

This MA thesis deals with the text analysis of the Song of Roland. The text analysis focuses in detail on the formal, content, narrative and symbolic aspects of the Song of Roland. All those features are in the context of the literary and historical frame.

The Song of Roland is one of the oldest literary pieces of French literature. It is the most famous heroic song belonging to the “Chanson de geste” and it was created in the 11th century. The main characters of the heroic poem are Charles the great, his nephew Roland, loyal friend Olivier, traitor Galeon and pagan king Marsil. The Song of Roland explores not only the family and friend relations, but the important topics are also betrayal and desire for fortune and glory. The Song deals with the matter of faith being asserted in the way which is typical for the middle ages. The story, which takes part in Spain, where the French have been besieging the pagan fort of Zaragoza for seven years, is very interesting from the historical aspects, but we were more interested in the narrative – textual aspects, in which we tried to explore the relationships between the narrators. We focused on individual speeches, who speaks to whom and in which way. We asked ourselves three questions, which we have gradually answered. For the need of an analysis of individual speech acts and communicational frame we created our own language pattern, which we used for the further analysis of the Song of Roland.

The first question was why is the text of the Song of Roland divided in to three parts. Does it have meaning in terms of plot or language or is it just a coincidental division?

Furthermore, we were interested in the support points of the narrative structure.

In our narrative research we focused on the function of the characters and pseudocharacters. We were concerned about whether there are any characters and pseudocharacters in the Song and if it is so, in what form we might see them. The chapter dealing with characters and pseudocharacters lead us to the idea of medieval thinking, which we tried to explore through the understanding of the importance of knighthood and through medieval symbolism. The question of comparison of the Christian faith (which is by the way the main motif of the whole Song) to the paganism or Islam is mentioned at the end of the thesis. In the very end of the thesis we added the anthropological translation, wherein we tried to find out whether the collocations chosen by us have deeper meaning and are stated in this way on purpose or they are just a matter of coincidence without any deeper meaning.