realms, thus providing a coherent framework to distinguish between the text, the metatext, analysis, and the anthropocentric daily reality. Also in this part, I introduce several of the concepts proposed by Kathryn Hume and Rosemary Jackson who reaffirm the importance that lies in the academic study of the fantasy genre by providing a plethora of examples aimed at finding the roots of this relatively new type of text starting from the most ancient writings and coming all the way into the present day. Thus, concepts usually associated with the supernatural such as cannibalism, animism, the obsession with death, or vampirism are just some of those found in my study of George Martin's fantasy universe.

The second element that permeates the entire analyzed saga is medievalism. Jean Delumeau, Jacques Le Goff, and Georges Duby are examples of historians whose perspectives on this time period I use to discuss this defining element of Martin's novels. Their descriptions of the medieval period in general and of the entire feudal system or the concept of chivalry appear in my paper when I discuss characters such as the Clegane brothers or Ser Meryn Trant by bringing arguments to justify their position in one or several of the monstrous typologies that I describe. The Latin concept of *mundus* and the soteriological need of the medieval man are key ideas excellently presented in *A Song of Ice and Fire* through his use of the prophets that herald the coming doom when the great battle of the end times will be upon the Kingdom of Westeros. The concept of quasi-present violence coined by Jean Delumeau in *Sin and Fear (Le péché et la peur)* is also highly useful in describing Martin's fantasy novels as his unfinished magnum opus that transcends the limitations of historical fiction, such as the novels written by Hillary Mantel, while also going beyond many of the elements traditionally associated with the fantasy genre as they can be observed in Tolkien. As such the pseudo-medieval world created by George Martin appears as a brutal, unforgiving alternate version of our own European Middle Ages where anyone, a peasant or a nobleman, ends up paying the ultimate price for even the slightest wrongdoing.

The third and most important of the subcategories discussed in this chapter is violence in its many shapes and forms. Returning briefly to Schopenhauer's words, I then introduce an entire host of names that make up the backbone of my conceptual analysis, starting with Michel Foucault, Elaine Scarry, Judith Butler, Erich Fromm, Ervin Staub, and Paul Ricoeur and ending once again with Tzvetan Todorov. All of these authors, alongside many other noteworthy intellectuals, provide one or a series of important notions in the discussion that revolves around human violence and the way in which it has manifested itself throughout the ages, thus looking for answers to some of the greatest mysteries of mankind. From Erich Fromm, I borrow the term malignant aggression, a concept the psychologist attributes solely to human beings in contrast to all the other types of aggressive behavior that he discusses in the cited analysis. This emphasis on humans remains constant when it comes to Ervin Staub as well, who in his *The Roots of Evil* analyzes a number of typologies that are responsible for many of the crimes committed by the Third Reich. One of the important elements I took from Staub's essay is the portrait he paints of the fanatic, which, alongside the supernatural and religious feelings invoked by Martin's usage

of this trait ends up conjuring an image of the actual witch sitting on the very high inquisitorial council that was responsible for burning them, to begin with, thus evoking the very image of another analyzed characters – Melisandre of Asshai. Michel Foucault is by far one of the most recognizable names of contemporary philosophy. Whether we talk of more general concepts he coined, such as the archeology of knowledge, his own definition and reframing of human madness (or more specific ones such as the panopticon), or the various types of abnormalities that have plagued humans since the beginning of times, his influence is highly visible throughout my analysis. One of his most important cited works within the confines of my thesis is *Abnormal (Les Anormaux)*, the collection of a semester’s course he taught at The Collège du France where he first proposes and elaborates on the tripartite image of the monster. Glossing over each meticulous detail and examples provided for each of the three given categories (namely, the human monster, the individual to be corrected, and the onanist), Foucault also tackles subjects such as incest and cannibalism, referring to them as part of the great outside or the grand otherness.

All of these elements appear at various points in my thesis with regard to one character or another, being utilized to justify their belonging to one, two, or several typologies. Elaine Scarry is another notable name whose take on the issues posed by suffering and the effects of torture on both the human mind and body are utilized in discussing the chosen characters. Concepts such as power, otherness, pain, or humanity are given new meaning from her point of view and are as such used to describe the likes of Theon Greyjoy, Ramsay Bolton, Gregor and Sandor Clegane, and Joffrey Baratheon to name just a few of the representatives of all the monstrous typologies included in my thesis. Paul Ricoeur’s definition of evil, especially through the lens of political power, is yet another theme often found in George Martin’s novels. From this point of view, comparisons between some of his characters and the traits laid out by Machiavelli’s *Prince (Il Príncipe)* are a natural next step and can be found at certain points in this analysis as well.

The connection has been discussed at length already by other researchers such as Marcus Schulzke in his essay *Playing the Game of Thrones: Some Lessons from Machiavelli*. Before closing this conceptual part, Tzvetan Todorov, alongside Wolfgang Sofsky, is mentioned to evoke the human element responsible for one of mankind’s darkest moments, namely the Nazi concentration camps. The ideas and framework utilized by these two authors fit in surprisingly

well in describing the monstrous characters and when they are combined with the aforementioned notions proposed by Foucault, Scarry, and Butler the image of the many-faced human monster becomes slightly clearer.

Judith Butler's perspective is taken from *The Force of Nonviolence* and comes as a necessary extension in completing the monstrous typologies with the issues posed by otherness and the other. In her essay, she revitalizes the discussion drawing from the likes of Freud, Jung, Derrida, and Walter Benjamin, while framing the whole discussion of cultural and social violence in the way humans interact with each other from an interpersonal level all the way to nations and the troubles they find in one every now and then. One of the last concepts mentioned in my take on the monstrous faces of humans is proposed by Rosi Braidotti in her essay *The Posthuman*. Starting from the framework she suggests, I discuss the character of Varamyr Sixskins, a shaman of the free folk who ends his human life by transferring his consciousness into one of his wolf pets before devouring his own lifeless body. This scene alongside a handful others receive a new interpretation based on the concepts proposed by Braidotti which go beyond what others such as Mircea Eliade or Tim White suggest in their respective essays mentioned in the chapter that mentions them.

Obviously the bibliography goes far beyond the names already mentioned and other writers, both old and new, such as Debbie Felton with her recently published book *Monsters and Monarchs*, Andrej Sapkowski and his series of fantasy novels or even Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* are recurring names and titles all throughout my thesis and serve as comparative elements. In terms of research and novelty brought about by this thesis of mine I can say that by overlooking the somewhat inconvenient fact that Martin has yet to finish writing his remaining two novels at the time when my analysis was done, there already exist plenty of academic essays and published articles that take the world of Westeros as a point of reference.

These writings cover a vast area of topics from political critique, gender studies, female representation, and the medieval tradition and all the way into the gothic elements from *A Song of Ice and Fire* in papers published in Journals, online literary magazines and all the way to other doctoral theses. Gordon McCormack's paper entitled *Legacy and Loyalty: An Application of Machiavellian Politics to George RR Martin's A Song of Ice and Fire* or Brian Pavlac's *Game of Thrones versus History: Written in blood* or even Henry Jacoby's volume *Game of Thrones and*

Philosophy: Logic Cuts Deeper Than Swords are among the titles I utilized in writing my own doctorate thesis. I would place my paper at a convergence point between literature, film, history philosophy, and anthropology for trying first of all to explain the staggering success that *Game of Thrones*, the television series, has had in spite of its grotesque and brutal view of man's nature, while also evoking such a strange fascination on the vast majority of consumers that got caught up in this modern cultural phenomenon. Secondly the main objective of this literary analysis rests in posing difficult questions and trying to find some semblance of an answer to them while acknowledging the many limitations of human mind, language, consciousness and research to name only a few. The dialogue that it seeks to stir ought to help better understand the complexity that lies behind the human shadow as it can be observed in the proposed typologies: the victim, the torturer, the individual to be corrected, the human monster, the warrior, the rapist, the fanatic, the necrophile, and the cannibal.

In the second chapter, the human monster is compared with the fantasy ones by the use of two examples. That is to say, Martin's giants and the beast named Nivellen from Andrej Sapkowski's *The Witcher* novel series. From a theoretical standpoint, the worldview of author Steven Pinker, as expressed in his book *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, makes up the introductory terms of the dichotomy that these two types of monsters imply in that he seemingly glosses over the human element and all the wickedness it's capable of, prompting me to compare his utopian view of our reality with the fictional version imagined by both of the previously mentioned fantasy writers. Their artistic and embellished worlds are used to emphasize the fact that the supernatural monsters are less vicious and malignant than the human characters and to support this some of the interviews in which George Martin expresses his own beliefs and influences in writing are also mentioned to help set the table for the analysis proper. Sapkowski brings his own take on this issue in the first novel of his fantasy series by providing a reiteration of the classic fairy-tale *The Beauty and the Beast* (*La Belle et la Bête*) by making his main character encounter the beast he is supposed to slay and instead choosing to save him from the curse that befell him, but not before he recounts his entire life's story up and including the moment when the curse was cast upon him. It is not a story that can be told to children nowadays. However, the Polish author chooses to humanize his character and add various layers of complexity on par with so many of Martin's characters discussed in my study as well. Through this character, I redefine the concept of monsters yet again into its final iteration,

simultaneously mentioning the types of monsters that won't really make an appearance in my essay as well. Also thanks to Nivellen the concept of perpetual group violence and peer pressure is also briefly brought into focus echoing Ervin Staub's take on it from *The Roots of Evil* alongside violence seen from the aggressor's point of view as violence against oneself as implied by Judith Butler.

Other concepts stemming from these discussions on the curse and the consequences of one's actions relate to elements which humanize or dehumanize someone. It is remarkable how in a world dominated by magic and supernatural such well-shaped allegorical notions conjure up several anthropological critiques in a rather pessimistic worldview that end up reflecting a world, devoid of its modern control mechanism, that is ages apart from the near techno utopia proposed by likes of Steven Pinker or Francis Fukuyama. As a complement to Sapkowski's monster plucked from the pages of his novel entitled *The Last Wish (Ostatnie życzenie)*, I choose the giants from George Martin's fantasy universe as they resemble the beast in appearance but not in personality. From among the passages chosen to illustrate their plight in contrast to the story of Nivellen, alongside the equivalent scenes from the television series, the giants of Westeros appear as humanoids lacking intelligence, but having physical strength matching their monstrously large hair-covered bodies.

Considering these traits Wun Wun or Mag the Mighty, two of the named giants from both books and televised series can be rather seen as anthropomorphized forces of nature and not necessarily the embodiment of unbridled violence and brute physical power, that title going to one character named Gregor Clegane, thoroughly discussed and described in the fifth chapter of my thesis. This is not to say that the two giants aren't able to cause havoc when they absolutely have to. However, at no point do they give the impression that there's any trace of evil or malice in their deeds. The same cannot be said about the human characters, whom, according to Erich Fromm, thanks to their capability of reasoning beyond answering to outside stimuli cannot be excused for their actions in the same way the giants, arguably, can be.

Once these examples have been given this chapter concludes with yet another allegory, this time told to Brandon Stark by his travelling companion, Meera Reed, who explains to him that sometimes the true monsters are the knights who should be responsible with killing and ridding the world of such creatures in the first place. The concept of chivalry as such is brought

into discussion, and an essay called *There are no True Knights: The Injustice of Chivalry* written by Stacey Goguen is used as a reference point in discussing the knights from Martin's fantasy universe. Lastly, the comparison between the monsters presented by both writers are given another meaning once they are left behind and mostly abandoned from an analytical point of view in favor of the real and measurable human typologies.

The third chapter deals with the concepts of otherness, distortion, and torture as seen in the characters of Theon Greyjoy and Ramsay Bolton. Beginning with an arrogant Theon who takes Ramsay into his service, not knowing who he really is and ending with Reek, Theon's alter-ego, born in the dungeons and through the pain of torture, these two characters embody both the typology of the victim and that of the torturer, each in their own way and one being better at one thing than the other. After mentioning several more titles that tackle the issue of torture from various perspectives, the analysis moves on to the main part where several notions proposed by Michel Foucault and Elaine Scarry are used to define the implications of such actions as torture upon both the one to whom it is administered and also the one who is administering it.

The deconstruction of the self and the other, or the unmaking as Scarry calls it, helps fit the two characters into their respective monstrous topologies. Continuing with yet another idea found in Scarry's *The Body in Pain*, namely the fact that torture is nothing else but the transposition of one's fiction of power into the suffering of another it becomes clear that the implied and expected annihilation of one's victim goes hand in hand with a form of self-destruction, while paradoxically strengthening the torturer's resolve and values. Furthermore, the concept of the panopticon is also discussed in regard to Theon's failed attempts to escape his captivity. Reek perfectly embodies the type of character that Foucault describes as the ideal prisoner who ends up seeing his master as a godlike figure in an almost flawless antithesis with himself, now reduced to a subhuman state.

Lord Bolton's love for his pets is another recurring topic of discussion in this part and one of the literary titles used for comparison and justifying his belonging to the monstrous typology of the torturer is Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. The example of the general and his bond to his bloodhounds is seen here as a complement to Ramsay's image given that they both enjoyed hunting human prey and rewarding their dogs more frequently than their human

companions. Also, at this point, Debbie Felton's essay is properly introduced and some examples from her analysis are picked to further elaborate upon Ramsay's personality. Her comparisons of the black widow archetype with the figure of the *Bluebeard* from folklore alongside a host of names from history such as Gilles de Rais are therefore borrowed and utilized with regards to Martin's character as well. Ramsay Bolton is from this point of view a murderous lover in both books and televised series especially when one considers the number of slain mistresses and the more specific case only found in the novels, Lady Hornwood, his late wife.

Joffrey Baratheon and his sexualized and sadistic tendencies constitute the main focus of the fourth chapter. Starting from the image of the whipping boy as it appears throughout history and a number of studies, a description of his ensues ranging from his pride and cowardice all the way to his unusual methods of pleasing himself, Joffrey is a highly important figure arguing in favor of the fact that the human monster, as Foucault presents him, is way above on the scale of cruelty and malice than any of the supernatural creatures who are the literal embodiment of destruction ever will be. This character represents one of the rare instances from Martin's novels where all three faces of the tripartite monster presented by Michel Foucault in *Abnormal* appear together, being first of all a human monster due to his vicious crimes, an individual to be corrected, at least from his uncle's perspective and obviously due to the many sexual undertones at first and deviations later on he can easily be considered an onanist as well.

As far as the theoretical part goes, Debbie Felton's *Monsters and Monarchs* is a rather important source along with Ervin Staub and Paul Ricoeur whose perspectives aid in fleshing out the character of Joffrey as a seditious teenager at first and an inefficient monarch later on, who drags his domain into a brutal civil war on a whim. Martin's pseudo-medieval world represents an interesting case study when it comes to conflicts and ideologies with the War of the Five Kings being the highlight of just how much complexity lies underneath any war that was ever fought regardless of how simplified a version one chooses to believe. Elaine Scarry's take on the annihilating power of war is used as a conceptual device for discussing the imaginary conflict set in motion by Joffrey and his executioner. Considering the unmaking of entire noble houses with many lives lost to both combat and gallows Albert Camus and Arthur Koestler's essay upon the capital punishment is also mentioned as a reference point alongside Tolkien and even Wilde.

One of the longer chapters, the fifth, focuses on the brutality that permeates two of Martin's most knightly characters, namely the brother Clegane, Sandor, and Gregor. The notions of medievalism as presented by the likes of Jacques Le Goff or Jean Delumeau in all its glorious quasi-present violence, the Clegane brothers represent the warrior archetype in both jousting and battle. Gregor is described as a massive man having an unrivaled strength and a very short temper while excessive aggression was the norm and way of life for him. Sandor on the other hand, less massive but still powerful enough to hold his ground even in front of his brother represents an unlikely dichotomy in that he is both a ruthless aggressor and a victim whose scars will never be healed. The comparisons between the two of them and the way their relationship is fleshed out through the five novels stand as the backbone of this chapter bringing into discussions topics such as fratricide, parricide, vengeance, or violence as a way of life. Given the pervasiveness of malignant aggression in both these characters, Erich Fromm is heavily quoted in the discussion of the traits which make both of these characters pathological criminals and monsters with little to no remorse shown for any of their crimes. Concerning Gregor, the notion of necrophilia in its psychological and fantastic renderings can also be mentioned considering that by the fifth novel, he is resurrected in a manner resembling Victor Frankenstein's monster.

The jousting tournament organized in Eddard Stark's honor and the trial by combat which was supposed to seal Tyrion Lannister's fate are two of the essential scenes from both books and television which help in describing both Sandor and Gregor so as to help with finding their appropriate typology. Gregor for example fits into several from killer and torturer all the way to a serial rapist while Sandor is slightly harder to proper categorize. He also seems to relish fighting and enjoy killing when ordered such as he did while butchering the butcher's son for daring to touch then Prince Joffrey.

Another theme introduced in this chapter is the role children play in the conflicts of the grownups, especially when considering the fact that both brothers pride themselves on having achieved their first kills before entering puberty while also being guilty later on in life on several crimes whose victims were children. Using the example of Gregor murdering the heirs of Prince Rhaegar Targaryen during Robert's Revolution it can be stated that such violent events bear the mark of savagery regardless of their context, facilitating crimes against the most vulnerable. As a bibliographical note, I mention the *Encyclopedia of War Crimes and Genocide* edited by Leslie

Alan Horvitz and Christopher Catherwood while also giving ample room to other views such as those presented by Hannah Arendt, Wolfgang Sofsky or Tzvetan Todorov. Seeing that the chapter covers a whole variety of themes, topics and ideas relating in one way or another to the two characters from a medievalist perspective, the critique of the feudal institutions, torture, the horrors of war and even the brutality of various sports alongside people's unwavering passion for them the theoretical apparatus used here is just as encompassing as well. As such, beyond Foucault, Scarry, Fromm or Staub other names such as David Le Breton or Robert Bohm both providing different points of view on the issue of pain, torture and the capital punishment are also mentioned.

Returning to the issue of monstrosity through one of Sansa Stark's remarks about Ser Ilyn Payne, when she refers to him in comparison with Ser Gregor Clegane as a *second monster*, while not as massive, clearly just as vicious and even more mysterious, I propose an analysis between him and another infamous headsman by the name of Johann Reichhart. Beyond both taking great pride in the professionalism of their work that required them to execute people in the name of their respective regimes it is also worth noting that Ser Ilyn's enigmatic figure is further deepened by his lack of tongue, a punishment which further dehumanizes him as per the definitions proposed by Judith Butler and Elaine Scarry justifying his addition as a third entry into this chapter. From a literary standpoint, the highlights of this part would be George Orwell's famous dystopia 1984 by comparing Winston Smith's torture scene with the method that Gregor and his entourage apply to their own victims as well as John Lothrop Motley's *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* where the author describes a series of events that echo some of those used by Martin to paint the picture of his characters.

Chapter six is centered on the figure of the religious fanatic as portrayed by Martin's Melisandre of Asshai and The High Sparrow, both of these characters representing various faces of fanaticism. I begin my discourse with Voltaire's famous words that whoever shall be able to convince his peers to believe absurdities can easily persuade them to commit atrocities as well. Through these characters, the writer thus critiques the evil sides of organized religion in all shapes and forms especially when it comes to the moments of fracture implied by the transition from one system of belief to another than more often than not was done so with impudent violence from times immemorial all the way into the religious conflicts of today. Using a number

of powerful scenes that focus on Melisandre various problematic topics such as human sacrifice, faith or prophecy, all of them superposed on a surreal plane where magic is interwoven with reality, are brought into discussion.

Among the most notable comparative elements of this character, we count Tolkien and the similarities drawn between Melisandre as the advisor of King Stannis Baratheon and Gríma Wormtongue who holds the same position at the court of King Théoden. Another fitting comparison based on a number of shared traits can be found in both the mythos of King Arthur and Merlin and the less fictional example of Rasputin from the court of Tsar Nicholas II. In defining this typology, I use Ervin Staub's *The Roots of Evil* where he sees the fanatic as a catalyst that is found in any dire situation. Joseph Campbell's analysis of the religious element and the portrayal of the hero or antihero in both myth and history are also mentioned in this part as it applies to both Melisandre's character and her prophecies. George Duby's description of women involved in religious rituals throughout the European Middle Ages is also used as a reference in pointing to the close ties that exist between the two antithetical notions of priestess and witch, proving by the end that the two terms are in truth parts of an age-old dichotomy and are in no way pitted against each other, at least in the Christian way of viewing the world that is.

Martin skillfully employs all of these ideas to frame Melisandre as both the persecutor and the witch, making her responsible for countless deaths by fire in public and many more by using her cunning and spells in private. The soteriological sentiment is also highly prevalent in the fictional universe, more so when it comes to the prophecies that form the entire system of belief upon which this new, invasive religion markets itself to the citizens of Westeros. The High Sparrow's character comes as an addition that rounds off the fanatic typology by embodying the extremes of the accepted and widely practiced faith of The Seven Kingdoms.

The seventh chapter remained hardly modified throughout the entire process that stands behind polishing a thesis such as this is focused not so much on a main character in particular, but more on a rather inherently monstrous concept. If that peculiar concept is to be attributed to a single character that would have to be Varamyr Sixskins, a shaman from among the free folk who made their home beyond The Great Wall of Westeros. Through him and a handful of others, the concept of cannibalism is brought into the discussion, a recurring subtopic in Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Endocannibalism, self-cannibalism, lycanthropy, or cannibalism used as

punishment are several forms that can be observed throughout the analyzed text. Theoretically speaking, Foucault's take on the issue remains one of the main lenses through which the study happens to see how the French philosopher equates it with the great otherness in one regard and the revolted masses that devour the ancient system of rules plagued by corruption and incest.

Certainly, this is one way of seeing it play out in Martin's universe as well, however, it isn't the only one because as Foucault continues to delve deeper into this topic as he progresses through his course on the *Abnormal* a few other direct examples of cannibalism in France's past are brought into discussion. Based on those and a handful other essays the analysis branches out into several thoughts each with its own degree of inherent monstrosity. I propose a slightly different view of Varamyr as something that goes beyond the archetypal shaman as defined by Mircea Eliade and into the realm of transhumanism or even posthumanism. Rosi Braidotti's *The Posthuman* comes in as a reference that helps redefine Varamyr as an unnatural mix between a human's mind and a wolf's body whose final act is feasting on his own corpse after transferring his consciousness into his pet to escape the army of undead that had caught up to him. Other notable examples include the punishment of Vargo Hoat by Gregor Clegane by dismembering, starving and then feeding him his own well-cooked parts. A similar fate is also found in Lady Hornwood's case where Ramsay recalls that by the time they checked on her in prison he was already dead and her hands were missing the fingers that she herself had tried to eat in a final act of despair. Other fictional characters such as Hannibal Lecter are also used to flesh out the typology alongside various real cases, both contemporary and historical.

The second to last chapter is also centered more on a concept than the actual characters themselves, namely the idea of childhood and how the young ones need to be protected, a rather problematic notion with more than one shortcoming and one which seems to be entirely absent from the fictional universe herein analyzed. On top of the critique brought to the seeming hypocrisy of those who champion protecting the younglings or saving the children it becomes obvious that the very construct of childhood is a rather modern construct and as such its absence from the pseudo-medieval world of Westeros isn't an intentional overlook, on the contrary.

I begin my analysis here from Philippe Ariès's *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life (L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime)* in searching for a coherent definition of what childhood represented in the European medieval period and beyond. Thus, a

number of recurrent notions such as physical, mental, or sexual abuse of the helpless victims, alongside the utter lack of concepts such as adolescence are brought up alongside the other concepts of my thesis. In forming the image of the abuser based on Martin's characters names such as Jaime Lannister, Ser Meryn Trant or Craster. Concerning the theoretical aspects of this chapter, together with Ariès, some of the more relevant names are Foucault and Elaine Scarry. Whether it is beatings, incestuous rape, or just an infant smashed into oblivion with minimal effort by someone like Gregor Clegane each of the characters mentioned in this chapter deserve their place among the true monsters of fantasy.

The problem of slavery is also briefly touched upon as presented by Benjamin Skinner's *A crime so monstrous: Face-to-face with modern-day slavery* correlated with arguments from Le Goff or Delumeau who state that in medieval times what we would consider slavery today used to very much be the norm, regardless of what form it took, and Martin makes true on this topic as well by making emphasizing the enormous gap that existed between the higher and lower echelons of the medieval society. Going even beyond it, far beyond the Narrow Sea on the continent of Essos he creates an entire society modeled on the medieval Middle and Far East where proper slaves serve their proper masters. I felt it necessary to make certain historic comparisons in this part such as the punishments used by the Roman legionnaires and those employed by the Great Masters of Slaver's Bay in a rather graphic episode involving children. The Sixth Crusade also known as The Children's Crusade is another event I mention so as to underline the anachronisms that exist in the mind of modern readers when it comes to the idea of childhood and how it should be seen or treated. Debbie Felton and her chapter on *Witches and Other Child-Murderers* is also used a reference point for several of the examples that stem from history alongside Dostoyevsky's stellar examples of this peculiar typology as presented by Ivan Karamazov in the eponymous book.

The final chapter, or more appropriately the conclusions and only a few closing thoughts, briefly revisits each typology and reaffirms once again where each character belongs. Likewise, the main objective of the study is once again stated alongside the spot this thesis holds in the general research relating to fantasy literature. Considering the author will ever manage to finish and publish his remaining two novels it is possible that a revisiting or maybe just a review of this study might also be possible at some point in the future. Until that happens, this thesis shall

remain in this form as the crowning achievement of all the years spent reading, writing, researching, and reviewing it. Still, that is nothing else but a simple possibility, and in the words of Heraclitus, “There is nothing permanent except change.”

I began writing this paper starting from what then seemed to me a rather simple notion that stubbornly enough has grown ever more complex throughout the years and as the concepts began to clarify over time up until it reached the form in which it is available today. What has remained constant, however, is the motivation that can be summed by paraphrasing the words of Faulkner and Tolkien by claiming that nothing is more important a topic to ponder in writing than the conflict within a human’s heart. As such, my motivation to delve deeper into the collective subconscious by means of lecture and analysis couldn’t fall short of this lofty ideal themselves. In my search for this conflict and the ensuing interpretation based on a series of popular books I sometimes wandered a bit too far off into the chasms of anthropology, the depths of psychology, the undercrofts of religion or even some of the most secluded catacombs of philosophy. Up to a certain point I believe this has been expressed quite appropriately and so I hope this study might service others who would venture into trying to tackle such topics as those that have been touched upon in this paper.

The many-faced monster as it appears in George Martin’s saga, in several other fantasy books of the anthropocene, or even in a mirror image, is none other than man, who alongside all his many redeeming qualities is highly capable of committing some of the greatest atrocities this planet has seen, our history as a species and more particularly as nations, families or even individuals serve as a grim reminder of this fact. The complexity of a human’s mind is still incredibly difficult to grasp even with all our technology, but we’re slowly headed into the future no matter how or what we feel about it and this future is riddled with conflicts that do nothing but amplify the many dissensions that have already taken root among us. In this context, I believe that dialogue and free speech alongside a fair analysis of any topic whatsoever, mine included, is of paramount importance, because how else are we going to maintain our humanity while also trying to better ourselves if not by working together rather than fighting and arguing aimlessly based on petty grievances, old grudges or ancient discords.