

# Literary analysis

Literature



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Literary Analysis Literary Analysis The Odyssey is a poetic piece written around the 8th BC and tells a story of a Greek soldier who fought in the ten-year Trojan War. The story is told in a poetic manner with more around 12,110 lines. The Song of Roland appears to be first of the great French heroic poems. The patriotic ardor of the Song of Roland gives it a place as one of the earliest national poems of the contemporary world. Although, the two poems have different timelines and written by different writers, the feudal social structure and heroism are major two facets that they show similarities.

Odyssey, who is the main protagonist is captured and is held captive by Calypso; the daughter of Tethys seven years before he finally plans his escape by veiling himself and swimming across the sea naked. Calypso wanted to make him her immortal husband on the Ogygia, which was her private estate (5. 223-232). During that time, when Odyssey was in captivity, his kinsmen decide that he might have died during the war and several suitors began seducing his wife with the intention of marrying her. As a soldier in the Greek army, Odyssey was relatively wealthy, and many of the suitors to his wife had lived on his vast estate while consuming his wealth. Before his escape from captivity, Athena, who is Odyssey's protector and the goddess discussed his fate with Zeus. Zeus was the king of the gods when his enemy god, Poseidon is absent from the Mount Olympus.

The story of the Odyssey has some degree of relatedness to the Song of Roland, in terms of their literary composition. In the Song of Roland, the key protagonist is Roland, who is a French war hero. Roland leads the battle during the invasion of Spain during a war between the Christians and Muslims in the race to win over the Spaniards. Unlike Odyssey, the Muslims  
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ambush Roland but he refuses to call for reinforcement from the Frankish army. His soldiers continue the fight; however, their number is smaller in comparison to the opponents. On sensing defeat, he blows the olifant to call for revenge from the Charlemagne's army. When the army arrives, they find Roland dead; apparently, he blew the olifant until his chest burst.

Interestingly, the story says that angels took his soul into paradise. Since Roland was fighting a Christian war, he is considered a martyr. On returning from the battle, Franks discover that Ganelon, Roland's uncle had come up with the plan to have him lead the charge if found guilty of treason. A trial conducted by divine intervention; Thierry kills Pinabel fought for Ganelon. Galone responds bitterly when Ronald nominates him for a post: " I shall stir up such a feud with you" (20. 289-291). Ganelon then faces the cruelest form of death, and thirty of his relatives are hanged according to the norms. The two poems are richly constructed around key important aspects in the society. One that stands out from both of them is the role of the divine deity. The gods wield much power in deciding the fate of the mortal men. In the Odyssey, his protector secures his release from captivity hence sets him up for a happy reunion with his wife. In the song of Roland, he is considered a martyr for having died fighting for the church of Christians. His soul is uplifted directly to heaven. The gods also intervene during the trial of his traitor and the people are convinced beyond any doubts that he had ill motives against Roland. It demonstrates how cruel betrayal had dire consequences in these ancient days. Loyalty, on the other hand, makes an individual get a reward, and Roland gets promotion to martyrdom as a reward for him.

Thousands of years separate the two stories apart and the circumstances,  
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which gave rise to them, are quite different. However, the treatment of mortality is strikingly similar. There seem to have been a common belief in the life after death. By capturing Odysseus, Calypso hoped to transform him into a god and by that guaranteeing the immortality. Promotion of Roland to martyrdom also depicts a form of belief in the life after death

#### References

Homer & Knox, B. (1997). *The Odyssey*. London: Viking.

Sayers, D. (1977). *The Song of Roland*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.