
Abstract

“The Conquest of Orange” is a twelfth century chansons de geste written during the Capetian reign in the south of France. The poem reflected the society in which it was written and provides insight into the ideas of love and romance during the Middle Ages. The poem was often written about from the standpoint of the poem as a piece of literature. The position of this paper is to examine “The Conquest of Orange” on the basis that the poem reflects societal beliefs of marriage, religion, and romance.

Ideas of chivalry evolved through the lens of history and have been thought of as the purest and most righteous way to live one’s life. These notions were most evident when one considered the Middle Ages. Along with the ideals of chivalry it was important to discuss the notions of romance and romantic involvement between people in the middle ages. Romance and romantic ideals were a part of medieval French society. “The Conquest of Orange” was an epic poem written in twelfth century France was a tale of love and romance. “The Conquest of Orange” displayed the characteristics of love and romance, and showed how these concepts influenced the ideals of chivalry, love, and marriage. The poem exemplifies these romantic ideals, and therefore was less driven by the other themes expressed in the poem, of religion, and violence. The romance stems from the actions of the hero, William of Orange, towards the Saracen queen, Orable. The romantic involvement of these two major characters of “The Conquest of Orange” was an example of romance that had the ability to cross ordinary racial and cultural lines which helped “The Conquest of Orange” to distinguish itself from other written works of the time. The poem displayed this with a cross cultural marriage between William and Orable. The relationship between Orable and William was a depiction of love and romance in twelfth century France. It was these influences which are conveyed in the chansons de geste, which helped to illustrate French medieval societal views of love and romance. Through the interaction of the poems main characters, the author, who remained anonymous, was able to establish and communicate the importance and the power of romantic attachment and of chivalrous ideals. The communication was important to the audience as it would convey the ideals which the non-noble population should adopt. It was the love between William and Orable which drove the actions taken by William in “The Conquest of Orange,” and served as the focal point of the poem.

The historiography of this particular chanson de geste had it being considered from a literary standpoint. A great portion of the resources that pertain to the epic French poems are examinations of the character and of
the literary aspects of the stories. Instead, this paper examines the poem for the aspects which it talks about instead of the written and literary aspects of the poem. Poems and literary works were often examined for their vernacular and their ability to produce pictures into the past about language and development. This examination of "The Conquest of Orange" depicts how literary works are examined based on how their vernacular and how their words were conveyed and the conventions the authors used. It is important to note that although the examination of "The Conquest of Orange" is often viewed from a literary analysis point of view, there are aspects that allow for the interpretation of the telling of the story as a romance. There are elements of the story that make the story about violence and the idea of religious division. However, the examination of this *chansons de geste* the underlying motive that drives the plot of the story is the romance between William and Orable. Grace Frank describes how these literary works and their themes are reflected in more contemporary literary works of fiction. This idea of the literary aspects and writing style of "The Conquest of Orange" sheds light on how important this written work was to the literature. Because of the need for inspiration, early stories, poems, and other literature, are sought after. This in turn leads to their examination based on literary models.

William Comfort examined this and other *chansons de geste* based on the character traits of the heroes of the epic poems. He describes the stories as poems that "relate the life-story of an individual hero whose personal doings invest the narrative with interest." This describes how the chansons were merely tools of interest. The stories followed one man on an adventure, and through the ups and downs of personal experience, the stories invoked and gained interest. Because "The Conquest of Orange" fits this description, the poem falls under a category of literature that has previously been developed and was already in practice. With this lens to look through, it is possible to view "The Conquest of Orange" merely as a tale or a story designed as a way of capturing the interests of the intended audience. However, there are attributes of this *chanson* which make the telling and retelling of it a little more than just a story of interest. The religious and romantic attachment between William and Orable suggest that there is more to the story than the apparent vernacular and the words on the surface. The story tells of a love that stretched beyond the preconceived notions of religion. It broke through the geographical barriers, and the love between William and Orable showed a greater importance to the story than the words used or how they were conveyed.

"The Conquest of Orange" was a story of great intrigue and historical insight. Tales like the *chansons de geste* are stories which follow one knight

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2 Frank. "Historical Elements in the Chansons de Geste," 211

on his search to prove himself. These poems help to tell a story and to build the concept of the ideal knight. These ideas and notions of romance and chivalry were presented to the public, through jongleurs. These performers were charged with performing and retelling the stories. Therefore it was up to these performers to present intriguing and engaging stories. Because of this tendency to rely on oral transmission of stories, it was hard to tell how “The Conquest of Orange” was received. However, the “The Conquest of Orange” helps researchers trace some of the development of romance and romantic literature. This epic French poem helped to shape the idea and the involvement of romance in medieval society.

French Society in the twelfth century presented a unique circumstance for the ordinary people and royalty alike. This was apparent and needs to be considered when one looks at and tries to interpret the “Conquest of Orange”. The Capetian dynasty had assumed the throne in 987. The Capetians of the 12th century represented stable rule and established continuity to the hierarchical structure of French society. The Capetian dynasty established “Kin Right,” a concept which instituted hereditary kingship in France and brought about a new emphasis on bloodlines. Moreover, the Capetians increased the dominions of the kingdom of France.

While the concern with territorial expansion may have served as motivation for the actions of Capetian kings during the period of the Reconquista, in the epic poem, “The Conquest of Orange” the protagonist was motivated by love and romance. In the epic poem, William conquers Orange, a city of particular magnificence bringing wealth and acclaim to his ruler. But, in the story, he does not do so as an act of allegiance to his king, or for personal glory, but rather for the love of Orable, a Muslim queen of renowned beauty, who William had never even met. This concept of acting through love was in direct conflict with the ideals of the crusades, and provided the poem with a stronger link to love and romantic ideals. In 1147, the French set out on a crusade to retake the Holy Land from the heathens. The crusade was a chance for the French people to regain some glory and for the failures of Louis VII to be redeemed. In contrast to the idea of redemption for the monarch, “The Conquest of Orange” was more about the ideals of romance and love. William’s motives are not shown to be for his

9 Lewis, The Royal Succession, 29
10 Hallam and Everard, Capetian France, 159.
king, although there is an aspect of loyalty because William conquers Orange for his monarch, but rather William was motivated by the love of Orable.

The feudal structure of Capetian France was shown in the class divisions which it professed. The role of the King was to rule, knights and nobility were to engage in warfare, and peasants were to serve in agriculture. This was conveyed in "The Conquest of Orange" as the poem featured mainly the noble class, and displayed how the passion and violence of the conquest could only have been achieved by one in that particular station of life. By featuring nobility messages within the poem itself would have greater resonance with both ordinary people and the higher social classes. This related to the poem by showing that even though the love between William and Orable crossed social lines, it did not cross the lines of class.

The rule and power of Capetian France lied with the territorial princes. One such territorial prince was Louis VI, who ruled from 1108-1137. Louis was worth examining because of how he ruled and how he may have influenced the telling of "The Conquest of Orange". Territorial princes, such as Louis VI, were striving to increase his royal power, widen his royal sphere of influence, protect the church, and establish and defend his ascendancy. Through this idea of increasing the territory over which Louis ruled, one can see that there was cause for William to invade Orange. The monarchy established a high priority on the acquiring of lands. This would give cause for French Society to listen and appreciate the chansons de geste. In addition, Louis was a great defender of the church. This idea lends itself well to the notion of the religious conflict of the epic poem. As well, Louis VII used the church to further his own social and political influence during the second crusade in 1147. However, these ideas served as ways for the poem to be accepted in the social sphere of twelfth century France culture. The underlying reasons for William and his companions to travel to Orange, was William’s lust and love for a woman he had merely heard tales about, Orable the Saracen Queen who resided there. These ideas helped to influence “The Conquest of Orange.” By France wanting to extend their sphere of influence, the poem could be viewed through the lens of expansionism. However, because the poem was driven by the individual experience of love between William and Orable, the poem was more about the love and romance rather than the expansion of French territory.

The romance of medieval France was one of great intrigue and evolution. Romantic and chivalric loves were ways in which one could convey feeling for another person. Much of what drives the chansons de geste "The Conquest of Orange" was this want and need for love and romantic attachment. William was shown to be so in love with Orable that he risked everything to be with her. William even infiltrated a Saracen city, in disguise, in order to merely see her. This kind of love could be described as irrefutable passion. The love between these characters has been shown and depicted as

11 Hallam and Everard, Capetian France, 17.
12 Hallam and Everard, Capetian France, 149.
13 Hallam and Everard, Capetian France, 155.

5 extremely passionate, and irresistible. This describes how a man could have been overpowered by the love he felt for a woman. The actions of William in “The Conquest of Orange” demonstrate how he was overcome with this powerful, animal lust for Orable. An example of this was demonstrated in the passage:

“You have set,” William says, “great worth upon her, and by the faith that I owe my love, I shall eat no more bread made from flour, no salted meat, I shall drink no more wine, Until I have seen how Orange is set. And I must see that tower made of marble, and Lady Orable, the gracious queen. Love of her has me so in its power, that I could not describe or conceive it. If I can't have her soon, I shall lose my life.”

This passage demonstrated how the love of Orable had taken control of William. William had become so infatuated with the mere thought of Orable that he would risk his life, reputation, and wealth to see her and make her love him. This displayed how important love and romance was to the people and the culture of the Middle Ages. The love described had the ability to cross traditional boundaries. The ability to love someone was not centralized around a person’s religious views or leanings. Love meant something more. Love was another emotion to be considered independently from other aspects of life. This was personified in “The Conquest of Orange” when William, a devout Christian, a strong French nobleman, and a courageous figure fell in love with Orable; a Saracen Queen.

William’s love for Orable could have been considered as an act of lust rather than love. Evidence that supported this notion would be that William was relying on the tales and descriptions of other men about Orable. At first, William was reluctant to admit that there was any attraction to Orable at all; rather it was the city of Orange itself and the wealth and prosperity associated with the city that attracted him. One such city in southern France in the 12th century would have been the city of Toulouse. The city of Toulouse was rich in culture and architecture which gave it a flourishing culture. This city represented the ideal city which France would covet. Evidence of this magnificent city was related in the story through Gilbert regaling William with tales of Orange:

Gilbert answers: “It is even better. If you could see the principal palace, how high it is and enclosed all around, as you look at it from any view; if you were there the first day of summer, you would hear the birds as they sing there then...”

15 The Conquest of Orange, v. 280-290
16 Hallam and Everard, 72.
17 The Conquest of Orange, v. 240-245
This passage showed how it was the city itself and not Orable that sparked William’s interest in the city of Orange. However, with the conquest being considered it was important to note that William did not march for Orange until he was overcome with love and romantic feelings for Orable. When William heard of the beauty of Orable, he was overcome and insisted that he go forth and claim her as his own. This action displayed how the underlying motive for the infiltration of Orange was love and not wealth or glory. It is possible however, to interpret this action as a lustful impulse. This lustful feeling in the Middle Ages was attributed to the Biblical story of Adam and Eve. When they were in paradise, Adam and Eve were able to control their sexual habits, but once they had defied God, they became aware of the rebellion within them. Adam and Eve succumbed to their desire, and man was destined to do the same. Since the feeling of lust was attributed to the ecclesiastical story of man, it was not difficult to view the relationship of William and Orable as a relationship of lust. William and Orable however challenged this notion at the end of the chansons de geste. At the end of the poem the two lovers get married and rule over Orange for thirty years.

As the epic chansons de geste evolved, love became a more centralized theme. The poems became more about love, adventure and chivalry, and less about the violence. The concept of love was central to the story of “The Conquest of Orange”. The love in these tales speaks of how love and views of love had changed. Women were going to be viewed as equals rather than subordinate to their male counter parts. This was demonstrated in “The Conquest of Orange” when it was the actions of Orable which saved the French knights. This was addressed by Aragon King of the Saracens when he states that it was because of Orable that the trouble with the French knights in the marble tower ever took place. By aiding and arming the French knights, Orable established herself as an equal to William. This equality between hero and heroin in the story helps to depict the acceptance of the love which Orable and William felt. William was described as a powerful and courageous man. It stood to reason that any woman he should fall desperately in love with should share some of those same qualities. Through her actions of arming the French and showing her devotion to William, Orable displayed her care and love for William. In addition to these examples, medieval love was described as the pursuit of something which was unattainable. William was in love with Orable, but Orable was married to Tiebaut, King of Africa. The unattainable nature of Orable brought the love that William felt for Orable to a new level of passion and deeper feelings of love. Not only was William desperately in love with Orable. The unattainability of love between William and Orable, helped to drive the romance of the story. The violence, religious differences, and

20 Comfort, “The Character Types on the Old French Chansons de Geste,”327
21 “The Conquest of Orange,” v. 1233-1234
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conquest were all working against William and Orable, but their love was able to persevere and displayed commitment and a lasting impression. With the conversion of Orable to Christianity, the epic poem reinforces the crusade mentality. The second crusade in the twelfth century was marked with violence and religious upheaval. One of the main driving forces of the crusades was the notion of destroying a population or converting them. The choice between death and conversion was seen in “The Conquest of Orange,” through the actions of Orable being completely complacent with converting to Christianity and renouncing her original faith. These crusade ideals may have influenced the ease of the conversion of Orable. As well as one of the ideas surrounding marriage during the twelfth century was the need of religious conversion. This may also describe how and why the conversion of Orable was so swift and almost a natural move for her to make.

The chansons de geste depicted chivalry and love and polar opposition based around religious conflict and associated differences. Through the use of these characteristics the chansons de geste were able to establish ideas and ideals associated with the notion of national identity. Because the chansons often featured a counter part or antagonist that formed in opposition to the French, it was easier for the French population to relate strongly with the heroes of the story. Having a distinguishable difference between religious ideologies in the chansons de geste, a thought of nationhood was being developed. However, it was seen that nationhood was more about the ideas of religion. The international nature of Christianity helped to stimulate the notion of one nation. This concept which pertained to the unification and acceptance of Christianity as the only true form of religion was depicted with the love that William and Orable felt. Orable was described as perfect except that she was a Saracen. She conceded to change her religion and marry William, thus conforming to the ideas of nationhood and of nationality associated with religion. Through this Orable not only demonstrated her love for William, but she also demonstrated to the French population that she was willing to become a Christian. This may have helped the story to be more widely accepted, as it was now a Saracen converting to be part of Christianity and therefore a part of French Society.

Religion and religious ideology had an important role pertaining to the ways in which William and Orable were able interact and the way that the poem was constructed. Religion was central to life in the Middle Ages, and twelfth century France was no exception. There was an underlying principle of medieval warfare which drove this religious conflict. This arose from the justification that Christian warfare was in service of God and would

24 Tyerman, God's War: A New History of the Crusades, 228.
fulfill His purpose. This notion that one religion was acting for God was common place in the middle ages. The crusades were an example of this. This pertains to William, because his invasion of Orange could have been considered to be the will of God. This meant that William could be considered to be a religious hero and icon. In addition, since Orable helped William, it displayed how their love was in service to God. Another interpretation may have existed that William was acting this way not only because he was infatuated with Orable, but also because he was serving some internal need to accumulate indulgences. Through these indulgences, people were able to achieve relief from purgatory, but also have a greater sense of personal and meaningful devotion to Christ. However this concept was one way of interpreting the themes and actions in “The Conquest of Orange.” The poem itself centres on the incurable and irresistible love which William holds for Orable. Religion to a point seemed to be at odds with the romance in the poem. The historian, Howard Felperin, described how love could be instinctual. The passion and love felt between William and Orable could be categorized by this idea of instinctual love. “The feelings which William felt for Orable were almost animalistic.” William gave in to his desire and his passion and pursued a woman who was in a well-established Saracen town. This described how his religious leanings were subject to change when his want for a woman’s love increased such that his rational mind no longer kept him in control.

The main idea which marriage was essential to accomplish was the notion of primogeniture. This idea stems from the medieval concept that the oldest male child stands to inherit the estate of his father. With this in mind it was the idea that the focus of household was to marry off the eldest son in order to ensure the perpetuation and prosperity of the estate. The necessity to provide a male heir was the main reason for marriage in twelfth century France. This need for a son conceived in wedlock, might have served as the reason for William and Orable to marry. William’s motive in marriage might have been to fulfill his need for Orable, but the concept of inheritance would be important when considering the motives behind the move to marriage of a French noble to a Saracen queen. Marriage in the Middle Ages was often considered through this concept because the need to produce an heir would be considered over ideas of love.

Marriage in the Middle Ages and in twelfth century France should be considered when discussing the love between William and Orable in “The Conquest of Orange”. The Church and medieval culture were bound together to form society and societal norms. Ordinary people looked to the church for guidance and worship. As well, people looked to the church as a way to

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29 Howard Felperin, “Romance and Romanticism,” Critical Inquiry 6, no. 4 (Summer 1980), 693.

30 Duby and Foster, Medieval Marriage, 11.
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establish and follow accepted moral behaviours. This kind of guiding light was evident in “The Conquest of Orange.” The importance of religion and the church was depicted in the lines which addressed how Orable was to convert to Christianity and marry William:

Count William is most noble and worthy. When he has conquered a city by force, he has a great vessel prepared and clear water is poured into it. Then comes the bishop into the city, Nimes; they have Orable take off her robes, and baptize her to the honour of God.

This process by which Orable had to be cleansed and become Christian in order for her to be fit to wed William, speaks to the high importance and high value twelfth century France placed on religious ideology. This spoke to the argument that people in the Middle Ages were self-obsessed and believed that their religion was far superior to that of the Muslim world. This notion of superiority was mimicked in the marriage of William and Orable. Orable had been described as perfect except for she was immersed in an opposing religious view. The superiority and dominance of the French religious ideology was apparent based on the fact that William’s religious standings were never brought into question. By omitting any discussion about William’s religious leanings, the author effectively established not only a case of good versus evil, but managed to interject French religious views as the only true religion. By creating this contrast, the author was effectively demonstrating the strength of the love which Orable was displaying for William. Conversion was an important aspect of the second crusade of 1147. The crusades were a constant theme in France which may have helped to relate the religious aspects of “The Conquest of Orange.”

When the action of marriage was considered in the poem, there was not a lot of detail provided. However it was important to examine the act of marriage as it pertained to twelfth century France. Marriage was a bond between two people. It was not always about love. There were times that marriage was more about alliances and men in power utilizing their authority to accomplish their own means. This described how many of the marriages that were considered in twelfth century France was more about advantages than the love between a man and a woman. There was, however, a truly different kind of marriage taking place in “The Conquest of Orange”. In the poem the marriage of William and Orable was based on the passion and love the two felt towards each other. The marriage crossed lines of country of origin and religion. The marriage did not however cross the ideological lines of chivalry. Orable proved she was chivalrous and a heroin,

31 F. J. Tschan, “Church and Culture in the Middle Ages,” The Catholic Historical Review 17, no. 2 (July, 1931), 184-185.
32 “Conquest of Orange,” v. 1861-1867
or equal to William. She did this through helping the men get armed to fight the Saracens, and helping William deliver a message to Bertrand about the secret tunnels beneath the city. This concept was demonstrated when Lady Orable released the French knights from prison and telling Gilbert of the secret tunnels beneath Orange:

   Now the lady has received the counts' oaths, and set them free from their prison; she leads and guides them into Gloriete..."My lords, barons listen to me now. I have taken you out of your prison, I have led you into my palace, but I do not know how you will escape. What I have in mind, I had best tell you: beneath us here, there is a secret cave which no man yet born of woman knows, except my ancestor who had it dug; from here to the Rhone a tunnel was carved. If you manage to send a messenger to Count Bertrand and the other barons, they might come to speak to you underground, and the infidel pagans would not know they had entered until they had entered the tiled palace and begun to strike with their broad swords."

This quote demonstrated Orable's commitment to William, as well as the depth of the affection which she felt for the French nobleman. Orable brought to light how much she was willing to sacrifice to be with William. Orable renounced her faith, gave the French troops the way into Orange and married the French invader. Through these actions, William and Orable had effectively challenged the societal norms. By so doing the love aspect of their relationship became even more apparent. The idea and concept of a forbidden love would have sparked greater interest in the story. By having Orable be a strong woman who was capable of making her own decisions and having a personality outside of her relationship with William, it demonstrated how love could be with people of nobility. It may have served as a way to inspire and stir emotion within the audience, as a way to tell a magnificent story about two lovers which challenged society, who became icons of the chivalrous code, who protected the faith, and who represented what was held in high regard in twelfth century France. By assigning Orable the equalizing characteristics the author made a strong female character that would have been viewed as worthy to marry a great French hero in William.

   The act and sanctity of marriage deserved to be at the forefront of discussion. It was these traditions and practices which would have framed how twelfth century France viewed love and romance. Marriage was often approached as a unification of two houses in order to preserve the structure or to ensure the survival of at least one of the houses. This described how marriages in twelfth century France were based around survival and not central to ideas of romance and love. This was different in "The Conquest of Orange" because William and Orable were not interested in preserving one

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household. Their attachment was based on an instinctual need for each other. Neither party in this case required the station or social standing of the other to remain solvent. This too would have prompted listeners to view their attachment as love.

Marital embrace and sexual encounters were of particular discussion in the Middle Ages. Sex was often frowned upon and was often merely sought after for procreation. This preconceived notion stemmed from the need for an heir. It was the duty of a marriage to produce an heir and continue the family name. Although the sexual relations associated with marriage did include extra marital sex as long as no inheritance was involved, sexual activity outside the marriage was tolerated. This was, however, just for the man to pursue. It was extremely important for a woman to receive only one seed. An example that demonstrated this was Eleanor of Aquitaine and Louis VII. The marriage between Eleanor and Louis was deteriorating in the mid-twelfth century. Eleanor of Aquitaine was being accused of improper and lewd behaviour. By 1151 Louis was fed with Eleanor and the council of Beaugency declared the marriage null on the grounds of consanguinity. This shows how the concepts of marriage were changing and how the ideals were present in the royal sphere. Adultery was also viewed as a highly negative aspect, regarding aspects associated with the royalty. The religious aspects of marriage made it so if a monarch committed adultery; it was associated with disgrace of both the monarch and the country. An example of this was in 1095. King Phillip of France married the wife of another man, Fulk count of Anjou. Fulk wrote about how King Phillip had sullied the marriage and therefore had sullied the reputation of France. The example demonstrates the discrepancy amongst the views of adultery and that the notions put forth with the marriage of William to another man's wife may have been viewed.

The duality of sexual relationship standards that twelfth century France endured spoke of how important heirs were to families and to French society. These notions presented a problem for William and Orable. Orable was already married to the King of Africa, Tieubaut. However, the ability of the French agenda to undermine the Saracen way of life was shown here. If Orable was already married to a Catholic Frenchmen, then these principles set out by the moral code of conduct, would have applied to her. Since Orable was married to a Saracen king, and the fact that she converted to Christianity, demonstrated how she was able to overcome the restraints placed on her by French society. This made the marriage of William and Orable more accepted in twelfth century France. It was interesting to note that the supply of men was significantly lower than that of women. This meant that men essentially had their pick of women. Also it made it so men were able to exact some form of upward mobility. They could marry up the

37 Bullough, “Sex Education in Medieval Christianity,” 187.
38 Duby and Foster, Medieval Marriage 7.
39 Hallam and Everard, Capetian France, 160.
40 Duby and Foster, Medieval Marriage, 30.
41 Duby and Foster, Medieval Marriage, 11.
social ladder. The fact that women outnumbered men helped to foster the actions of knights and therefore fuel the notions of chivalry and adventure present in medieval France. These in turn made what was called “courteously love” establish itself as a part of French society.

The sexuality of these knights was often reconciled by many women, both women of stature and women of no standing would be points of sexual interaction for these knights. In “The Conquest of Orange”, this was apparent when William said:

“Listen to me, worthy and valiant knights, we came from France not very long ago; if only we now had a thousand girls, maidens from France, with graceful charming forms, so that our barons might be entertained, and I too might delight in making love...”

This displayed how French bachelors viewed women. Based on the ideas of chivalry, marriage and society, this passage may have been for entertainment of the male listeners. It also shed light on how the view of William changed and evolved in the story. William displayed how he viewed women in the above passage. However, this changed when he heard of Orable. His thoughts became more about love and the pursuit of one woman. This demonstrated how views of women had the potential to change. Because of this, thoughts of marriage and of romance might also have changed and been influenced. William and Orable demonstrated a couple based on notions of equality and religious stability. Orable renounced her faith and embraced Christendom. William became a guiding influence in the ideals of chivalry and romance.

“The Conquest of Orange,” had been viewed as a literary work and little attention was ever paid to the societal implication of this epic poem. Often times people who study the Middle Ages focus on the violence and warfare which helped to promote research. However, this chansons de geste displayed more attributes associated with marriage and romantic love than the more popular violent aspects of the poem. The ideas of romance and love were merely realms for people to examine concepts that did not fit within the normal framework of medieval society. This displays the importance of examining how “The Conquest of Orange” challenges the original thoughts about twelfth century France. Love and conversion were essential to the progression of the poem, and proved to be the driving force of the violent actions of the story. Ideas of love and devotion were present through the actions of William through his adventure to Orange and the city’s eventual conquest. Ideas of love and religion were conveyed through the willingness to and the actual conversion of Orable to Christianity.

42 Duby and Foster, Medieval Marriage, 13.
44 Christopher Bellitto, "Chivalry: a Door to Teaching the Middle Ages," The History Teacher 28, no. 4, (August 1995), 482.
45 J. Tatlock, “The Middle Ages—Romantic or Rationalistic?” Speculum 8, no. 3 (July 1933), 304.

Poem also reflected the societal norms surrounding the ideas of marriage and acceptability of love and romance when coupled with religion and chivalric ideals. "The Conquest of Orange" was an epic poem which told the story of love and romance within the confines of Capetian France in the twelfth century.
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