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> God should not be said to be ineffable, for when this is said, something is said. And a contradiction in terms is created, since if that is ineffable which cannot be spoken, that is not ineffable which can be called ineffable. This contradiction is to be passed over in silence rather than resolved verbally.
>
> —Saint Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*

ON THE MOST BASIC LEVEL, SYMBOLS SURROUNDING THE Holy Virgin attempt to name the unnameable. Mary becomes paradoxical in such attempts: metaphorically she is, for example, at once bride of her son, mother of her father, and sister and mother to all of humanity (cf. Brown, 16: 1–12).[1] Similarly, the inexpressibility topos in *Pearl* paradoxically expresses and foregrounds the gap between time- and space-bound human language and the total otherness of divinity. The poem's recapitulative formal qualities, embodying the central spherical metaphor of the poem, the eponymous jewel, heighten this feeling of difference between mundane things and the perfection of divine things, even as the poem speaks of bridging this gap. The poem uses the pearl image and many other metaphorical figures, comparing the ineffable to worldly things, in order to represent this otherness.

It is no wonder, then, that many interpretations of this poem have focused on the logic of metaphor. However, it is sometimes forgotten that metaphors work only by preserving a sense of difference both within and beyond the establishment of metaphorical likenesses.[2] Pseudo-Dionysius, who with Augustine had a profound influence on medieval allegorical thought, understood that no metaphor can totally annihilate either of its

terms because it can function only to the extent that it states, not negates, its own reality of difference (Bogdanos 109). So we are reminded that metaphors actually preserve the status quo, crossing categorical boundaries only by recalling those very boundaries. Yet we can also recognize that there is another logic at work in *Pearl*, a metonymic logic, which tends to pluralize the heaven of the poem, connecting it fluidly to human desires and bodies.

Metonymy exploits the contiguity between categories, that is, between something and its attributes, its surroundings, and its components. From the perspective of medieval Christianity, which understood that "For [God's] inuisible things, from the creation of the vvorld are seen, being vnderstoode by those things that are made: his eternal povver also and Diuinitie" (Romans 1:20),[3] God inheres in the things of the world; that is, the transcendental signified is metonymically immanent and manifest, contiguous with its creation. Thus, an investigation of metonymy in *Pearl* can lead not only to an understanding of the poem different than those focused on metaphor as a defining trope but also to a better understanding of metaphor itself, an understanding more in line with medieval poetics.

Before we turn to an analysis of the *Pearl* Maiden's ostensibly salvific words and the poem's symbolism and form, considering representations of Mary will help shed some light on this concomitant logic at work in the poem and more generally in Christianity and its narratives, since Mary can be seen to highlight divinity's metonymic relationship to mundane things. The Annunciation, the Incarnation, and the Assumption can be taken as metonymic representations when we understand them as figurations within the narrative of salvation that foreground the contiguous[4] nature of flesh and the divine, of things and faith. An investigation of certain depictions of Mary as both artifact and queen of heaven will evidence an underlying fluidness of signification, in which each term in the semiotic network is dependent on others. From the perspective of metonymy we can understand the idealism of *Pearl* other than in the ostensibly appropriate metaphoric form of humanity versus divinity. For in so doing, we can come to realize the import of *Pearl*, which lies not so much in its tour de force of form but in its

textual refusal to idolize or monumentalize its accomplishments.[5] In the same way that Mary physiologically manifests the interdependence between flesh and salvation, the pearl, shifting in meaning from context to context, is a figure that metonymically marks the contiguity between divine and human, and more remarkably between purity and poetic representation.

Called the "wyndow" and "yate of hewen"(Brown 41: 24 and 27),[6] Mary is a trope on the boundaries between heaven and earth, translating things of one sphere into another. For instance, the *vierges ouvrantes* constitute one example of the theme of Mary as the *sedes sapientiae*, the throne of Wisdom: via the Incarnation, she translates the Word and Wisdom of God into the mundane realm. She who held the Word within her becomes iconographically his seat or support (Attwater 267). This theme is part of a larger one that reminds the faithful of the connection of Mary's flesh to Christ's and therefore ultimately to salvation. A prime example is a late-thirteenth- or early-fourteenth-century *vierge ouvrante* from the Middle Rhine that represents a crowned and enthroned nursing Madonna when closed. The statue opens to reveal the adult Christ enthroned, holding a crucifix and surrounded by scenes of salvational history (Bynum, figure 6.11). Such representations, along with others like monstrances in which the host is held in the body of Mary (Bynum, figure 6.10), remind the faithful of the necessary, liminal quality of the Holy Virgin, and more generally of the female body, within this salvational narrative.

Mary, then, is the contiguous figure between the failure of the old law and the inauguration of the new incarnational one. Her explication of Word into flesh initiated the redemption of human language, "for if language had fallen with Adam, it had been redeemed by Christ's condescending to take on human flesh—and therefore human speech" (Schotter 24). She is a "tokne þat pays [peace] scholde be / By-tuexte god and manne" (Brown 32: 15–16), the medium through which the light of God must pass and be refracted to be apprehensible to humanity.[7] An investigation of such passive roles in relation to her didactic and regal functions will reveal a narrative necessity that Mary remain a trope that never attains any one all-subsuming significance. In this liquescence, the medieval faithful, like Dante's

pilgrim who reaches Paradise at last, wrote "nostra effige" onto the face of God (33: 131). Via the pathway of Marian imagery we will see how, even if he does not see himself reflected in the New Jerusalem his sight enters, the *Pearl* narrator is productive of that landscape.[8]

Five aspects of the history of Marian figuration are especially relevant to *Pearl*: stories about her life after Jesus's death; tales surrounding her own death and assumption; and her roles as queen of heaven, throne of Jesus, and vanquisher of evil. The *N-Town* "Assumption of Mary" begins with a collection of Jews discussing the threat Mary still poses to their society after Jesus's death (lines 59–65).[9] One threat she poses is her "hie lore," or "high learning" (line 137). As representations of the Annunciation make clear, Mary was believed to be a woman of serious and complete education in Jewish law.[10] The *N-Town* "Assumption" play indicates that Mary was also a teacher, that her "fayre speche" has "bredyn" belief in the resurrected Christ (71 and 70). Bynum notes several late-medieval visual representations of Mary as a priest.[11] Such images undoubtably emanate from early writings of the church. Apocryphal sources show the Virgin in a position of authority, albeit not a strictly ministerial one, as she continues to have the ear of several of the apostles. The "Twentieth Discourse of Cyril of Jerusalem," "The Discourse of Theodosius," and "The Discourse of Saint John the Divine" all contain references to Mary's instruction of the disciples.[12] Additionally, in a role that was to become traditional, Mary becomes an intercessor for humanity, even at her own death, praying to God to have mercy on those who call on her name (James 207). Such intercession is strikingly similar to that provided by the priest via the mass and confessional, and we see Mary as a translational term within the process of salvation. As intercessor Mary is also active, suggesting a potent, if overwritten, aspect of the medium in which the Word was made manifest.

After recognizing the threat Mary's power poses to their society, the collection of Jews in the *N-Town* "Assumption" plot her death. The Jews want Mary dead, and their plans coincide, not surprisingly in this piece of Christian didacticism, with God's plans: Mary is already dying and her death will once again prove God's power and mercy. Throughout this recounting, as

in the *York Plays* and the apocrypha, the bodily nature of Mary's death is stressed. The verb used is the common one, "to d(e)ye," as in lines 139 and 257 in the *N-Town* and 44, 104, and 132 in *York*.[13] "The Death of Mary" in the York cycle additionally emphasizes the "peynes" and "sikenes" Mary suffers (lines 37 and 92). Also following apocryphal sources, each play recounts the double nature of Mary's death. First her "flech . . . feble be nature" (*N-Town*, line 302) dies and then it "expirand" (129)—or expires transitively—her soul: "*hic exiet anima marie de corpore in sinu[m] dei*" (stage direction between lines 329 and 330). As her soul thus rises into the *sinu[m]* or "fold" of God, Mary is left on earth as a corpse, about which Jesus gives the apostles explicit directions for burial and protection from the scheming Jews. But, then, even Mary's corpse is prolific: her soulless body, that is matter without form, converts those outside the fold and increases the faith of those already within it. The *N-Town* follows the apocryphal tradition in having the collection of Jews converted after one of their number grabs Mary's body in an attempt to steal and destroy it.[14] The way in which Mary's body has power over others in contiguity with it creates a network of bodies. In the case of *Pearl*, the maiden will have a similar function. Also, such moments, which reproduce faith, recall the power of the maternal and translational body, a power which, depending on context can be positive or negative. Of course, the potential of Mary's body to reproduce faith is a standard part of Christian doctrine, and yet the threatening quality of such reproduction is never far in the background in Mary's story. This threat is reinstated in the *York Plays*, for example, in the references there to the efficacy of a prayer to Mary during the dangers and pains of childbirth, the intercessional functions of which recall her sacerdotal functions.[15]

Even recuperated here within the Christian narratives of salvation and conversion, Mary's body has physiological and psychological potency, a potency more striking in Assumption texts since her soul is already in heaven. We can see how Assumption texts incorporate and attempt to sublate Mary's flesh and yet make of it this dangerous, slippery matrix upon which so much of the narrative is founded. This system's own definition of such matter as prototypically outside the bounds can teach

us to listen and read in ways other than in good form(s) (Irigaray 111). For by investigating the semiotic networks that produce and enact the idea of heaven, as in the cases of the Christian salvational narrative and of *Pearl*, we can understand the authority of images upon which these narratives rely.

Mary's soulless body is one site where this semiotic process can become visible because it is a body comprehending a contradiction: it must be completely human, if God is indeed to be truly incarnate, and yet the corpse, conceived without spot, that had once been the home of God should not, believers held, be subject to decay and consumption by worms.[16] So in the same way that the *Præredemptio* seemed a logical necessity in the Incarnation,[17] since Mary's was such a unique incorporation, her bodily assumption also became a necessity. In the Assumption texts, Mary prays "Wyth all [her] herte and sowle be natures excitacyon" for her death in order to be with her son; all creatures, she knows, want to be with him but, "myche more owe I, youre moder be alye [kindred], / Syn ye wern born God and man of my bodye, / To desyre yowre presens, that were our ferste formacyon" (*N-Town*, "The Assumption of Mary" 101 and 104–06). Paralleling apocryphal and later literary sources,[18] this passage indicates the very human, physiological affiliation she feels for Jesus. This passage is striking because it begins with a catalogue of the Godhead's power and attributes, yet it returns to "saluacyon"'s physical connection to and reliance upon maternal flesh (*N-Town*, "The Assumption of Mary" 69). Again here, Mary's death is doubly potent: even as Assumption texts tend toward a sense of timeless history connected to salvation, Mary's body continues to return as a specific, material site around which this narrative of transcendence is figured.

Later versions of Mary's death, including all those apocryphal and dramatic texts so far cited in this essay, specifically illustrate a bodily death of Mary. "The Discourse of Theodosius" makes clear the contextual reasons Mary's passing turned from a *Transitus* into an Assumption.[19] As James synopsizes:

> Jesus spoke [Mary] of the necessity of death. If [Mary] were translated, "wicked men will think concerning thee that thou art a power which came down from

> heaven, and that the dispensation (the Incarnation) took place in appearance. (ch. 4)

As Jesus and Mary talk before her death in the *York Plays*, the terms of her death are made clearer still. She asks her son that she be spared the horrifying experience of seeing the devil when she dies (line 134). Jesus cannot grant this request, however. He makes it plain that the "fende" (154) must be present at her death so that her death will be completely human and the salvational narrative will continue (154–58).

The myth of Mary's death correlates meticulously with the period's reading of the "Song of Songs" and creates of her a metonymic link between the whole of humanity, specifically the faithful of the church, and the redemptive power of heaven. In an allegorical reading of the "Song," the bride is understood to represent the church and the canticle itself becomes an expression of God's love for the faithful. The church is understood to be the bride waiting at the altar for Christ, the groom, and the story of ultimate salvation seems to subsume all.[20] And yet this paradoxical figuration of Mary as "bo maiden ant wyue" (Brown 50: 10), connected in such an intimate way with her death, betokens that her death is also *not* typical. That her body would not be subject to decay after death is one indication of the narrative's failure to sublate even as the Assumption is a narrative necessity.

Such comprehensively contradictory figuration continues as Mary becomes Queen of Heaven. In section eight of *Pearl*, the maiden attempts to explain to the narrator her relation as *a* queen of heaven to Mary, whom the narrator understands to be *the* Queen (line 432). The *Pearl* Maiden also calls Mary the "quene of cortaysye" (456) but adds to this a feudal connotation:

> Þat emperise al heuenz hatz—
> And vrþe and helle–in her bayly;
> Of erytage ȝet non wyl ho chace,
> For ho is quen of cortaysye. (441–44)[21]

> [That empress has all heaven, earth, and hell within her castle walls {dominion}; she will chase none from

their heritage because she is the queen of courtesy.]

Mary's queenship was a traditional aspect of poetic figuration. In his praises of the Virgin, Richard of Saint Lawrence describes her as queen of three provinces, "coelestium, terrestrium, et infernorum" just as our poet does (qtd. in Fletcher 7). Brown's lyric collections contain thirteen references to the title "quen[e]" in thirteenth-century and five in fourteenth-century lyrics.[22]

After her death, Mary's regal power grew but remained closely allied to her maternal physiology. Gertrud Schiller describes a common fourteenth-century portrayal of the crowned Mary, the "Madonna of Humility" (Schiller 1: 47–48). Even though she sits on a stool or the ground and holds the Christ child, she is crowned not only by a rayed halo but also by twelve stars, the crown of the Apocalyptic woman of Revelations, chapter 12, verses 1–5:

> And a great signe appeared in heauen: a vvoman clothed vvith the sunne, and the moone under her feet, & on her head a crovvne of tvvelue starres: & being with childe, she cried also traueling, and is in anguish to be deliuered. And there vvas seen an other signe in heauen, and behold a great red dragon hauing seue[n] heades, & ten hornes: and on his heades seuen diadems . . . and the dragon stoode before the vvoman which vvas ready to be deliuered: that vvhen she should be deliuered, he might deuoure here sonne. And she brought forth a man childe, vvho was to gouerne al nations in an yron rodde . . .

Exegetically, this passage was understood to refer to Mary's role in salvation (Attwater 29), and examining Schiller's example (figure 106) with this tradition in mind reveals the authority of even this humble figure of Mary. She is the work's main figure. Situated to face the viewer, the Virgin Mother physically encompasses the Christ child, whose face is turned partly towards his mother and only partly toward the viewer. This physical comprehension parallels Mary's temporal and spiritual comprehension of the Christ child, sucking his thumb and infantalized

in the image, as it brings together many elements of the cultural matrix that Mary represents. She is at once crowned by stars as queen of heaven, prefiguring salvation for all humanity, as well as the Second Coming, while she holds the vehicle of that salvation in her lap. In Mary's holding the Christ child, the painting recalls the *sedes sapientiae*: the crowned Mary is also the throne of Jesus, wisdom (e.g. Schiller 1: 41).

Additionally, the title "Madonna of Humility" and the figure's close proximity to the ground should remind us of another aspect of Marian imagery—the cultural inheritance of being female. "Humility" is from the Latin *humilis*, meaning "lowly, mean, base," but more originally from *humus* or "ground." This virtuous humility seems to be the recuperated form of the otherwise threatening fecund maternal matter of the earth. Like the excessive matter sloughed from a woman's body each month, Mary's humility, even from her position of the crowned and enthroned Queen of Heaven (albeit a different type of enthroning as she becomes the throne), points towards the very material basis of an ostensibly transcendent salvation and system of virtue.

That Mary reigned bodily in heaven was a commonplace, and as with the other forms Mary takes, as Queen of Heaven she is meant to continue reproducing faith. The fecundity of the "garden enclosed" and the "fountaine sealed up" is never in question (Song of Songs 4: 12). In her role as heavenly intercessor, made of "fel [skin] & flesch & ban" (Brown 26:39), between humanity and the godhead, she is the term of contiguity between human and divine realms in many literary and theological texts. But the contradiction of Mary's materially spiritual procreation must remind us of her originally sinful predecessor, Eve, for Mary was not the first woman to come face to face with the devil. Even in her moment of triumph over Satan, and the triumph it suggests for all humanity, Mary's role as vanquisher of evil is intricately associated with Eve and the fall in the garden. This role arises from allegorical readings of several seemingly disparate Old Testament verses and from these readings' being associated with the first five verses of Revelations chapter twelve, verses upon which the "Madonna of Humilty" type was based.[23]

The relationship between Mary and the serpent of evil begins with a remarkable mistranslation of the curse on humanity in Genesis 3: 15: "I wil put enmyties betwen thee & the woman, and thy seed and the seed of her: she shal bruise thy head in peeces, & thou shalt lye in waite of her heele."[24] Hirn describes the mistranslation as follows: "The great prophecy in Genesis . . . has been rendered in the Vulgate by 'Ipsa conteret caput tuum, et tu insidiaberis calcaneo ejus'—'*She* shall bruise thy head, etc'" (416). The confusion over the gender of nouns in the translation served to add to the Holy Virgin's reputation in the salvational narrative when this translation was added to similar interpretations of other verses.[25] Such readings, founded on mistranslations and built up narrative element by narrative element, call attention to the role context plays in signification. Each element, "mistaken" or based on standard theology, plays a part in determining the significance of all other elements and the structure of the whole narrative of salvation, as well as Mary's place within it. Again, our attention is turned to the contiguity between the elements of this system, a contiguity which *Pearl* will foreground in a similar manner.

The eponymous pearl, a "perle wythouten spot"—"pearl without spot" (lines 12, 24, 36, and 48), begins the tale allied with the *specula sine macula* image of Mary. Additionally, the "Joylez Juelere"—"Joyless Jeweler" bewails his loss near harvest time "In Augoste in a hyȝ seysoun, / Quen corne is coruen wyth crokeȝ kene"—"In August in a high season, when corn is cut with keen sickles" (39–40). Scholars have linked this seasonal timing, as well as the herbs growing in the "erbere" or garden (9), with the Holy Virgin, the fifteenth of August being the feast day of the Assumption (Stern 76). The *Pearl* Maiden is multiply framed by these opening lines. Connected to the Holy Virgin more than just with these and other textual references, the image of the pearl is similarly a transitional image.

When the narrator falls asleep and begins his dream vision, he enters a magical landscape where we begin to see metonymic logic at work more precisely. The pearl image next appears as a part of this landscape. As the narrator walks, gazing at the "crystal klyffez so cler of kynde"—"crystal cliffs so naturally clear" (74) and the trees with trunks "as blwe as ble of Ynde—"as blue as

blue of India" (76) and leaves like "bornyst syluer"—"burnished silver" (77), he hears the crunching of gravel under his feet. He looks down to find that it consists of "precious perlez of oryente"—"precious pearls of orient" (82). These pearls—recalling the whole of the poem and figuratively allied with every other pearl in this vision—metonymically represent the character of this landscape, a place where the narrator recognizes the fixtures and yet realizes they are in a context completely new to him. Where the pearl was before singular, a lost object of grief, the image has now been multiplied and translated from the grave-like "huyle" or hill where the pearl had fallen (41) to the expansive landscape of the dream. This landscape, in between the human world of death and harvest and the timeless, heavenly New Jerusalem, is indebted to both the religious and the erotic visionary traditions.

Precedents like John's apocalyptic vision and Dante's *Comedia* abound on the religious side. In addition, Eden and the *hortus conclusus* are models for the magically artful landscape of *Pearl*, as Patricia Kean has asserted (98–113).[26] From the erotic tradition, the love garden or the garden of *Deduit* from *La Roman de la Rose*, the fallen Eden, offers a precedent (Bogdanos 38; Stanbury, *Seeing* 18).[27] This alliance of spiritual and secular analogues provides us our first glimpse of the intertextual and often contradictory nature of the setting of this dream vision. The image of the pearl focuses and manipulates such intertextuality. Given the semiotic weight of pearls in the period, the poem's translation of the pearl image offers a metonymic glimpse of the indeterminacy of this highly intertextual setting, as allegorical and lapidary texts would indicate.

In the Middle Ages, pearls were called Margarita stones, connecting them to the purity and virtues of Saint Margaret. For instance, in his *Testament of Love*, Thomas Usk translates the physical value of pearls—their capacity to provide bodily comfort, protection against passions of evil men, and the stanching of blood—into the virtues of purity, humility, and the healing effect of beloved on lover (Bogdanos 15). Lapidary lore describes similar virtues. Pearls are made "of þe dewe of heuen" and have powers "aȝens rennyng [running] of blod, & aȝens þe flyx [flux] of þe wombe" and powers to comfort "lymes &

membris" because they can cleanse away "superfluite of humors & fasten the lymes" (*English Medieval Lapidaries* 107–08). Such virtues coincided with medieval exegetical practices, but from the Biblical perspective pearls had both a positive and negative weight. Matthew 13: 45–46, for example, relates the parable of the pearl of great price: "the kingdom of heauen is like to a marchant man, seeking good pearles. And hauing found one precious pearle, he vvent his vvay, and sold al that he had, and bought it." Similarly, Matthew 7: 6 associates pearls with attaining and protecting God's kingdom: "Giue not that which is holy to dogges; neither cast ye your pearles before swine, lest perhaps they treade them with their feete, and turning, to teare you." Additionally, pearls show up as part of the kingdom itself, as the gates of the New Jerusalem (Revelations 21: 21).

On the negative side, Revelations 17: 4 describes the whore of Babylon as "gilted vvith gold, and pretious stone, and pearles," while after the destruction of Babylon, the town's merchants are themselves "Joylez Juelere[s]" (*Pearl*, line 252), mourning their lost "merchandise of gold and silver and precious stone, and pearle" (Revelations 18: 12). Additionally, as Dolores Frese argues in her work on Chaucer's Pardoner and its relation to *Le Roman de la Rose*, the gravel that covers the river bed in the garden of *Deduit*, like the pearly gravel in the *Pearl*'s magical landscape, is suggestive of semen. As a sign, semen can have negative or positive connotations because, as Augustine says, in the "torrent of the human race, both elements are carried along together—both evil which is derived from him who begets, and the good which is bestowed by Him who creates us" (qtd. in Frese 64). Within these few examples are evident the various natures of the pearl as image; it is a symbol of perfection and transcendence and, at the same time, of mutability and moral corruption (Bogdanos 17). All that distinguishes a good pearl from a bad one, it seems, is the setting of the pearl, the semiotic context that provides it with signification. Like the translated "dewe of heuen" that forms a pearl, the image of the pearl is itself fluid; and this fluidness, infusing and infused by each context in which it signifies, operates in *Pearl* as a collateral logic to that of the poem's dualism.

The conflicted history of the interpretation of this poem and

its central figure illustrates the difficulty such fluidness poses to coming to some final understanding of the poem. Those who would read the poem via Augustine's four-tiered strategy of allegory understand the pearl to have spiritual significance right from the poem's beginning.[28] There are those who understand the pearl to be a symbol, believing that the poem provides its own exegesis, no outside systems being necessary (Spearing 123). Those who do what might be called a psychological reading, understand the pearl to be secular and personal at the poem's beginning but increasingly endowed with changing significance throughout the work (Conley 57). The importance of these various and contradictory readings to my purpose here is not in using one or the other of them to uphold yet another interpretation of the pearl image; instead, these readings help us to focus on *how* the poem works, how it calls attention to the process of signification by repeatedly relocating and reinterpreting the pearl image.

We next see the pearl in the clothing of a "faunt" or "child" (161) the narrator notices in the magical landscape. Gradually it becomes clear that this child is the pearl that the narrator lost in the erber. The narrator sees the maiden on the other side of a stream, which he realizes is "a deuyse / Bytwene myrþez"—"a device between joys" (140) planned to divide him from "paradyse"—"paradise" on the other side (137). Even this naïve narrator realizes the fabricated, divisive quality of his surroundings. The narrator is amazed to see "A mayden of menske, ful debonere"—"A maiden of honor, completely debonair" in a "Blysnande whyt"—"shining white" gown (162, 163). Like the jewel that he once possessed "clanly close in golde so clere"—"completely imbedded in gold so clear" (2), she looks like "glysnande golde"—"glistening gold" (165) sitting on the opposite bank with a face as "whyt as playn yuore"—"white as plain ivory" (178). He fears (losing) her "gostly"—"ghostly" presence (185) even as he solidifies her through description:

> Þat gracios gay withouten galle,
> So smoþe, so smal, so seme sly3t,
> Rysez vp in hir araye ryalle,

A precios pyece in perlez pyȝt. (189–92)

[That gracious, gay {one} without gall, so smooth, so small so seemly slight, rose up in her royal array, a precious piece in pearls fixed {or arrayed}.]

These lines echo the original description of the first stanza in which the narrator describes his lost pearl as "rounde," "smal," and "smoþe"—"round," "small," and "smooth" (5 and 6). Stanza seventeen intensifies the pearl imagery in its description of the maiden's white gown which is "with precios perlez al vmbepyȝte"—"with precious pearls completely surrounded" (204). Stanza eighteen describes her crown "Of marjorys and non oþer ston"—"Of Margerys [pearls] and no other stone" (206). However, stanza nineteen makes most clear the metonymic logic at work in this landscape and in the relationship between the dreamer/narrator and the maiden as well as between the poem and its readers; in this complex the poem teaches another lesson in how signification occurs. It describes the most remarkable pearl that arrays the maiden's gown:

Bot a wonder perle withouten wemme
Inmyddez hyr breste watz sette so sure;
A mannez dom moȝt dryȝly demme
Er mynde moȝt malte in hit mesure.
I hope no tong moȝt endure
No sauerly saghe say of þat syȝt,
So watz hit clene and cler and pure,
Þat precios perle þer hit watz pyȝt.
Pyȝt in perle, þat precios pryse (221–29)

[But a wondrous pearl without spot, in the middle of her breast was set securely; a man's judgment could rapidly fade, before a mind could speak it in moderation; I think no tongue could endure nor sweetly say a word of that sight, so clean, clear, and pure it was, that precious pearl where it was fixed, that precious prize fixed in pearl.]

The narrator then addresses her as "perle . . . in perlez pyȝt"—"pearl . . . in pearls surrounded" (241). Even, it would seem, in this magical landscape where the narrator's gaze turns everything into art (Stanbury, *Seeing* 17), there are some things that are inexpressible, things that make judgment fail. Yet as the maiden becomes what the narrator sees her wearing—that is, she becomes the *Pearl* Maiden as he recognizes and describes all the pearls she wears—conventionality of representation becomes apparent, even in the basic convention of the inexpressibility topos. Additionally, her being "with-outen wemme" reminds us of her intertextual, contiguous relationship with Mary and the cultural matrix she disseminates.

The pearl on the maiden's breast seems to represent her metonymically just as she represents that paradise across the stream metonymically, as the text later reveals. The above passage is remarkable, however, for the way in which it foregrounds the reciprocal process that produces meaning; as it foregrounds the failures of language, it uses language and invokes the fluid processes of signification. Such processes are indicated most powerfully in the circular "Þat precios perle þer hit watz pyȝt. / Pyȝt in perle þat precios pryse." Repeating the verb "pyȝt," "to fix"—forms of which are also used in descriptions of the maiden's dress—reveals the urge in this signifying system to make this pearl mean something, to fix it in time and space. But the way in which this passage and the several stanzas that precede it actually make the pearl into the pearl illustrates the way in which this longed-for fixity is only a rest-stop in the web that gives the passage meaning. As the various intertextual affiliations align the description of setting and maiden with various scriptural, theological, and romance texts, meaning is made and yet dispersed by the very vehicles of poetic representation used.[29]

By noting how the metonymic characteristics of the first stanza's pearl become the maiden of the landscape, we can understand the way in which the poem foregrounds its own artifice and conventionality, teaching us to read in ways other than simply passing over in silence with our judgment faded. What the metonymic construction of the maiden illustrates is not so much what the ideal is like but rather how the notion of "the ideal" itself is reached. Since metonymy and contiguity can

also be understood as placing things into serial relationship, looking at a series of substitutions in the text will help me to clarify this perspective further.

Pearls are substituted for pearls and each variation becomes the focal point for a new context. When an image, and not an ostensibly external, transcendent idea, becomes such an anchor for a context, the narrative urge toward plenitude becomes more apparent. In other words, as characteristics aggregate into this character, the ideal is being *articulated*, not transparently *represented*. In the same way that Mary articulated the Word—that is, gave it intelligibility by giving it the jointed form of the human body[30]—this poem attempts to make the transcendent intelligible through the physicality of form and sound; the primary paradox of the poem becomes, then, the realization that "the ideal world, which is meant to transcend time and space, is represented here by its very contradiction, an image, an artifact of time and space" (Bogdanos 3). However, in the same way that Mary fills the role of the translational site or the term of contiguity between heaven and earth, the metonymic logic of the poem undoes the logic of paradox, the logic of duality, the logic of metaphor, on a fundamental level.

The *Pearl* Maiden calls on metaphoric logic and exegetical practice when she cites Matthew 13: 45–46, the parable of the pearl of great value. She retells the parable adding that this

> makellez perle þat boȝt is dere
> . . . . . .
> Is lyke þe reme of heuenesse clere—
> So sayde þe Fader of folde and flode—
> For hit is wemlez, clene and clere,
> And endelez rounde and blyþe of mode,
> And commune to all þat ryȝtwys were.
> Lo! euen inmyddez my breste hit stode:
> My Lorde þe Lombe þat schede Hys blode,
> He pyȝt hit þere in token of pes. (733–42)

> [this matchless pearl that is bought dear . . . is like the realm of bright heaven, so said the father of earth

> and flood, for it is spotless, clean and clear, and endlessly round and joyous in mood, and common to all who are righteous; Lo! even in the middle of my breast it remains; my lord the lamb that shed his blood, he fixed it there as a token of peace.]

In the same way that the figure of Mary is often inserted in a narrative to represent humanity or divinity depending on context and narrative necessities, the above passage sets up a series of substitutions,. As Sarah Stanbury has so forcefully pointed out in her investigation of the poem's scopophilic tendencies, this passage metonymically allies the maiden's body with the lamb, who reigns in the poem's New Jerusalem ("Feminist" 101). But the series is not just a dual one between maiden and her "make" or mate, the lamb (759); it also includes the "fader," the earth and seas, the pearl itself, and the biggest of all celestial bodies, heaven. In such metonymic relationships figurative bodies continue to reappear, recuperated but ever-present.

As Kevin Marti has pointed out in *Body, Heart, and Text in the* Pearl-*Poet*, Christ's body is the spatial center of medieval culture (6). In the ritual re-enactment of the Incarnation that is the Eucharist, each Christian's body participates in the Christic redemption of the flesh. Scholars point to lines 457–68 of *Pearl*, which relate the Biblical similitude of Christians being the limbs of Christ, and the poem's allusion to the sacrament in lines 1208–10 as the loci of understanding the poem as itself incarnational.[31] Formally, the poem attempts to incarnate its central symbol, the pearl, in its recapitulative aspects. The poem is tightly constructed throughout, connecting five stanzas at a time by the use of *concatenatio*, or the repetition of key words in the beginning and ending lines of each stanza. These five-stanza groups are linked by the repetition in the first line of the next stanza of the concatenating words of the previous stanza group.[32] The poem concretizes this circularity by ending upon virtually the same phrase with which it began—"Perle plesaunte, to prynces paye"—"Pleasant pearl for prince's payment" (1) and "Ande precious perlez vnto His pay"—"And precious pearls for His payment" (1212).

Formally, therefore, the pearl and *Pearl*/Maiden are connected with the matter of the text, its physical properties, and the poem

itself becomes another term in the metonymic series. White and round, inscribed with the Word of God, pearl and poem both have a tendency to be sublated in service to the transcendent presence even as they manifest that transcendence, calling our attention to its absence. As with figures like the "Madonna of Humility" and representations of the Queen of Heaven, embodiment remains an issue. Metonymically, the poem connects and interchanges bodies, texts, and textual representations with transcendent truths and timeless ideals. Before we can understand the poem's reflexive attitude towards this contiguous relationship, we will first look at how the text speaks about bodies, primarily the maiden's and the lamb's, but with Mary's curiously allied to both.

The apocryphal texts and cycle dramas have illustrated the potency of Mary's body, with and without its soul, and its imperial powers even in its mothering functions. *Pearl* couples the heavenly functions of the *Pearl* Maiden, the "bryd"[33] of Christ and "quene in blysse" (415), with those of Mary. But the text allies the two in more ways than just their titles as queens and brides. The *Pearl* Maiden is, in body and name, a twin of her who was "neuere in two to be twynnand" ("The Death of Mary," *York Plays* 182).[34] In his signature study of the poem's allegory, Jefferson B. Fletcher describes the most obvious exegetical ways the poem associates the two characters. He cites *Pearl* lines 763–64—"Cum hyder to Me, My lemman swete, / For mote ne spot is non in þe"—"Come hither to Me, my sweet love, for there is neither speck nor spot in thee"—as a Middle English translation of Song of Songs 4: 7–8 about the spotless bride from Lebanon, commonly thought of as a precursor to Mary (Fletcher 6). Additionally, the image of the white pearl set in gold recalls Richard of Saint Lawrence's descriptions of the lily-white Virgin's virtues adorning her "quasi aurum," (qtd. in Fletcher 8)[35] virtues the *Pearl* Maiden, "coronde clene in vergynté"—"crowned purely in virginity" (767), shares. In a close study of Richard's *De Laudibus Beata Mariae Virginis*. Fletcher finds many instances in which Mary is described as bedecked with pearls and shining with pearl-like luminescence (11–12). Such portrayals create of the *Pearl* Maiden a twin of her who was not to be made into two. In this multiplication, another

logic becomes apparent: the logic that must use repetition to conceive of its idea of singularity. In the same way that the Eucharist replicates the body of Christ, *Pearl* replicates the body of Mary in the *Pearl* Maiden, who herself is replicated exponentially in the poem's final vision when she is in a procession

> Of such vergynez in þe same gyse
> Þat watz [the narrator's] blysful anvunder croun.
> And coronde wern alle of þe same fasoun,
> Depaynt in perlez and wedez qwyte;
> In vchonez breste watz bounden boun
> Þe blysful perle with gret delyt. (1099–1104)

> [Of such virgins in the same guise as was the narrator's blissful crowned one, and all were crowned in the same fashion, adorned in pearls and white clothes; on the breast of each one was fixed ready the blissful pearl with great delight.]

All fall at the feet of the lamb in praise. Even the narrator feels "delyt" in gazing on the scene from across the stream (1116 and 1117). The passage operates on the assumption that the lamb is the eschaton of the action, the focus of this story and of the history of salvation towards which the poem has been progressing all along. And yet, the lamb's serial relationship with the body of the *Pearl* Maiden and, now, all these identical maidens illustrates that the lamb is one term in a metonymic series, allied with figuration and physiology.

The *Pearl* Maiden's alliance with Mary is more, then, than just titular and exegetical. Their stories share the bodily foundation of figuration at the same time that their bodies are inscribed by the discourses of salvation and virtue that they legitimize. Like Mary, whose story necessitated she not rot in the earth, the *Pearl* Maiden seems not to be rotting either since she is in the physical presence of the narrator. Yet the narrator had had his doubts about the bodily fate of his lost pearl at the poem's beginning. He believes his pearl has left him, his "priuy perle withouten spotte"—"very own pearl without spot" (24) having gone from him, or "fro [him] sprange" (13), in a particular

"spote"—"spot" (13). Now he mourns "To þenke hir color so clad in clot"—"To think of her color so clad in dirt" (22), her "rychez to rot . . . runnen"—"riches run to rot" (26). Later, however, he meets the maiden, manifest in all of her expanded, redoubled presence in the magical landscape. Through the blazon of the maiden and her shining white clothes—Stanza group four, lines 181–240—the pearl reappears as the *Pearl* Maiden, embodied for readers as a human character, not a figuration of grief, for the first time. Her "wemlez," or spotless, body in all its glory seems anything but dirty and rotted. And as the metonymic qualities of this scene illustrate, her body is multiplied exponentially by the pearls on it—that become it—and this first vision of the *Pearl* Maiden foreshadows the multiplicity her body will take on in the New Jerusalem at the feet of the lamb.

However, even this immaculate pearl knows the vicissitudes of death. She tells the narrator that his "corse in clot mot calder keue"—"corpse must rot more coldly in the dirt" (320) before he can enter the paradise he sees across the stream. Her own body "in clottez clynge[s]"—"in clots remains" (857), as does the body of each who "beren þys perle vpon [her] bereste"—"bears this pearl upon her breast" (854). And yet she exists for the narrator and for readers only because of the figurative body that walks beside the stream in the magical landscape. Indeed, her physiological death, reported by her as it is, exists only as a body of narrative.

But of course, this pearl of heaven knows the teleology of her death; it mirrors and depends upon that of the lamb, who was "to þe slaȝt þer lad"—"led to the slaughter there" (801) and overcame sin and death, to exist bodily in the New Jerusalem. This point in the story when the salvational narrative seems so clear and clearly efficacious, however, is one of the most intertextually revealing. The *Pearl* maiden calls on John's vision of the apocalypse as her authority for what she describes. Within the five stanzas of stanza group fourteen, she invokes this vision, this other text or "trw recorde"—"true record" (831), four times. John, she says, had his visual apotheosis on the "hyl of Syon þat semly clot"—"hill of Sion, that seemly soil" (789). This "clot" reminds us of the one where the narrator mourns his loss at the poem's beginning and portends the ones that the maiden

describes surrounding the bodies of all the *Pearl* maidens. Most interesting, however, is the connection between this passage, with its teleology and sublation of bodily death, and an earlier passage in which she explains to the narrator that he must be surrounded by clots before he can enter paradise. She continues to explain the reason for this condition:

> For hit watz forgarte, at paradys greue;
> Oure ȝorefader hit con mysseȝeme.
> Þurȝ drwry deth boz vch man dreue,
> Er ouer þys dam hym Dryȝtyn deme. (321–24)

> [For it {the body} was destroyed, in the grove of paradise; our fore-father did misuse it; each man is driven through dreary death before the Lord deems him over this stream.]

The maiden later retells the same story, adding the details of how "Oure forme fader"'s—"Our former father"'s biting of the apple "forfete[d]"—"forfeited" (639–40) the "delyt"—"delight" of paradise (642). She also extends this story forward to include the Crucifixion (646), the Harrowing of Hell (651), Baptism (653), and the Eucharist (647). She retells the salvational narrative three times, each time correlating the terms of salvation with those of original sin. By thus inscribing salvation as contiguous with the originary moment of loss, a moment repeated in the narrator's loss of his pearl, the poem calls attention to the slippery potential of generation and reproduction, even of faith. Curiously Eve is absent from these scenes of original sin, but in their focus on inheritance of this already stained body, the stage for the scenes has already been set by another passage occurring much earlier in the poem. If we return to our first view of Mary in the poem, we again see this emphasis on "erytage" (443), that is, on genealogical serial contiguity. As illustrated by the "Madonna of Humility" and the *vierges ouvrantes*, even when Mary is crowned and enthroned as "emperise" (441) of heaven, the fecundity of her body is never far behind. This picture of her with heaven, earth, and hell in her dominion strains towards the idea of unified and self-identical existence, yet the

focus on heritage and its connection to bodily reproduction and transgressions calls the specter of Eve forth. Her body seems to be a missing term upon which this vision of perfection is based.

The conflicted histories of Mary's conception, birth, motherhood, and death and her relation to Eve must, then, impact the following lines about the Holy Virgin spoken by the narrator: "We calle hyr Fenyx of Arraby, / Þat fereles fleȝe of hyr Fasor"—"We call her the phoenix of Arabia, that blameless of her form, flew" or "unique from her creator, flew" (430–31). In the Middle Ages the tradition of the phoenix was familiar in both popular and learned writings. For instance, the narrator of Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* calls the White Queen the "soleyn fenix of Arabye" (line 982).[36] Such citations often emphasize the solitary existence of the bird, a description that compares with those of Mary as alone of all her sex. Yet the myth of the phoenix from the *Metamorphoses*, which would have been the most well known form of the story in the period, also emphasizes another aspect of the bird's existence—its singular reproductive capacities. It gives birth only to itself over and over, with only one phoenix existing at any time. Once again we are drawn to see how Mary is made to signify differently—often in ways contradictory to each other—in various contexts for various purposes. This image of such singular birth seems antithetical to Mary's metonymic role as gate of heaven, that point of translation between human and divine, productive of the salvation of innumerable faithful; as such, Mary was figured as the mother of all humanity. And as the poem itself has revealed, Mary is neither so limited in her reproductive capacities nor so singular. The *Pearl* maiden, a metonymic reflection of the Holy Virgin, reminds the narrator that it was from Mary that "Jesu con spryng"—"Jesus did spring" (453). Similarly, the poem's subtle emphasis on heritage calls to mind the contiguous nature of sin and salvation, death and life, bodies and immaculate pearls.

In this way, this image of the phoenix focuses the poem's self-reflexive qualities as it suggests the extent to which any formal tropological classification of images is bound to lead to crossed or confused categories at certain points. Representations of Mary as the architecture and furniture of heaven, her

relationship to Eve, and her inheritance of cultural anxieties about maternity intimate the supplementary nature of flesh and figuration to faith in transcendence. Even in *Pearl*, Mary's body is seemingly comprehended into the *telos* of the heavenly vision. The *Pearl* maiden falls on her knees to worship the Holy Mother, calling her the empress of heaven, but nowhere does the Holy Virgin appear as a character in the plot. In the same speech in which the *Pearl* maiden prays to her, Mary is replaced by the *corpus mysticum* of lines 457 through 468, which relate the Pauline doctrine of Christians being the limbs of Jesus (Romans 12: 4–5). During the vision of the New Jerusalem, only attributes of her appear: the virginal *Pearl* maidens and the "hyȝe trone"—"high throne" on which the lamb sits (1051) suggest her metonymically. It would seem that sublation is complete, that the dangerous supplementarity of flesh and figuration has been put in its proper place in service to the truth of the lamb and his grace.

Yet the poem has taught its readers early on how certain types of figuration do not work, even though it uses this figure of the phoenix. It is this phoenix and her metonymic representative, the *Pearl* maiden—repeated and diffused as I have shown her to be—that articulate the poem's concomitant logic of transcendence. This metonymy, even mirrored by the poem's own formal characteristics, creates what could be a mystifying web of signification. To prevent readers from becoming lost like the "dased quayle"—"dazed quail" (1085) the narrator becomes within this web, the poem calls readers' attention to its underlying logic. Returning to an earlier passage will enable me to clarify this point further. In the *Pearl* maiden's retelling of the parable of the pearl of great price, she names God as "þe Fader of folde and flode"—"father of earth and flood" (736), bringing this web to the surface on the levels of letter and word. The metathesis involved in changing "folde" to "flode" is remarkable for it calls attention to the part context plays in signification. In the same way that the passage substitutes one body for another in what seems to be a seamless and logical progression, the letters make sense in context. However, the similarity between these words illustrates the fundamental indeterminacy that underlies language and signification. The same five letters

in different serial relation to each other can mean two different things. Their self-identical but reproducible quality and their ability to be cited and translated into other contexts, like the bodies of Mary and the *Pearl* maiden, evidence the divisive consequences of figuration. The *Pearl* maiden is self-identical, being easily recognizable to the narrator as his pearl when he first sees her.[37] Yet, she is the epitome of multiplicity: her clothes repeat her metonymically; she repeats and is repeated by the "Hundreth þowsandez"—"Hundred thousands" in the procession of maidens (1107); and she stands in for the body of that singular phoenix, Mary, and her offspring, the lamb that is Christ. It is the repetition of her sameness, stemming from the idea of the unity and plenitude of heaven, that undoes the figure of the Maiden, authorizing yet jeopardizing that very sameness.

The metonymy of the poem, thus, allows us to see the fold in the immaculate pearl, or the ways in which its multiple representations of perfection undermine its purity. The narrator feels some vexation upon looking at the *telos* of this purity, the New Jerusalem, where his sight can penetrate the walls but his dreamer's body cannot. Driven by "luf-longyng in gret delyt"—"love-longing in great delight" (1152)[38] upon spotting his "lyttel quene"—"little queen" (1147) among the multitudes in the heavenly city, he attempts to cross the stream that bounds the magical landscape from paradise. Instead of fulfilling his desire to be with his queen, however, he awakens from his dream to find himself in the erber in which he began. Having been specially chosen to experience a vision of ostensible completion and perfection, his desire is still singularly focused, "to maddyng malte"—"to folly dissolved" (1154), on the one facet of that plenitude, and he forfeits it all. His experience marks the dissolute but dangerously necessary effects of figuration as he chooses one *Pearl* maiden—that is, one piece of the story—and not the whole of the salvational narrative. Yet his story also reminds us of how faith is reproduced through such figuration. As this story ends where it began, it reminds its audience of the bodily existence of faith "in þe forme of bred and wyn / . . . vch a daye"—"in the form of bread and wine . . . each day" (1209–1210) refiguring ceaselessly the Christic body and the narrative of salvation.

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NOTES

[1] All lyric citations are from Brown's edition. The following practice is used in reference to lyrics: the number of the lyric in Brown is followed by a colon and the line number(s).

[2] Cf. Jakobson 119–125; Jakobson and Halle 90–96; and Ricoeur 9–43.

[3] All references to New Testament books are from the Douai-Rheimes edition; Long *s*'s have been regularized for the purposes of this essay.

[4] Cf. Derrida on supplementarity, 144 and 159.

[5] See Schotter's Augustinian reading: "Words which admitted their own inadequacy were held to be less likely to lead to idolatry than those which took themselves for granted, as Augustine, following Plato and Plotinus, had pointed out" (28).

[6] The following practice is used when Middle English is quoted: all lines from *Pearl* are translated, while only particularly difficult passages from other Middle English texts are glossed. Translations are my own.

[7] The image of Mary as glass, undamaged by the light that passes through it, is a common one exemplified in line 74 of number 32 in Brown.

[8] On this point see Bogdanos, *passim*, who argues that the poem fails fundamentally to provide a picture of heaven that is human on any level and, in contrast, Stanbury, in *Seeing the* Gawain-*Poet*, who argues that the text is organized around the narrator's perception as a way of representing human limitations; the description of heaven can, therefore, be only human.

[9] All references are to Spector's edition.

[10] Bell claims that "Uncountable paintings and sculptures of the Annunciation depict Mary as an avid reader" (154), while Schiller asserts such an image was popular in western iconography by the fourteenth century (1:42).

[11] Bynum observes, however, that such images "have nothing to do with claiming sacerdotal functions for ordinary women. Mary is priest because it is she who offers to ordinary mortals the saving flesh of God, just as the celebrant does in the mass" (212). See also Bynum, figure 6.12.

[12] All references to New Testament apocrypha are to James's edition.

[13] All references to the York cycle are to Smith's edition.

[14] See "The Death of Mary," lines 395–410, and the following apocryphal books: "The Latin Narrative of Pseudo-Melito," "The Discourse of Theodosius," and "The Greek Narrative of Saint John the Divine."

[15] See "The Death of Mary," line 147, and "The Appearance of Our Lady to Thomas," line 193.

[16] For a sampling of medieval sources expressing this idea see "The Latin Narrative of Pseudo-Melito"; Hirn 410–11; Warner 81–102.

[17] Duns Scotus (1265?–1308) was the first to suggest the logical and narrative necessity of the *Præredemptio*. The tradition gained weight as miracle after miracle was reported in which nonbelievers were converted to this idea of the Immaculate Conception. Cf. Warner (242) and Hirn (226–27).

[18] See James, "The Greek Narrative of Saint John the Divine" (201) and "The Latin Narrative of Pseudo-Melito," Chapter 3, verse 1. Also, the *Golden*

Legend recounts her sorrow over Jesus's death and her constant desire to be with him again.

[19] According to Warner by the last half of seventh century the notion of the Dormition had arrived in Gaul, and by the ninth some liturgical calendars call the feast day the Assumption. Pope Leo IV (847–55) developed a vigil and an octave for the feast day, celebrated 15 August, while Pope Nicholas I (858–67) declared Mary's passing to heaven on par with Christmas and Easter–the Incarnation and the Resurrection (88).

[20] Ambrose (340?–97) was the first father of the Western church to connect the bride of the Song, the church, Mary, and each individual Christian (Warner 126). Cf. Brown 91: 95–98: "Ihesu þat are kynge of lyf / Tech my soule þat is þy wyf / To loue best no þynge in londe / Bot þe, ihesu, hir dere housbonde."

[21] All references to *Pearl* are from Andrew and Waldron's edition.

[22] Based on the lyric usages, Gross argues that Mary as queen is merely one of several conventional terms of praise of her beauty and dignity, not a description of power (86). This quotation from *Pearl* is striking, however, for so closely collocating, in the comparison of her to the bailey of the castle, Mary's emperial qualities with her artifactual status, reminding readers of Mary's fluid figurative status in heaven. In his edition of the poem, Morris metonymically glosses this word as "authority, jurisdiction, dominion," not mentioning the architectural basis of the word.

[23] Warner calls the verses from Revelations a key to understanding the text of the Assumption mass, which celebrates "the conquest of lust and putrefaction" (92–93). A commonplace understanding of this conquest in the Middle Ages was the trope that Mary changed "Eva"—that first defect of the flesh—to the "Ave" of blessing and faith. By thus "turnand þe name of eve again"—"Turning the name of Eve again," (Brown 45: 8)—Mary righted humanity generally and femininity, more specifically, with her actions. A common representation of Mary as vanquisher of evil shows her stepping on the serpent (Warner 268–69; Hirn 416).

[24] All references to Old Testament books are from the Douai edition; long *s*'s have been regularized for the purposes of this essay.

[25] Another image added to this reputation still further. Psalms 91: 13 is part of a meditation on God as protector of the faithful which states that believers "vpon the aspe, and the basiliscus . . . shalt walke" and "shalt tread vpon the lion, and the dragon." Allegorical readings of this verse metonymically substituted Mary for the whole of humanity and represented her as riding atop a lion and/or serpent. Schiller (1: 108 and figures 279 and 280) describes an Adoration compositional type prevalent from the mid-twelfth century in which the Virgin, enthroned, rests her feet atop a bull, a lion, and/or a serpent, signifying her conquering the dragon of Psalms 91: 13.

[26] Also, cf. Song of Songs 4: 12.

[27] Similarly Shoaf writes of the influence of eroticism in *Pearl* compared to that in Dante's work (152–68).

[28] For a sampling of such a critical position, see Bishop 95; Chance 31–59; Hoffman 86–102; Johnson 33; Robertson, "Heresy" 292 and "The Pearl as Symbol" 25; and Stern 73–85.

[29] For a sampling of essays pertaining to the poem's intertextuality see Bullón-Fernández 35–49; Gross, *passim*; Roper 169; Spearing, 135.

[30] "Articulate" originates from the Latin *articulāre*, "to joint" and still maintains this sense in modern biological discourse, in which bones are said to articulate with one another at joints.

[31] See Bogdanos 10; Johnson 31; Marti *Body* 84; Schotter 30.

[32] For a more detailed analysis of stanza construction see the introduction to Osgood's edition of the poem, ix–lix.

[33] Most basically this word means simply "lady" but the poem allies it with "make" (759) and its many forms (e.g. "makelez" in 784), "vyuez" or "wives" (785), and "maryage" (414).

[34] Morris's glossary for his edition of the poems of the Cotton Nero A X manuscript, including *Pearl*, makes clear the doubled status of this word, glossing it contextually either as "two" or "separated." The editions of Osgood and Gordon provide similar glosses.

[35] On the lily as a symbol for the Virgin, see also Hirn 438–9, and numbers 10 and 31 in Brown.

[36] See also lines 15948–64 in *Le Roman de la Rose*.

[37] See Marti, "Traditional" (315, 329–32) on aspects of resurrected bodies that would allow them to be individually identified.

[38] On some implications of the term "luf-longyng" see Aers 67–68 and Bullón-Fernández 45–47. See also line 11 in which the narrator complains of being "for-dolked of luf daungere" or severely wounded by love's danger.

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