Pearl is an extraordinarily beautiful, fourteenth-century, dream vision poem. It is infinitely rewarding to teach, but notoriously difficult to do so. That is because the poem requires a level of literacy that college students do not always possess. In order to read Pearl, whether in Middle English or in a Modern English translation, students must be brave enough to encounter not only poetry, but medieval poetry; not only medieval poetry, but a specific dream vision poem densely packed with biblical and classical allusion; not only a dream vision with a literal meaning, but one with several layers of meaning: literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical. Although students may not come to the poem with the skills to understand the poem at first, by reading key precursor texts and studying Pearl in different contexts, students can learn to read Pearl, and in the process, learn how to become better readers overall.

I have taught Pearl for over a decade, and in so doing, I have developed a variety of approaches to help make it accessible to students. The development of my Pearl pedagogy is paralleled by my Pearl publications; my teaching and scholarship both inform one
another.\footnote{I currently teach at a public research university, and I have previously taught at small, private, liberal arts colleges. Both types of institutional contexts have fostered the development of my \textit{Pearl} scholarship. See Jane Beal, \textit{The Signifying Power of Pearl: Literary and Cultural Contexts for the Transformation of Genre} (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, forthcoming), Jane Beal and Mark Bradshaw Busbee, eds., \textit{Approaches to Teaching the Middle English Pearl} (New York, N.Y.: MLA, forthcoming), and Jane Beal, “Medieval Pearl,” \url{https://medievalpearl.wordpress.com}.} As a result of what I have learned from teaching and writing on \textit{Pearl}, I explain the same key aspects of \textit{Pearl} repeatedly, no matter what type of class I am teaching, because these aspects are essential to learning how to read \textit{Pearl}:

- the poem’s dream vision genre, layers of meaning, and biblical and classical allusions;
- the transformation of the central symbol of the poem, the pearl, throughout the course of the narrative;
- the ascent of the Dreamer through three landscapes (the garden, the paradisial dreamscape, and the heavenly New Jerusalem) as if on a ladder of contemplation (and, after beginning with humility, taking the steps of illumination, purification, and unification);
- the Pearl-Maiden as the Dreamer’s beloved, as preacher-teacher, and as \textit{sponsa Christi};
- the bleeding Lamb as icon of redemptive suffering;
- the nature of the relationships between the characters;
- and the nature of the consolation offered by the poem within the context of a medieval Christian world-view.

However, there are other aspects of \textit{Pearl} that I emphasize depending on the kind of class I am instructing. These aspects are determined by the structure of the course, the level of student preparation, and the readings in the syllabus that precede \textit{Pearl}.
My approach to teaching *Pearl* in the general education literature course for non-majors, “Introduction to Literature,” which is structured by genre, differs from my approach in the introductory literary survey for English majors, “British Literature I,” which is structured by chronology. My approach to teaching *Pearl* in “The Mythology of J.R.R. Tolkien,” an author course for upper-division English majors that is structured (in part) by consideration of the reception of medieval literature in Tolkien’s work, again differs from what I do in either “Introduction to Literature” or “British Literature I.” It is good pedagogical practice to alter lesson plans and assignments to take the specific classroom context into consideration. This essay explains how I do so when teaching *Pearl* in the above mentioned courses. My aim here is to inspire other teachers and to provide resources to my colleagues that may be useful for designing their own pedagogical approaches to *Pearl*.

“*Introduction to Literature*:
*Parable, Fable, and Fairy-Tale Motifs in Pearl*

“Introduction to Literature” is a standard general education course that the faculty of English Departments in colleges and universities offer to freshmen and sophomores (and occasionally juniors and seniors who have put off fulfilling their General Education literature requirement). The course is intended to introduce students to three major genres: fiction, poetry, and drama. Several anthologies, published by Bedford, Norton, and Pearson (among others), provide a fair sampling of the three genres from modern
American and British literature. Occasionally, there are stories, poems, and plays from the early modern period, but examples of medieval literature are few and far between.²

Although I used to use one of these anthologies when I taught “Introduction to Literature,” I no longer do. This is in part because I believe that students who read medieval and early modern literature can learn just as much about the three (or four) genres as those who read modern and contemporary literature. They can also learn about reader response and reception theory through their encounters with written versions of stories they know already (at some level) from Hollywood films. Indeed, Hollywood’s long fascination with medieval subjects makes comparative study of literature and film in the classroom quite fruitful.

In my current version of “Introduction to Literature,” I have narrowed the “fiction” section of the course to “folktale.” I teach three major sub-genres of the folktale -- parable, fable, and fairy-tale -- using Joanna Cole’s delightful anthology, *Best Loved Folktales of the World*. I assign generally familiar as well as a few lesser-known folktales for students to read, enjoy, and analyze. The reading assignments include five parables of Jesus, select fables of Aesop, and versions of “Beauty & the Beast,” “Rapunzel,” “Cinderella,” “Snow White,” “The Frog Prince,” “Sleeping Beauty,” and “Aladdin & the Lamp.” When we study fairy-tales, we also view video clips from “Disney Princess” films and discuss the different cultural values represented in the older and newer versions of the evolving tales.³

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² The fourth genre – creative nonfiction – is only rarely acknowledged and included in these anthologies, but this is understandable, as it is difficult to teach well three genres, let alone four, in either a quarter or a semester.

³ I give students a model blog post analyzing Disney's "Rapunzel" and ask them to formulate similar, comparative analyses of written and film versions of fairy-tales. See [https://thepoetryplace.wordpress.com/2011/04/30/girl-samson-reflections-on-disneys-rapunzel/](https://thepoetryplace.wordpress.com/2011/04/30/girl-samson-reflections-on-disneys-rapunzel/).
As a class, we are then well prepared to consider J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Hobbit*, which has parabolic, fabulous, and fairy-tale qualities. I assign Tolkien’s essay, “On Fairy-Stories,” which explains Tolkien’s beliefs about the nature of fairy-stories and their intended effects on readers. So we are able to consider *The Hobbit* not only in terms of our working definitions of parables, fables, and fairy-tales, but also in terms of the Tolkien’s ideas about fantasy, recovery, escape, consolation, eucatastrophe, and joy.\(^4\) Then the prose section of the course, with which students are reasonably comfortable, is over, and they face the terror of *poetry*.

Many students, who are majoring in business, the sciences, or one of the social sciences, naturally recoil at the prospect of trying to deal with a genre they have rarely (if ever) read and (almost) never understood. One real way to engage them is to assign poetry that deals with the most important matters in life: love and death. So we read the biblical wedding song, “The Song of Solomon,” from the Judeo-Christian tradition, and the legend of “Orpheus and Eurydice,” from the classical tradition, comparing the Virgilian and Ovidian accounts with that strange and lovely fourteenth-century poem, “Sir Orfeo.”\(^5\) After a few Old English elegies, including “The Seafarer” and “The Wife’s Lament” (all in contemporary English versions), I introduce students to *Pearl*.

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\(^5\) Students read Virgil’s account from the *Georgics* and Ovid’s from the *Metamorphoses*. I use the translations by Kimberly Johnson and Rolfe Humphries respectively. Students listen to a Modern English recording of “Sir Orfeo” made by Linda Marie Zaerr and her sister, the harpist, Laura Zaerr, who as a duo are known as Psallite: *The Grafted Tree: Medieval Tales with the Harp – Sir Orfeo, Sir Handsome Stranger, Sir Bevis* (Corvallis, OR: Rosewood Music, 1997). CD.
Marie Borroff’s stand-alone, modern English translation is an excellent one for students to use in this type of class because the translation is sensitive to the nuances and meanings of Middle English words rendered in Modern English. The introduction is also brief and clear. Unfortunately, Borroff’s translation lacks explanatory notes, must be purchased separately from Norton, and is currently only available in hard-copy when many students prefer to read ebooks. In recent years, therefore, I translated Pearl myself, annotated it extensively, and added the color illustrations from the manuscript, an introduction, and related appendices, and then made it available as a PDF for my students.6

When our class begins reading Pearl, the students have gotten the basic vocabulary for analyzing poetry from our reading of the “Song of Solomon.” From our study of versions of the Orpheus legend, they understand a little bit about the complexities of reading poems in modern English translation and how they are transformed over time as they are passed down through the generations. Certainly they are aware of the themes of love and death, and the related motifs of sorrow and loss, exemplified in the genre of Old English elegy. Now they are ready to consider how all of these things are evident in Pearl. We can also remember what we learned in the first section of the course about parable, fable, and fairy-tale, because Pearl has qualities from each of these genres.

For the purposes of “Introduction to Literature,” I define “folktale” as a story originally transmitted orally (or with roots in oral tradition) and that has, as a result, many different versions and is dispersed widely throughout culture/s. Certainly Pearl is a highly-wrought, literary object of a poem, but it also has moments of sheer ordinariness, dolefully

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6 Several translations of Pearl are in the public domain and now available at [https://medievalpearl.wordpress.com/pearls-editiontranslations/](https://medievalpearl.wordpress.com/pearls-editiontranslations/). My own, Pearl: A Medieval Masterpiece in Middle English and Modern English, will be available there soon as well.
humorous speech, and interjections from the first-person narrator (represented as the Dreamer at a later stage of personal growth and transformed understanding) that suggest that a plainspoken representative of the “folk” (i.e., Northwest Midlands English people) is verbally relating a “tale.” In short, Pearl has roots in the folk-tale tradition.

In class, parable, fable, and fairy-tale are defined as sub-genres of this over-arching genre. My students and I revisit our definitions before we consider how each is manifested in Pearl. This process is facilitated both by an oral question-and-answer review and, if student memory proves somewhat vague, with slides in a PowerPoint lecture projected on-screen at the front of the classroom.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLIDE 1: GENERAL DEFINITIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The <strong>parable</strong> features human characters, often in an agricultural context, and uses images from the lived experience of the anticipated audience to reveal hidden truth about the spiritual world. (parables of Jesus)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In contrast, the <strong>fable</strong> often uses animal characters to comment on social injustice and unequal power dynamics in hierarchal cultures. (fables of Aesop)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The <strong>fairy-tale</strong> includes not only men, women, and animals as characters, but supernatural beings as well, interweaving magic with the plot in order to address the psychological experiences of human beings: hopes, fears, wishes, and dreams. (myth of Cupid &amp; Psyche)</td>
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The English word “parable” comes, via Old French, from the Latin *parabola* and Greek *parabole*, both of which mean “comparison.” The genre is exemplified by the parables of Jesus, five of which were most popular in the Middle Ages: the parables of the Prodigal Son, Good Samaritan, the Wise and Foolish Virgins, the Workers in the Vineyard, and the Rich Man and Lazarus. In the nineteenth century, Friedrich Gustav Lisco said

7 My complete PPT for the teaching of Pearl is available here: https://medievalpearl.wordpress.com/teaching/.
specifically that in the parables of Jesus “the image borrowed from the visible world is accompanied by a truth from the invisible (spiritual) world” and that the parables of Jesus are not “mere similitudes which serve the purpose of illustration, but are internal analogies where nature becomes a witness for the spiritual world.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARABLES IN PEARL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Parable of the Pearl of Great Price</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Parable of the Treasure Hidden in the Field</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Also consider the Parable of the Sower and the Parable of the Seine Net (Matt. 13)</td>
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</table>

In *Pearl*, parables are incorporated into the very fabric of the poem. The parables of the Pearl of Great Price and the Treasure Hidden in the Field from Matthew’s Gospel are key to understanding the poem’s imagery, symbolism, and narrative trajectory. I explain that the *Pearl*-poet would have read these parables in the Latin Vulgate, the Church’s Bible in the Middle Ages. I provide the parables in English, explaining that the key Latin word *margarita* means “pearl.” This is relevant to an understanding of the Pearl-Maiden, whose figure is certainly related to hagiographical writings about St. Margaret.

The importance of these two parables is reinforced by the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, which the Pearl-Maiden recalls and re-articulates in an extensive paraphrase.

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9 The Latin Vulgate translation of these parables is available online, with Douay-Rheims and KJV parallel versions, at http://www.latinvulgate.com/.

in response to a question from the Dreamer. Her speech is essentially a sermon.11 It certainly constitutes the theological heart of the poem, which denies the role of personal merit in receiving salvation and instead emphasizes God’s great grace in giving it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FABLE MOTIFS IN PEARL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Birds and birdsong in the dreamscape</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dreamer as mild hawk, dancing doe, and dazed quail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Dreamer’s protestations as if against social injustice in a hierarchical system ... in the context of a strained relationship with a woman of elevated status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Lamb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Moral lesson expressed as a proverb at the conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– “He gives us to be his humble servants / and precious pearls unto his pleasure”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like the genre of parable, the genre of fable has an influence on *Pearl*. The word “fable” comes from the Latin word *fabula*, which means “tale” or “story.” The genre is exemplified by the fables of Aesop, which were translated into Latin, the vernacular languages of Europe (e.g., French and German), and English, then circulated widely, both oral and written versions. Key transmitters of tales include Phaedrus (into Latin) and Marie de France (into Anglo-Norman), whose collections were used to entertain, but also to

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11 Jane Chance, J.J. Anderson, and Davis Aers have compared the Pearl-Maiden to a preacher and her discourse on the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard to a sermon. See Chance, “ Allegory and Structure in Pearl: The Four Senses of the *Ars Praedicandi* and Fourteenth-Century Homiletic Poetry,” in *Text and Matter: New Critical Perspectives of the Pearl- Poet*, ed. Robert J. Blanch, Miriam Youngerman Miller, and Julian N. Wasserman (Troy, N.Y.: Whitson, 1991), 31-60 and J. J. Anderson, *Language and Imagination in the Gawain-poems* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 31, 35. Even those who doubt the efficacy of the Maiden’s speech sometimes refer to the Maiden’s discourse as homiletic. For example, when David Aers describes the Maiden’s failure to change the Dreamer’s will, he compares her instruction to a homily, arguing that “No homily, however forceful, can bend the will of another.” See David Aers, “The Self Mourning: Reflections on *Pearl*,” *Speculum* (1993), 54-73, esp. 64.
instruct. Aesopian fables were used in the schools not only to teach Latin and translation into vernacular languages, but also to instruct young minds in moral matters.

The generic qualities of the fable can be simplified to four points: 1) the fable is a short work of fiction, 2) in which inanimate objects, plants, animals, or forces of nature are anthropomorphized, and 3) which concludes with a moral lesson expressed as a maxim. Most importantly for the study of *Pearl*, 4) the fable often uses talking animal characters to comment on social injustice and unequal power dynamics in hierarchal cultures. Students typically grasp this definition fairly easily.

Just as parables influence the imagery and theme of *Pearl*, so do fables influence the animal metaphors and the moral lesson expressed at the conclusion of the poem. In the course of *Pearl*, the Dreamer is metaphorically compared to three different animals: a hawk, a doe, and a quail. The comparisons are used to evoke the Dreamer’s emotional state, and his frustration corresponds to his perception of God’s injustice in taking the Pearl-Maiden, rewarding her beyond her merits, and keeping the Dreamer from reunion with her. In the vision of the New Jerusalem, the powerful presence of the pure white Lamb bleeding from his side is an iconic symbol of Jesus. Although the vision does not immediately alleviate the Dreamer’s distress, especially because he is distracted by the sight of his “lyttel queen” in the Lamb’s procession, it lays the groundwork for spiritual and emotional change as the Dreamer later meditates on Christian truth.

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13 *Pearl*, line 1147.
The poet’s use of animal metaphors to describe the Dreamer’s emotional state is striking when placed alongside his use of the Lamb (of all the ways to represent Christ) and the Lamb’s gladness in suffering. Although fables sometimes call for change in social systems, the juxtaposition in *Pearl* promises not change in the heavenly hierarchy (in which the Maiden has already said all saints are equal and in which there is no injustice), but rather change in the Dreamer’s heart. This change starts at the very beginning of the poem when birds and their song feature importantly in the initial description of the dreamscape, a *locus amoenus*, in which the Dreamer’s distress begins to fall away from him.

The poem does conclude with a proverbial maxim, which represents the final transformation of the central symbol, the pearl:

> He gef vus to be his homly hyne
> Ande precious perle3 vnto his pay.
> (He chooses us to be his humble servants and precious pearls unto his pleasure.)

The pearl has stood for a literal gem (in the garden), for the Maiden herself (at the stream), for salvation (the pearl that the Maiden wears), for access to heavenly places (the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem), and now, the poet says that we – he and the readers or hearers of the poem – are “humble servants” and “precious pearls” to please the Lord. Giving inanimate objects human characteristics, and concluding a narrative with a proverb, are both generic qualities of fables that help to give *Pearl* its form.

While parables and fables were both recognized genres in the Middle Ages, the fairy-tale *per se* was not. That is to say, the name for the genre, “fairy-tale,” had not yet been

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14 *Pearl*, lines 1211-12 (my translation).
invented.\textsuperscript{15} However, it is not difficult to see how the entire genre is rooted in the magical narratives of the Middle Ages, including courtly romances, several of which have the following standard characteristics of the fairy-tale genre:

- Set in an indefinite time period ("Once upon a time ...")
- Archetypal characters (innocent princess, heroic prince, evil stepmother, wicked witch, fairy-godmother)
- Magical characters (elves, dwarves, giants), magical beasts (talking birds), and magical flora and fauna (giant beanstalks) as well as magical objects (wands, mirrors, spinning wheels)
- Plots shaped by the quest or hero's journey (often including prohibitions and the breaking of prohibitions, the accomplishment of impossible tasks with magical help, and poor, younger sons and daughters triumphing over opposition through determination, trickery, and/or unreasonably good luck – in order to win the castle, a royal spouse, and unimaginable riches, and so as to become the happy parents of good offspring)
- Themes focused on the struggle between good and evil, wish-fulfillment fantasies (for delectable food, true love, extraordinary wealth, social status, and even revenge), and the growth of the protagonist from childhood to maturity
- Characterization focused on the dynamic \textit{transformation} of the main characters from one state to another (while other characters may remain static, flat or unchanging)

\textsuperscript{15} The English term "fairy-tale" is a translation of the French "conte du fée," used first by Madame d'Aulnoy in the seventeenth-century.
• Style that tends to be simple, concise, and repetitive, with patterns of events, characters, or symbols that recur in threes or sevens

• Tone that may be surprisingly dark, but then turns, as happy endings occur quite frequently in the genre (although, of course, not always).

*Pearl* aligns with these fairy-tale characteristics in many ways. The poem is set in an indefinite liturgical time (the Dreamer falls asleep at harvest-time in August, but the dreamscape appears to be set in springtime, while the vision of the New Jerusalem has strong Paschal overtones). The unnamed protagonists are an archetypal Dreamer and Maiden. The flora and fauna of the dreamscape is utterly wondrous and magical: tree trunks are blue, leaves are silver, streambeds are bejeweled. The gravel the Dreamer walks on, at one point, is all made up of pearls. While the Dreamer is not a hero in the classical Homeric or Virgilian sense (no Odysseus or Aeneas!), he does bear resemblance to Dante’s Dreamer, so his journey may be a Christian hero’s one: a spiritual pilgrimage.\(^{16}\) Certainly the Dreamer has fairy-tale expectations when he encounters the Maiden in his dream (and medieval readers of courtly romances would naturally share in these).\(^{17}\) The Dreamer also faces a “fairy-tale prohibition” – not to cross the stream – which he breaks. While scholars debate the meaning of the poem’s conclusion, most agree that the Dreamer is changed. The happy ending is not a marriage to the Maiden, as one might expect in a medieval romance or fairy-tale, but the Dreamer’s recognition that God is his friend.\(^{18}\)

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\(^{16}\) In another course I have often taught, but which I do not discuss in this essay, “Classics of Western Literature,” I usually teach *Pearl* after Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. The *Commedia* provides an excellent context for promoting student understanding of *Pearl*.

\(^{17}\) Quintessential examples of courtly romance are the *Roman de la Rose* and the lais of Marie de France.

\(^{18}\) *Pearl*, line 1204.
poet transforms fairy-tale expectations, just as he does parabolic imagery and fable motifs, for a higher purpose.

This shows that the poet knew how to read, anticipated how his audience would read, and worked to transform genre expectations in *Pearl*. He did this deliberately to challenge readers and to provoke them – like the Dreamer – to emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth. When students work through the process of reading *Pearl* in “Introduction to Literature” with the poet’s extraordinary process in mind, they too become readers: better than they were before.

*“British Literature I”: Interpretation, Debate, and the *Pearl*-Poet’s Middle English Masterpiece*

“British Literature I” is an undergraduate literary survey course intended for English majors, most of whom are freshmen, sophomores or (occasionally) juniors in college. As majors, these students often come with a higher level of interest and a greater commitment to working hard for good grades, but they may still be intimidated by the prospect of trying to read early forms of English (Old English, Middle English, Early Modern English) and older forms of literature, primarily poetry, if they prefer or are more familiar with prose (i.e., novels) from the Victorian, modern, and contemporary periods. They have usually been successful in their high school English classes, but they may not yet have been asked to perform well in collegiate English courses, and some may be over-confident. Most have considerable room to grow. So teachers of the literature survey for English majors have their work cut out for them. They need to teach students not only how to read, but also how to ask complex questions, to analyze literature, and to engage in interpretation and debate by making effective use of literary evidence. The challenges posed by *Pearl* make it the perfect poem to accomplish these pedagogical purposes.
Before teaching *Pearl* in “British Literature I,” I first ground students in the knowledge of the Old English, Anglo-Norman, and Middle English literary periods. They gain a basic understanding of key dates and shifts in the English language, especially the impact of William the Conqueror’s invasion of England in 1066. They listen to the sound of Old English, Old French, and Middle English in recordings I play for them in class. I read these earlier forms of language aloud, and they repeat after me as well, so they get more practice hearing and reading them. Before reading *Pearl*, they read a selection of Middle English lyrics, and then they choose one of these short poems to translate and to write a commentary on. This prepares students to think about the language of *Pearl* and its lyrical contexts, both sacred Marian hymns and secular romance songs, and to notice the words and phrases from the Song of Songs that can be found in both sacred and secular lyrics as well as in *Pearl* itself.

Prior to our first official discussion of *Pearl*, I show to students the four illustrations from the manuscript, Cotton Nero A.x, projected on screen in the front of the classroom.¹⁹ We talk about what story the illustrator seems to be telling, the key moments from the poem he is highlighting, and the differences between the images of the illustrator and the descriptions of the poet. I assign students to read *Pearl* in a facing-page, dual-language, edition-translation, so that they can compare the Modern English translation to the Middle English original.²⁰ If there were more time, we would read the whole poem in Middle English.

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²⁰ In the past, I have used the dual-language edition-translations of William Vantuono and Casey Finch in British Literature I, but the translations, especially Vantuono’s, are not especially accurate *verbum pro verbo*. Now I use my own edition-translation, *Pearl: A Medieval Masterpiece in Middle English and Modern English*, and I make it available to students as a pdf.
English, as in graduate courses, but the breadth demands of a survey course do not leave extra class meeting days for this. Nevertheless, an intellectually curious student can still make a lot of progress with the original when given this type of dual-language edition-translation.

We typically discuss *Pearl* over a two-day period, analyzing one half of the poem (sections I-X) on the first day and then the next half (sections XI-XX) on the second day. Students have a set of reading comprehension questions to guide their at-home study and our in-class discussion as well as a list of terms that, when defined, help them to gain a greater understanding of *Pearl*. However, my goal in “British Literature I” is not only to get students reading closely and understanding some Middle English, but also to engage students in the scholarly debates over interpretation of the poem. This typically means focusing on four key questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How is the symbol of the pearl transformed throughout the poem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is the nature of the relationship between the Pearl-Maiden and the Dreamer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How might we interpret this poem literally, allegorically, morally, and analogically?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is the dreamer consoled at the end of the poem? If not, why not? If so, how?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I invite students to consider each of these questions and share their own thoughts about them. The nature of the literal relationship between the Pearl-Maiden and the Dreamer usually captures a certain amount of attention, but students rarely come up with

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21 Note that I cover *Pearl* in two days in 1.5 hour class meetings, which is the equivalent of three 1 hour class meetings.

22 For the list of terms as well as the questions themselves, see https://medievalpearl.wordpress.com/teaching/.
the allegorical options (unless they have done some Googling), so I also share a PowerPoint that gives them additional interpretive options to consider:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DREAMER AND MAIDEN:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LITERAL FIGURES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• father and daughter (Morris, et al.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• a man grieving the death of his godchild, grandchild, or younger sister (Bishop, <em>Pearl in its Setting</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• poet’s patron and the patron’s daughter who died to the world when she joined a religious order (Staley)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• King Richard’s young bride, Anne of Bohemia (Bowers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• similarities to suitor and Saint Margaret (Earl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• lover and beloved (Beal, “Pearl-Maiden’s Two Lovers,” drawing on Carson – an unconsummated love)²³</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DREAMER AND MAIDEN:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALLEGORICAL FIGURES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• maidenhood or virginity (Schofield)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the Dreamer’s own soul (Madeleva)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the Dreamer’s own soul in mystical union with Christ (Hillmann)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the Dreamer’s regenerate soul, eternal life, and/or beatitude (Hamilton)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the Dreamer’s lost innocence or the innocence of childhood (Cawley and Anderson drawing on Robertson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the Dreamer’s “alleluia” or his joy in salvation (Beal, “Signifying Power of Pearl”)²⁴</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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As in “Introduction to Literature,” I ask students to consider the poem’s genre, but this time, not in the comparative context of parables, fables, and fairy-tales, but rather in the historical context of the four-fold level of scriptural interpretation. Medieval people often read the Bible (as well as classical literature) for four senses: the literal (or historical) sense, the allegorical (or spiritual) sense, the moral (or ethical) sense, and the anagogical (or future) sense. Dante and the Pearl-poet are examples of medieval poets who used the four-fold method not only to read, but also to compose original poems in their native languages, works that were meant to be read at multiple levels for their various meanings. Thus, it is possible to see Pearl as literally, an elegy; spiritually, an allegory; morally, a consolation; and anagogically, a revelation. Of course, as Cynthia Kraman has observed so insightfully: “For critics who do not notice the highly literary and personal quality of Pearl, the genre discussion of Pearl is rather overwrought, heightened by expectations that it will conform to a single type of literature, unaware that a new and original literature is being created before their eyes.”

We conclude our discussion on the second day with a look at the nature of the consolation the poem offers. It is not conventional. Whereas a courtly romance would end with (or at least include) the love-tryst of the man and the woman, the lover and the

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beloved, *Pearl* is in the business of shifting expectations. The Pearl-Maiden is the *sponsa Christi*, the bride of Christ, and so she is his beloved, and he is hers. One of the main ideas conveyed in the poem is the Dreamer’s progress toward accepting this (however hesitantly or slowly!). Another idea is the realization that the Dreamer, too, is part of the Bride of Christ, the Church, so he is loved by God and should also love God. This truth is enshrined in his recollection of the Eucharist at the end of the poem.26

The nature of this consolation is, of course, rooted in Christian theology and beliefs about Christ’s death on the Cross, represented in *Pearl* through the image of iconic bleeding Lamb with a glad countenance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE BLEEDING LAMB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To devise such delight the Lamb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>went with much marvel in mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best was he, happiest, and most to praise,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that ever I heard of in speech that was spent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So worthily white were his clothes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his looks simple, himself so noble.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>But a very wide and wet wound could be seen</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>near his heart, torn through his skin.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From his white side his blood sprayed out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alas, I thought, who did that spiteful deed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any breast for sorrow ought to have broken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before he had any delights from that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lines 1129-40</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(trans. Jane Beal)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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26 *Pearl*, 1209-10.
Students examine the key passage, then ask and answer questions about it before comparing it to the conclusion of the poem.

**DISCUSSION**

- Why is the Lamb happy if he is wounded and bleeding?
- What would a medieval Christian remember when looking at the bleeding Lamb?
- How is this relevant to the Dreamer’s own suffering?

Medieval Christians looking at a bleeding Lamb would automatically recall Christ’s Crucifixion. Those who were instructed in their faith would know that the joy that Christ had was not in the suffering itself, but in the knowledge that his suffering would lead to the redemption of humanity, the resurrection of the dead, and the reconciliation of the saints with God and each other. If the Dreamer can understand this intellectually, as the truth of Christian doctrine, and accept it emotionally, he can grow through his grief over this separation from the Pearl-Maiden, which is, from a Christian point of view, only temporary if both he and the Pearl-Maiden accept God’s gracious gift of salvation.

It is crucial to compare this passage with the poem’s conclusion, where the poet speaks of the priest showing the “bread and wine” to “us” each day. For the memorial of the Eucharist is the memorial of the bleeding Lamb. It authorizes the Dreamer-narrator to remember his own sufferings and loss and to see the greater significance of them in light of hope and charity.

Students in “British Literature I,” like those in “Introduction to Literature,” become better readers when they read *Pearl*. They learn to read some Middle English. They consider manuscript context (i.e., Cotton Nero A.x) and the kind of “commentary” an illustrator might provide. They learn to read for multiple levels of meaning, to understand
medieval literary genres, and to relate meaning and genre to one another. They get a basic introduction to medieval ways of thinking theologically (with the help of icons, manuscript images, and poetry) about the divine presence in history, on earth, and in heaven. They also consider various scholarly interpretations of Pearl, the history of debate these involve, and what their own view of key interpretive questions might be. Thus students are able to begin to enter a broader conversation with other readers about interpreting English literature.

“The Mythology of J.R.R. Tolkien”: Translation and Transformation of Pearl in “Princess Mee”

“The Mythology of J.R.R. Tolkien” can be taught as an upper-division author course in the English major and as a special topics seminar. Students are English majors, typically juniors or seniors, and their level of interest and commitment to the course is extraordinarily high. They are well prepared for advanced study as they have completed prior English courses at the lower and upper-division levels. Nearly all of the students have seen Peter Jackson’s film adaptations of The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit, and many of them have already read Tolkien’s major works, even venturing into The Silmarillion. Students are, in several cases, quite passionate about Middle-earth and Tolkien’s mythology. A few have even studied Tolkien’s Elvish languages and can use words and phrases from them (or at least pronounce his invented names for people, places, and things correctly). I have even known an English major whose name was Arwen!27 However, very few upper-division English majors, even among the enthusiasts, have read Tolkien’s translations of medieval poetry or his critical essays related to the translation process,

27 “Arwen” is a name that Tolkien invented; my student’s name indicates that interest in Tolkien in her family is multi-generational.
“Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics” and “On Fairy-Stories.” Yet Tolkien’s translations form a key part of the philologist’s work, and they constitute some of the most important sources for his mythology.

To prepare my students to read Tolkien’s translations of medieval poetry and his critical essays, so different from the prose novels they are used to, I first whet their intellectual appetites with one of Tolkien’s short stories: “The Smith of Wootton Major.” This is an extraordinary (but somewhat overlooked) example of Tolkien’s imagination at work; it is also the final short story he wrote in his lifetime. When we read it together, we learn that in the town of Wootton Major, the Feast of Good Children takes place every twenty-four years, and twenty-four children are invited to it. A Great Cake, which has been made by the Master Cook Nokes (a despicable man) and his apprentice Alf (an insightful one), is served to the children. In the cake are many trinkets, including a magical star, which is swallowed by a young boy, the blacksmith’s son. When he is ten years old, the star becomes boy’s passport into the perilous realm of Faërie. It shines on his forehead, and so he is called Starbrow when he is in Faërie, though he is just known as Smith when he is at home. He has many adventures throughout his life, including one in which he dances with the fairy-queen and brings home a magical flower that never fades. When he is old, he gives the star back to Alf – who has become the true Master Cook – so that it can be passed to another child. The story has multiple levels of meaning, but it especially conveys the importance of the power of the imagination being passed from one generation to the next.28

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28 For two different interpretations of the story, see Verlyn Flieger and T. A. Shippey, “Allegory Versus Bounce: Tolkien’s ”Smith of Wootton Major,” Journal of the Fantastic in the Art 12 (2001), 186-200. In my view, the star is not only a passport, but a symbol that connects to Tolkien’s Catholic imagination. It is best understood in the context of Tolkien’s surprising remarks that the Great Hall of the village of Wootton Major is meant to represent a village church and the Great Cooks, apparently, priests (see Flieger, “Smith of Wootton Major,” in The J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia 619). The Great Cake, in which the star is hidden, is reminiscent of the cake
But where does this imagination find its life? For Tolkien, the sources of imaginative power came from his Christian faith, his life experiences, and his broad and deep reading of medieval literature. This, I explain to my mythologists, is why we read Tolkien’s translations of medieval literature.

I first teach Tolkien’s translation of *Beowulf*, pairing it with his critical essay, “*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics” and his short story, “Sellic Spell,” a folk-tale Tolkien wrote to re-imagine the core story behind the Old English epic, *Beowulf*. This pairing allows students to see that Tolkien had both critical and creative responses to the medieval literature in which he found so much of his inspiration. After *Beowulf*, we read Tolkien’s translations of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Sir Orfeo*, and finally, *Pearl*.²⁹

Some of my students have read *Pearl* before, a few of them in the “British Literature I” survey course, but usually they have not read Tolkien’s translation of the poem or his prefatory essay to it, both of which reveal Tolkien’s interpretation of the dream vision. So together we review the four main questions about the poem (slightly rephrased), and we consider not only diverse scholarly answers to them, but our own and Tolkien’s. These questions are posted on a blog, and students have the opportunity to respond to them in comments before class discussion begins.³⁰ With this preparation, students are ready to consider several possibilities and absorb Tolkien’s answers to these questions. Because I

²⁹ For more detail, see Jane Beal, “Teaching Tolkien’s Translations of Medieval Literature: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Sir Orfeo*, and *Pearl*,” *This Rough Magic* 5 (June 2014), 1-40. Available at http://www.thisroughmagic.org/beal%20article.html.

read their answers before discussion starts in class, I also have a sense of where the students are in their understanding and where we can go in class.

For Tolkien, *Pearl* is an elegy, not an allegory, though it contains minor allegories within it – like the parable of the workers in the vineyard from Matthew's gospel.\(^\text{31}\) He compares the poem to Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, but he considers it greater than Chaucer's dream vision, in part because it strikes him as unfeigned. Indeed, for Tolkien, the poet and the narrator's voice are co-identified, saying of the poem that "it is overwhelmingly more probable that it too was founded on a real sorrow, and drew its sweetness from a real bitterness."\(^\text{32}\) Tolkien sees the poet's own lived experiences in the poem, and he considers the Dreamer representative of the poet and the Pearl-Maiden representative of the poet's daughter.\(^\text{33}\) However, Tolkien's acknowledges that the Pearl-Maiden also stands for the "spirit of celestial charity."\(^\text{34}\) Indeed, the interactions of the Dreamer and the Maiden take place in a symbolic narrative, in which the central symbol of the poem, the pearl, is endowed with great significance and by the end of which the Dreamer is miraculously consoled. Despite the consolation of the Christian hope of salvation, life after death, and reunion of the saints in times to come symbolized by the pearl, what captured Tolkien's imagination in this poem was what he called "the great sense of personal loss that pervades it," for the poem "represents a long process of thought

\(^{31}\) Matt. 20:1-16.


\(^{33}\) For Tolkien, the intentional fallacy (first clearly identified and analyzed by Wimsatt and Beardsley) goes mostly unrecognized, but this is typical in scholarship on *Pearl*.

\(^{34}\) Tolkien, "Introduction to *Pearl*," 8.
and mental struggle, an experience as real as the first blind grief of bereavement.” A similar tone of loss pervades much of Tolkien’s Middle-earth legendarium.

Tolkien drew inspiration from *Pearl* in his creation of the *Silmarillion*, especially in the legend of Beren and Lúthien, as well as in his much lesser known poem, “Princess Mee.” So it can be worthwhile, in “The Mythology of J.R.R. Tolkien” course, to pair *Pearl* with either the legend or the poem. If with the latter, then “Princess Mee” can serve as an opening to study of Tolkien as a poet. Indeed, in a recent version of “The Mythology” class, “Princess Mee” served as the first poem we discussed before a larger consideration of poems in Tolkien’s *Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, a collection of sixteen of Tolkien’s poems, which has been reprinted with four of Tolkien’s short stories and the essay “On Fairy-stories” in *Tales from the Perilous Realm*. “Princess Mee” is a longer version of a poem called “Princess Ni,” which Tolkien originally published in *Leeds University Verse, 1914-1924*. In 1961, Tolkien’s aunt, Jane Neave (his mother’s younger sister), asked him to write a collection of verse with Tom Bombadil “at the heart of it.” Tolkien subsequently published *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil and Other Poems from the Red Book* (1962), nearly all of them previously

35 Tolkien, “Introduction to Pearl,” 18-19.


published and then revised – including the fourth poem in the collection, “Princess Ni,” now entitled “Princess Mee.”

“Princess Mee” is a simple narrative poem about a lovely, little elven princess. It describes the physical appearance of the princess and how she dances with her reflection in a pool of water. The imagery associated with the princess is similar to that associated with the Pearl-Maiden: “pearls in her hair / all threaded fair; / of gossamer shot with gold / was her kerchief made” (lines 4-7). Like pearls, the colors white and gold (standing for purity and holiness) are clearly associated with both the Pearl-Maiden and the Princess. Tolkien refers to the pearls of this princess no less that three times (lines 4, 67, 74), including once in the very last line of the poem, making the pearls a significant visual element in her description and a symbol of her identity. Other repeated elements, her “kirtle fair” and “slippers frail / Of fishes’ mail” are clearly significant as well.39

The Princess also has similarities to Lúthien, being dressed in a gray mantle with a blue hood as she is, and being so very beautiful in her dancing. This picture of a beautiful, fairy-woman dancing alone in a wood is iconic in Tolkien’s imagination, inspired by a day when his own wife danced for him. It is most fully realized in his versions of the legend of Beren and Lúthien, in which Beren sees Lúthien dancing and desires her: the beginning of their love-story. But in “Princess Mee,” there is apparently no parallel for Beren (or for Tolkien) – at least so it seems at first.

39 It is interesting to compare the representations of the Pearl-Maiden in the late-fourteenth century Cotton Nero Ax manuscript to Tolkien’s descriptions of Princess Mee. See https://medievalpearl.wordpress.com/illustrations/. Notable, too, are the fish in the stream (not mentioned in Pearl but added by the illustrator). One wonders if Tolkien imagined these fish somehow becoming shoes for his Princess as she danced beside the pool!
Rather it appears that Tolkien is re-writing the myth of Narcissus, changing the lead character from a man to a woman (and from a human to an elf) and changing the narrative from a sad tale of self-absorption and paralysis to a delightful story about self-awareness and free movement. The re-writing accomplished in “Princess Mee” is an example of Tolkien’s application of his own concept of “eucatastrophe,” the joyous turn in fairy-stories, which he would occasionally insert into traditional narratives when he re-wrote them (as in “Sellic Spell,” for example, a folk-tale version of Beowulf in which the hero is not dead at the end, but instead, alive and married). In “Princess Mee,” the protagonist of the poem does not reject a lover (as Narcissus does Echo) nor fall in love with herself (as Narcissus does when he sees his own reflection) nor waste away from longing for her own reflection (as Narcissus does until the gods take pity on him and transform him into a flower). Instead, the princess accepts herself, without becoming obsessed with herself, and indeed appears to have great delight in seeing the reflection of her own existence.

It may be that Tolkien is re-writing aspects of Pearl as well. Whereas the Pearl-Maiden stands still (for the most part) on one side of a swiftly-flowing stream, Princess Mee dances beside a still pool. The Pearl-Maiden holds up a metaphorical mirror to the Dreamer, with her own reflection in it, through her sermon on the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, hoping he will better understand himself in terms of divine realities. Princess Mee, on the other hand, is truly looking at herself, not to show herself to others, but to celebrate herself: her beauty, her delight in dancing, the freedom of her body’s movement. Yet of course every reader who reads this poem imagines Princess Mee dancing, and so sees her, imaginatively, as Tolkien does, in the mind’s eye.
This imaginative participation of writer and reader in the viewing of Princess Mee, a woman ostensibly dancing alone with her reflection, recalls the Dreamer’s gaze upon the Pearl-Maiden and Beren’s on Lúthien. The Pearl-poet subtly critiques the Dreamer’s preoccupation with what he sees, especially because he apparently values it over what he hears (and thus over the divine truth the Pearl-Maiden is trying to speak to him), but Tolkien’s take on Beren’s gaze is more sympathetic. While Tolkien, like the Pearl-poet, does critique men who see Luthien’s beauty and wish to possess Luthien as an object – men like her father Thingol and her enemy Thú/ Sauron (especially in the verse version published in The Lays of Beleriand)\(^{40}\) – he also, ultimately, makes his legend a great love-story, the goal of which is not renunciation, but consummation for the greater good of Middle-earth. For ultimately, the descendants of Beren and Lúthien will help to eradicate evil from the good lands.

The existence of “Princess Mee” suggests the complex ways in which Tolkien’s imagination interacted with his sources and 1) experiences from his own life, 2) elements from his legendarium, and 3) details from Pearl highlighted in his translation and introductory essay. “Princess Mee” is surprisingly complex in content, and in transmission history (developing as it does over time from “Princess Ni” and in relation to both the Pearl-Maiden and Lúthien, not to mention Tolkien’s wife, Edith, who inspired the character of Lúthien). This complexity is not even remotely suggested by the way the author characterizes it in his preface to the poem in Tales from the Perilous Realm:

The Red Book contains a large number of verses. A few are included in the narrative of the *Downfall of the Lord of the Rings* or in the attached stories and chronicles; many more are found on loose leaves, while some are written carelessly in margins and blank spaces. Of the last sort most are nonsense, and now often unintelligible even when legible, or half-remembered fragments. From these marginalia are drawn numbers 4, 12, and 13 [i.e., “Princess Mee,” “Cat,” and “Shadow-Bride”]; a better example of their general character would be the scribble ...

The very dismissiveness implied by such characterization, compared to the intensive re-writing Tolkien did of these poems, compels us to reconsider Tolkien’s intentions in these poems in relation to his larger legendarium.

When students in “The Mythology of J.R.R. Tolkien” course read *Pearl* and “Princess Mee” together, and consider both in relationship to the legend of Beren and Lúthien, they become better readers not only of *Pearl*, but also of Tolkien. Our study is not simply one of sources and influences, but rather of translation and transformation. It gives students an idea of how Tolkien’s imagination worked. The pattern of our study – questions asked, discoveries made – can help students in their study of any medieval or modern author. Furthermore, because many of these students are creative writers themselves, who encountered Tolkien’s writing as children and are inspired to write their own novels and poems set in a secondary world of their own invention, they also have the opportunity to reflect on how their own imaginations work. How have they been influenced by their own sources (including Tolkien and Tolkien’s sources)? How have they translated and

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41 Tolkien, *Tales from the Perilous Realm*, 169 (full titles of poems 4, 12, and 13 added).
transformed what they have read in their own writings? Thus the students can become not only better readers, but also more self-aware writers.

**Conclusions**

*Pearl* can be a difficult poem to teach, but it can also be an enjoyable and instructive poem to study. It can be read in different kinds of English courses, including the general education course in literature for non-majors, the early British literary survey course for English majors, and an upper-division author course or special topics seminar on J.R.R. Tolkien for English majors. It can be read in different contexts, in relation to parables, fables and fairy-tales; in relation to Middle English lyric poetry; and in relation to Tolkien's “Princess Mee” (and other poems) and his legend of Beren and Lúthien. In every case, by reading the poem and responding to it in writing and through discussion, students can become better readers not only of *Pearl* in particular but also of literature in general.

I have never ceased to be impressed by the way that students engage *Pearl* intellectually, imaginatively, and emotionally. Intellectually, they read the poem closely and consider how many levels of meaning may co-exist in it literally, allegorically, morally, and anagogically. Imaginatively, they respond to the poem (much like Tolkien did) not only with critical analysis, but creative expression in the form of their own poems and works of visual art. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, they engage emotionally with the poem.

This emotional engagement suggests to me that they will remember the poem long-term, especially when they relate the poem to their own lives. I have seen that many of my students find in *Pearl* a Dreamer like themselves, one whose confusion, anger, sorrow, and sense of loss resonates with their own, for students often come to my classroom with a
history of personal loss of loved ones that they sometimes disclose in relation to our study of *Pearl*. When the Dreamer in *Pearl* is consoled, sometimes, at some level, so are they.
Appendix: Three Assignments

Professor Beal – Introduction to Literature

MANUSCRIPT MISCELLANY

Length: 10-12 pages
Weight: 35% of the course grade
Proposal of theme due: Monday of Week 13 via email to Dr.B.
Due: Monday of Week 14 via e-dropbox in the online learning management system

Assignment: Select at least 9-12 passages from class readings related to one another by a theme. Comment on them. Write a final reflection paragraph explaining why you selected the passages and why they matter to you. Illustrate, illuminate or otherwise adorn your manuscript miscellany. Assessment: 9-12 passages connected by the theme (logic of selection), meaningfulness of reflection, clarity and beauty of prose style, and creativity.

Manuscript Miscellany Evaluation Checklist

___ 9-12 passages from class readings
    ___ 3-4 from medieval literature, 3-4 from Renaissance literature, and 2-4 from Restoration literature)
    ___ thematically related to one another

___ theme: What is your theme? ___________________________ (logic of selection)

___ comment on the 9-12 passages (clarity and beauty of prose style)

___ final reflection paragraph explaining why you selected the passages and why they matter to you (meaningfulness, clarity and beauty of prose style)

___ illustrate, illuminate or otherwise adorn your manuscript miscellany (creativity)
Explication of a Middle English Lyric Poem
(or a Stanza from Pearl)

Length: 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages (at least 5-7 paragraphs). Append the GRADING CHECKLIST to your paper.

Weight: 25% of the course grade

Workshop: Tuesday of Week 6. Email four copies of your complete draft to your workshop partners before class.

Due: Tuesday of Week 7 in the appropriate e-dropbox in the online learning management system

Directions: Choose a poem to explicate. Read it carefully, identifying its themes and at least three poetic devices that evoke the theme. Write a paper according to the following structure:

Introductory paragraph: Identify the author and the cultural context of the poem. End your paragraph with the thesis.

A 2 Sentence Thesis: The first sentence should state the theme. The second sentence should list the three poetic devices you plan to examine.

1 Main Body Paragraph: Begin with a clear topic sentence stating the first poetic device and how it evokes the theme. Then quote the relevant portion of the poem. Explain it and comment on it. Create a smooth transition to the next paragraph.

2 Main Body Paragraph: Begin with a clear topic sentence stating the second poetic device and how it evokes the theme. Then quote the relevant portion of the poem. Explain it and comment on it. Create a smooth transition to the next paragraph.

3 Main Body Paragraph: Begin with a clear topic sentence stating the third poetic device and how it evokes the theme. Then quote the relevant portion of the poem. Explain it and comment on it. Create a smooth transition to the next paragraph.

Conclusion: Conclude with a new insight you have gained about the poem. State what you learned, what you enjoyed, and what you will remember about this poem in the future.

Dr. B’s Paper Recommendations:
1) Choose a poem you care about.
2) Think before you write.
3) Create an outline. Create a draft. Edit carefully.
4) Take your paper to the Writing Center and have someone else carefully proof-read it.

*Please do not expect a passing grade if you choose to scramble to write this paper the night before it’s due.

Dr. B’s Paper Policies:
1) Papers can be submitted before the due date, but MUST be submitted to the correct e-dropbox of our course shell online before class on the date due.
2) If you doubt your paper is in the drop-box, you may email it to me with an explanation.
3) No papers will be graded without the paper-grading rubric attached as the final page.
Professor Beal – “The Mythology of J.R.R. Tolkien”

CREATIVE PROJECT

Proposal due: Monday of Week 11
Student-teacher conference meeting: Monday of Week 12 (visual artists, performers, and mixed media artist) and 13 (songwriters, poets, and short story writers)
Final draft due: Monday of Week 14
Length: Varies
Weight: 50% of the course grade

Assignment: create a short story (set in Tolkien’s Middle-earth or your own secondary world), poetry portfolio, song lyrics w/ music, original visual artwork (drawing, painting, collage), or performance (poetry recitation, dramatic monologue, or film clip of dramatic adaptation / skit).

Poetry Portfolio Evaluation Checklist

___ alliterative poem of at least nine lines (in the Old English poetic tradition)
___ a riddle poem (see OE riddles from the Exeter Book and Tolkien’s riddles spoken by Bilbo and Gollum in The Hobbit)
___ a prose-poem allegory (see Tolkien’s allegories concerning Poesis and the poet-as-a-man-who-built-a-tower in “Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics”)
___ a lay in the tradition of OF lais (see Marie de France and Tolkien’s Lay of Leithien, which tells the story of the first meeting of Beren and Luthien and is included in FOTR, “A Knife in the Dark”)
___ a strictly metered and rhymed narrative poem, having the genre of romance or elegy, in the tradition of West Midlands poetry influenced by native OE tradition and Anglo-Norman traditions (see Tolkien’s translations of “SGGK,” “Sir Orfeo,” and “Pearl”)
___ a bestiary poem (see Tolkien’s “Oliphaunt”)
___ a narrative, descriptive or nursery-rhyme styled poem about Faery-land (like “Errantry”)
___ a free-choice poem
___ a reflection paragraph answering these questions: 1) What is your evaluation of JRRT as a poet? 2) What was it like for you to write in the medieval forms that JRRT loved
3) What have you learned, and how have you grown as a poet by practicing these forms?
### SHORT STORY EVALUATION CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Engaging Introduction - WHAM:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who? Main character</td>
<td>Spare or lush style as appropriate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where? Setting (time &amp; place)</td>
<td>Provided promptly when new character, setting, event or object appears so the reader can visualize?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is happening? (first event in the plot)</td>
<td>Proportionate to importance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery – <em>what’s the hook, that unknown thing, that provokes readers to curiosity?</em></td>
<td>Metaphors? Symbols? Motifs?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Setting</strong></th>
<th><strong>Plot (vs. chronology!)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place/s?</td>
<td>Initial event? “In the middle of things?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time/s?</td>
<td>Rising action – conflicts &amp; complications?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is the world of the story made real and believable to the readers?</td>
<td>Flashbacks (2-3)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Main Character Development</strong></th>
<th><strong>Genre</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical appearance? Description:</td>
<td>“Shape” of the plot?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological picture?</td>
<td>Elements included that define the genre (detective, fantasy, historical, horror, magical realism, realism, romance, sci-fi, etc)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot Strategy: <em>is the main character’s flaw resolved in the course of the story?</em> (man vs. self, man vs. man, man vs woman, man vs society, man vs nature, man vs God or the supernatural)</td>
<td><strong>Coherence &amp; Meaning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the characters’ actions coming from logical / believable internal and external motivations?</td>
<td>Is the theme of the story evident?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Other Characters</strong></th>
<th><strong>Style</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foil?</td>
<td><strong>Style</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological picture?</td>
<td>Carefully proofread?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Dialogue</strong></th>
<th><strong>Length (2-21 pp)?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advances the plot?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reveals character?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expresses emotion?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formatted correctly?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varies tone by using another word than “said”?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Professor Beal – “The Mythology of J.R.R. Tolkien”*
**VISUAL ART EVALUATION CHECKLIST**  
(adapted from http://onfeatureblog.blogspot.com/2012/10/how-to-critique-artwork.html)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is the objective portion of the art critique. It involves a technical description:</td>
<td>This part of the art critique is more subjective. I use my analysis of the technical aspects of the piece of art to understand the artist's intended purpose for the artwork.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Artist's name</td>
<td>◦ Expound on the <strong>feeling (or mood)</strong> conveyed by the artwork. Describe what the artwork means and why.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Title of work</td>
<td>◦ Explain the artist’s intended <strong>purpose</strong> for creating this particular work of art. Examine why the artist made the <strong>choices</strong> in technique, materials and subject matter and how they relate to the intended purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Type of artwork</td>
<td>◦ Identify <strong>symbols</strong> in the artwork and describe how they relate to the artist’s technical choices and contribute to the artist's execution of the intended purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Subject of the painting (scene)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Objects in the painting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ First impression--note the characteristics of the artwork that first jump out at you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Colors used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Shapes, lines and texture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Light saturation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Sensory qualities--identify the predominant mood and visual effect.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From a technical description to an in-depth examination of how the technical elements were utilized by the artist to create the overall impression conveyed by the artwork. Technical elements you need to analyze when you critique artwork include:</td>
<td>This is a summation of the art criticism process leading up to this point. Uses analysis and interpretation to draw conclusions and reach judgments about the artwork.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Color.</td>
<td>◦ States my judgement of the artwork’s value. For example, its value may be to evoke nostalgia, to incite anger or to reveal beauty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Shapes, forms and lines.</td>
<td>◦ Describes the artwork’s relevance to the art community and to people as a whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Texture.</td>
<td>◦ Explains where the artwork has strong value and where it falls short.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Light and shadow.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ How each technical element contributes to the mood, meaning and aesthetic sensation of the artwork.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


Anderson, J.J., Language and Imagination in the Gawain-poems (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 31, 35

Beal, Jane, The Signifying Power of Pearl: Literary and Cultural Contexts for the Transformation of Genre (New York, N.Y.: Routlege, forthcoming),

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Robertson, D.W., “The Pearl as Symbol,” Modern Language Notes 65 (1950), 155-61; repr. in The Middle English Pearl: Critical Essays, ed. John Conley (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of


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