

Song of roland summary essay



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Roland is not depicted as a hero in every way.

In what particular way does his heroism cause him to fail himself and others, and what does that tell us about the culture out of which the poem emerges?

The Song of Roland is a heroic epic that depicts the tragic defeat of Roland, the courageous leader of Charlemagne's army. Within the epic Roland is not depicted as a hero in every way. I believe that Roland's pride eventually becomes the root cause of his failure to himself and to others. It is this pride that Roland carries that sheds light upon the culture out of which the poem emerges.

In this culture during the late 700's, pride in one's religion is expected and upheld to great extents such as sacrifice. The Song of Roland was written at the beginning of the Crusades and is designed to stir the Christians and to fire them up. The intent of the poem is not to celebrate certain men like the likes of Oliver, but to glorify men of the likes of Roland. Roland is the poem's hero and the poem's most glamorous warrior. With that being said, he still lacks some of the majesty of Charlemagne, the Christian king, and the wisdom and knowledge of his friend, Oliver.

The entire epic is about Roland, the heroic crusader. The nature of Roland as a hero is somewhat different than other heroes because of his knack of often being at odds with other leaders within Charlemagne's army. This is proof of Roland's undying pride and strong will. It is Roland's sense of pride as a hero that causes him to fail himself and others, as well. Roland has many virtues and faults and is the kind of man needed for the Crusades, and he knows

this. Roland's pride allows him to be willing to die and willing to sacrifice the lives of others for land and glory.

This pride that Roland conveys makes him a fearless leader and a completely loyal servant to his king and to the Catholic Church. In the beginning of the poem, Roland, without hesitation, nominates his stepfather, Ganelon, to carry a message from Charlemagne to King Marsilion. Seemingly irritated and peeved, Count Ganelon refuses to go to Marsilion and threatens Roland that if he does go to King Marsilion and lives to make it back home to make Roland pay for his nomination. I believe that Roland knew that his stepfather would not go to King Marsilion and used that to his advantage to prove himself to Charlemagne.

Proving his pride for himself. Additional proof of Roland's pride that causes him to fail himself and the other Crusaders is his hard-headedness to call for help when being attacked by Saracens. In the Song of Roland, Roland's biggest enemy is his stepfather Ganelon. Out of spite, Ganelon organizes forces led by the Saracens to detour Roland and separate him from the Christian forces.

Being the proud person he is, Roland refuses to sound the battle horn to call for help. His pride leads to a massacre of Charlemagne's army. Throughout The Song of Roland pride seems to be a major theme. Roland is not the only one with extreme pride for what he believes in. Without pride for religion, I believe, that there would not be a crusade, let alone the story of Roland.

With this poem taking place in the latter part of the 700's, religion and pride in one's religion was taken very seriously.

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