Edward A. Heinemann

On the Metric Artistry of the Chanson de Geste

I should like to sketch in these pages the broad outlines of a lengthy inquiry into the art of repetition in the chanson de gste.\(^1\)

The knowledge that the genre uses repetitive language antedates Jean Rychner's seminal *Essai sur l'art épique des jongleurs*, but that study gave considerable impetus to the search for repeated hemistichs and verses in various chansons de geste.\(^2\) Repeated language, however, includes a rather problematic component, namely the small measure of variation which the critic is prepared to admit within repeated word groups. Marguerite Rossi arrives at a rather melancholy observation, that somehow the repeated phrases of the genre show just too many variations to allow drawing up a satisfactory repertory of "formulas" (pp. 173-174), a point to which I shall return below under the heading of external echo. It is precisely this measure of variation which led me to assume ("Composition stylisée," p. 9), following the thinking of Parry and Lord about the "formulaic system",\(^3\) that all of the verses in a chanson de gste are "formulaic" (in the sense of belonging to a highly stylized set of patterns) and that the "formula" may be discerned in grammatical patterns independently of any particular

\(^1\) Tentatively entitled *La Chanson de gste. Essai sur l'art métrique des scribes* both in recognition of the fundamental debt which the study owes to Jean Rychner and as an expression of the uncertainty of the place of the oral tradition. I should like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for the research grant in support of this project and which has made possible the writing of the present article.

Let me specify here that I shall restrict myself largely to decasyllabic texts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

\(^2\) Such as the lists in Jodogne (pp. 54-56), Hitze, McMillan, Nichols, Duggan.

wording those patterns may take on. While I have for many years tried to avoid using the word "formula" because of the many implications which burden it, among them the problem of variation, I have during the same time come to recognize more and more subtle kinds of repetition in the texts. Two kinds of repetition, which I would call disjunctive echo and external echo, are fairly well documented. External echo is usually known by the labels "formula" and "motif. It is the repetition of stock, traditional phrasing in a variety of chansons. Scholars usually seek "formulas" by looking within a single text for recurrent hemistichs and verses; these echoes within the text are what I call disjunctive echoes. There is a clear difference between a repetition within a text which calls attention to a specific similarity or set of similarities in that text and a phrase which refers outward, not to a specific passage, but to something generally prevalent in the genre. A third, sometimes heavily marked but sometimes quite subtle, kind of repetition may be called consecutive echo, a series of consecutive verses which emphasize repetition, as in an enumeration of heroes' names. Finally, there is a fourth kind of repetition, so obvious that it risks passing unnoticed: verse and laisse are fundamental, underlying metric repetitions.

A challenging, if somewhat cryptic, observation by Paul Zumthor rescues this last discovery from the overpowering urge to yawn which it should otherwise provoke in any sensible reader. Zumthor argues, on the basis of a remarkable degree of correspondence between the line of verse and the clause in a sampling of early Gallo-Romance texts, that these texts actually use a "new" form, the "verse", in which meaning and rhythm are tightly bound.

On n'a pas ici le banal découpage d'une matière (discours) selon un patron rythmique. Mais, entre discours et rythme se produit un

4 Disjunctive echo differs from Miletich's "repetitive groups" (five or more immediately successive hemistichs) only in that the latter do not allow for what might be called internal variation, i.e. one or more hemistichs which do not repeat. See both Miletich and Carton. Miletich makes this restriction for the sake of rigor in measuring the relative share of repetition in a text; the restriction is of little importance for esthetic study.
échange vital, engendrant une forme nouvelle, à la fois rythme et
discours: levers. ("Vers", p. 770)

There is a profound sense in which meter informs the chanson de
geste everywhere. Rhythm engenders meaning, and meaning does
not even exist without rhythmic form, both at the level of verse and
sentence structure and at the level of laisse and organization of the
story.⁵

The metric art of the chanson de geste measures both
language and story. Critics have, for example, paid attention to the
length of the laisse and the length of incidents as measured by the
laisse. Measure in the genre may, however, be seen to imply three
further components in addition to length, namely internal cohesion,
position, and thrust.

An adequate treatment of these questions will require a
book-length elaboration (see n. 1 above), but I should like to present
an overview of this metric art, treating briefly the four kinds of echo
(metric, disjunctive, consecutive, and external) and the four
components of measure (internal cohesion, length, position, and
thrust). Although my goal is to point out the esthetic use made in
the genre of a variety of devices based on repetition and measure,
the necessity of detailed presentation of the devices precludes in the
present article anything more than sporadic evocation of those
esthetic uses.

⁵ At the 1989 meeting of the Société Rencesvals in conjunction with
the MLA, Jean-Paul Carton observed of ll. XL-XLII of the Oxford Roland that
in l. XLII Ganelon "absorbs" Marsile's style, thereby giving form to his treason:
Marsile has used repetitive language in all three laisses; Ganelon says entirely
different things in the first two laisses, and so, when, in the third laisse, he
repeats the language of the second laisse, he takes on a resemblance to the
Saracen. In opening his paper, Carton contrasted his emphasis on meaning to
the emphasis on rhythmicity in Paquette's study of the same three laisses; as the
observation about Ganelon's language shows, rhythm and meaning interact See
his "Aesthetic Considerations... Narrative Progression."
Three lines of analysis

In order to make some necessary distinctions about repetition, we shall distinguish three lines of analysis, or skeins in the fabric of the text: the metric skein, the verbal, and the narrative or referential. The distinction between the verbal and narrative skeins is not always clear-cut, nor can we allow ourselves here the space to do more than let a few examples bearing on other questions serve as illustrations. It is essential, however, to recognize that the three skeins are independent of each other and that match or mismatch of all three or of any two can be used for effect.

In a recent book Dominique Boutet discusses extensively the role of repetition in *Jehan de Lanson*; his examples show the repetitions in question to belong largely to the narrative skein with very little support from the verbal skein.

When Michael Holland states the principle that "L'unité du motif recouvre l'unité de la laisse et la constitue" (p. 398), he is asserting that the metric and narrative skeins match; his discussion of the principle, however, shows that mismatch can be used to effect (pp. 405-411).

Descriptions of the laisse which take parallel introductions or conclusions as marks of the laisse contours confuse the verbal skein with the metric. Similarly, verbal parallelism may occur either in conjunction with the form of the laisse or independently of it.

At the boundary between laisses XLIII and XLIV in the *Enfances Guillaume*, a recurrence on the narrative skein highlights the break on the metric skein, but the verbal skein gives no reinforcement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>XLIII</th>
<th>XLIV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elle se clame</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ahi Guillames</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jai m'ait Thiebaus</td>
<td>com m'amistié</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jai de Guillaume</td>
<td>poc ont duré</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>espousee et plevie</td>
<td>et la vostre départent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ne seraï mais saisie</td>
<td>mais poignans sont et aspre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*EG (D) 1813*  
*1814*  
*1815*  
*1816*  
*1817*  
*1818*
Orable's lament is introduced in v. 1813, and the verb of speech in the second hemistich of v. 1816 repeats this introduction, but it is only the narrative skein, the content, that repeats. As far as the verbal skein goes, the most one could argue is that clamér in v. 1813 and dire in v. 1816 belong to the same lexical category of verbs of speech. This laisse boundary shows a measure of echo from conclusion to introduction, but a very slight measure. The echo highlights the metric boundary, but only mildly. Compare the more striking effect of echo when the verbal skein enters into the recurrence, as it does at the boundary of laisses LVI-LVII of the same poem:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>EG(D)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LVI</td>
<td>Grans fut la joie</td>
<td>sus el palais amon</td>
<td>2389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LVII</td>
<td>Grans fut la joie</td>
<td>el palais principel</td>
<td>2390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rient et juent</td>
<td>cil ligier bacheler</td>
<td>2391</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first hemistichs of the last verse of 1. LVI and the first of 1. LVII are identical, and both second hemistichs are adverbial phrases of place specifying el palais. (Notice how the metric skein strengthens the verbal recurrence: the words Grans fu la joie occupy the same position in both occurrences, and this part of the echo is more strongly marked than the recurrence of the phrase el palais, which changes position. The verbal echo strengthens the effect of repetition on the narrative skein and reinforces the metric boundary.

In the next two sections we shall be concentrating on the metric and verbal skeins, leaving the narrative skein largely implicit. We shall look first at the principles of measure which the metric skein applies to the two others and then at the operation of repetition in the verbal skein.

**Meter and Measure**

The concept of measure would seem to imply above all length: if I want to measure a piece of wood, I pull out a tape measure; we measure scholarly papers at a conference by peering at a watch and counting minutes. We measure the epic verse as ten or twelve syllables long, the laisse as a variable number of verses in length.
It is not difficult, however, to recognize the three other components in the measuring of discourse and narrative in the chanson de geste. Internal cohesion is something of a corollary to measuring in general: the things one measures (piece of wood, scholarly paper, verse, or laisse) have some sort of unity to them, something in common which makes them seem an appropriate thing (the singular is significant) to measure. Position may be somewhat less self-evident, but, in measuring length, we start from one end (an initial position) and measure to the opposite end (final position). Meter simply emphasizes these positions. The cesura divides the verse into two strongly marked positions, the first and second hemistichs, or initial and final positions. Initial, medial, and final positions in hemistich, verse, and laisse carry a fair amount of significance.

The fourth component of measure may be particular to meter and versification. The force and nature of the semantic or narrative thrust from one unit to the next, something of an extension of the concept of enjambment, is a measure of the cohesion of successive units.

We shall begin with the principle of internal cohesion. Then we shall look at a grammatical classification of verse types as an expression of thrust, or the cohesion of successive units. In a sense, the semantic thrust from first to second hemistich is the keystone of our entire analysis; certainly it was the realization that Rychner's grammatical types describe fundamental semantic rhythms in the epic verse which initiated this long inquiry into the metric art of the genre. Finally, we shall round out the discussion of meter and measure with the principles of position and of length.

**Internal Cohesion**

The fundamental accord of metric unit and semantic unit underlying the shape of the verse in the chanson de geste implies a concept which we might call the metric sentence. The metric sentence is always one verse long, whatever the length of the grammatical sentence. The metric sentence is always complete in itself and always one; it may be analyzed as containing two or more clauses, or as containing only part of a clause, but, by virtue of its filling a verse, it is complete and fully independent in itself. A
second, analogous concept applies to the laisse. The metric incident is one laisse long, however many narrative elements seem to squeeze into a long and disparate laisse, however many laisses a narrative element may seem to cover. These concepts are a kind of working hypothesis derived initially from the high degree to which the clause tends to be coterminous with the line end. They are not so much propositions, the truth of which can be tested, as a convenient perspective for grasping the internal cohesion of those elements which fill a metric unit. Any element which is "raised" to the status of hemistich, verse, or laisse acquires thereby a particular, privileged status, a kind of metric dignity. The labels "metric sentence" and "metric incident" provide a means of expressing that particular status. (I have not found a convenient term for the hemistich, and the necessity for a complete set of terms seems rather limited.)

The match between grammatical sentence and metric sentence, reproduced consistently, results first of all in the metric form of the verse, but, when the three skeins match consistently in a passage, the "sympathetic vibrations" produced can result in a fairly lyric effect. The more strongly marked the match the greater the intensity of the effect. Mismatch, on the other hand, can result in fusion or in highlighting: the internal cohesion of the metric unit imposes unity on those elements of the verbal and referential skeins contained within it and highlights those which spill out of its confines. Two examples, a fairly lengthy look at vv. 479-511 in ll. XVIII-XXI of the *Charroi de Nîmes*, and a very short look at vv. 679-680 of MS *D* of the *Prise d’Orange*, will illustrate, first the effect of matching skeins and then the effect of mismatch between skeins.

In ll. XVIII-XXI of the *Charroi* Guillaume asks the king four times for fiefs in Spain. An intricate play of matches among the three skeins produces an intensely lyric effect. To begin with, vv. 481-489, concluding 1. XVIII, echo w. 450-459 from the interior of the laisse; recurrence on the verbal skein marks off this narrative unit, the request for Spanish fiefs, as privileged. Then 1. XIX further highlights the narrative unit by raising it to the metrically privileged status of laisse. L. XX confirms this status by echoing the match of metric and narrative skeins in XIX, with the result that the narrative unit incorporates into itself the expansion in 1. XXI
consisting of two entirely new elements, the brief comment by the
king and Guillaume's reply:

\begin{verbatim}
... Ou voit le roi
Icestui don
Ainz vos demant
Et Tortolose
Si vos demande
 Après Orenge
Se la me done
C'onques escuz
N'ainz chevalier
N'apovrïez

XVIII
Ot le li rois
Par Deu me done
Moie iert la terre
M. chevalier
dit Guillelmes le fort
d'Espaigne toz les porz
tuens en iert li tresors
t'en conduiront en ost

XIX
Loïs sire
Par Dieu me done
Moie iert la terre
.M. chevalier
s'en a un ris gité
dit Guillelmes le fort
d'Espaigne toz les porz
en eus en digner
n'en est vostre chatel
n'en fu par toi portez

XX
Done moi roi
Et avec Nymes
S'en giterai
Qui tant François
De maintes terres
Se Dex me veult
c'est mont ne vos demant

XXI
Donez moi sire
Donez moi Nymes
Après Orenge
Et Neminois
Si con li Rosnes
Dist Loïs
Par un seul home
Et dit Guillelmes
Chevauchera
De mon hauberc
S'en giterai

NZ
si l' a aresonné
par nos n'iert ja rové
Espaigne le régné
et Portpaillart sor mer
Nymes celé cité
qui tant fet a loer
n'i aiers ja rové
n'en fu par toi portez
n'en eus au digner
n'en est vostre chatel

CN (A )
479
480
481
482
483
484
485
486
487
488
489
490
491
492
493
494
495
496
497
498
499
500
501
502
503
504
505
506
507
508
509
510
511
\end{verbatim}

The match of the narrative and metric skeins in the three successive
laisse, XIX-XXI, is further reinforced by verbal echo at the laisse
introduction. The opening verse of the last laisse, XXI, echoes that of the preceding laisse (501 = 494), an echo still further emphasized by v. 502. And it would lead us too far afield to detail the traces of vv. 490-491, 481, and 450 which contribute still further to the intensification of the effect of match on the three skeins. The match of the three skeins emphasizes the internal cohesion of the laisse to produce intense lyricism.

The second half of 1. XXI points us in the direction of the effects deriving from mismatch. As we have remarked, Louis’ words and Guillaume’s reply have no antecedent either in 11. XIX and XX (or, for that matter, in vv. 450-459 or 481-489): the laisse imposes thematic unity on these new narrative elements. Ever since Rychner’s strongly stated preference for the "lyrical" laisse in which unity on the narrative skein corresponds to the unit on the metric skein as in the Oxford Roland (Essai, p. 125), students of the genre have recognized the principle that the laisse can impose unity on the diversity of the elements of the narrative skein.6

A different kind of mismatch between the metric skein and the narrative or verbal skeins will highlight a detail in the narrative. At the level of the verse mismatch is a general category of which enjambment is one variety.7 Although enjambment, in any of the definitions given to the term, can scarcely be said to apply to the chanson de geste, the same underlying effect of mismatch and tension between the metric unit and the narrative or discursive unit is at work both in enjambment and in the cases we shall consider. Guillaume’s dramatization of the rescue of Louis from Oton’s army in CAT (A) VII-VIII (see "Measuring", pp. 28-32), like the reopening of the grammatical sentence in vv. 679-680 of version D

6 Gittleman notes of l. LXIX in Garin le Loherain that "Une dizaine de situations diverses se succèdent... dans la laisse, mais elles se rattachent toutes à un moment important de l'action" (p. 93). Holland devotes pp. 407-410 to cases in which the laisse contains more than one "motif". Subrenat breaks laisses into three categories according as they contain, one, two, or more narrative elements (pp. 103-107). Boutet distinguishes, among other forms, bipartite laisses, composite (multipartite) laisses, and unified laisses (p. 45).

7 Mazaleyrat’s discussion of mismatch between syntax and meter ("Les phénomènes de discordance", pp. 119-130, and "Conséquences de la discordance", pp. 130-136) lies at the base of my treatment of the question.
of the *Prise d’Orange*, derives its effect from the mismatch of the measuring unit, laisse or verse, and the measured unit, incident or sentence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guïelins out</th>
<th>lou palais effraés</th>
<th>PO(D) 679</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devent lo roi</td>
<td>lou Sarrazin tüé</td>
<td>680</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mismatch of metric sentence and grammatical sentence, the reopening of the complete idea expressed in v. 679 to include the further expansion of v. 680, produces an effect of amplification and narrative slowdown. The internal cohesion of the verbal unit, the sentence, contrasts to that of the metric unit, the verse.

Mismatch opposes internal cohesion on one skein to a different internal cohesion on another skein. In this way internal cohesion is closely bound up with thrust, the cohesion of successive units or impulse from one unit to the next.

**Thrust**

Perhaps the most basic aspect of the principle of thrust may be seen in the grammatical relations between the two halves of the verse. The semantic thrust between successive sentences (grammatical or metric) and the narrative thrust from one laisse to the next entail an immense range of possibilities. The relation between successive sentences, more lexical in nature than grammatical, is an open-ended set of values. The relation between successive laisses entails a still larger range of possibilities in that it encompasses not only the relations of sentences but also, in combination with those relations, the possibilities of narrative combinations.

In contrast to these two open-ended sets of possibilities, the thrust from first to second hemistich of the epic verse can be analyzed as a quite limited set of less than a dozen possibilities, in essence those which Jean Rychner sketched out thirty years ago ("Versification", pp. 168-170). The limited set of possibilities means not only that we can grasp the set as a whole (I avoid phrasing this as an exhaustive description, which would be impossible) but also that the components of the set will repeat in any passage with some regularity. The description of the set is a tool for describing a basic form of écho in the genre. Rychner noted that in addition to making clause and sentence coterminous with the line of
verse, the chanson de geste constructs a considerable proportion of epic clauses in such a way that a noun phrase fills one or the other hemistich. The following table lists the types, following in essence Rychner's classification:

Table 1: Grammatical Types of the Epic Verse

I. Each hemistich is filled by a clause.
II. The verse is filled by a clause.
   Un. A noun phrase fills the first hemistich (IIn1) or the second (IIn2).
   IInS. Subject
   IInCO. Object of the verb (complément d'objet)
   IInCA. Adverbial phrase (complément adverbiael)
   IInCN. Adjectival phrase (complément de nom)
   IInH. Exterior to the clause (hors de la proposition), vocative or interjection
   IIV. The verbal kernal of the clause is divided between the two hemistichs.

III. The verse depends on a main verb in another verse.
   IIIa. A noun phrase occupies each hemistich,
   IIIp. A noun phrase occupies the first hemistich, and a clause (proposition) occupies the second.

This classification describes virtually every verse of the decasyllabic chanson de geste. In itself and without further refinement it accounts for a high proportion of verses in the genre, and apparent exceptions to the classification (verses which it does not describe) tend to function as rhythmic variations. A number of further considerations such as the relative semantic weight of the hemistich and the possibility of double functions in the hemistich serve to make the scheme both more complete and more precise, but the usefulness of the scheme does not lie in a precision of

8 For a considerably more detailed analysis of the classification and of Rychner's original version, see my "Rythmes sémantiques... Types grammaticaux". Having elaborated these categories and their abbreviated names in French, I have retained those codes but given English names to the categories in this article. Where the English does not make the code clear, I give the French name in parentheses.
description which could lead to an exercise like counting the number of Type II1n1CO verses in the O and Ch manuscripts of the *Chanson de Roland*. Rather, these types convey information about semantic rhythm, about thrust from first to second hemistich, giving a very concrete reality to the "vital exchange" between meaning and rhythm. (We return below to look more closely at some of these thrusts.) Further, because these various types repeat frequently, they are the principal component of a low level of consecutive echo which runs through vast stretches of epic text, sometimes rising to noticeable levels of musicality.

This set of categories is perceptible. It takes a certain mental distortion, no doubt, to take conscious cognizance of them, to attach grammatical labels to the way in which the metric skein highlights components of the verbal skein, but the grammatical categories involved are nonetheless a basic component of linguistic competence. Just as millions of M. Jourdains use direct objects every day without having any idea that they are doing so, the audience of a chanson de geste does not have to perform a grammatical analysis in order to be sensible of these rhythms.

I do not wish to imply that every single line of decasyllabic epic verse should send the members of the Société Rencesvals into fits of esthetic ecstasy but simply that the very nature of this system of versification contains significant potential for lyricism, for a kind of musicality based on grammatical categories.

Guillaume arrives in the palace of Tibaut (*Prise d'Orange, AB* version, laisse XVI) and sees the marvels within:

```
Li cuens Guillelmes  vet tote voie avant  PO (A)  458
Trusqu'au palés       roi Tiebaut le Persant  459
De marbre sont       li niler et li pan  460
Et les fenestres       entaillies d'argent  461
Et l'aigle d'or       qui reluist et resplent  462
Soleil n'i luist       n'i cort goute de vent  463
Dex dist Guillelmes  beau pere roi amant  464
```

V. 460 begins a description of the marvels, and, vv. 461 and 462 being Type III, grammar reflects the astonishment of the Frenchman as he seemingly slows his pace to admire the wonders of the palace, delaying the occurrence of the next grammatical sentence until v.
463, the next act until v. 464. At least two echoing details underscore this delay in the narrative advance, the recurrence of Type in verses in 461 and 462, and the repetition of the conjunction *et* in initial position of both those verses.

The thrust in question in this instance is from verse to verse. The grammatical classification, by and large, is useful for describing the thrust from first to second hemistich. Contrast, for example, the relative "balance" of a Type IIv verse to the highlighting of a nominal function in one or the other hemistich of a Type IIn verse:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Encui sera</th>
<th>Guillelmes mal mené</th>
<th><em>PO (A)</em> 745</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A tant ez vos</td>
<td>un paien Salatré</td>
<td>746</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The principal components of v. 745 (IIv) are distributed more or less evenly on either side of the cesura, adverbial complement and auxiliary verb in the first hemistich, subject and main verb in the second. In contrast, v. 746 throws a direct object into high relief by setting it off from the rest of the clause in the second hemistich, "raising" the noun phrase *un paien Salatré* to the privileged status of a full hemistich. The two verses have a very different feel to them, a noticeable difference of semantic rhythm. Compare now the effects of a Type IIn1S and a Type IIn2S:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Li cuens Guillelmes</th>
<th>ra choisi un tinel</th>
<th><em>PO (A)</em> 827</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Granz cops i donent</td>
<td>li baron naturel</td>
<td>853</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We must allow for a fair amount of uncertainty and variation from the following observation, but still one may discern something of a congruence between the metric skein and the verbal in the Type IIn1S (v. 827) in contrast to the two skeins' thrusting in opposite directions in the Type IIn2S (v. 853). On the metric skein a first hemistich anticipates the second, is incomplete without it, presents, as it were, a subject about which the second hemistich will predicate something. A Type IIn1S matches the verbal thrust to the metric

---

9 The Prague school theory of Communicative Dynamism argues that a sentence may be seen as theme in initial position and rheme in final position (see Slakta, "Ordre", among others). That which is already familiar precedes that which the sentence presents as new. Thus the metric skein, independently of any
thrust at the cesura whereas a Type IIn2S distributes the functions of the verbal skein in direct opposition to those of the metric.

One further example will have to suffice here, the Type IIn2CO, in which a different kind of match occurs between the metric and verbal skeins:

\[ n \text{ en apele Sarrazins et paiens } P O (A) 888 \]

The transitive verb of the first hemistich calls for the direct object of the second. The verbal skein shows an anticipating thrust at the cesura on top of the anticipating thrust of the metric skein, but here meter highlights a direct object in the second hemistich, making the direct object into the principal element of the predicate.

Each of the types outlined in the table above has its rhythmic effects, some of the types being open to quite a range of thrusts at the cesura, and for all of them the thrust will vary according to the lexical values associated with the two hemistichs.

Beneath the variety of grammatical relations between hemistichs we may discern three basic thrusts, a full stop, an anticipating thrust, and an agglutinating thrust. These are in essence the fundamental types of cohesion which may exist between successive verses.

The full stop is most evident at places which might be described as boundaries between narrative incidents. There is no carryover from one metric unit to the next, and, as that absolute negation implies, a pure full stop is something of an impossibility. Simple juxtaposition of ideas results in an implicit association between them. In the following two verses there is just a touch of agglutination, by which I mean addition after the fact, expressed by the conjunction \textit{et} introducing the second verse:

\[ \text{verbal realization, treats the first hemistich as subject and the second as predicate. It can also be seen to treat the first hemistich as containing less information than the second. See my ”Rythmes sémantiques... Types grammaticaux” for more detailed examination of some of the implications of this analysis of the two hemistichs.} \]
Further, v. 170 expresses an answer to v. 169. In principle, the boundary between laisses is the site of a full stop, but, as the many studies of *enchaînement* following Rychner have shown, a wide variety of thrusts occur from one laisse to the next.

A clear-cut case of agglutination is the Type III verse which depends on the preceding verse:

Aporté li a mengier a planté  
Et pain et vin et piment et claré

Nichols calls unperiodic enjambement this addition of a second verse to one already complete in itself. Rychner gives a fair measure of attention to this kind of addition after the fact ("Versification", pp. 174-175). He also discusses the anticipating thrust which occurs when a subordinate element of the sentence fills the first verse, as in v. 176 of the Prise:

Quant il se fu richement conraé  
As piez le conte s'asist tot de son gré

The subordinate clause in v. 176 anticipates the main clause of v. 177. V. 176 is a Type II verse; a Type III projects an even stronger anticipation. A fine example of an anticipating Type III verse opens the Oxford Roland: the subject in v. 1 anticipates the verb in v. 2.

The mixing of thrusts is even stronger at the laisse boundary than at the end of the verse. An unusually strong anticipating thrust,
from verb of speech to direct discourse, occurs between 11. LVII and LVIII in *Jourdain de Blaye*:

```
Oriel la bele s'en prinst garde  JB  1521
LVII A son pere en parole 1522
LVIII Es gardéz pères ce li dist la pucelle 1523
De cest anfant com tient basse la teste 1524
```

Ten laisses farther on a fairly "naked" agglutination occurs, an introductory *reprise* on the narrative skein by means of a *Quant* clause, but without reinforcement from the verbal skein:

```
Je li affi par Mahon cui j'ai chier  JB  1635
Qu'il n'i sera deséz ne touchiéz 1636
Par nesun home sievis ne enchauciéz 1637
LXII Mais chevaliers contre autre 1638
LXIII Quant li rois oit dou paien la vantance 1639
Vint a ses homes si lor dist un example 1640
```

The next laisse boundary is even more naked, showing not even a narrative agglutination. The first and then the second of a series of knights come forward to fight the Saracen champion:

```
Au Sarrazin s'en vint en la montaingne  JB  1648
Li Sarrazins le feri de sa lance 1649
Dou bon destrier trestout mort le balance 1650
LXIII Voiant cels de la ville 1650
LXIV Or s'adouba Baudins dou Val Guiot 1651
Vint en l'angarde ansoiz au'il onques pot 1652
```

The break between laisses is close to a complete stop. Even so, the adverb *Or* expresses a small measure of chronological sequence. Finally, let us quote a laisse boundary which fits Rychner's description of a *palier* (*Essai*, p. 78), where the introduction of the second laisse echoes the conclusion of the first:

```
Cil de la ville moult grant joie en demainnent Ami  2049
CII Ez Amile en sa ville 2050
```
The recurrence of *Cil de la ville* in the first hemistichs of vv. 2049 and 2052 confers a kind of synonymy to the second hemistichs *moult grant joie en demainnent* and *li ont fait feauté* and emphasizes the synonymy of vv. 2050 and 2051. Not only does the opening of the second laisse add on to the end of the first, it emphasizes the agglutination by turning backwards and starting over again.

Thrust from one metric unit to the next produces in the texts a constant play of repetition with variation. From first to second hemistich this play bears on the grammatical relations of the two halves of the metric sentence. From verse to verse a wide range of implicit lexical relations sit atop the three fundamental thrusts, agglutination, anticipation, and stop; they produce a surprising measure of variation in the unfolding of the text from one verse to the next. This play alone is an important factor in the propensity for consecutive echo.

Thrust across the cesura is the cohesion of two privileged positions, the first and second hemistichs, initial and final positions in the verse. Thrust from one verse to the next, likewise, is the cohesion of an earlier and a later position although these are not particularly privileged positions. Recurrence, too, involves position, and, as we saw in the case of *Ami* 2049=2052, recurrence is reinforced when it takes place in the same position. We turn now to consideration of position.

**Position**

We have already suggested above that the first hemistich as initial position may be considered a theme and the second hemistich a rheme, and within the limits of this paper we shall not pursue further this particular aspect of position as meaning. We shall restrict ourselves to the marks of the laisse introduction and conclusion, treating the conclusion briefly and the introduction in somewhat more detail, as rhythmic positions conveying meaning. And we shall look at position within the hemistich as an element of rhythm.
Studies of the marks of the laisse go back to Mildred Pope, but they have not yet begun to treat introduction and conclusion as meanings and rhythmic elements. Here we shall note briefly that the conclusion appears to derive its meaning from its position and examine in more detail the relation of rhythm and meaning in the laisse introduction. In all the analyses of laisse conclusions we find virtually no formal marks; conclusions are largely a matter of content, and the contents, things like a brief comment by character or narrator, are just as likely to be found within the laisse as in final position. The only clear-cut formal mark is one which does not appear at all in many chansons de geste, the six-syllable vers orphelin which we saw at the laisse ends quoted above from Ami et Amile and Jourdain de Blaye. It may be that laisse-final position is conferred after the fact in many of the texts; the laisse intonation and change of assonance in the second laisse create the effect of conclusion in the first. This production of meaning après coup is part of the agglutinating thrust, but the notions of provisional and corrected meanings in the unfolding of the text at cesura, verse end, and end of laisse are yet another subject we must shortchange.

We shall use, the Type II n 1S verse as an entry point into rhythm and meaning in the mark of the laisse introduction. We have already seen the match between metric meaning and grammar in this type. There is a further consideration which might be called narrative rate or speed. The subject of a clause is something of a presentation while the predicate expresses the action, the movement, the narration. Thus a verse like v. 2233 of the Chanson de Roland gets off the ground slowly, so to speak:

Li quens Rollant      revient de pasmeisuns       Roi (O) 2233

The first hemistich is more or less static, and it is the second hemistich which carries the movement in the storyline. It happens that this verse opens a laisse, which is to say that it follows an implicit pause in the narrative. Metric skein, verbal skein, and referential skein all match up as narrative momentum slowly gathers,

---

12 Pope, pp. 355-358, 43-44, 48-49. Rychner, Essai, pp. 69-74. See Gittleman (pp. 91-93), Subrenat (pp. 96-102), Boutet (pp. 22-42), Lachet, among others.
starting with the standstill between laisses, building through the relatively static first hemistich of v. 2233 to full narrative speed in the second.

This effect of presentation as opposed to narrative movement forms the basis of much of the laisse introduction, as in the Type IIIp verse which opens laisse CLXV:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLXV</th>
<th>Li arcevesques</th>
<th>quant vit pasmer Rollant</th>
<th>Rol(O)</th>
<th>2222</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dunc out tel doel</td>
<td>unkes mais n'out si grant</td>
<td>2223</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tendit sa main</td>
<td>si ad pris l'olifan</td>
<td>2224</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here the narrative advance is delayed beyond the end of the first verse of the laisse, and, to the extent that we consider the description in v. 2223 to be outside the narrative advance, we may say that the introductory slowdown puts off the resumption of full narrative speed until v. 2224.

Rychner identifies the naming of a principal character (with the function of subject of the clause) as a mark of the laisse introduction, and his successors all acknowledge this trait in one form or another. What we see in the Type Íín1S verse is the identification expanded to fill an entire hemistich, raised to the special metric status of hemistich. The hemistich is one of the degrees of amplification privileged by meter. Rychner describes this particular trait of the laisse introduction without reference to its metric status, merely stating that the character is designated by means of a noun. This description implies the principle of amplification: whereas, within the laisse, characters are often identified by the personal pronoun or the verbal ending, at the laisse introduction this identification is expanded to a full noun. It occupies more syllables in the hemistich as a noun than as a pronoun or verb ending, consequently leaving less space in the hemistich and verse for the action of the clause. Thus, even where the identification of the character does not fill a hemistich, the extra syllables in the noun or noun phrase displace syllables which otherwise would belong to the predicate. Compare the opening verse (v. 74) of laisse IV of the Prise d'Orange with a verse (v. 80) from within the same laisse:

Or fu Guillelmes as fenestres au vent \( PO(A) 74 \)
Regarde aval par mi un desrubant 80

There being many elements which go into the rate of narrative advance, we need not linger over the description and reprise which play an important part in the slowdown of v. 74; the point that these two verses illustrate is that the same character, Guillaume, displaces two syllables' worth of action in v. 74 and none at all in v. 80.

A corollary to this notion of displacement is that a Type II1S in medial position of a laisse can have the effect of a narrative articulation within the laisse. And indeed the verse preceding v. 80 does seem to change the subject within the laisse:

Li cuens Guillelmes ot mout le cuer joiant PO (A) 79

We are not laying out rules of epic composition here in the sense of asserting that Type II1S is a laisse-introductory verse. Rather, we are noting elements common to certain rhythmic features of the verse and to the initial position of the laisse, yet another instance of the marriage of meaning and rhythm. A variety of devices and principles contribute to the meaning and rhythm of the metric position of laisse introduction. In essence they boil down to principles of amplification and the relative space occupied in the verse by those elements of the sentence which are largely static and function as presentation, on the one hand, and, on the other, by those elements which express the action of the sentence.

Other marks of the laisse introduction, like epic inversion, or Types II2S and III1CO, make position in the laisse a fairly intricate matter. We abandon the laisse here, however, to take a brief look at one further aspect of position, the internal patterns of the verse and hemistich.

A simple case of consecutive echo, like the list of Tibaut's barons recited by Aragon in laisse XIX of the Prise d'Orange, will suffice to give an idea of how position within the hemistich is a component of echo:

Venra mon pere et ses riches barnez PO (A) 593
Et Golïas et li rois Desramez 594
Corsolt de Mables et son frere Aceré 595
Et Clariaus et li rois Atriblez 596
Et Quinzepaumes       et li rois Sorgalez 597

Vv. 594-597 contain a series of anthroponyms, one per hemistich. A hypnotic rhythm takes over this enumeration as the anthroponym anchors itself more and more firmly in final position of the hemistich:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 10 \\
& \text{--- A---} & \text{--- A---} & 594 \\
& \text{A- - -} & \text{--- A---} & 595 \\
& \text{--- A---} & \text{--- A---} & 596 \\
& \text{--- A---} & \text{--- A---} & 597 \\
\end{array}
\]

In the first hemistich of v. 595 the name Corsolt imparts a measure of variety to the pattern by appearing in initial position, but then the final position takes over, one might say obsessively filling the last three syllables of every hemistich.

Position is thus a rhythmic element without any particular semantic value as well as an element of meaning. We see it function within the hemistich, within the verse, and within the laisse, and we shall see it as well as an element of echo.

Length

One of the components of the hypnotic effect of PO 594-597 is the recurrence of the same length, seven of the eight names being three syllables long. Amplification, too, has introduced length into our considerations as a matter of rhythm. It can also be a measure of importance, as critics have long noted in looking at things like single combat when treated in a single laisse, in part of a laisse, or in a series of laisses (Holland, pp. 411-413). In addition to conveying a sense of importance through amplification, length has a more purely rhythmic function which we shall examine in the presentation of direct discourse and in the rhythms deriving from comparison of consecutive laisses.

First, however, let us mention the peculiar consequence, for the measurement of length, of the privileging of metric units. Hemistichs are half verses even though one is four syllables long and the other six. Laisses are a measure of length even though they
themselves vary widely in length. Hemistich and laisse are variable units of measure, a notion which seems self-contradictory in a century in which engineering and the quantitative sciences attempt to reduce ever further the variation tolerated in measurement, but we continue to measure much of everyday human experience by means of widely varying units of length. We measure in generations, for example, although this unit of measure is imprecise to say the least, and some of us say that Montreal is a four-hour drive from Toronto while others maintain it is a six-hour drive. Two elements may be at the same time of the same length because they fill equivalent metric units and of different lengths because those metric units, measured against a different scale, are of different lengths. The measurement of length takes place against more than one scale.

Discourse presentation may be one of those elements in the chanson de geste which alludes to the tradition, an external echo. Any occurrence of this narrative element measures itself against the norms of the tradition, which range in length from zero (as in vv. 216-217 of the Prise) to a full verse (v. 214) or more, with full-hemistich realizations (vv. 170,239) as a very frequent mid-length variety:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Et dist Guillelmes</th>
<th>tu en avras assez</th>
<th>PO (A) 170</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Li cuens Guillelmes</td>
<td>entendi le baron</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dejoste lui</td>
<td>s'asist sur un perron</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If l'en apele</td>
<td>si li dist par amor</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amis beaus frere</td>
<td>mout as bone reson</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te tindrent onques</td>
<td>Sarrazin en prison</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil voir sire</td>
<td>.III. anz et .XV. jorz</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amis beau frere</td>
<td>dit Guillelmes le ber</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 I quote from the first paragraph of the article "Metrology" (Henry Barrell) in the Encyclopedia Britannica (1969), Vol. 15, p. 310, col. 1, on the length of the second as a unit of time: "Official replacement of the astronomical by an atomic standard was authorized in 1964 for the measurement of time intervals by the employment of the so-called cesium-beam frequency standard, which is capable of providing a more conveniently accessible as well as a more accurate standard for the second based on a natural resonance period of the cesium atom."
Est tele Orenge comme tu as conté 240

Just as with the noun phrase, the realization of a narrative element as a full hemistich confers privileged status on that element. Because both v. 170A and v. 239B are hemistichs, they confer equal "metric dignity" on these two occurrences of the detail of discourse presentation. At the same time, the six-syllable version is two syllables longer than the four-syllable version (we shall not treat in this article oxytonic and paroxytonic hemistichs, which add further nuances to the question of length); it is slightly amplified in comparison. The first- and second-hemistich realizations represent slight variations in the middle of the scale between the bare minimum of the zero-degree realization and the full-verse realization in the examples above. We have in these examples a low-level rhythmic modulation, rhythm measured in terms of length with reference to the norms of the tradition. We shall see below under the heading of external echo an example where the rhythm of discourse presentation takes on just a shade more significance, becoming amplification and narrative rate.

Unlike the rhythmic modulation in the presentation of discourse, the modulation of length in the laisse is primarily a matter of internal reference, comparison of the lengths of successive laisses. Common scholarly practice categorizes laisses as long, middle-length, or short, more or less absolute categories which use as point of reference either the tradition as a whole or the average length of the laisse in a given poem or in the major subdivisions of the poem.14 This reference to a general norm, however, seems less relevant to the rhythms of the text than reference to the immediate context in which a given laisse appears. Suard, followed by Boutet (p. 44), points the way when, in order to decide in which category a given borderline laisse belongs, he compares its length to that of its neighbors. If twenty-five verses marks the boundary between short and medium, for example, a twenty-two verse laisse may be considered medium length in the vicinity of several ten-verse laisses or a twenty-six verse laisse may be considered short in the vicinity of sixty-verse laisses. We should, in point of fact, leave these.

14 E.g. Gittleman, pp. 93-95; Subrenat, pp. 78-80; Rossi, pp. 132-135; Boutet, p. 44.
categories aside as somewhat secondary, and compare the lengths of successive laisses. The *Charroi de Nîmes*, for example, makes brilliant use of varying length. Suard's table gives a remarkably good idea of that variation, but the categories of short, medium, and long laisses actually obscure some of the rhythmic intricacy in the poem deriving from the relative lengths of successive laisses.

Laisse XLIX, for example, stands out less because it belongs to the category of long laisses than because its 110 verses make a striking contrast to the twenty verses of the preceding laisse and the six of the following one (the columns on the left represent respectively Suard's three categories of long, medium, and short; the column on the right gives the number of verses in the laisse):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Short</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XLIV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLVI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLVII</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLVIII</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LII</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at this revised table of Suard's data, one notes that laisses LI and XLVIII are of roughly similar length although Suard has put them in different categories. To argue over the appropriate category would be futile, for the text simply does not function in such terms. Rather, it contrasts XLIV and XLV, Guillaume's arrival at Nîmes, to XLVI-XLVIII, in which Harpin and Otran question Guillaume. Suard's opposition of medium and short laisses shows the contrast strikingly, in fact somewhat more so than the actual text, for XLVIII is only four verses longer than XLIV. As we can see clearly on the table, the text makes the contrast work by means of progressive reductions in the length of the two successive series. XLIV and XLV go together, and it is the shorter of the two which closes the first series while it is the longest laisse of the next series which
opens that series. Following up the shortest laisse of the first series with the longest of the next series emphasizes the difference in length and thus the narrative articulation which occurs at this point.

Similarly, the series L-Ln contrasts to XLIX just as does the series XLVI-XLVIII, and Suard's classing the one group as short laisses and the other as medium-length suggests a difference which is not really relevant in the text. In XLVI-XLVIII Harpin and Otran question Guillaume in a manner that becomes more and more taunting. The questioning turns from mild to threatening in XLIX, the aggressivity turns to hostility with the slaughter of two of Guillaume's oxen, and the length of the laisse marks off this combination of incidents as a turning point leading to the taunting questions of 11. L-LII and Guillaume's increasing exasperation.

Suard's original table shows clearly how CN modulates the rhythms of its tale by contrasting the lengths of successive laisses and groups of laisses. The more detailed portrayal of relative length, referring not to abstract categories like short, medium, and long, but to the immediate context in which a laisse figures, reveals a brilliant use of this feature of meter. Length as a component of rhythm implies reference to other occurrences, both within the text and in other texts. Thus it raises questions related to echo.

Echo

In discussing meter we have been treating a first, and basic, form of echo, the metric echo which underlies every succession of verses and laisses. Although we have used the verbal and narrative skeins in our discussion of metric echo, in essence we were looking at the metric skein in abstraction from the other two. When the verbal and narrative skeins enter into consideration, they bring into play three further forms of echo: disjunctive echo, consecutive echo, and external echo.

As the term "external" implies in this series of terms, disjunctive and consecutive echoes are "internal": they refer back and forth between specific passages within the same text. External echoes, on the other hand, allude to something outside the text, refer to the tradition from which the text derives. There are, of course, a certain number of areas in which the distinctions are hard to draw. The Charroi de Nîmes, for example, contains a certain number of
disjunctive echoes which refer outward to the Couronnement de Louis and to the Prise d'Orange ("Composite Laisse", pp. 135-36, and see below n. 17). Nonetheless, once we recognize the principle of internal reference and do not try to explain it in terms of external reference (i.e. as "formulas" and "motifs"), the "litigious" cases do not really matter for our purposes.

Before looking at the three kinds of verbal echo, we shall make a basic definition relating to the composition of echo. Every echo from one occurrence to another includes both a component which is identical in both occurrences and a component which is different. We shall refer to these as the constant and the variable.

**Constant and Variable, "Formulas" of Repetition**

Even in the case of a word-for-word repetition, two occurrences will differ in that one occurs in initial position and the other in final position. The familiar case of the hemistich or rhyme-word which appears to have been repeated through scribal error illustrates the role of position: the modern critic jibes not at the first occurrence but at the second one. Reflection may suggest that the first occurrence is the error, but in the linear process of reading (or listening to) the text, it is the second occurrence which sets off the alarm bells. Here yet again, in the metric component of position, meaning binds itself inextricably to rhythm. Indeed, we have seen and shall see again the four components of meter functioning as part of echo.

This sequence in which the second occurrence acts retroactively upon the first to confer some sort of value to both applies to artistic uses of recurrence as much as it does to clumsy ones and scribal errors. Position, as a matter of order of occurrence, produces patterns of "meaning" (taken as present participle with full verbal value, rather than as a noun) in the interplay of constants and variables. The basic pattern may be seen in a series of three occurrences which could be described by the formula AA'B. The first occurrence, A, is neutral. The second fixes attention by means of strongly marked repetition, a high proportion of constants to variables (thus A'), and creates thereby a new point of reference in the text. Subsequent occurrences need not be as strongly marked in order to attract attention; the point of reference already exists for them, and a smaller proportion of
constants to variables (thus B) will suffice to mark the occurrence as a reference to the preceding occurrences. A very simple sequence in the *Enfances Guillaume* illustrates the point:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Et jure Deu</td>
<td>lo glorius dou ciel</td>
<td>EG(D) 362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et jure Deu</td>
<td>lo glorious dou ciel</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il jure Deu</td>
<td>lo roi omnipotent</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vv. 362 and 371 are identical except for position and the spelling of *glorious*, so much so that one wonders if the scribe or poet (or singer) simply tired at v. 371. The consequence of that recurrence, however, is that v. 378, with a different second hemistich and a different tool word in initial position of the first hemistich, becomes a clearly recognizable member of the set.\(^{15}\) We saw the pattern AA'B above in *CN (A)* 450 = 481 = 491. Vv. 490-491 = 494 = 501 in the same passage show the pattern ABB'.\(^{16}\)

A vast range of lexical and grammatical categories function both as constants and as variables, as does their position in the echo.

The second hemistichs in the three verses from the *Enfances Guillaume* quoted above contain two fairly synonymous expressions, not to say hackneyed phrases in the genre for filling out a verse which mentions God. While word choice is a variable, their underlying meaning is a constant. The abstract lexical categories in which a word or expression fits are part of the verbal skein and can function as constants. (Conversely, a given word can have two different referents, as where two different characters are

\(^{15}\) The play of echo in which these three verses participate is fairly complex. These three verses form the pattern AA'B, but in the text v. 371 does not belong to the larger echo in which 362 and 378 play. I do not yet have an opinion on v. 371, whether to see it as a weakness in the text or as part of a rather intricate pattern.

\(^{16}\) In "Mémoire" I go into more detail about formulas of repetition and examine some of the elements which function as constant and variable. Paquette uses numbers to represent formulas of repetition.
designated by li *cuens; the verbal skein may show a constant, but the referential skein shows a variable.)

The grammatical categories to which a word or expression belongs are likewise a component of verbal echo. The first syllable of the above echo opposes the grammatical category of conjunction in the A form to the category of personal pronoun in the B form. The second hemistichs, in addition to the constant of being the noun phrase in a Type IIn2CN verse, present a second constant in the grammatical pattern {lo + NP}. These grammatical constants strengthen the resemblance between the B and the A forms. The two five-syllable noun phrases in the second hemistich show a grammatical variable: the A form constructs a substantivized adjective followed by a noun phrase while the B form constructs a noun followed by an adjective.

Note that position can be labelled in a variety of ways. In treating the opposition between *Et and *II we named the position by the syllable it occupies. We have referred to first and second hemistichs as positions. We could count positions by words and contrast the four positions in the second hemistich of the A form to the three of the B form. We could also describe the second hemistich in terms of an initial position which remains constant and a final position which varies. Position is not an arbitrary concept, but it does vary widely according to the element under analysis.

Clearly, detailed grammatical analysis would be a tedious and unrewarding approach to discovering beauty in poems two thousand lines long or longer, particularly since every echo is likely to make use of its own set of categories. Once we find an echo, however, the vast range of lexical and grammatical categories is likely to provide a tool for describing the components of the echo.

Disjunctive echoes tend to use strongly marked constants such as semantically heavy words reinforced by position and by grammatical patterns; in the most strongly marked cases several whole hemistichs repeat. Consecutive echoes tend rather to use as constants lexical categories, tool words, and grammatical patterns (including position). Disjunctive and consecutive echoes can be schematized, provided they are not too complex, in terms of formulas of repetition. External echoes, for their part, do not refer
to specific occurrences, and so the notion of formulas of repetition does not apply to them.

*Disjunctive Echo*

Disjunctive echo is the recurrence of a passage, the length of which can vary widely, as can the length of the interval between occurrences.

The shortest interval between occurrences is the immediate succession which appears at those laisse boundaries marked by a *palier*. Other occurrences can appear within the confines of the same laisse; we saw above, in the section on internal cohesion, the echo of vv. 450-459 = 481-489 within 1. XVIII of the *Charroi*. At the other extreme, in *Ami et Amile* some echoes occur at nearly two thousand lines’ interval: 498-502 = 2003-2009; 38-42 = 109-111 = 1959-1961). And passages in the *Charroi de Nîmes* echo passages from other poems in the cycle.17

The length of a disjunctive echo normally runs from two to five or ten verses, but variation can be considerable because an echo can expand in a given occurrence to include quite a bit of material foreign to the other occurrences; disjunctive echo differs in this respect from Miletich’s repetitive groups.18 The *Enfances Guillaume* has some remarkably long repeated passages, like w. 511-522 = 534-546 and 553-573 = 629-650, in which the variable plays very little role. It is the short echo, however, and not the long one, which presents the problem. Can a single line or hemistich constitute a disjunctive echo? V. 371 of the *Enfances Guillaume*, *Et jure Deu lo glorious dou ciel*, gives an example of the problem: to

17 CN 14-16 = PO 39-42 (May theme); CN 17-22 = CL 113-114 (return from the hunt); CN 23-27 = PO 75-78 and 106-107 (companions); CN 31-35 = CL 115-118 (encounter with Bertrand). See “Composite Laisse” for more detail.

18 Miletich intends the repeated group as one of a set of instruments for quantifying repetition in a text. He reduces therefore to a strict minimum the role of the variable admitted in these instruments. The nature of echo, in contrast, includes necessarily a share of variables in every occurrence, as we argue above.
what extent should we work occurrences of this sort into the
description of esthetic patterns? Or are they simply the result of
scribal fatigue, or perhaps traces of the much-discussed oral
tradition? We shall return to the question below under the heading
of external echo, but two observations seem relevant here.

First is the degree to which a text reinforces echo by using
echoes. I have not yet found disjunctive echo used in Jourdain de
Blaye, and, in the absence of this kind of support for single-line and
smaller echoes, I suspect that recurrent phrasing in that text is not
likely to belong to patterns. Thus the hemistich Et cil respondent,
which occurs eight times in the text, seems a poor candidate for
interesting patterns of disjunctive echo:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Et cil respondent</td>
<td>com voz plaira si iert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et cil respondent</td>
<td>vostre plaisir ferons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et cil respondent</td>
<td>tout a vostre plaisir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et cil respondent</td>
<td>si com voz conmandéz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et cil respondent</td>
<td>a vos sers en parléez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et cil respondent</td>
<td>biax sire a bon eür</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et cil respondent</td>
<td>grant aumosne feroit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et cil respondent</td>
<td>de gréz et volentiers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the AB version of the Charroi de Nîmes, on the other hand,
disjunctive echo is one of the principal elements of poetic
organization, and the repetition in vv. 878 and 883 stands out in
consequence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Et .III. enfanz</td>
<td>que il ot engendré</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les .III. enfanz</td>
<td>que il ot engendrez</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I am not sure how to describe the effect, as a low-level parody of
epic repetition or as another instance of repetition emphasizing a bit
of narrative awkwardness for comic effect, but I am suspicious that there is something more than lack of inspiration in these two lines.

The second observation has to do with the principle of internal reference. The concept of the oral formula and motif invites a search for reference to the tradition outside the text, but it is more and more clear that many of the repetitions which scholars like Nichols and Duggan unearthed within the text are part of functional patterns in the text. As a rule of thumb it may not be unwise to assume that strongly marked recurrences within a text constitute internal reference before they make external allusion.

Disjunctive echo is a device and, in principle, a fairly evident one. Using as constants not just elements on the narrative skein, unsupported by verbal repetition, and, on the verbal skein, not just abstract grammatical and lexical patterns but fairly extensive sequences of words, it catches the attention. While one could no doubt argue whether repetition of word choice represents more effort or less than variation when narrating similar incidents, and therefore whether disjunctive echo is more or less likely to derive from the conditions of oral composition, there are enough chansons which use disjunctive echo and enough which apparently do not

19 In "Composite Laisse" pp. 131-132 I describe w. 46-57 and 116-128 as emphasizing narrative articulations, but there is also something comic about the impulsive behavior thus emphasized in the hero.

20 Chanson de Roland in MS 0; Couronnement de Louis in the AB version; Charroi de Nîmes in the AS version; Prise d’Orange in the AS and D versions; Enfances Guillaume in the D version; Ami et Amile (one MS); Chanson de Guillaume (one MS), see Schurfranz Moorman; Raoul de Cambrai (one MS). I should correct here my mistaken assertion in "Textual Criticism" that Raoul does not appear to use repetition (p. 128); see Matarasso, pp. 271-277, and nn. 1 and 2 on p. 1x of the editors’ introduction, listing repeated verses in the text. Catherine Jones documents two extensive recurrences in Hervis de Mes.

21 The C version of both the Couronnement de Louis and the Prise d’Orange seems to eliminate it. Jourdain de Blaye (one MS) seems not to use it. Dominique Boutet appears to have found very little verbal echo in Jehan de Lanson. I have not yet found evidence of echo in the Enfances Vivien (any of
that we may take as a working hypothesis that poets, copyists, and performers used it, or avoided it, as a device.

It is a matter of considerable interest to learn the extent of the use of disjunctive echo, whether it is a regular feature throughout the tradition, an early device which went out of favor, or simply a device used right from the start by some poets or performers but not by others. Jean-Marcel Paquette has documented the deterioration of the device in a variety of scenes in the *Roland* as the text is transmitted from the early versions to the late ones; it is not clear whether this weakening of the device results from intention to cut redundancy or as a consequence of the dilution which accompanied the substitution of rhyme for assonance. There is some indication that the *C* version of the Guillaume cycle cut out these seeming redundancies: the *C* version of the *Couronnement* in the Lepage edition shows large blanks opposite the facing AB version where the latter contains disjunctive echoes, and in Régnier's edition of the three versions of the *Prise d'Orange* disjunctive echoes found in the *AB* and *D* versions regularly are missing from the *C* version. Comparing the echoes in the *AB* version to those of the *D* version might, I suspect, show different treatment of the device.

As a fairly evident feature in a text, a set of disjunctive echoes fixes attention on those passages which repeat. This highlighting can serve a variety of functions. The *Chanson de Roland* uses disjunctive echo extensively, largely in close conjunction with the contours of the laisse, for lyric and dramatic intensity; the parallel and similar laisses in that text which have drawn so much attention are disjunctive echoes reinforced by their match to the metric skein. The *Prise d'Orange* uses disjunctive echo for comedy, insisting repeatedly on the preposterous scrapes into which the hero gets himself time and again. The *Charroi de Nîmes* uses disjunctive echo

---

22 The Norse translation of the early version appears to have cut "redundancy" systematically (Aebischer, p. 40).
to emphasize narrative organization, marking articulations in the story by means of these echoes (see "Composite Laisse").

As an illustration of the function of marking narrative organization, let us look at a slight echo in the Charroi which marks the progression of Guillaume’s interview with the pagan kings Harpin and Otran, as Otran asks the supposed merchant a series of questions, part of the passage we examined above for its use of length of the laisse. Disjunctive echo, being an element of the verbal skein, can occur either in coordination with, or independently of, the metric skein, that is, the contours of the laisse. The first and last occurrences appear in internal position in their laisses while the two middle occurrences appear in laisse-initial position and contribute, by this mutual reinforcing of the three skeins, to an intense lyricism.

The echo consists of the first hemistichs Li rois Otrans and Tiacre frere (all four occurrences), the second hemistich [par la loi + relative clause] (occurrences 2, 3, and 4), and at least one hemistich presenting the direct discourse (all four occurrences). First, in internal position in 1. XLVI, Otran asks the merchant what goods he is carrying:

Li rois Otrans l’en apela errant CN(A) 1134
... Tiacre frere quel avoir vas menant 1138
  Syglatons sire cendaus et bouquerans 1139

This first occurrence is part of a series of questions and answers, as the supposed merchants introduce themselves; v. 1120, earlier in the same laisse and also containing the first hemistich Li rois Otran and a presentation of discourse in the second, belongs to this series. Then in 11. XLVII and XLVIII Otran pursues the question of the merchant’s goods, using the first laisse to ask Tiacre to share his goods and the second to ask where he has acquired so much wealth:

XLVII  Li rois Otrans Ten prist a apeler 1154
     Tiacre frere par la loi que tenez 1155
     Par vo plesir dites nos veritez 1156
     Mien esciènt molt grant avoir avez 1157
     Qui a charroi le fetes ci mener 1158
     Par voz merciz fetes nos en doner 1159
...

...
The écho marks thé laisse introduction in both cases, thereby raising the question and answer to the status of metric incident.\textsuperscript{23} Finally the echo occurs again in the next laisse, diluted by amplification and disassociated from the contours of the laisse.\textsuperscript{24}

| Li rois Otran | le prist a regarder | CN(A)  | 1207 |
| Quant il l'oï | sifaitement parler  |       | 1208 |
| Si a veü     | la boce sor le nes  |       | 1209 |
| Lors li remenbre | de Guilleme au cort nes |  | 1210 |
| Cortoisement | l'en a aresonez      |       | 1215 |
| Si l'en apele | con ja oïr porrez    |       | 1216 |

\textsuperscript{23} As a result, w. 1176-1184, which conclude 1. XLVII and in which Guillaume verifies that his entire convoy has entered the city, take on the effect of a parenthetic addition, wholly subordinate to the main business of the laisse, instead of raising a second subject in the laisse.

\textsuperscript{24} This occurrence of the echo is pushed back from laisse-initial position by another echo belonging to a wider network:

| I  | Oez seignor | Dex vos croisse bonté |  | 1 |
|    | Li glorieus | li rois de maiesté    |  | 2 |
| XLIV | Seignor oez | que Dex vos beneïe     |  | 1085 |
|     | Li glorieus | li filz sainte Marie   |  | 1086 |
| XLIX | Oez seignor | par Deu de maiesté     |  | 1205 |
|     | Conment Guillemes | fu le jor avisé |  | 1206 |
| L  | Oez seignor | que Dex vos beneïe     |  | 1315 |
|    | Confetement | Guillelmé atâïent    |  | 1316 |
| LIII | Oez seignor | Dex vos croisse bonté  |  | 1352 |
|     | Confaitement | Guillelmes a ovré     |  | 1353 |
This occurrence introduces a turning point with the threat that the pagans may recognize Guillaume, and the laisse continues at considerable length, first with Guillaume's tale of his misspent youth (vv. 1230-1244) and then with the first aggression against the supposed merchants, the slaughter of the two oxen (vv. 1246-1280). The echoes mark off a narrative unit, a kind of mini-episode beginning in 1. XLVI and running as far as 1. XLIX, where the pagans' hospitality begins to wear thin.

We shall make briefly three further observations about this set of echoes, leaving implicit their pertinence to disjunctive echo in general.

First, this set of echoes works in conjunction with others, of which we have mentioned only the one built on the hemistich *Oez segnor.* The intertwining of disjunctive echoes in the *Charroi* is quite elaborate.

Second, we note very briefly that echo plays a metric function, marking positions. Not only is position one of the constants in the echo, the verse naming Otran occupying the initial position, and the verse containing the vocative in second position, but also each of the occurrences is a position.

Third, we should insist on the relative weakness of this particular set of echoes. Not only are the first and second verses separated from each other in the first and last occurrences (the formula ABB' A'), the principal elements repeated are almost trivial components of narrative, a noun phrase as subject, *Li rois Otrans,* and a vocative, *Tiacre frere.* It is the appearance of these

---

25 See also 1064-1067 = 1139-1143, linking to another passage; 1252-1253 = 1263-1264 within 1. XLIX; 868-870 = 1016-1018 = 1295-1296, linking to two other passages. Further, the connection of our echo with the *Oez segnor* echo at the beginning of 1. XLIX builds another tie to the sequence in 11. L-LII.
two hemistichs in immediately successive verses, reinforced by par la loi in initial position of the second hemistich of the second verse, that is, the B form of the echo, which raises this unit to the status of an echo. Further, the prevalence of disjunctive echo in the poem reinforces this particular network of echoes.

Disjunctive echo, seen as a set of internal references from one point in the text to another, is a principle of narrative and lyric organization. It is not bound to the laisse, either as in parallel laisses or in parallism of introductions or conclusion, although it certainly does function in conjunction with the laisse in many passages. Nor is it a "motif", a prefabricated block furnished by the tradition, although traditional elements of epic narrative like lance combat may be used as disjunctive echoes. It may well derive as a device from the conditions of oral composition, but in the texts where it occurs we should not overlook its function as a set of internal references.

Consecutive Echo

Consecutive echo may be said to begin at the relatively subconscious level of the rhythms and abstract patterns of speech, reinforced by the repetitive nature of the metric language of the genre. It calls to some extent on word choice, but to a much greater extent it uses more abstract categories like lexical categories and grammatical patterns. Deriving as it does from the nature of the versification, it is in principle latent everywhere in the genre, ranging from the monotony which is so often felt when reading a chanson de geste, especially at first exposure to the genre, to extraordinary degrees of lyricism. Indeed one of the important questions it presents is defining the difference between intensely musical passages and the dreary ones. The key may lie in a rather hard to define agreement of the narrative skein with the verbal and metric; a referential recurrence somewhat stronger than the usual repetition which takes place in any sequence of verses (one little happening per metric sentence) shifts the text from simple narrative advance to a more insistent attention to rhythm.

In a straightforward case like an enumeration of heroes we may actually be looking at something of a set piece. Here is a passage from Raoul de Cambrai:

XXXVII Quarante ostaiges l'emperere li done 783
I have not yet found Raoul to be particularly sensitive to the play of semantic rhythms in the metric language of the genre, but one notes in this list of hostages, w. 785-788, an incantational quality to the constant repetition of the pattern \{anthroponym + de + toponym\}. (Compare a similar effect in PO 593-597, above.) One also notes the very slight variations, which may well preserve the passage from monotony. The second hemistich of v. 787 alters the opposition of first hemistich without conjunction to second hemistich opening with the conjunction; this change goes along with the sole deviation from the pattern of two-syllable anthroponyms, Savari counting three syllables. The two-syllable Auçois in the very first hemistich of the series presents the sole exception to the pattern of one-syllable toponyms in the first hemistich as opposed to two-syllable toponyms in the second. And a change of rhythm marks the conclusion of the list: w. 789-790 continue the list by dwelling on the last person named, but they cease adding items to the list.

Lists of names proliferate in the genre: in the Prise d'Orange, the pagan king Arragon lists his father's vassals (AB 592-603, C 552-559, D 458-467); Charlemagne lists the men who will accompany Renier to his fief in Genvres vv. 1169-1172 in Girart de Vienne; in the Couronnement de Louis, challenged by the giant Corsolt, Guillaume proudly declaims his family lineage vv. 820-831 (version AB, vv. 566-575 in version C). In Raoul de Cambrai vv. 811-813 list the fiefs of Herbert de Vermendois, as do vv. 874-876, 987-989, and 1004-1005. Laisse XII of MS O of the Chanson de Roland lists the members of Charlemagne's council, and vv. 2345-2348 list the relics in the pommel of Durendal. In the Charroi de Nîmes Louis promises one quarter of his kingdom to Guillaume in an elaborate list, vv. 384-394 (Heinemann, "Aperçus").

Consecutive echo is by no means limited to lists of nouns. In Girart de Vienne Charlemagne knights Renier:
Here we have not a string of nouns but a series of clauses, one per verse, displaying very strongly marked constants. The first three are Type IIn2CO and show marked rhythmic contrast to the Type IIn2S of v. 751 (thus the formula A A' A" B):

748 IIn2CO  
749 IIn2CO  
750 IIn2CO  
751 IIn2S  

The semantic patterns within the hemistichs add other formulas, like so many arabesques, to this formula. In the first hemistich, the internal pattern follows a formula which could be approximated as A A' B A":

```
Forms A A' 748, 749 1 2 3 4
   --CA- li V1
Form B 750 1 2 3 4
   --S-- li V2
Form A" 751 1 2 3 4
   --CA-- le V2
```

CA = El + noun (part of the body)  
V1 (present indicative, third person plural)  
V2 (present indicative, third person singular)

The A" occurrence also contains an element of the B occurrence, namely the shift of the verb to the singular.

In the second hemistich positions are relative rather than absolute; the number of syllables which the elements occupy changes, but the order does not. Vv. 748-750 all observe the same internal pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>initial</th>
<th>medial 1</th>
<th>medial 2</th>
<th>final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J.</td>
<td>adj.</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>modifier</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V. 750 departs slightly from the pattern established by the two preceding verses in that the adjective in the second position is no longer one of color. V. 751 departs entirely from the pattern, giving a formula A A' A" B. The analysis of these patterns of similarity and variation quickly becomes tedious; the patterns themselves, however, confer musicality on these verses.

Helge Nordahl’s study of chiasmic constructions in the Oxford Roland shows the musicality of consecutive echo operating in passages as short as a single verse. While a passage a half dozen lines long may be seen as a kind of lyric piece set off from its surroundings, this kind of musicality, being set off neither by length nor by striking intensity, implies a more or less constant craft. Acknowledging this craft does not necessarily argue for written composition; it simply recognizes a sensitivity to rhythm and balance, a gift which a poet has and a rhymer does not and which, presumably is found in equal proportions among the literate and the illiterate.

Consecutive echo does not lend itself to identification as easily as does disjunctive echo, and so it will probably always remain a somewhat uncertain aspect of the texts. It is, however, fairly certain that at the very least the play of recurrence and variation in the thrust at cesura and line-end create a musicality which we have not yet begun to appreciate, and I suspect that a considerable amount of lyric virtuosity remains to be discovered.26

External Echo

It is something of a commonplace in chanson de geste studies to refer to the oral tradition from which the texts derive. Lists of "formulas" like those published by Matarasso (pp. 282-293), Hitze, or Duggan ("Couronnement"; Roland, pp. 105-159), to name but three such, are intended to show the utilization of "traditional" materials. "Formula" and "motif", since Rychner, are not only the tools of the oral-formulaic school, they also imply reference to as

26 See for another example the analysis of vv. 5-13 of version A of the Charroi de Nîmes in "Rythmes sémantiques... Types grammaticaux".
well as use of a stock of traditional, conventional materials. Indeed, whether one adheres to the oral school or to the written, the recurrence of similar formulations across a wide range of chansons de geste implies some sort of reference back and forth. The question is to grasp the nature of that reference.

The tradition to which the texts refer, being oral, is rather elusive, not to say seven or eight centuries dead. We do have, however, some hundred extant poems, many of them preserved in more than one version, and many versions represented by more than one manuscript, a rather considerable corpus with which to work. We may be reduced to speculation about the tradition anterior to the earliest texts, but, from the late twelfth century on, we have materials with which to work. Again, though, the problem is to get an accurate picture of the tradition, one which is not distorted by exaggerating the importance of one text or set of texts. The usual victim of this exaggeration is, of course, the Oxford version of the *Chanson de Roland*, which, although regularly admitted to be atypical, continues to stand as the principal point of reference for chanson de geste studies. The reader of this article will note in this regard the limited place given to that text here.

We can discern at least three kinds of reference outward from the text: reference to a specific passage, allusion to a sub-set of the tradition, and allusion to the tradition in general. The first two, by their very nature, provoke reference as their dominant effect: they link the text in which they appear to occurrences in other texts.

The first kind is direct reference to a specific passage, either as an allusion to that passage or as a straightforward copy. A number of echoes, for example, link the *Charroi de Nîmes* to the *Couronnement de Louis*, which precedes it in the short cycle of Guillaume d'Orange, and to the *Prise d'Orange*, which follows it, as we noted above.

The second kind of reference may be described as allusion to a subsection of the tradition. Unlike the first kind of reference, it does not point to any spécifique passage but rather to a general ensemble of texts, but, at the same time, it does not refer to the tradition as a whole. Perhaps the classic example characterizes the Guillaume cycle, the famous knockout punch which we all know
and love in Guillaume, but which extends to his relatives.\textsuperscript{27} It serves to situate a text by recalling a familiar and, no doubt, favorite detail. Here the reference from any given occurrence is made, not to any specific other occurrence, but to the generality of occurrences in the Guillaume cycle.

One can easily imagine the manner in which the first kind of echo becomes the second: one text makes a specific reference to another, then a third picks up that echo, then a fourth, and the specificity of the reference begins to dilute. Instead of referring to the opening scene of the \textit{Couronnement de Louis}, an occurrence refers to the general tone of the Guillaume poems.

The third kind of reference, the reuse of a commonplace for any of a variety of reasons, brings us to the so-called stock of traditional "formulas" and "motifs," deriving in their scholarly genealogy from Parry and Lord, the \textit{useful} devices which the illiterate singer learns as part of his trade. Formulas allow the singer to express himself metrically without searching for words; motifs provide him with a ready-made outline of standard incidents, not just an outline of the details which compose the incident but also the formulas with which to express those details. It is this kind of external echo which presents the difficulties, both in determining the presence of the echo and in deciding on its effect.

It seems reasonable, for example, to distinguish between those conventions which characterize the chanson de geste and those which characterize narrative in general. Boutet lists "le rire" as a "motif" in \textit{Jehan de Lanson} (p. 101), but laughter is not particular to the Old French epic; on the other hand, formulations based on the model \textit{Ot le + [character] + si a geté un ris} are typical of the expression given to the laugh in many chansons de geste. To the extent that the study of "formula" and "motif" bears on allusion to the tradition, it concentrates on features which distinguish the

\textsuperscript{27} Gui delivers the family punch to Pharaon in the \textit{Prise d'Orange} (version \textit{AB}) vv. 1600-1606. Frappier believes that the trait originates with the \textit{Couronnement} (pp. 94-96).
tradition of the chanson de geste from other traditions.\(^{28}\) We are looking for repetitions which involve the conjunction of the verbal, metric, and narrative skeins and which occur in a wide range of texts.

Excessive generality creates another problem, however, when we try to establish norms for the relative weight of constant and variable in these components of the tradition. If we admit no variables other than the place of the occurrence, we run up against the nature of both spelling and word structure in Old French. Not only *aie finir, finer, and fenir* alternate spellings of the "same" verb, they imply two different conjugations; *folie, foleté, and folage* are used so interchangeably that they can scarcely be considered to be three different nouns. We have to admit spelling variants and at least some "insignificant" morphological variants, but, once we admit these kinds of variables, it becomes difficult to draw the line. Duggan, for example, admits variation of the word at the assonance in a count of "formulas" in which for methodological reasons he wants to restrict severely the part of the variable (*Roland*, pp. 10-11). What then are we to make of the following hemistichs listed by Hitze (p. 222)?

1) sor son elme gemé *Raoul* 4084 item #18  
2) sor son elme d'or mie *Aspremont* 3640 item #12  
3) sor son elme a or mie *Raoul* 2585 item #11  
4) en son elme devant *Aspremont* 6065 item #21

Examples 1 and 2 oppose a single adjective to a three-word adjectival phrase in the last two syllables of the hemistich. Example 3, like example 2, uses a three-word adjectival phrase in final position, but the phrase occupies three syllables. And in example 4, the difference of preposition in initial position is slight compared to the function of the final position, an adverb as opposed to the adjectival functions of the three other examples.

\(^{28}\) For the purposes of the distinction in my review of Boutet (pp. 106-108) I refer to n-motifs, which are common to narratives in general, and to e-motifs, particular to the chanson de geste.
Parry and Lord defined the "formula" as admitting only limited variations; it is in the "formulaic system" that the vitality of this style of composition resides. The formulaic system anchors itself more or less to a semantically heavy word and a grammatical pattern. One quickly discovers, however, variations in which the grammatical pattern remains but another word takes the place of the presumably fixed word. In the first hemistichs of the following two versions of the same verse, the only constant word is the definite article *la*, and yet the two readings show a fundamental similarity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brandist la lance</th>
<th>si ficha as ester</th>
<th>Rol (Ch) 2092</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roidist la jambe</td>
<td>si s'affiche en l'estrier</td>
<td>Rol (P) 555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is, in fact, most difficult, not to say impossible, to find a satisfactory point at which to draw the line to variation, and we come to the conclusion that any sentence fitted to the mold of the epic line of verse is "formulaic"; we have generalized the "formula" to the point of triviality: if any epic line of verse is a "formula", then there is no distinguishing those verses which draw on the tradition from those which do not because there are none in

29 Cf. the definition of the epic cliché by Paul Imbs: "1) Un ensemble de vocables à sens 'plein' et la représentation d'une matière; 2) Une forme syntaxique; 3) Un rythme qui lui permet d'entrer aisément dans le décasyllabe" (Technique littéraire des chansons de geste, p. 57, discussion of O. Jodogne's paper).

One sees much the same tendency in Hitze's hundred-page appendix of first- and second-hemistich "formulas" (pp. 149-251). A relatively small number of hemistichs occur in identical form in a number of her texts, but most of these "formulas" show variations from one occurrence to another morphemes, tool words, semantically heavy words, word order.

The extent of variation leads Rossi almost to melancholy (pp. 173-174): "L'étude de la formule... n'a pas permis de constituer une véritable liste de formules et ne semble même pas avoir abouti à des conclusions claires."

30 Many of the "formulas" which Maureen Cromie defines are so general in nature that they cannot be restricted to the chanson de geste. "Formulas" of this nature suggest that we think in terms of a kind of sliding scale against which to measure the degree to which an element is particular to the epic tradition.
the latter category. We may possibly have succeeded in excluding things foreign to the genre, but we do not have a tool for making distinctions within the genre. And we have become tautological: a trait is typical of the genre because it is found in the genre.

And yet the readers of *Olifant* are all familiar with stock phrases like *Par tel vertu* and *por les membres trenchier*, phrases which just do not have the same "feel" as *Metent les tables au mengier sont assis* (*PO*, version A, v. 547), not to mention *On dit qu'un prompt départ vous éloigne de nous/ Seigneur* (*Phèdre*, II v). We know there is a very familiar stock of phrases in the genre, and many of us feel that their familiarity has something to do with the metrical usefulness which Parry finds implicit in his formula.31 We can analyze this feeling further and discern degree of semantic weight, degree of appropriateness to the particular context in which the phrase occurs, and relative frequency as somehow related questions. They are, however, delicate questions.

A low measure of semantic weight is characteristically considered a feature of the epic cliché, but modulation of semantic weight can be seen to play a part in the semantic rhythms of low-level consecutive echo. A passage like vv. 1124-1167 of the *Moniage Guillaume*, which Duggan quotes, putting into small capitals those second hemistichs which do not add to the plot (*Roland*, pp. 206-207), may be seen to play on this modulation. The hemistichs in question are indeed "ornamental", as Duggan calls them, but not for the reason he gives, that they "simply reflect the desires of the medieval audience: that God crush the thieves [v. 1137 que Damedieus cravente]." (p. 207). Rather, they ornament the passage by varying the degree to which each hemistich advances the narrative.

31 "Studies", pp. 80-81, following his often-quoted definition of the "formula": "The definition thus implies the metrical usefulness of the formula. It is not necessary that a poet use one certain formula when he has a given idea to express and a given space of the verse to fill, since there can be formulas of like metrical value and meaning which can take the place of one another, though they are rare in Homer. But if a formula is to be used regularly there must be a steady need for it"
Appropriateness to the context actually cuts both ways. On the one hand, the epic cliché is notable for the way in which it appears everywhere; it is appropriate to no particular passage. On the other hand, the "formula" exists, if such a thing does exist, precisely because it is so useful, so appropriate to its context. The currency of a considerable number of four- and six-syllable phrases in what he called "elementary Old French" explained, in Frederick Whitehead's eyes, the occurrence of many repeated hemistichs. Whitehead argued that these were not "formulas"; we could argue, on the contrary, that these hemistichs are precisely the stuff of which the "formula" is made.

We have already noted how a measure of variation in "formulas" complicates the question of frequency: Hitze's "formulas" are striking in their variety, and very few of them, in fact, appear to occur with a high degree of frequency. Indeed lexical frequency is proving, now that computerized word counts are coming within the compass of everyday research, to be a somewhat more vexed question than one would think. It does, however, seem appropriate to assume that an element, whether "formula" or "motif", should not be treated as traditional until it is found in a range of texts; as Boutet observes (p. 157 and n. 57), recurrence in a single text does not mark an element as belonging to the traditional stock.

32 Boulet uses the words "stéréotypie" and "abstraction" to refer to this all-purpose nature, as opposed to "caractérisation", which is specific to a given context. See in particular pp. 121-127, "Abstraction et caractérisation."

33 As an example let me just mention a peculiarity which I stumbled across a few years ago. The more than 70 million words forming the corpus of the *Trésor de la langue française* appear insufficient to level irregularities of frequency: the rather intellectual word *faculté* appears 6034 times in the corpus, as opposed to 1744 occurrences of the everyday word *fatiguer*. See the *Dictionnaire des fréquences, Vocabularie littéraire des XIXe et XXe siècles*, 4 vols. (Paris: Didier, 1971) published in conjunction with the TLF. The contrast between these figures is fairly striking, but an adequate appreciation of this relatively simple irregularity would require quite lengthy discussion, obviously out of place here.
Picking up again the principle that strongly marked recurrences within a text constitute internal reference before they make external allusion, we shall assume that where an echo (that is, a set of occurrences) is a feature of the text as found in one or more manuscripts, or as found in one or more versions, of a poem, the reference is internal in those texts. When the echo occurs in many poems, then the reference may also be external; the greater the number of occurrences, and the the wider the range of poems in which they appear, the more the element involved may be described as traditional. In all cases, the greater the proportion of constant to variable, the stronger the reference: one hemistich is stronger than one two-syllable word, and one verse stronger than one hemistich. A two-syllable word reinforced by the grammatical pattern in which it fits or by its position in the hemistich is a stronger reference than a two-syllable word occurring in different grammatical constructions and different positions. A grammatical type like IIn1S is a weaker reference than a complete hemistich like Enfui te torne.34 At some point (very likely not so much a point as a fairly wide range) along this very imprecise scale, we pass from those repetitions which occur through the natural processes of language and narration to repetitions which occur because of the particularities of the chanson de geste. Locating that point or range would entail an understanding of lexical frequency in ordinary language (whatever that may be) as well as interrogation of an extensive corpus of chansons de geste.35

34 JB 4071; EG 439,1012,2079,2856, 2893, 3103, 3332.

35 At present I have in progress a small corpus in machine-readable form thanks to the efforts of David Jordan and the generosity of Joseph J. Duggan, Peter R. Grillo, William W. Kibler, and Annalee C. Rejhon. The corpus is too small for meaningful interrogation of the genre, and it is still in a very experimental, not to say chaotic, state, but it does permit certain elementary searches such as the ones which produced the list of occurrences of the hemistich Et cil respondent in JB, EG, and CN.

Disjunctive echo, being less problematic than external echo, is easier to discover through machine searches. Recently I have begun mapping the occurrences of these echoes in the Prise d'Orange (the AB version), using TACT (developed by John Bradley and Lidio Presutti at the University of Toronto); it appears that disjunctive echo permeates and organizes the text to an extent which quite exceeds that suggested in Schurfranz's discussion and even that which Lachet has documented.
The eight occurrences of the hemistich *Et cíl respont* (or its variant in the plural) in *Jourdain de Blaye* quoted above could well be, for example, the kind of recurrence of which Whitehead was thinking. Compare the sixteen occurrences in the *Enfances Guillaume*\textsuperscript{36} and six in the *Charroi de Nîmes*\textsuperscript{37} Clearly the hemistich shows a happy coincidence of narrative needs with the rules of epic versification. Is it something more than just a very convenient phrase?

Having sketched out, not so much a definition of external echo as a rather imprecise set of boundaries within which external echo may possibly be found, we may turn to the esthetic functions of external echo.

Probably the first function occurs at the most banal level, in establishing a set of conventions or expectations, setting a tone, marking the text as a chanson de geste (Rossi, Boutet, *passim*). The very nature of the language used, the strongly marked syntactic breaks at cesura and verse-end, situate a text in the epic tradition. Certainly this effect results from the many external echoes in which the share of the variable is too great in relation to that of the constant for us to feel with assurance that they may be traditional set pieces. Inverting the tautology we used above, we may say that a text is a chanson de geste or related to the chanson de geste because it uses the metric language of the chanson de geste; in fact, this formulation breaks away from tautology.

Perhaps the "function" which has been known the longest derives from lack of skill. The scribe or poet of little talent uses hackeneyed material to fill out his lines and stumble through his tale. This lack of skill shows up as internal echo as well. Within the same laisse he repeats the same rhyme words or, even worse, the same second hemistichs, all to no perceptible esthetic effect. When

\textsuperscript{36} Vv. 348, 754, 791, 802, 824, 899, 915, 1164, 1259, 1611, 2000, 2005, 2066, 2235, 2534, and 3062.

\textsuperscript{37} Vv. 122, 858, 889, 909, 947, 1272.
he returns to the same assonance later on, he pulls out the same stock of clichés. I mention this effect, which we may call poverty, only as a reminder that we have all encountered this effect in both external and internal echo.

Other allusions carry more narrative weight. The description of a battle in *Jourdain de Blaye* vv. 208-210 is expedited rapidly by means of this kind of allusion:

| La veïssiez | un estor si mortel | JB 208 |
| Tante anste fraindre | et tant escu troer | 209 |
| L'un mort sor l'autre | trebuchier et verser | 210 |

Rossi (p. 162) and Boutet (pp. 116-117) suggest that traditional elements can be used for rapidity: a line or two suffice to evoke a well-known motif.

The traditional element can also be used to introduce a distinctly non-traditional element, as in parody. The hemistich *Qui donc veïst*, like *La veïssiez*, is used in a wide range of texts to introduce a description of heroic battle; in 1. XXXVII the *Charroi de Nîmes* uses it to introduce the description of workers hammering together barrels, and the strong contrast between the usual heroic context and this decidedly unheroic one produces a comic effect, emphasized by the traditional conclusion:

| Qui dont veïst | les durs vilains errer | CN(A) 964 |
| Et doleiores | et coignies porter | 965 |
| Tonneaus loier | et toz renoveler | 966 |
| Chars et charretes | chevillier et barrer | 967 |
| Dedenz les tonnes | les chevaliers entrer | 968 |
| De grant barnage | li petit remembrer | 969 |

Less commonly thought of than parody is the rhythmic value of the traditional element, in a sense the broader heading under which rapidity of allusion might fall. We saw above the rhythmic effects in discourse presentation, in standard one-hemistich presentations, amplified full-verse presentations, presentations amplified still further, and acceleration through suppression of the presentation. Vv. 1212-1217 of the *Charroi*, part of which we have already evoked, amplify two details to three verses in length each,
As we saw above, this is the point at which the pagan kings' welcome to the supposed merchant begins to sour. The amplification of traditional elements contributes to a kind of narrative slowdown and to a particular emphasis put on this juncture in Guillaume's adventure.

A precise definition of the tradition continues to elude us, making external echo particularly problematic. The grammatical types we sketched out above are very likely basic enough that they characterize the entire tradition, as are, no doubt, in some form or other the metric principles associated with them, cohesion, thrust, position, and length. Meter, however, is a component of poetry in general, as is often the device of consecutive echo. It remains to be seen how these elements differ in the Old French epic tradition from their use in French poetry generally and whether their use remains the same throughout the chanson de geste. Disjunctive echo, on the other hand, seems to be a distinctive feature of the genre, or at least of part of it.

In this paper I have touched on some of the highlights in the role of repetition in the chanson de geste, starting from the basic underlying metric repetitions to which the close adhesion of syntax to hemistich and verse in the genre give a particular emphasis. The subject is intricate, the many parts are interrelated, and much remains implicit.

Although the reader may find little reference to Jean Rychner, and although I certainly cannot be accused of belonging to an oralist school, virtually everything in this paper derives from Rychner's insights as seen from the perspective of a vital exchange between
rhythm and meaning. Meaning derives from meter, from the semantic impulse from one metric unit to the next, from the internal cohesion of a metric unit, from position within a metric unit, from length of or length within a metric unit. Meaning is rhythmic in the chanson de geste. Rychner's grammatical types, perhaps the keystone of the entire edifice, his analysis of the contours of the laisse, his discussion of parallelisms, both as related to the laisse and as they appear in individual verses, all point to verbal repetition coordinated with the metric units of hemistich, verse, and laisse.

There is some interest in categorizing, in drawing up lists, in counting occurrences of Type Iln1s verses in laisse-initial position or comparing the relative frequency of Type III verses in Girart de Vienne and the Couronnement de Louis. Categories like the "composite laisse" have a certain heuristic value in that they may raise questions about a particular passage. The vitality, the poetry (and I trust that at least some of the preceding analyses have shown the reality of that poetry) of the chanson de geste, however, lie less in these essentially static counts and categories than in the semantic rhythms which a Type Iln1CA imparts to a passage of Type Iln2CO verses, or which an anticipating thrust at the line-end brings to a series of agglutinating verses. We are a far distance from the monotonous droning of ten-syllable verses hammering away endlessly in -ant or in -iez.

New perspectives and questions open. For sheer brilliance of composition, I wonder if the Charroi de Nîmes does not outshine the Oxford Roland, precisely in the intricacy of the weave of metric, verbal, and narrative skeins; Rychner, however, says of this text that it reveals "une correspondance très imparfaite des éléments narratifs et des éléments lyriques" (Essai p. 110). What of P. Matarasso's treatment of répétition in Raoul de Cambrai (pp. 271-277)? The interplay of répétition and variation which she documents on the three skeins seems quite remarkable. Does Ami et Amile use disjunctive echo mechanically, or does Claude Lachet's discussion of echoing laisse introductions point to skilled technique? Are the disjunctive echoes in MS B.N. fr. 1448 less well crafted than those found in the AB version of the Guillaume poems? In a casual conversation not so many years ago, a colleague of mine, a medievalist in French, questioned something I had said about a chanson de geste; he had always, he said, thought of the chanson de
geste as the prose of the twelfth century. There appear to be good reasons for looking more carefully at the poetry in the genre.

Edward A. Heinemann
University of Toronto

Bibliography

1. TEXTS
McMILLAN, Duncan (ed.). Le Charroi de Nîmes, Chanson de geste du XIIe siècle éditée d'après la rédaction AB avec Introduction, Notes et Glossaire, Deuxième édition revue et corrigée, BFR, B:12 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1978)
_________. Les Textes de la Chanson de Roland, t. IV, Le Manuscrit de Châteauroux, (Paris: Geste Francor, 1943)
_________. Les Textes de la Chanson de Roland, t. VI, Le Texte de Paris, (Paris: Geste Francor, 1942)
2. STUDIES


__________. "Aesthetic Considerations Based on Elaborate Style in the Chanson de Roland: Narrative Progression and Blending of Discourse in Laisses 40-42", Olifant, 15:2 (Summer 1990), 137-154


CROMIE, Maureen. "Le style formulaire dans Le Voyage de Charlemagne à Jérusalem et à Constantinople (le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne)", Revue des langues romanes, 77 (1967), 31-54

DUGGAN, Joseph J. "Formulas in the Couronnement de Louis", Romania, 87 (1966), 315-344


GITTLEMAN, Anne Iker. "Le Style épique dans "Garin le Loherain", PRF, 94 (Geneva: Droz, 1967)


__________. "Composite Laisse' and Echo as Organizing Principles: The Case of Laisse I of the Charroi de Nîmes", Romance Philology, 37 (November 1983) 2,127-138

__________. "Composition stylisée et technique littéraire dans la Chanson de Roland", Romania, 94 (1973), 1-28

__________. "Linguistic Counterpoint in Roland, Laisse XII: Expressions of Parallel Alignment in Langue and in Parole and the Place of Convention and of Construction in a Semantic Set", Olifant, 8 (Winter 1980) 2,115-129


__________. Review of Dominique BOUTET, "Jehan de Lanson", Technique et esthétique..., Olifant, 15...1 (Spring 1990), 103-120.
Heinemann / Metric Artistry 57

"Rythmes sémantiques de la chanson de geste: Types grammaticaux du vers et pulsions à la césure", Romania, forthcoming.


"Silence in thé Interstices: Epie Cliché and the Editorial Poetics of the Chanson de geste (Couronnement de Louis 736-739)", L'Esprit créateur, 27 (Spring 1987) 1, The Poetics of Textual Criticism: The Old French Example, 24-33


"Textual Criticism or Literary Criticism? Echo (Or Is It Redundancy?) and the Shifting Text of the Old French Epic", TEXT, Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship, 4 (1988), 121-133


HOLLAND, Michael. "Rolandus resurrectus", pp. 397-418 in Mélanges offerts à René Crozet (Poitiers: Société d'Etudes Médiévales, 1966), t. 2

JODOGNE, Omer. "Sur l'originalité de Raoul de Cambrai", in La Technique littéraire des chansons de geste (1959), pp. 37-58

JONES, Catherine M. "Dispersed Parallelism in Herns de Mes", Olifant, 13:1 (Spring 1988), 29-40


"Nouvelles recherches sur la Prise d'Orange" Revue des langues romanes, 91 (1987), 55-80


McMILLAN, Duncan. "Notes sur quelques clichés formulaires dans les chansons de geste de Guillaume d'Orange", in Mélanges de linguistique romane et de philologie médiévale offerts à M. Maurice Delhouille (Gembloux: Duculot, 1964), t. 2, pp. 477-493


POPE, Mildred K. "Four Chansons de geste: A Study in Old French Versification", *Modern Language Review*, 8 (1913), 352-367; 9 (1914), 41-52; 10 (1915), 310-319


SLAKTA, Denis. "L’ordre du texte", Études de linguistique appliqué, n.s. 19 (juillet-septembre 1975, Essais en linguistique et en philosophie du langage), 30-42
La Technique littéraire des chansons de geste. Actes du Colloque de Liège (septembre 1957), Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège, Fasc. 150 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1959)

--±± --±±

**Personalia**

**Mercedes Vaquero** has recently moved from the University of Michigan to Brown University, where she is an Assistant Professor of Medieval Spanish Literature. In addition to a recent publication on the epic in *Olifant* 15/1, she read a paper in one of the Société's medieval epic sessions at Kalamazoo, has published *Tradiciones orales en la historiografía define de la Edad Media* (Madison, 1990), and is currently working on a book on the Spanish epic of revolt.

--±± --±±

As noted recently in **Personalia**, **Gerard J. Brault** (Penn State) was named Distinguished Professor in January 1990. Word has now been received that Gerry has been given an endowed professorship and proudly bears the new title of Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of French and Medieval Studies.

--±± --±±