

# Rules for the Endgame: The World of the Nibelungenlied (Parallax: Re-visions of Culture and Society)

Jan-Dirk Müller

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The source of Richard Wagner's Ring Cycle, the Nibelungenlied occupies a unique place in medieval literary history. Commonly seen as the paradigmatic example of national epic, its interpretation has long been colored by the later evolution of German cultural tradition. In Rules for the Endgame Jan-Dirk Müller argues that the literary reception of the *Nibelungenlied* was problematic long before the modern era.

Here Müller uncovers the complex and heterogeneous cultural context from which the poem emerged. He challenges scholarly readers to move beyond modern methods of criticism and analysis? specifically, in their expectations of coherence, agreement, and integrity?and to look for other possibilities and methods of interpretation. He recommends a reading that elucidates meaningful linkages, isotopes, and structural recurrences on the epic's different levels and thematic subjects.

This groundbreaking interpretation offers a new approach to the reading of medieval literature and revolutionizes the study of the Nibelungenlied itself?providing a richer understanding of the work's significance both in its era and for our own.



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