

In my thesis I analyze the highborn women figures in the epos Kudrun and the Nibelungenlied written in the 13th century. On the basis of their behavior, talk and the narrator's comments, I analyze in detail their personality traits which were very unusual for the medieval audience. Last but not least, I focus on the ability of the women to manipulate and influence the figures in their vicinity. I also focus on the described contemporary environment in which mainly men are featured and women are very much influenced by them. Some characteristic women features in this epos are compared to the women in the eposes Tristan and Isolde, Iwein and Erec. Last but not least I deal with the description of the feudal structures and the influence of the courtly epic poetry on both mentioned eposes.

My aim was to find out whether the women of this epos are passive trophies of men, objects of exchange, kind-hearted conciliators, sly fighters, independent empresses, or even martyrs. How do women perform in marriage policy, in courtly ceremonies, or even in extreme and dangerous situations?

I persistently compare all the women figures with the highborn men from royal or aristocratic houses who stand by them.

Ultimately, I try to answer the following questions:

- 1) Is it possible to talk about Kudrun as about a novel written or initiated by a woman? Was this novel written mainly for women? Or is it a work in which women figures are highlighted and efface the male heroes with their exemplary behavior?
- 2) Is it correct to call Kudrun only a reaction to the Nibelungenlied ("Anti-Nibelungenlied") or as a contrafact of the Nibelungenlied?
- 3) Why has the Nibelungenlied been associated with Kudrun for centuries?