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COEXISTENCE OF INCONGRUOUS WORLDS IN *GAME OF THRONES*

Abstract

The objective of this paper is to foreground the ontological elements and to explore the clash between the medieval and the contemporary worldviews in the narrative of the series *Game of Thrones* (based on G. R. R. Martin's novel *A Song of Ice and Fire*). The narrative in *Game of Thrones* efficiently merges the medieval and the contemporary world, rendering the borders between them almost invisible on the level of the story, even if they are incompatible on the level of the cultures and values they represent. This paper is based on research of how certain contemporary traits, such as Jon Snow's unification of traditional enemies and Arya Stark's attitude to identity and gender roles, manage to blend in into an apparently medieval setting and system of values, in which they could otherwise be expected to appear completely incongruous. Such examination will bring together aspects from film, literary theory, history and ethics.

Keywords: *Game of Thrones*, clash of worlds, Jon Snow, Arya Stark, postmodernism

1. Introduction and objectives

The television series *Game of Thrones*, based on George R.R. Martin's novel *A Song of Ice and Fire*, is often referred to as fantasy due to the use of tropes typically found in the genre of fantasy (magic, wondrous creatures, supernatural events, among others). *A Song of Ice and Fire* has furthermore been analyzed in regard to the closeness of the events it represents to the history of the Middle Ages (Pavlac 2017, Liedl 2017, Alesi 2017, Polak 2017, Hackney 2015). The points made in the mentioned research of the novel are also valid for the television series based on the novel.

This paper, however, aims to destabilize such genre categorization, and explores the relation of the narrative in the series to postmodernism rather than to fantasy, as well as how it surpasses postmodernism in various aspects. The foregrounding of the ontological dominant and the concept of clash of worlds discussed by Brian McHale (1987) is the starting

point. The focus is on the clash of the medieval and the contemporary world in the series *Game of Thrones*. Unlike postmodernist fiction, which aims to highlight the borders between the different worlds, the narrative in *Game of Thrones* efficiently merges the medieval and the contemporary world, rendering the borders between them almost invisible on the level of the narrative, even if they are incompatible on the level of the cultures and values they represent. Jon Snow's unification of traditional enemies, Arya's fluidity in regard to identity and to gender roles, Tyrion's humor and irony, Sandor Clegane's atheism, Bronn's cynicism, among others, are some of the traits of the contemporary world existing within the medieval setting. I explore two such traits – Jon Snow's unification of traditional enemies and Arya's fluidity in regard to gender roles and identity in general – and I argue that they manage to blend in into an apparently medieval setting and system of values, in which they could otherwise be expected to appear completely incongruous. This interdisciplinary examination will bring together aspects from film, literary theory, history and ethics.

In terms of the methodological approach, the following part will present some general characteristics of fantasy fiction and medieval narratives, as well as similarities with historical events from the Middle Ages, on the basis of previous research in the area in order to establish how *Game of Thrones* differs from them. Previous research of postmodernist fiction will establish how the ontological dominant typical for postmodernism is relevant to constructing clashing worlds.

The central part of the paper will discuss separately how the characters of Jon Snow and Arya Stark deviate from the medieval system of values. In order to examine this effectively, in each of the subheadings focusing on each of the two characters, certain specific medieval views and customs will be examined, and then the actions and traits of the corresponding character will be interpreted in light of these views and customs. The similarities between the ways the contemporary world clashes with the medieval world in both cases through a comparative approach, as well as the question why the two worlds don't seem incongruous within the medieval setting, will also be discussed at the end of the central part.

2. Previous research: Similarities with history, genre conventions and postmodernist approach

George R. R. Martin has discussed the fact that he drew inspiration from British history, especially the period of the War of the Roses. Numerous critics have explored the

links between events in his novel and historical events from the mentioned period. Kavita Mudan Finn in her article “High and Mighty Queens of Westeros” (2017), and Danielle Alesi in her article “The Power of Sansa Stark: A Representation of Female Agency in Late Medieval England” (2017), for example, discuss female characters, with focus on queens, underlining parallels with history. According to Alesi, “Sansa’s life is remarkably similar to that of Elizabeth of York”, who was “the first queen to reign after the Wars of the Roses, the dynastic struggle for the English throne that inspired *A Game of Thrones*” (161).

In his article “A Machiavellian Discourse on *Game of Thrones*” (2017), Jacopo della Quercia also examines similarities between the lives of some of the characters in Martin’s novel and certain historical persons. “Like *The Prince*, George R. R. Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire* borrows heavily from the lives and deeds of numerous historical figures, some of whom were Machiavelli’s contemporaries and even mentioned in his writings.” (34) Not only the characters, but also the events described in the novel, and consequently in the television series, resemble certain historical events, such as the impressive “Red Wedding” in *Game of Thrones*. “The Starks expected hospitality from the Freys but were butchered instead. It is well known that George R. R. Martin based this event on two incidents from Scottish history: the ‘Black Dinner and the ‘Glencoe Massacre.’” (Della Quercia 40)

One of the central notions in *Game of Thrones* that is easily recognizable from medieval history is chivalry, which, as Steven Muhlberger writes in “Chivalry in Westeros” (2017), is “key to understanding the culture of Westeros as well as that of the later Middle Ages in Western Europe (roughly the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries). In both places, chivalry is both a noble ideal to be lived up to and a set of practices central to aristocratic life and the culture as a whole.” (47)

Apart from the characters and events that bear similarities with historical figures and events, *Game of Thrones* also bears similarities with works from the fantasy genre, which has led many critics to consider the novel as belonging to this genre. For example, *The Cambridge Companion of Fantasy Literature* (2012), edited by Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn, lists the individual novels which compose *A Song of Ice and Fire* in the part “Chronology” that includes works in the genre of fantasy.

Certainly, *Game of Thrones* does contain numerous fantasy tropes. These tropes include magic, fairytale creatures, monsters, supernatural elements, imaginary lands, adventures, heroic quests. Brian Attebery’s *Strategies of Fantasy* (1992) proposes that texts that share a cluster of such (and other) common tropes can be considered works of fantasy. Finn states that the “cultural standards in *A Song of Ice and Fire* and *Game of Thrones* hew closely to

traditional fantasy tropes, themselves a product of J. R. R. Tolkien's training as a medieval literature scholar" (19), although she also points out some differences. In "Tolkien, Lewis and the explosion of genre fantasy" (2012), Edward James also makes a point about Tolkien's influence on subsequent works of fantasy: "Tolkien's greatest achievement, however, in retrospect, was in normalizing the idea of a secondary world. Although he retains the hint that the action of *LOTR*¹ takes place in the prehistory of our own world, that is not sustained, and to all intents and purposes Middle-earth is a separate creation, operating totally outside the world of our experience." (65) According to James, this has become standard in modern fantasy. This is certainly true for the world created on the continents of Westeros and Esos in *Game of Thrones*.

A genre relevant for *Game of Thrones* and related to fantasy is the medieval or chivalric romance – fantastic narrative that includes adventures filled with marvel, in which a hero (in the medieval romances usually a knight) goes on a quest either to search for something important or to right a certain previously done wrong. These conventions have then continued to exist in romances in following centuries, as well as in the fantasy genre.

Although *Game of Thrones* includes certain recognizable tropes and the setting of fantasy and medieval romance, still the logic of events and the values presented are subverted by the end of the first season of the series (which corresponds to the end of the first book from the book series *A Song of Ice and Fire*). As David J. Peterson explains in "The Language of Ice and Fire" (2015), the conventions have created expectations among readers that the hero Eddard Stark "will survive and ultimately exact vengeance". (17) However, *Game of Thrones* undermines those expectations, and "the reader learns that traditional expectations will not be borne out in *A Song of Ice and Fire*". (Peterson 17) This is only one example out of many in which *Game of Thrones* departs from the conventions of the fantasy and medieval romance genres.

It terms of creating a world similar to the one of the Middle Ages, *Game of Thrones* manages to achieve this by constructing a setting which contains a lot of medieval characteristics, such as castles, feudal lords, feudal relations, knights, but also deliberately abandons the system of values and beliefs existing in that world, which is what the central part of this article focuses on. McHale's elaboration of clash of worlds within postmodernist novels may well explain the departure from the Middle Ages in *Game of Thrones* in terms of ethics and views on life.

¹ *LOTR* – *Lord of the Rings*, as written in James's article.

In *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987), McHale uses the term *dominant* as a helpful notion in differentiating between various literary movements: for example, if a novel is characterized *predominantly* by a recognizable postmodernist trait, it may be situated in the category of postmodernism, even if it also has traits of Realism or Romanticism or any other literary movement. In that sense, literary works do not strictly belong to a certain category, but may have a dominant feature encountered in other works from the same period. Thus, according to McHale, modernist works have the epistemological dominant, whereas postmodernist ones have the ontological dominant, that is, they “typically involve some violation of the ontological boundaries” (16) or, in other words, involve some kind of a conflict between different worlds. McHale illustrates his points with examples of novels by Carlos Fuentes, Thomas Pynchon, Robert Coover, among others. In terms of the “strategies for constructing/deconstructing space” in building zones (in McHale’s terminology), postmodernist fiction employs various strategies, among which: “*juxtaposition, interpolation, superimposition, and misattribution*”. (McHale 45)

Game of Thrones does not belong to this group of novels that deliberately foreground the plurality of worlds, yet it does exploit the ontological dominant through representing coexistence of and conflict between various worlds. In constructing a zone, *Game of Thrones* draws upon a strategy which is somewhat different from the four ones mentioned by McHale.

3. Contemporary traits in medieval setting and system of values

3.1. The wrong side of the wall: Jon Snow and the importance of circumstances

The setting of *Game of Thrones* is largely medieval: it is a world filled with lords, castles, knights, vassals, sword fights, tournaments. This, for example, is a description of knights in the Middle Ages: “In the Middle Ages, knights were highly trained warriors in armor, mounted on large, powerful war horses, who fought alongside other knights in battle. Knights [...] fought with swords, lances, maces, and battle-axes” (Muhlberger 47). Knights were required to be loyal to their liege-lords, they were expected to have prowess and to belong to the class of nobility. These historical descriptions of knights closely correspond to the knights presented in *Game of Thrones*, such as Jaime Lannister, Renley Bartheon, Loras Tyrell, Barristan Selmy, or Brynden Tully.

Muhlberger describes three types of medieval knights – vassal knights, noble knights and courteous knights. Explaining that chivalry became identified with nobility, he states that

vassals “themselves could be powerful enough to be feudal lords with their own vassals. Thus a complicated ‘feudal network’ of sworn loyalties connected knightly lords and vassals to one another.” (Muhlberger 48) In this, the system of bannermen in *Game of Thrones*, sworn to the service of the highest lord in an area can easily be recognized. To give just a couple of the many examples in the series, it is mentioned at different occasions throughout the episodes that the Freys, the Brackens or the Mallisters are bannermen of house Tully, or that the Royces and the Waynwoods are bannermen of house Arryn.

The medieval ethical system is also generally reflected in *Game of Thrones*. Jean Porter, professor of Theology and Ethics, discusses virtue ethics in the Middle Ages, emphasizing that what dominated in this period was “the idea of a distinctively human form of excellence which is proper to the human being as such, without reference to particular circumstances or roles” (Porter 71). This means that regardless of whether they are peasants or nobility, people are required to exhibit the same virtues. In the same context, Porter also adds that “Seneca’s account of the rational character of the virtues, and his insistence that the ideals of virtue are the same for all persons, were to have considerable influence on later Christian thinkers” (Porter 74). The cardinal virtues include: faith, prudence, justice, fortitude, honesty, temperance, and the idea of the importance of such virtues can also be seen in many medieval works or literary works that refer to the medieval period, such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* or Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queen*. These same virtues are also highly regarded in *Game of Thrones* along with the identical idea that virtues are the same for all persons without consideration of particular circumstances. Even if the characters don’t always live by them, they all emphasize them as virtues: thus, for example, even the greatest of Ned Stark’s enemies, such as Cersei Lannister or Petyr Baelish, admire Ned Stark’s prudence, sense of justice, fortitude and honesty.

There are, however, several elements in *Game of Thrones* that are completely incongruous with this typical medieval setting and ethical system. One of them is the idea that what is regarded as a virtue depends on circumstances, and that in evaluating people’s worth, circumstances of their life must be taken into consideration – an idea represented by Jon Snow, who thereby repudiates the typical medieval ethical system. Such views have further implications on Jon’s ethical system, as they make him recognize that the traditional division between allies and enemies in Westeros cannot hold. This, along with the fear of the White Walkers, leads Jon to attempt to unify the traditional enemies, that is, to bring together the people north of the Wall and the people south of the Wall, who had been killing each

other for centuries. The people north of the Wall are derogatorily referred to as wildlings by their enemies although they call themselves the Free Folk.

Jon Snow introduces circumstances as an essential criterion for considering anyone's behavior. His statement that the wildlings "were born on the wrong side of the Wall; that doesn't make them monsters" (*Thrones* S5E1) makes his position about the significance of circumstances very clear. This idea – that the wildlings should not be considered enemies since the reason they fought the members of the Night's Watch was in order to survive and defend themselves – is incongruous with the medieval ideas that people should be judged "without reference to particular circumstances or roles" since "the ideals of virtue are the same for all persons". In fact, his acceptance of the Free Folk is closer to the twentieth and twenty-first century theories of otherness and deconstructing otherness than they are to medieval perceptions.

In his article "A Defense against the "Other": Constructing Sites on the Edge of Civilization and Savagery" (2017), Brian de Ruyter notes that "Sociologists use this term ['other'] to describe how societies (and individuals) represent their own self-identity as normal and correct, but that of other social groups (and persons) as abnormal and deviant. This distinction often leads to discriminations and hostility." (86) Referring to Hadrian's Wall, which inspired the Wall in *Game of Thrones*, De Ruyter points out that "Roman and medieval literature demonstrate that writers viewed the tribes to the north of Hadrian's Wall in terms of 'the other'", and that similarly, "the people of the Seven Kingdoms hold a corresponding image of the wildlings. In both cases, a wall defends against otherness." (86) Indeed, the people of the Seven Kingdoms, including even those like Benjen Stark or Eddard Stark who are represented in positive light by the Point-of-View characters, consider their own self-identity as normal and see the "wildlings" in terms of otherness, as savages who should be killed – which is very close to the traditional medieval views. Jon Snow's ethical system, on the other hand, is different, and is completely at odds with that of the other people of the Seven Kingdoms. He rejects the idea of unalterable and absolute obedience to a certain moral norm valid for all people regardless of circumstances. Even the terminology itself is an indication of this: namely, in the beginning Jon calls them "wildlings" but in time starts using the word "Free Folk", in accordance with his altered views. He observes these people north of the Wall and comes to understand that they do not represent evil, they are not 'deviant' or 'abnormal'; that they are not "the other", since in essence there is no difference between the Free Folk and the people of the Seven Kingdoms, except for the circumstances – the fact that they had been born north of the Wall and accustomed their lifestyle to that fact. This is why

Jon Snow's position is completely out of place and is incongruent with the common views of his own medieval environment.

3.2. A girl has no name: Arya Stark and the identity of fluidity

“‘Courtesy is a lady’s armor,’ advises Septa Mordane, governess to Lady Sansa Stark [...] Sansa is the perfect aristocratic girl, versed in courtesies, songs, and good behavior, unlike her tomboyish younger sister Arya.” (Finn 19) The contrast between Arya and other female characters, who are more typical representatives of the medieval idea of femininity, is stressed throughout *Game of Thrones*, as this contrast between Arya and Sansa – presented by Finn – shows. In fact, most women characters in the series (regardless of whether they are as young as Arya or older) follow the rules of courtesy and good behavior that an aristocratic woman is supposed to follow: Catelyn Stark, Margaery Tyrell, Myrcella Baratheon, Olenna Tyrell. Even Cersei, whose secret undertakings are contrary to all that is considered to be virtuous, in public displays the characteristics expected of women. And even Brienne of Tarth, who has become a knight contrary to what is expected of women, is in fact an epitome of courtesy, honor and good behavior – characteristics highly revered in the medieval ethical codes.

As Nicole M. Mares writes in “Writing the Rules of Their Own Game: Medieval Female Agency and *Game of Thrones* (2017), in medieval times “women were key assets in the struggle for power and the creation of political networks” (148). Noblewomen, Mares explains, “were used to form alliances through marital networks. Cersei, Margaery, and Dany are all married (at some point) to men they do not love but who will further the political interests of their families. They are essentially bartered by their families for access to the political sphere and a chance at the Iron Throne.” (148)

In such a context, Arya’s lack of courtesy or good behavior, as well as her refusal to get married, appears completely incongruous with the medieval expectations and ideas of appropriate woman’s behavior. Arya often exhibits characteristics that were more typically pursued by men in the given setting, which gives her identity great fluidity as she transforms from one role to another throughout the series. This does not only include fluidity in terms of gender roles, but of her identity in general, as she never firmly settles for one stable role.

Arya’s ignoring of the rules of courtesy is visible on numerous occasions. On the King’s Road she plays at swords with Mycah – something generally unacceptable in her society as he is the son of a butcher, and then gets into fight with the much higher ranking

prince Joffrey. In King's Landing, she involves her family into several incidents by behaving wildly and improperly, as Septa Mordane notes. In the second season, when she tries to trick Jaqen H'ghar into killing more than the three promised names, he accuses her of having no honor, to which she shrugs, refusing to be dissuaded from her decision.

Arya's relation to gender is much more complex than that of any other character. From the very first scene in the series where Arya appears, she is presented as a girl who outrivals the boys in things that were reserved for boys in the Seven Kingdoms – she is excellent at riding horses or shooting arrows. She shoots an arrow right in the center of the target better than her brother, during the time of the day reserved for her to train knitting with her sister. At the same time, she is not proficient at all in activities that were reserved for girls – she is constantly criticized by Septa Mordane for being bad at knitting and other household activities. Arya also denies traditional gender roles in regard to arranged marriages, which were very common among noble families in the Middle Ages. When she tells her father Ned Stark that she wants to be a knight when she grows up, he tells her that, instead, she will marry a great lord and be a great lady. “No, that's not me,” Arya replies, refusing to play the predetermined part of women in the Middle Ages and preferring what was commonly the path of men.

Nevertheless, her identity is not inclined towards the male, but is much more fluid than it seems, and this is where her contemporary views and behavior come into light. The statement “that's not me” is especially significant because it clearly does not refer only to Arya refusing to be the wife of a great lord, but to her identity in regard to any other strictly delineated roles. Arya is not content to settle to either male or female role. She clearly refuses to be a “lady”, but she never gives up on being a woman. Whenever Syrio Forell calls her a “boy”, she corrects him every time: “I am a girl”. Thereby she establishes firmly her feminine side, but she also does not mind disguising herself as a boy (which is initiated by Yoren), immediately after her father's execution, so that she may survive and pursue her goals. Thus, Arya refuses to pin down her identity in terms of gender – women may still be women if they are not ladies; they can fight with swords and still retain their feminine identity.

The fluidity of her identity in general and her empowerment especially come to light in the “temporary sacrifice of her identity in Braavos and in the House of Black and White” (Mares 148), where she is able to become anyone. Here, she not only transcends gender roles, but goes beyond by exploring the full potential of fluidity, and is able to take over any identity, regardless of gender, age, race or background. She trains to be an assassin, but in

fact she refuses that role as well. This is clear from her refusal to complete both assignments given to her by the Faceless Men: she does not kill either the thin man, or the actress.

All these numerous possibilities that she opens to herself, refusing to settle to roles preordained by the social conventions, make her a representative of more contemporary ideas of identity.

3.3. Blending into the medieval system: Reasons

As described before, Jon's and Arya's views and behavior are completely incongruous with the ethical views of the medieval setting. So, how is it that they coexist with their environment without giving the impression of being in sharp discrepancy with it? Or, in terms of narrative techniques, why don't their story lines seem unconvincing or too evidently incongruous in the fictional world that *Game of Thrones* has built? Mainly, the reason for that is that the borders between the medieval world of *Game of Thrones* and the contemporary world as represented by a few of the characters – here, specifically Jon and Arya – are not so conspicuous because of the gradual distancing between the two worlds.

The fact that Jon Snow saves the Free Folk and cooperates with them would certainly be unacceptable in the medieval setting. The reason why this act does not seem incongruous with the setting is because gradually, in the course of several years, Jon is changing and developing as a character. To present him immediately as a person who has such different views from the rest of the northerners while he spent all of his life with them would appear to be ineffective. However, since in the course of time – by listening to the advice of Tyrion Lannister, of Lord Commander Mormont, and by witnessing the life of the wildlings for himself – he gradually adopts more contemporary views, the clash between them and the medieval views is not visible. Jon is also building up his credibility and integrity when: he trains the inexperienced members of the Night's Watch at swordfight, confronts Alliser Thorne, protects Sam, opposes Craster, organizes the defense against the wildlings at Castle Black, kills Mance Rayder out of mercy (when Mance was supposed to be burnt alive), fights the White Walkers at Hardhome. Such acts, witnessed by the members of the Night's Watch, by Stannis and Davos, as well as by the Free Folk themselves contribute to many of them, though by no means all (as can be seen in the fact that he is killed by Alliser Thorne and several members of the Night's Watch), accepting his decisions, so different from those typical of a medieval environment.

Arya's behavior, also inappropriate in medieval environment, is likewise not so strange. Arya doesn't become an outcast because her behavior is actually supported by characters who are largely medieval, such as her parents and most of her siblings, but who do have some liberal views albeit to a limited extent. Thus, in Season 7 of *Game of Thrones*, Arya remembers that once when she shot an arrow in the bull's-eye (shooting target), she heard clapping, and it was her father. She comments: "I raised my head and he [Ned Stark] was smiling at me. I knew that what I was doing was forbidden, but when I saw him clapping I knew that I had not done anything wrong. It was the rules that were wrong." (*Thrones S7E6*) If her family strictly followed the medieval customs, it could be argued that Arya's behavior would have been too conspicuously incongruous with that system. However, the understanding, or more frequently the tolerance, she receives from her family makes the clash between the two worldviews less discernible.

4. Conclusion: Key findings and implications

As could be seen from previous research, *Game of Thrones* does borrow from certain historical events in the Middle Ages in Great Britain. Likewise, the characters in it mainly hold ethical views that are close to the medieval ones. It also includes certain fantasy tropes that usually place it in the genre of fantasy. However, Jon Snow's ideas that people's behavior can be understood only if circumstances are taken into consideration, and Arya's attitudes towards gender identity and personal identity in general as being fluid rather than fixed, represent a different, more contemporary, world existing within the medieval world and ethical system. Such findings have implications on at least three aspects.

One of them is that *Game of Thrones* destabilizes the fantasy genre. Although it does include traditional fantasy tropes, still, in terms of narrative strategies and ethical ideas, there are great differences between this series and most of the well-known fantasy books, films or series from the twentieth and twenty-first century, such as *Lord of the Rings*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter*, among numerous others (which, though also different from each other, still share similar plot structure and ethical ideas). Many of the fantasy narratives establish a world that offers a whole ethical architecture, in which a battle between good and evil is taking place, and in which if a character persists in doing what is right according to the set ethical norms, regardless of all troubles and challenges, he/she will prevail. In contrast, *Game of Thrones* refuses to offer a simple moral compass for differentiating right and wrong, good and evil, as the cases of Jon and Arya showed in that

they do not act in accordance with the accepted norms of good behavior, yet their acts certainly cannot be defined as evil either – instead, they are different from the dominant medieval ethical codes. *Game of Thrones* undermines all semblance of sense or poetic justice in its fictional world. Its fictional world resembles the real world in that it is absurd, things do not happen for a reason, there is no justice, characters do not succeed or fail because of their moral characteristics. All these features are in fact recognizable in twentieth and twenty-first century literature, from existentialism to the dark pessimistic visions of the present and future, and are alien to the medieval world and the fantasy genre that the tropes of the series build on the surface.

The clash of the contemporary with the medieval world as represented by Jon and Arya also has implications for the notion of the ontological dominant, which is not only present in postmodernist fiction, but is also characteristics of other types of fiction. Although *Game of Thrones* does not seem to be about a clash of different worlds, but only about the clash between the contenders for the throne, a thorough analysis of the characters reveals them as being representatives of completely different worlds that carry different philosophies and values.

The research also contributes to extending the understanding of the concept of “clash of worlds”; namely, *Game of Thrones* represents a clash of contemporary and fantasy worldviews, thus foregrounding the ontological dominant recognizable in postmodernism rather than in fantasy. However, it departs from postmodernism because it merges the borders and renders them invisible, thus showing the potential of the concept “clash of worlds” to be presented as coexistence rather than as clash. So, the strategy used in building a zone in *Game of Thrones* doesn’t strictly match the four ones mentioned by McHale, and is based on *interweaving* one world into another, thereby creating a zone that is not readily visible.

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