

## 7: The Close Commentary Format

# Extent of the Close Commentary

A page.

## Aim of a Close Commentary

Answer the question **What's going on here?**

1. Outwardly
2. More subtly

# 1: Outward Elements

Concisely describe:

- ▶ Form (prose/verse; genre)
- ▶ Context
- ▶ Action
- ▶ Evident themes

## 2: Subtler Elements

How does the author use diction, word-fields, sound, figures of speech, relationships between characters, biblical echoes and the like to make a point, effect a mood, or invoke certain themes?

## Approaches

A commentary to a **prose** text is more likely to focus on assumptions, intertextual connections, and argumentative structure.

A commentary to a **poem** is more likely to discuss formal features and associations evoked by word-fields, sound effects, and subtle hints.

Since nearly all Old English poetry is anonymous, you may use clues in the text to speculate about the *class* of author. With the prose, even when we don't know the author we often know the author of a Latin source; such connections may be stated briefly and are less speculative.

# Example Commentary

See **handout**.