
The Use of Rhetoric in the Nibelungenlied: A Stylistic and Structural Study of Aventure V

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THE USE OF RHETORIC IN THE *NIBELUNGENLIED*: A STYLISTIC AND STRUCTURAL STUDY OF *AVENTIURE V* ❧ BY SISTER MARY FRANCES MCCARTHY ❧ After two centuries and more of scholarship, it is no longer necessary to prove that the *Nibelungenlied*-poet was, as Panzer has put it, "mit der lateinischen Rhetorik wohl vertraut."¹ In fact, there already exists a rather large *corpus* of works that clearly demonstrates both his knowledge and his use of several of the individual tropes and figures of rhetoric.² But, in a sense, these works do the poet an injustice. By isolating style from structure, they obscure what is, I think, his most significant achievement, viz., the coordination of style and structure in the interests of unity. It is this aspect of his work that I wish to demonstrate. Since stylistic and structural analysis is a lengthy procedure, however, it is not feasible to attempt it here for the *Nibelungenlied* (NL) as a whole. I shall limit my

¹ Friedrich Panzer, *Das Nibelungenlied: Entstehung und Gestalt* (Stuttgart, 1955), p. 483.

² The most recent, as well as the most comprehensive, of these is the treatise on "Sprachstil und innere Form" that comprises the sixth chapter of Panzer's book. Among the treatises on the use of individual figures or tropes in the NL, the following deserve special mention: 1) Albert Krause, *Die Litotes und ähnliche Figuren im Nibelungenliede* (Berlin, 1913): includes not only *deminutio (litotes)*, but also *contrarium*; 2) Leo Wol, "Der groteske und hyperbolische Stil des mittelhochdeutschen Volksepos," *Palaestra* XXV (Berlin, 1903): also contains a discussion of irony; 3) Georg Radke, *Die epische Formel im Nibelungenliede* (Fraustadt, 1890): discusses the phenomena of *antonomasia (pro-nominatio)*, circumlocution, superlative expressions (the "hyperbole" of Wol's study), contrast, irony; 4) H. Groth, *Vergleich, Metapher, Allegorie, und Ironie in dem Nibelungenlied und der Kudrun* [Monograph], Programm des Kaiserin-Augusta Gymnasiums zu Charlottenburg, 1879; 5) Alfred Hübner, "Die 'mhd. Ironie' oder die Litotes im Altdeutschen," *Palaestra* 170 (Leipzig, 1930); 6) Josef Körner, *Das Nibelungenlied* (Leipzig und Berlin, 1921); 7) Richard von Muth, *Einleitung in das Nibelungenlied*, 2. Aufl. (Paderborn, 1907); 8) Hugo Wislicenus, *Das Nibelungenlied als Kunstwerk* (Fluntern bei Zürich, 1866): discusses the poet's use of onomatopoeia, simile, metaphor, etc.; 9) O. Behaghel, "Zur Technik der mittelhochdeutschen Dichtung," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, XXX (Halle, 1905), 431-564: discusses repetition and variations.

remarks, therefore, to *Aventiure V: Wie Sifrit Kriemhilde aller erste ersach*.³

Friedrich Maurer and Michael S. Batts have divided the 60 strophes of *Aventiure V* into three numerically symmetrical sections of 20 strophes each: 1) strophes 265-284; 2) strophes 285-304; 3) strophes 305-324.⁴ But their division, as we shall see, disturbs the unity of the *Aventiure*. By studying the NL-poet's use of stylistic devices, I have arrived at what seems to me a more satisfactory division. The pages that follow will provide the rationale for this division and will point out many other instances of the poet's use of stylistic devices both to support the structure of his epic and to call attention to the *hic-et-nunc* of its individual episodes.

AVENTIURE V

Rising action (strophes 265-287 = 23 strophes)

Movement one: the beginning of the festival

265-270 = 6 strophes

Movement two: entrance of the ladies into the court

271-287 = 17 strophes

Main action (strophes 288-305 = 18 strophes)

Movement three: Kriemhild and Siegfried

288-305 = 18 strophes

Falling action (strophes 306-324 = 19 strophes)

Movement four: the end of the festival

306-317 = 12 strophes

Movement five: Siegfried's decision to remain in Worms

318-324 = 7 strophes

Movement one: the beginning of the festival (265-270)

Aventiure V opens with a reference to the guests who are coming "tägelichen . . . zer höhgezîte" (265, 1-2). In the first movement

³ Because this is a stylistic study, it must be based on a specific text—in this instance, Ms. B of the *Nibelungenlied* as contained in *Das Nibelungenlied*, ed. Helmut de Boor, 19. Aufl. (Wiesbaden, 1967). Parts of this study were read, in a much shorter form, before the Fourth Biennial Conference on Medieval Studies sponsored by The Medieval Institute of Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, March 13-15, 1968.

⁴ Cf. Friedrich Maurer, "Über den Bau der Aventiuren des Nibelungenliedes," *Festschrift für Dietrich Kralik* (Horn, 1954), and Michael S. Batts, "Die Form der Aventiuren im Nibelungenlied," in *Beiträge zur deutschen Philologie* 29, 1961, 42.

(strophes 265-270), where the poet records the arrival of these guests and their reception at Worms, he refers again and again (*commoratio*) to one or other aspect of the general air of rejoicing that marks the approach of the festival. "Durch des küneges liebe" (265, 3), he tells us, the guests came "gerne" (265, 2) to the *hohgezît*; upon their arrival, they were given "ross und hêrlîch gewant" (265, 4); the ladies of the court "zierten sich" (266, 4) before going out to welcome them; Giselher and Gernot received them "güetliche" (267, 2); the guests themselves were "fürsten" (266, 3); they arrived with "vil goltrôter sâtele" (268,1), "zierliche scilde" (268, 2), and "hêrlîch gewant" (268, 2); those who had been wounded in the *Sachsenkrieg* "muosen des vergezzen, wie herte was der tôt" (269, 2). The narrator himself stresses the cordiality of the reception accorded the guests: "jâ gruozten si di degene, als ez nâch êren was getân" (267, 4), and resorts to *superlatio* (hyperbole) to describe the happiness of the occasion: "wunne âne mâze, mit vreuden überkraft" (270, 2). In the repetition of the key word *hohgezît* (265, 2; 266, 3; 268, 3; 269, 4), the poet employs *traductio* both as an aid to *commoratio* and as a means of linking this movement with the end of *Aventiure IV* (where the *hohgezît* is mentioned in lines 257, 3, and 262, 3) and with the next movement of *Aventiure V* (where it is mentioned in lines 271, 3, and 273, 2). We should note, too, that most of the references in this movement—except those that pertain directly to the festivity of the occasion—are general. The poet speaks of "die geste" (267, 2), of "di degene" (267, 4)—or, by *pronomination*, of those "die zer hohgezîte gerne wolden sîn" (265, 2); he speaks of "die siechen ungesunden" (269, 3)—or, by *pronomination*, of those "Die in den betten lâgen und heten wunden nôt" (269, 1); he speaks of "die scœnen frouwen" (266, 4). But Siegfried is not mentioned, nor is Kriemhild. Even the time has not been specified exactly; the events occur "tägelîchen" (265, 1). In strophe 270, 4, the poet employs *conclusio* to sum up what has been said: "des huop sich michel vreude über al daz Guntheres lant." This use of *conclusio*, together with the changed tone that we shall observe in the next strophe, indicates that the poet has completed his general remarks about the *hohgezît* and is about to turn his attention elsewhere.

Movement two: entrance of the ladies into the court (271-287)

Movement one was introductory and general. Movement two

begins with a transition from general to particular. The guest-motif is resumed in strophe 271 at the beginning of this movement, but with a different emphasis. The *tägeltichen* of strophe 265 has disappeared. Time has become specific; the action occurs "an einem pfinxtmorgen" (271, 1). This transition from general to particular in *time* is followed in strophe 272 by a similar transition in *person*: from the "vil manegen küenen man" of 271, 2, to "der helt von Niderlant" in 272, 2, and from "die scenen frouwen" of 266, 4, to "swester" (= Kriemhild) in 272, 3. When, therefore, the last line of strophe 271 repeats in different words (*interpretatio*) the *conclusio* of strophe 270, 4: "sich huop diu kurzewile an manegem ende wider strit" (271, 4), the narrative has ceased to describe the daily arrival of many guests and promises to become the account of what happened at Pentecost to two particular individuals. But the promise is a false one. The movement quickly reveals itself as a delaying action—or, to use a rhetorical term, as *amplificatio*. As soon as the reference to Kriemhild and Siegfried has been made particular, the poet proceeds to introduce tension into the narrative by postponing the moment of their meeting. The first indication of his intention is his use of *interpretatio* in strophe 272, 1: "Der wirt der hete die sinne, im was daz wol erkant." The repetition is not unintentional. This is an important moment in *Aventiure V*; it sets in motion the whole train of events in which Siegfried sees, woos, and wins Kriemhild and thus initiates the events leading up to his own death and to the destruction of the Burgundians. The poet is aware of its significance and communicates his awareness by his use of rhetoric: first, by his use of *interpretatio* (as we have just seen), and then, in the next three strophes (273-275), by his use of *expolitio* to stress what the king knows (viz., "wie rehte herzenliche der helt von Niderlant / sine swester trûte," 272, 2-3) by repeating it in a different form. *Sermocinatio* (the use of dialogue) is the first means of *expolitio* to be used in this passage. In strophes 273-274, Ortwin, as though he had read Gunther's thought, speaks directly to the king and urges him to allow the women of the court, and specifically Kriemhild ("iuwer swester," 274, 3), to join in the festivities. In strophe 274, lines 1 and 2, he reinforces his argument by a *sententia* (maxim) in the form of *interrogatio* (rhetorical question):

Waz wære mannes wünne, des vreute sich sîn lîp,
ez entæten scêne mägede und hêrlîchiu wîp?

Though Ortwin does not mention Siegfried, his whole speech is a variation (i. e., *expolitio*) of what the king already knows. When the king has given his consent (275, 1) to Ortwin's proposal, the voice of the narrator makes itself heard. The narrator, too, uses *interpretatio* and *expolitio*: *interpretatio* in line 2 of strophe 275, which repeats in substance what has been said in line 4 of strophe 274; *expolitio* in strophe 275, 3-4, where the monosyllabic *ez* of line 3 recapitulates both Ortwin's suggestion and Gunther's consent, while line 4 summarizes the whole discussion.

Immediately after the king's decision to allow the ladies to attend the festivities (275), movement two becomes almost completely static. What little action there is, is stately and pageant-like, with emphasis on *effictio* (description of outward appearance). In strophes 281, 282, and 283, it is Kriemhild who is described; and in strophe 286, Siegfried. These latter descriptions are enriched, in the manner of *Minnesang*, by *imago* (Kriemhild is compared to the "morgenrôt" and to "der liechte mâne"; Siegfried to a painting in a miniature). The trope *superlatio* is used in strophe 282, 3-4, and again in strophe 286, 4, to assure us that no one in the world is more beautiful than Kriemhild or more handsome than Siegfried.

It is obvious, however, that Ortwin's speech, as *expolitio*, has not developed the king's whole thought. The king's thought had referred to *Siegfried*, not to all the knights, and to Siegfried's eagerness to see Kriemhild, not all the ladies of the court. Yet Ortwin suggests only that *all* the knights be allowed to see Kriemhild (274, 3); and the king's answer (275, 3-4) is a summons to *all* the ladies of the court to appear at the festival. It is clear, then, that the dichotomy between general and particular has not been resolved by this interchange. Indeed, the poet seems to have designed movement two for no other purpose than to give visible expression (*demonstratio*) to the fact of Kriemhild's continued inaccessibility to Siegfried. To this end, he has been careful to note that it is not just Siegfried who is granted the privilege of seeing the ladies of the court—though references to him are frequent in this movement: 272, 2-3 (with *pronominatio*); 281, 2-4 (with *pronominatio*); 284, 4; 285, 1-4 (with *sermocinatio* and *dubitatio*); 286, 1-4 (with *effictio*, *imago*, and *superlatio*); on the contrary, it is a favor granted to all the knights: 274, 4; 275, 2 (with *pronominatio*); 277, 1-4; 280, 2-4; 283, 4; 284, 2-3; 287, 2-4. Likewise, he has been careful to note that

it is not just Kriemhild who is permitted to greet the guests—though references to her are also frequent in this movement: 272, 3-4 (with *superlatio*); 274, 3; 275, 3-4; 278, 1-2; 279, 4; 281, 1-2 (with *imago*); 282, 1-4 (with *effictio* and *superlatio*); 283, 1-3 (with *imago*); on the contrary, it is a permission granted to all the ladies of the court: 273, 3-4; 274, 1-2; 276, 1-4; 279, 1-4; 280, 1; 284, 3; 287, 1-4. Nor has the poet left any doubt as to the exact nature of the favor that is here being conferred, as witness his use of inflectional forms of the verb *sehen* twelve times (*traductio*) in the seventeen strophes of this movement (272, 3; 277, 2; 277, 4; 279, 1; 280, 1; 280, 4; 281, 4; 282, 4; 284, 1; 284, 3; 286, 4; 287, 4). But he has not shown Kriemhild and Siegfried together, nor does he, at first glance, seem to promise that their relationship will advance beyond this very literal fulfillment of the desire that Siegfried had expressed when he deliberated with himself (*dubitatio*) at the end of *Aventure III*, before the *Sachsenkrieg*:

“ wie sol daz gescehen
 daz ich die maget edele mit ougen müge sehen?
 die ich von herzen minne und lange hân getân,
 diu ist mir noch vil vremde: des muoz ich trûric gestân ”
 (136).

On the contrary, he makes a point of informing the audience that the sight of Kriemhild has roused Siegfried to new self-deliberation (*dubitatio*):

“ wie kunde daz ergân
 daz ich dich minnen solde? daz ist ein tumber wân ”
 (285, 1-2).

Yet this very uncertainty is, in a sense, an indication that the relationship between Kriemhild and Siegfried will advance to a new level; for Siegfried, in strophe 285, does not despair of being allowed to *see* Kriemhild, but of being allowed to *woo* her. Nevertheless, the dichotomy between general and particular that has characterized this movement is not completely resolved until Gernot's speech at the beginning of movement three (strophes 288-289). When Gernot says:

Ir heizet Sivriden zuo mîner swester kumen (289, 1),

the references are all specific, and the total meaning of strophe

272 has at last become explicit in the narrative. A simple test will show that movement two (or more exactly strophes 273-287) is, indeed, nothing more than *amplificatio*—a delaying action within the *Aventiure*. If strophe 288 had followed immediately upon strophe 272, the narrative would, certainly, have been poorer from a stylistic and decorative point of view, but the contents would have sustained no loss at all. The whole section, therefore—Ortwin's speech and the pageantry that follows it—must be regarded as *amplificatio* by a variety of means (*interpretatio, expolitio, effictio, imago, demonstratio, dubitatio, sententia, superlatio, interrogatio, sermocinatio*). Before moving into the next phase of the action, the poet employs *conclusio* to summarize the motifs of the preceding strophes:

diu hôhe tragenden herzen vreuten manegen lip.
 man sach in hôhen zühten manec hêrlîchez wîp
 (287, 3-4).

It is clear from these words, which are all general, that the promise of a particular frame of reference has not been kept in the second movement—one more proof, if it is still needed, that the preceding strophes have been decorative, not functional, in the *Aventiure*.

Movement three: Kriemhild and Siegfried (288-305)

Gernot's speech (*sermocinatio*), which extends through the first two strophes (288-289) of movement three, forms an obvious parallel to Ortwin's earlier speech of the same length (273-274), and it performs much the same function in the *Aventiure*, i. e., it gives external expression (*expolitio* by means of *sermocinatio*) to the king's awareness that "der helt von Niderlant / sine swester trûte" (272, 2-3). But there is a difference. With Gernot's speech, the spell of the pageantry (*amplificatio*) is broken, the action again becomes dynamic, and the frame of reference is, as we have seen, centered upon Kriemhild and Siegfried. All references to the *hohgezît* and its guests are banished from the narrative as the poet relates in vivid detail (*demonstratio*) how Siegfried is invited to join the royal party (*sermocinatio*, 290, 3-4); how, in the best tradition of courtly love, he flushes with joy as he is ushered into Kriemhild's presence (292, 1-2); how Kriemhild greets him (*sermocinatio*, 292, 3); and how she gives him her hand (293, 1). But the banishment is a brief one. Bound by the convention that re-

quired the poet of courtly love to speak "in verhüllenden Andeutungen"⁵ of the tokens of *minne*, the NL-poet resorts, in strophe 294, to *occultatio* (the disavowal topos of 294, 2) and *significatio* (294, 3) to curtail (*abbreviatio*) his description of the first meeting between Kriemhild and Siegfried and, in strophe 295, employs *expolitio* (with *pronomiatio* in 295, 4) to speak in lyric tones of Siegfried's happiness (cf. 291, 1-4; 292, 4):

Wart iht dâ friwentliche getwungen wîziu hant
 von herzen lieber minne, daz ist mir niht bekant.
 doch enkan ich niht gelouben daz ez wurde lân.
 si het im holden willen kunt vil sciere getân.

Bî der sumerzîte und gein des meien tagen
 dorft' er in sîme herzen nimmer mêr getragen
 sô vil der hôhen vreude denn' er dâ gewan,
 dô im diu gie enhende, die er ze trûte wolde hân
 (294-295).

From the very first words of strophe 296 ("Do gedâhte manec recke," 296, 1), it is obvious that the tone of the narrative has undergone a change. Kriemhild and Siegfried are, it is true, still isolated from the general activities of the *hohgezît* by the particular course of events that concerns them alone, but their happiness is viewed now from the perspective of the other guests: "manec recke" (296, 1), "die geste" (297, 1), and "der kûnec von Tene-marke" (298, 1). Indeed, when the latter comments (*sermocinatio*) on the fact that Kriemhild ". . . wart erloubet kûssen den waetlîchen man" (297, 3), the poet uses his words:

"diss vil hôhen gruozes lît maneger ungesunt
 (des ich vil wol enpfinde) von Sîvrides hant.
 got enlâz' in nimmer mêre komen in mîniu kûneges lant"
 (298, 2-4),

to link *Aventiure V* with the *Aventiuren* that precede and follow it. By reminding the audience that Siegfried's present happiness (*Aventiure V*) is a reward for precisely that role in the *Sachsenkrieg* (*Aventiure IV*) that is such a painful memory to the defeated king, the words suggest the motivation for Siegfried's promise, so soon to be given, of further *dienst* in the interests of

⁵ de Boor, p. 55: commentary on strophe 294.

minne (see below, strophe 304) and for his subsequent assistance to Gunther in the wooing of Brünhild (*Aventiuren* VI-X); by giving expression to the Danish king's fervent desire to avoid all future conflict with Siegfried, they add the poignancy of irony to the later scenes (*Aventiuren* XIV-XVI) in which Siegfried is lured to his death by the prefabricated tale of a war threatened, but not undertaken, by Liudegast.

When it becomes apparent from the dynamism that characterizes the opening words of strophe 299:

Man hiez dô allenthalben wichen von den wegen
 der scœnen Kriemhilde. manegen küenen degen
 sah man gezogenliche ze kirchen mit ir gân (299, 1-3),

that some new action is about to take place in *Aventiure* V, and when it becomes further apparent that this new action concerns a second meeting between Kriemhild and Siegfried (cf. 302, 2), it is not difficult to see that the three strophes just discussed (296-298) did not constitute the beginning of a new movement within the *Aventiure*. On the contrary, they are to be regarded as a brief central episode between the two meetings of Kriemhild and Siegfried in the third movement. This insight is reinforced by the evidence of the structure itself, which demands that the accounts of the two meetings should form a unit. For there is, despite necessary differences, a remarkable parallelism between the poet's account of the first meeting of Kriemhild and Siegfried and his account of their second meeting. Before each of the two meetings, Siegfried is separated from Kriemhild by the conventions of his age: before the first meeting, by the "strenge Abgeschiedenheit der unverheirateten Frau,"⁶ before the second meeting, by the custom of separating the knights from the ladies during services in the church ("sît wart von ir gesceiden der vil waetliche man," 299, 4). This separation, in turn, reflects the dichotomy between *general* and *particular* that must be resolved before Siegfried can achieve his goal. But whereas the dichotomy that existed before the first meeting had evolved naturally from the fact that Siegfried had not yet been allowed to see Kriemhild, the dichotomy that exists before the second meeting has had to be reconstructed by the poet (since the original dichotomy had been resolved at the first meeting, and the separation in

⁶ de Boor, p. 28: commentary on strophe 132.

Alain Renoir has shown how closely the NL-poet's description of the relationship between Kriemhild and Siegfried parallels, on one level of interpretation, the "cinq degrez especiaux" of courtly love as outlined by Jehan Lemaire de Belges: *le regard, le parler, l'attouchement, le baisier, le don de mercy*.⁷ It would be pointless to rehearse his arguments here, but it will be rewarding to see how the NL-poet's use of two stylistic devices—*traductio* and *commoratio*—confirms and complements Renoir's findings. We have already commented on the poet's use of *traductio* to call attention to the *sehen* of movement two; but if we think of this *sehen*, as Renoir does, as the first step (*le regard*) in a series that should culminate in *le don de mercy*, the repetition becomes more meaningful, for we realize that the poet has used *traductio* not as an end in itself, but in the service of *commoratio*, i. e., to subserve his intention of dwelling, by every means at his disposal, on what is his chief theme in this *Aventiure*—*wie Sifrit Kriemhilde aller êrste ersach*. A similar use of *traductio* in the service of *commoratio* appears at the beginning of movement three, where we are informed by the repeated *grüezen* of strophes 289-292 (*grüeze*, 289, 2; *gegruozte* and *grüezen*, 289, 3; *grüezen*, 290, 4; *gruozte*, 291, 4; *gruoze*, 292, 4) that the relationship between Kriemhild and Siegfried has advanced to the second stage of courtly love (*le parler*), and immediately thereafter, by the repeated references to *enhende gân* in strophes 293-295 (*bi der hende*, 293, 1; *wart . . . getwungen wiziü hant*, 294, 1; *gie enhende*, 295, 4), that it has reached the third stage (*l'attouchement*). As the movement progresses, the poet no longer finds it necessary to stress Siegfried's progress by the use of *traductio*. To report that the fourth stage of courtly love (*le baisier*) has been achieved, he relies on a simple statement: "ir wart erloubet küssen den waetlichen man" (297, 3), emphasizes it briefly in the comment of the King of Denmark (298), and then proceeds, as we have seen, to introduce into the narrative his account of the second meeting between Kriemhild and Siegfried. But it is not really necessary for him to say more. Within the structure of meanings created by his use of *traductio* and *commoratio* and by his iso-

⁷ Alain Renoir, "Levels of Meaning in the 'Nibelungenlied,' Sifrit's Courtship," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, LXI (1960), 353-361. The "cinq degrez especiaux" of courtly love are quoted from Jehan Lemaire de Belges, *Les Illustrations de Gaules et Singularitez de Troye*, ed. Jean Stetcher (Louvain, 1882), I, 182-183.

lation of this central episode in the structure of meanings, his report is enough, despite its brevity and apparent casualness, to ensure that his audience will neither overlook the fact of this *küssen* nor need to be reminded that it is part of the same climactic sequence of events (*gradatio*) that had begun with the *sehen* of movement two and had just progressed to the *grüezen* and *enhende gân* of the first part of movement three. However, Siegfried's successful attainment of the fourth stage of courtly love is no indication that his attainment of the fifth stage (*le don de mercy*) is either certain or imminent. In fact, it becomes obvious in the course of his second meeting with Kriemhild that Siegfried has arrived at a kind of impasse in his courtship. As at the first meeting, he is invited to join Kriemhild. But the *küssen* of the central strophes is not repeated, nor does the poet employ *commoratio* or *traductio* to show any new development in the relationship between Kriemhild and Siegfried. On the contrary, the parallel structure that he has employed to describe the two meetings serves only to emphasize the fact that the *bi dem degene* of 305, 2, which represents Siegfried's highest attainment during the second meeting, is intended to signify no more and no less than the *grüezen* and *enhende gân* of the passage that had recorded the first meeting. In terms of structure, then, the NL-poet may be said to have considered the second and third stages of courtly love, as described by Jehan Lemaire de Belges, as concomitant, not successive, phenomena. But, we may well ask, what has happened to interrupt the smooth *gradatio* of Siegfried's courtship? The poet provides no answer at this point. With a nice sense of timing, he interrupts his account of the idyllic scene with a reference, in strophe 305, 3, to court and friends as an indication that the narrative is about to revert to the larger framework of the *hohgezît*.

Movement four: the end of the festival (306-317)

Aware that the absorbing events just narrated have distracted his audience from the larger scene of the *hohgezît*, the poet employs an echoic technique to reconstruct the general framework that is needed for movement four. The parallelism with movement one is immediately apparent: the opening words of strophe 306, "vreude unde wunne," are a chiasitic repetition (*commutatio*) of the "wunne âne mâze, mit vreuden überkraft" of 270, 2; the "tägelich" of 306, 2, is a reminder of the "tägelichen" of 265, 1; the *pro-*

nominatio of 308, 1: “die dâ wunde lâgen,” recalls the *pronomina-tio* of 269, 1: “die in den betten lâgen und heten wunden nôt.” In a word, the poet has made every effort to reintroduce, at the beginning of the fourth movement, the whole atmosphere of festivity and rejoicing that had marked the opening strophes of the *Aventiure*. As in movement one, Kriemhild is not mentioned. Siegfried, on the contrary, has an active role to play—not, however, as courtly lover, but as adviser to Gunther—a role that is closely related to the magnanimity motif in which the poet incorporates the theme of this movement, viz., the end of the *hōhgezît*. As soon as the general framework has been reconstructed, the poet employs *commoratio* to call our attention to Gunther’s generosity to his departing guests. Gunther, we are told, “hete sich bewegen / aller slahte scande, die ie künec gewan” (309, 2-3); his guests are served “mit der besten spise” (309, 2); he moves “vriwentliche” (309, 4) among them; as they plan their departure, he urges gifts upon them, “ê daz ir sceidet hin” (310, 1); he grants Liudegast’s request for amnesty “ê daz wir wider rîten heim in unser lant” (311, 2); and he distributes more than “fünf hundert marken” (317, 3) as a token of his friendship. Like Liudegast’s words in 298, 4, the episode of six strophes (311-316) in which the Danish king is granted amnesty in return for his pledge not to renew hostilities against the Burgundians—a pledge given, ironically enough, at Siegfried’s suggestion (315)—serves to link this *Aventiure* with *Aventiuren* XIV-XVI by showing the unlikelihood of the pretext on which Siegfried is betrayed and murdered. With this integration accomplished, the movement has served its purpose, and the *hōhgezît* can come to an end. Though the poet speaks again in strophe 317 of Gunther’s generosity to his guests, it is not in order to prolong his description of this part of the *hōhgezît*, but to cut it short (*abbreviatio*) and so to prepare the audience for a reorientation of the narrative in the next movement.

Movement five: Siegfried’s decision to remain in Worms (318-324)

When movement five opens, the poet is no longer speaking of the final stages of the festival, but of the leave-taking of the guests, and he stresses this fact by his use of *superlatio*: “ez enwart nie degenen noch mêre geurloubet baz” (318, 4). Nevertheless, the movement is not concerned with the guests and their leave-taking. Almost at once, *repetitio* (of the word *urlouf*) transfers our atten-

Giselher. On the contrary, he seems to have allowed the suggestion of double motivation to go unchallenged, for it is immediately repeated (*expolitio*) by the narrator in the two apparently factual statements in which he employs *commutatio* (*beleip-durch* / *durch-beleip*) to sum up (*conclusio*) the main theme of the movement:

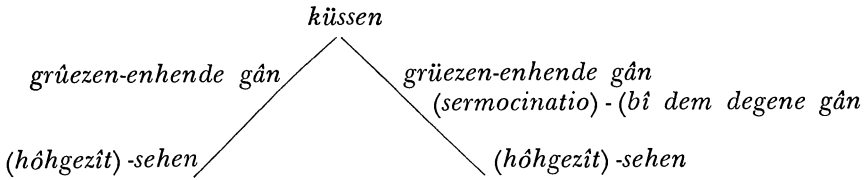
Sus beleip der küene durch vriwende liebe dâ (323, 1)
 Durch ir unmâzen scêne der herre dâ beleip (324, 1).

If we were aware at the end of movement three that Siegfried's courtship had reached an impasse, we are even more aware of it in movement five as it becomes obvious that he will not attain in this *Aventiure* the fifth stage of courtly love (*le don de mercy*). The reason for the impasse lies in the exigencies of the structure. The poet has, as we recall, just conjured up a very credible portrait of Siegfried as courtly lover par excellence, dedicated to the ideal of *minnedienst*. And he has shown this same Siegfried not only as active in the *Sachsenkrieg* in pursuit of this ideal, but also as happy in the first enjoyment of his reward. Why, then, has he not shown him in full possession of this reward? The answer is not far to seek. The *Sachsenkrieg* is not the only service to the Burgundian kings by which Siegfried is to attest his love for Kriemhild (as witness his promise of further service in 304). He must also offer his assistance in the wooing of Brünhild (*Aventiuren* VI-X). But if Siegfried's desire of the ultimate reward of *minnedienst* is to be a plausible motivation for further service, that reward cannot be granted in *Aventiure* V. Hence the poet's insistence (*commoratio*) on the theme of this movement: that Siegfried's immediate reason for remaining in Worms is not the imminent expectation of *le don de mercy* that would have brought the *gradatio* of courtly love to its logical conclusion, but the same admiration of Kriemhild's beauty that had brought him to Worms in the first place (48-49), and the same modest hope of being allowed to see her (*le regard*) that had kept him there for over a year (137-138). Indeed, the poet has not relied solely on the *amplificatio* of Giselher's remark and Siegfried's answer or on the *expolitio* and *commutatio* of the narrator's words to fix firmly in our minds the anticlimactic nature of Siegfried's reason for remaining in Worms. He has also employed two other devices to achieve the same purpose: on the one hand, the repeated juxtaposition of a double *traductio* (*sehen* and *Kriemhilde*):

structure of the *Aventiure*. It must be emphasized, however, that this symmetry, at least as it exists in the extant version of the NL that has been preserved in MS. B,⁸ is not a numerical symmetry, depending for its existence on the equal distribution of strophes in parallel movements (as Maurer and Batts have suggested), but a thematic symmetry, arising out of the symmetrical distribution of themes around a central axis. In support of this statement, let us review what has been said in the preceding pages about the climactic and anticlimactic arrangement of themes in the various movements of the *Aventiure*.

The description of the *hōhgezīt* in movements one and four, it will be recalled, was, in both instances, a prelude to the account of Siegfried's attainment of the first degree of courtly love: the *sehen* of movements two and five. The poet's use of parallelism in the structure of these two sequences and of *commoratio* and *traductio* to emphasize the *sehen* within the context of the *hōhgezīt* at the beginning and end of the *Aventiure* is duplicated in movement three in his treatment of the two scenes that record the first and second meetings of Kriemhild and Siegfried. In describing the first of these meetings, the poet uses *commoratio* and *traductio* to indicate the progress of Siegfried's courtship to the second and third degrees of courtly love: the *grüezen* and *enhende gân* of strophes 289-295. In describing the second of these meetings, he relies, as we have seen, on the parallelism of the structure of the two "meeting"-scenes to indicate to his hearers that the *sermocinatio* and the *bī dem degene gân* of the second meeting are to be equated with the *grüezen* and *enhende gân* of the first. Between the two meetings, at the thematic center of the third (central) movement, he reports, in one laconic sentence, Siegfried's attainment of the highest degree of courtly love that is granted him in this *Aventiure*: "ir wart erloben küssen den wætlīchen man" (297, 3). The following diagram will, perhaps, make the poet's use of architectonic symmetry in the arrangement of these themes more immediately obvious.

⁸ This fact does not, of course, exclude the possibility that the parallel movements of *Aventiure* V as they existed in the original, non-extant manuscript of the NL may have been characterized by a numerical symmetry, but any attempt to prove that they were would have to rest upon conjecture. What is certain is that there is no such numerical symmetry in the extant text of the NL that has formed the basis of this study.



In conclusion, let us note—and this, too, is important—that the interpretation of the NL-poet's concept of symmetry as thematic, not numerical, is substantiated by the evidence of his practice in the epic as a whole. For he has, as I have shown elsewhere,⁹ employed the same principle of architectonic symmetry in arranging the thirty-nine *Aventiuren* (= themes) of the epic as a whole around a series of central axes as he has shown, *mutatis mutandis*, in arranging the five movements of *Aventiure V* around one central axis (the *küssen* of 297, 3). On the other hand, he has made no effort to achieve a numerical symmetry either in the epic as a whole by regulating the number of strophes in parallel *Aventiuren*, or in *Aventiure V* by regulating the number of strophes in parallel movements.

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⁹ Sister Mary Frances [McCarthy], S.N.D., "Architectonic Symmetry as a Principle of Structure in the *Nibelungenlied*," *The Germanic Review*, *XL* (May 1966), 157-169.