NEW TRENDS, OLD PATHS OR VICE VERSA: A LITERARY ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH TO *WULF AND EADWACER*

0. INTRODUCTION

For some time now, the study of Old English literature has been facing an open discussion about its future, a debate spinning around diverse attitudes. In a rather recent article, Roy Michael Liuzza (1994: 103-147) made a sort of joke about the critics' persistance in studying a fixed number of topics once and again because of the reconsideration made upon them due to the publication of critical articles on those fixed topics themselves; in other words, he ironically mentioned the existance of a sort of *metathematic (re)criticism*, which fed itself with *counterpapers* that had on their titles -with some exceptions- a very reduced number of customary expressions such as "Second Thoughts", "Reappraisal", "Revisited" or "Reconsidered". There has been also another group of critics -like W. M. Calder (1981: 242)- who have stated quite the contrary, that is: the uselessness of any kind of study about classical, ancient or medieval literature, arguing that there is nothing new to be said.

I like to bring both stances face to face -metathematic recriticism vs. "exhausted topic" school- with a clever turning of the screw to say that medieval (ancient or classical) literature is very far from being exhausted because we can go back to the same topics with new theoretical perspectives, which help us either to admit or reject what we already know, or to open new paths for research that we had never considered to tread on. Liuzza's view -totally shared by myself- was not pessimistic despite his being ironic, because a great part of the advances made on Literary Criticism come up from the reconsideration of traditional topics from innovatory perspectives. The ongoing new theories of Literary Criticism -like, say, Pragmatics, Discourse

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Analysis, (Inter)Textual Criticism, Relevance Theory, etc- and their analytical principles are given to the scholar devoted to medieval matters as new tools for carrying out those aforementioned reconsiderations. Although directed at first to the study of the immediate -i.e, Contemporary or XIXth century Literature, at the most-, the use of these new theories to the study of classical or medieval literature can be a good way both to shed some light on old topics and to validate the efficiency of such theories/ methodologies for the analysis of literary texts, regardless of their century of origin.

From these modern theories I have chosen Literary Anthropology -or, more accurately, "Literary Anthropological Hermenutics" as I have recently tried to prove (Bueno 1997b)-, and in previous studies I have been offering different attempts to analyse the Old English elegiac discourse with its methodology for textual analysis (Bueno 1997a, forthcoming a & b). To study Old English elegiac poetry I have been adopting a literary anthropological approach because I think that such a perspective is the best to offer us a taxonomy of the parametres which build the Old English elegiac discourse. In my previous studies the introductory condition prevailed over the exhaustive research, because my idea was to offer different extracts of greater and more comprehensive analysis with the aim of providing the academic community with the practical and theoretical functioning of Literary Anthropology and its application to the study of Old English poetry. Now that this approach has been conveniently presented in the aforementioned studies, it is my aim -in the present article- to offer a complete literary anthropological analysis of *Wulf and Eadwacer* as a sample that will show how much can this method of textual analysis contribute to the thorough study of Old English poetry. What was presented in previous analysis will have to be added to what is going to be described here.

Basically, the literary anthropological method of textual analysis sets forth the study of the linguistic, symbolic and conceptual bases of the selected text by means of a threefold approach[1]: a)study of the linguistic and paralinguistic bases of the poem, where a lexical, grammatical and textual analysis is carried out *(Ritual Level);* b) from the abstraction of the data obtained in the

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[1] I do not describe here the operative devices of Literary Anthropology due to the existance of a good number of articles and theoretical treatises that state the matter, basically Poyatos 1979, 1988, Escobedo & Caramés 1994, Caramés 1978 & 1980, Bueno 1996 & 1997b.

previous level, a symbolic study of the text is developed *(Symbolic Level)*. This study is based on the application of a series of analytical devices, which will unveil the contextual system upon which the conceptual world of the poem will be established; and c) deep analysis of the intelligible cultural systems, which come up from the text and set the bases of its conceptual world *(Conceptual* or *Thought-World Level)*. In the following lines it is my intention to offer the application of these three levels of analysis to *Wulf and Edwacer*.

1. THE RITUAL LEVEL IN W & E: VERBAL ANALYSIS

1.1. STUDY OF THE LEXICON:VOCABULARY AND ITS SEMANTICS

As a previous step to the application of the analytical devices characteristic of this method, we must divide the poem in all its constituent parts, revising the lexicon in order to study its richness. I offer next the complete vocabulary list of *Wulf and Eadwacer* (as it is edited in Krapp & Dobbie 1936: 179-180), pointing out the number of times a given word is repeated:

apecgan: 2	beaducafa	bilegde	bireÍ
biworpen	bogum	cymeÍ: 2	dogode
eac	Eadwacer	earne	eape
eglond	Fæst	fenne	geador
gedydon	Gehyrest	gesomnad	giedd
gif: 2	gife	he: 2	him
hine: 2	hit	hwæpre	hwelp
hy: 2	ic: 3	iege	ige
is: 5	lac	laÍ	Leodum
me: 3	mec	meteliste	min
mines	minum	mod	mon: 2
murnende	nales	næfre	operre
on	ond	renig	reotugu
sæt	se	seldcymas	seoce
Sindon	swylce	to: 2	tosliteÍ
pær	pæt: 2	pætte	pine: 2
pon	ponne: 2	preat: 2	pu
uncer	Uncerne	Ungelic	Ungelice

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us: 2	wælreowe	wæs: 4	weder
wena	wenum	weras	widlastum
willaĺ: 2	wuda	wulf	Wulf: 3
Wulfes	wyn		

The previous table indicates that *Wulf and Eadwacer* is formed by a complete lexicon (Cl) of 117 words; 50 of them appear several times (Rw), and 67 are never repeated (Nrw). The Frequency Index (Fi) obtained from these data is the following:

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$$Fi = Cl/Nrw = 117/67 = 1,7.$$

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As it is known, the utopic index would be 1, so we can say that this poem upholds a reasonable richness of vocabulary. Besides, we have to highlight the existance of conscious repetition in the lexicon that is more frequently repeated. Thus, exception made of the preposition "on" -appearing five times-, the words whose appearance is more prominent are "is" / "wæs" -five and four times each- (past and present forms of "beon", which emphasize certain space/ time opposition), "ic"/ "me" -three times- (focusing on the personal style of the discourse) and "Wulf" -three times- (personal noun, evidently relevant for being one of the characters mentioned in the text). As we have seen, repetition has a clear aim within the poem's general framework and follows explicit thematic reasons, which will be developed later on. This vocabulary usage is even more conscious when the poet has the possibility of repeating a lexical item and does not do it. Instead, he introduces alternative forms as it is case of the pronouns "uncer" and "uncerne" -"our", "of us two"- and the adjectives "Ungelic"/ "ungelice" -"different"-[1] in the sentence that appears in the irregular lines 3 and 8, whose structural symmetry is enriched with such a lexical non-semantic formal variation.[2]

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[1] Some critics (e.g. Aertesen 1994: 137) see a change of category (adverb "ungelice"/ adjective "ungelic"). However, the reasons posed for that change are not very clear, and the vast majority of critics argue for an scribal mistake or for the existance of the same adjectival category in both cases, as it is my opinion.

[2] The conditional sentence "willaĺ hy hine aþ_ecgan, gif he on þreat_ cymeĺ" -"They will wish to capture him if he comes with a troop (Hamer 1970: 85)"- is also repeated twice (lines 2 and 8) in a conscious way due to formulaic and thematic

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Thus, there is a clear intention of using a diverse vocabulary -sometimes enigmatic and ambiguous-[1], mainly in those words holding lexical content. As it will be seen more deeply when dealing with the grammatical analysis, the 62'3 % of the vocabulary is based on nouns, verbs and adjectives, being these categories the ones in which repetition is hardly found, and when it is found, it is totally conscious. So, from the words holding a lexical content, only those previously mentioned could be considered as "main words" due to the reasons already presented. However, just as it happend in some other elegiac poetry analysed (Bueno 1997a, forthcoming a), the metrical form, the semantic fields and the rhythmic structure will play relevant roles for the poem's thematic building.

To begin with the analysis of the rhythmic structure of *Wulf and Eadwacer*, the study of the word size is going to be very useful. The obtained data present the following percentages:

1 syllable words = 58 (49,5 %)	Words x syllable (58 x 1 = 58)
2 syllable words = 38 (32,4 %)	Words x syllable (38 x 2 = 76)
3 syllable words = 18 (15,3 %)	Words x syllable (18 x 3 = 54)
4 syllable words = 3 (2,5 %)	Words x syllable (3 x 4 = 12)
Cl = 117	Word x syllable total = 200
	Total Wxs% = Total Wxs/ Cl = 200/ 117 = 1'7

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reasons, emphasizing the main character's fear that something could happen to her lover. I coincide with Anne Klinck (1984: 134-135) when she said that in Wulf and Eadwacer "the theme of the speaker's separation from and anxiety for her lover, an enemy of her tribe, is emphasized by the repetition of two consecutive lines".

[1] If in every Anglo-Saxon text, choosing a translation means to select a particular interpretation of it, Wulf and Eadwacer is the model of that thought. Following the words of Marijane Osborn (1983: 182): "The ambiguities in the diction of Wulf and Eadwacer are of three kinds: words of clear but ambivalent meaning (lac, _preat), words of uncertain meaning (a_pecgan, dogode and later earne) and words that translate readily into modern English but may be complicated by a figurative meaning, like the name Wulf itself, and hwelp, bogum, wudu, giedd".

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Exception made of three four-syllable words -"beaducafa", "meteliste", and "ungelice"-[1], the figures indicate a clear majority of monosyllabic and disyllabic words (81,9 %), which is the Old English average word size. So, the Anglo-Saxon style of composition is clearly marked, and the Word x Syllable percentage of 1'7 validates this statement. As the word syllabic difference is not great, we can point out that the lexicon is used in a very regular way within a highly rhythmical compositive model.

When studying the rhythmic structure of a poem, the second step consists in carrying out an analysis of the word size by counting the letters that form every word. This kind of analysis will give us new data to describe both the rhythm of the poem -external or internal- and the distribution of the phonetic units -with or without a fixed order-. We count the letters that form every word and calculate afterwards their difference line by line:

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  4   3     1   3   0  0  1
6    2   5     6   3  3  3  4
Leodum is minum    swylce him mon lac gife;
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  4   2   3    4    1 0 3 0
6    2   4   7     3 2 2 5  5
willaĺ hy hine apecgan,    gif he on preat cymeĺ.
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  5   0
7   2  2
Ungelic is us.
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  2  0  2  2    0  4
4  2  2  4     2  2  6
Wulf is on iege,    ic on operre.
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[1] "Warlike man, bold warrior", "want of food, lack of food", "different". Together with Bosworth & Toller 1972 I have used Giles' (1981: 408) and Hamer's (1970: 84-85) translations. All the translations of isolated meanings made in this article are referred to these references. If it is not indicated otherwise, the translations of the poem come from Hamer's edition.

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  2 1 3   1   3
4 2 3 6   5   8
Fæst is þæt eglond,   fenne biworpen.
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    2   3   2 1 1
6   8   5 3 2 3
Sindon wælreowe   weras þær on ige;
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  4 2 3   4   1 0 3 0
6   2 4 7   3 2 2 5 5
willaĺ hy hine apecgan,   gif he on preat cymeĺ.
_____

   6   0
8   2 2
Ungelice is us.
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   4 3 4   4   1
  6 2 5 9   5   6
Wulfes ic mines widlastum   wenum dogode;
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  2 0 2 0   2 1   5   4
5   3 3 5   5   3 2 7 3
ponne hit wæs renig weder   ond ic reotugu sæt,
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  2 1 7   4   2
5 3 2 9   5 7
ponne mec se beaducafa   bogum bilegde,
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  1 1 1 1   0 1 4 3 0
3 2 3 2 3   3 2 6   3 3
wæs me wyn to pon,   wæs me hwæpre eac laĺ.
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  1 1   0   2 2
4 3 4   4 2 4

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Wulf, min Wulf,   wena me pine

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   2   3   5
5   7   4   9
seoce gedydon,   pine seldcymas,

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    5   2   4
8   3   5   9
murnende mod,   nales meteliste.

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   6   6   1   2   0
8   2   8   7   5   5
Gehyrest pu, Eadwacer?   Uncerne earne hwelp

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  1 2 2
5 4 2 4
bireĺ wulf to wuda.

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  0 1   4   3   0   3   5
3 3 4   8   5   5   8   3
pæt mon eape tosliteĺ   pætte næfre gesomnad wæs,

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   0   1
5   5   6
uncer giedd geador.

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When we divide the total amount of the differences (210) by the complete lexicon (117) we obtain a general promedium of 1'79. It seems, thus, that there is not a given continuity in the distribution of the phonetic units; so the absence of differential rhythm is clearly marked. The rhythmic structure will be marked by the different metrical patterns and by alliteration. The prevailing rhythmic structure consists of lines lacking differential rhythm and presenting perfect metrical patterns:

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2　　3　　2 1 1 6　8　　5　3 2 3 Sindon wælreowe　weras þær on ige;	/ X / ' X / X X /X **Da** Sindon wælreowe weras þær on ige **A　x　　a　　a　　　x**
2　　3　　5 5　7　　4　　9 seoce gedydon,　　þine seldcymas,	/ X X / X　X / / X **A** seoce gedydon,　þine seldcymas, **C** **a　　x　　　a x**
5　　2　　4 8　3　　5　　9 murnende mod,　　nales meteliste.	/ 'X /　X /X/X **E** murnende mod,　nales meteliste. **A** **a　　a　　　a x**

68'5 percent of the lines display this structure. Only in six lines (31,5 %) we have differential rhythm appearing together with a metrical pattern. However, in the last two instances of the examples given below, the rhythm is broken at the end of the line:

2　0 2　2　0 4 4　2 2 4　2 2　6 Wulf is on iege, ic on operre.	/ X X/X /X / X **A** Wulf is on iege, ic on operre. **A** **x　　a　a　x**
2 1 3　1　　3 4 2 3　6　　5　8 Fæst is þæt eglond, fenne biworpen.	/ X X / X / X X / X **A** Fæst is þæt eglond, fenne biworpen. **A** **a　　x　　a　　x**
1　1　0　2 2 4　3　4　4 2 4 Wulf, min Wulf,　wena me þine	/ X / (X) / X X /X **A** Wulf, min Wulf,　wena me þine **A** **a　　a　　a　　x**

It is also very interesting to mention the distribution of the metrical patterns appearing in *Wulf and Eadwacer*:

PATTERNS	PERCENTAGES
Tipe A	58,8 %

Tipe B	8,8 %
Tipe C	17,6 %
Tipe Da	11,7 %
Tipe Db	0 %
Tipe E	2,9 %

The results obtained from these data contradict the traditional tendency (Bueno forthcoming a). From the 34 half-lines [1] *Wulf and Eadwacer* is made of, the pattern that appears in a prevalent way is type A (58,8 %). This indicates that the poem holds a very clear active/narrative style. This feature will have to be collated with the data that will be obtained by analysing the grammatical categories of the poem later on.

An analysis of the different types of vocabulary used in this poem indicates that, basically, the lexicon of *Wulf and Eadwacer* belongs to two semantic fields. Placed in a prevailing thematic position and showing a rate of appearance higher than the other semantic field I'll mention next, we find a high number of words and groups of words devoted to express certain feeling of uneasiness, of suffering, of mental anxiety, in the poetic *persona* of the text. So, terms such as "wælreowe", "dogode", "widlastum wenum", "reotugu sæt", "wæs me **wyn** to pon, wæs me hwæpre eac **laĺ**", "seoce", "murnende mod", "earmne"[2] or even the closing sentence "þæt mon eape tosliteĺ þætte næfre gesomnad wæs, uncer giedd geador"[3], are elements, which hold not only the presence of physical pain but also the proximity of certain spiritual affliction that distresses the poetic narrator.

In different moments throughout the text there are terms referred to the natural world: "iege", "eglond", "ige", "fenne", "renig weder", "wulf", "wuda"[4] or even the name of one of the main characters because, on the one hand, it could be used as a proper name or as a nickname, and, on the other, it

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[1] I n the consulted edition the text is divided in 19 lines and offers four verses of a single half-line (3, 8, 17 y 19); thus, 19 x 2 = 38 - 4 = 34.

[2] "Cruel, murderous", "suffered, grieved", "far-wandering hope, distant longings", "sat mournful", "that was **joy** to me and that was also **pain** to me", "ill/ sick", "grieving heart", "wretched".

[3] Trans: "Men very easily may put asunder/ That which was never joined, our song together (op. cit. p. 85)".

[4] "Island", "island", "island","fens", "rainy weather", "wolf", "woods".

could be playing with the metaphorical meaning of "wulf" as a wild creature, as an animal.

There is a very clear tendency towards synonymy, towards the expression of a semantic style with a wide variety of lexicon[1], which contains "a high concentration of *hapax legomena*, rare words and enigmatic imaginery (Tasioulas 1996: 1)". Both semantic fields hold a direct interrelation -i.e. the natural environment supplies the background for the mental uneasiness of the poetic *persona* - and contribute to build the symbolic/ conceptual world of the poem.

1.2. GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS

It is now time to analyse the distribution and combination of the different grammatical categories that shape the text. After dividing the text in the categories that form it, the following data are obtained:

Nouns = 30 (25,6 %)	Pronouns = 23 (19'6%)
Adjectives = 14 (11,9 %)	Prepositions = 7 (5,9 %)
Verbs = 26 (22,2 %)	Conjunctions = 4 (3,4 %)
Adverbs = 9 (7,6 %)	Demonstratives = 4 (3,4 %)
Cl = 117	

A series of relevant combinations are also appreciated:

a) Noun / not Noun = 30 / 87

b) Verb / not Verb = 26 / 91

c) Noun / Verb = 30 / 26

d) Noun + Verb / Adjective + Adverb = 30 + 26 / 14 + 9 = 56 / 23

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[1] This is especially clear for the word "island". The poet uses consciuosly three different synonyms, "iege", "eglond", "ige".

e) Noun + Verb + Adjective + Adverb / Conjunction + Preposition

= 30 + 26 + 14 + 9 / 4 + 7 = 79 / 11

These combinations -together with the data previously exposed- reveal that 47'8 % of the lexicon is formed by nominal and verbal categories. We can deduce from this fact that the text presents a very clear narrative/ evolutive style, and offers the narrator's direct judgement about his inner and outer world, a judgement that constitutes the expression of his mental experience. These results are supported by the data obtained when examining the high percentage of metrical type A patterns found in the text. It seems that there is a certain stylistic connection between the high number of A half-lines -which indicates a fluent narrative style- and the use of a high percentage of verbs and nouns -which indicates practically the same thing-.

The use of 11'9 % of adjectives points out that in some combinations there is a certain impression of sensory modulation on the experience, but the general tendency indicates a greater degree of direct/ objective judgement, which shows the experience of his thought, of his pondering about the mental distress the poetic narrator is going through.

1.3. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The tense usage employed in the text reveal a very clear absence of modality -no modal auxiliaries[1] are found and there is a very reduced number of adverbs (only 7'6 %)-. Thus, the poet's main function is clearly expressed, his judgements are very properly defined and his statements about reality are objectively clear and real. The existance of a clear majority of verbal forms in the present tense -mainly in lines 2b/8 & 16/19- together with the insertion of some past tense forms -in lines 1, 9/15- and some brief future prospection -2a, 7a- provide the text with a certain sense of dramatic tension, with a slightly cyclic temporal asymmetry. So, from a narrative present tense, the poetic narrator describe her present state and what happened to her from the past to the very moment of narration, going back to the present time in the final lines of the poem as a sort of cyclic ending for her thoughts. The combination of both temporal perspectives enhances the dramatic style.

In *Wulf and Eadwacer* there are no worth mentioning figures of speech[2], and the traditional elements of Anglo-Saxon poetic diction -"kenningar", "fixed formulæ", etc- are nonexistent. Only the half-line"fenne biworpen (5b)" -"surrounded by fens"- could be understood as a fixed formula as it is a description that has been found in many Anglo-saxon texts (Bravo 1984: 23). Nevertheless, the presence of two sentences repeated as a sort of refrain is worth mentioning: "Ungelic is us"/ "Ungelice is us" (3, 8) and "willaİ hy hine apecgan, gif he on preat cymeİ" (2, 7). This is an stylistic fact, which only appears in this poem and in *Deor*. Its meaning is both puzzling (Tasioulas 1996, Jones 1985) and coherent with the general sense of mysterious ambiguity that covers the text from beguinning to end.

2. THE RITUAL LEVEL IN W & E: NONVERBAL ANALYSIS

After having finished the study of the verbal aspect, I am going to focus next on the analysis of the nonverbal features that are built upon the distinction between the perception/ influence of the surrounding background, the

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[1] For a treatment of modal auxiliaries within a literary anthropological analysis of an Old English elegy see Bueno 1998: 160.

[2] I use this term in a literary anthropological way. See the aforementioned bibliographical references to enhance any theoretical doubt.

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relations we establish with it -Sensible World- and the synchronic/ diachronic viewpoints the text presents -Intelligible World-.

Within the sensible world we'll try to find the presence of certain literary categories -i.e. *realisms*-, which are responsible for the setting of a given communicative line. In *Wulf and Eadwacer*, this communicative line is developed through the presence of a wide number of elements that belong to the psychological realism, modulated once by an element from the physical realism. The text widely describes the psychological features of the poetic narrator -i.e. her suffering, her anguish, the pains and fears she is going through because of Wulf, etc.-, building thus a feeling of mental distress by using a good number of terms related to this particular semantic field -as I have previously explained-, which are basically enclosed in the following lines:

> Wulfes ic mines widlastum   wenum dogode;
> ponne hit wæs renig weder   ond ic reotugu sæt,
> ponne mec se beaducafa   bogum bilegde,
> wæs me wyn to pon,   wæs me hwæpre eac laÍ.
> Wulf, min Wulf,   wena me pine
> seoce gedydon,   pine seldcymas,
> murnende mod,   nales meteliste.[1] (9-15)

Besides, in line 10 this psychological expression is connected with a particular physical feature, with the background. This background -rainy, cold, classical in a way- has an influence over the feelings of the poetic narrator who suffers, waits and ponders "ponne hit wæs *renig weder* ond ic *reotugu sæt*".[2] Albeit brief in length, it is worth mentioning that the environment had a certain influence over the psychological aspects, particularly in a short poem, which has been thematically built around the psychological expression of the narrator's feelings.

Among the basic topics of the Intelligible World we'll have Space and Time: the synchronic/ diachronic approach the text reveals. The space/ time

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[1] Trans: "Grieved have I for my Wulf with distant longings./ Then was it rainy weather, and I sad,/ When the bold warrior laid his arms about me./ I took delight in that and also pain./ O, Wulf, my Wulf, my longing for your coming/ Has made me ill, the rareness of your visits,/ My grieving spirit, not the lack of food *(ibid.* p. 85)".

[2] "When it was rainy weather and I sat mourning (Giles 1981: 468)". My italics.

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perspective offered by *Wulf and Eadwacer* 's poet is again twofold (Bueno forthcoming a & b). The synchronic perspective appears when we are told about the narrator's present situation, about her current personal experiences in her most immediate context. The diachronic perspective is revealed through the description of past facts, through the recalling of certain events that have a direct influence over her present time -controlling it in a way- and cast some doubts upon the future -briefly mentioned twice in lines 2 and 7-. That's how we come back to the present at the end of the poem, with a sort of structure that places the reader at the departure temporal point. The space is only one, so we move again within a single unidirectional spatial/ contextual reality upon which a bidirectional temporal line is developed. Thus, in the narrative space, different past events are narrated from that present time to be back to the present space/ time in the last lines of the poem (16-19).

3. THE SYMBOLIC LEVEL OF W & E

The analysis of the symbolic world comes from the abstraction of all the different parts the ritual level is made of. For such an aim, we'll have to use a series of analytical devices, which will be very useful to begin with the un-veiling of the hidden symbols that smooth out the way to the final study of the conceptual world.

3.1. SOMATIC SYSTEM

For the analysis of the somatic system we'll have to center on the biophy-sical and psychological features, which are held by the characters appearing in a given text. In *Wulf and Eadwacer* we are faced with different characters who can be classified as direct or indirect as regards the degree of their being involved in the narration. The poetic narrator is the direct character, as she is the main voice of the text and develops the narrative discourse with her nar-ration and her acts. The male characters who are mentioned by the poetic nar-rator could bear the indirect label: i.e, Wulf and Eadwacer.[1]

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[1] Two other indirect characters are also briefly mentioned: the cruel men from verse 6 –"wælreowe weras"-, presenting no physical description and showing only psychological characterization regarding their cruelty and their not very positive

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We have no trace whatsoever of the latter's physical or psychological de-
scription. The poetic narrator gives us their names, although modulating the
degree of affection she feels for them. Eadwacer is mentioned only once in
line 16 and he is both object of a question and addressee of the final lines
whose content suggest that we are facing a sort of relationship -marriage,
perhaps, as we'll see later on-, which has been neither good nor lasting, be-
cause "þæt mon eaþe tosliteð þætte næfre gesomnad wæs, uncer giedd
geador".[1] As far as Wulf is concerned, her affections are more explicitly
stated because she always connects his name with the first person singular
of the personal pronoun in the genitive case "min(es)"; thus, Wulf is always
"min Wulf (13)", "Wulfes mines (9)", that is to say, "my Wulf". So, the poetic
narrator establishes a much more personal, direct and sentimentally involved
relationship with Wulf -probably, they are lovers- than with Eadwacer (Jones
1985: 326).

No physical features of the poetic narrator are described at all. However,
the use of psychological information is plentiful as it happened in other po-
ems of the kind (Bueno forthcoming a & b). This fact makes me think that the
narrative development is again subject to the poetic narrator's psychological
expression, to the expression of her distress, of her pain, just as the main part
of the poem (lines 9-15) states. The physical features are irerelevant, and all
we are told about the poetic narrator come through psychological factors. I
believe that such a focusing on the psychological is again (Bueno forthcom-
ing b) an element that gives a universal condition to the experiences and the
feelings that have been narrated and transmited through the poem.

3.2. KYNESIC SYSTEM

The kynesic system -which joins all the elements related to the active
world of the characters, to gestures, sounds, and vision- does not reveal too
much. Kynesic behaviour is hardly found in *Wulf and Eadwacer*. The only
kinesic instance that is worth mentioning is the verb "cymeð" (2b, 7b) and the

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attitudes towards Wulf -"willað hy hine aþecgan, gif he on þreat cymeð"-; and the
brave warrior -"beaducafa"- from 11a, under whose face Wulf is hidden.

[1] Trans: "Men very easily may put asunder/ That which was never joined, our song
together (op. cit: p. 85)".

brief reference to the fact of sitting down, mentioned by the poetic narrator -"sæt"(10b), more connected with a psychological element ("reotugu") than with something kynesic-. These are very few references to consider kynesics as something relevant in the poem. However, there is a relevant use of the space, related to present spaces -without Wulf- and absent ones -with Wulf-, which is defined with the present and past forms of "beon" as I mentioned before.

3.3. PARALINGUISTIC SYSTEM

Something similar happens with the paralinguistic system, because there is only one brief, albeit important, paralinguistic reference in *Wulf and Eadwacer*. In the following lines we can read:

> ponne mec se beaducafa   bogum bilegde,
> wæs me wyn to pon,   wæs me hwæpre eac laÍ.[1] (11-12)

The act of hugging is the only reference to gestures in all the poem. In these lines, the poetic narrator recalls Wulf's hugs as something pleasant and painful at the same time, so she connects a gesture with a psychological element, just as the kynesic expression of "sæt" was connected with a psychological behaviour. I think this very brief paralinguistic feature is important in spite of its brevity, because I do not consider it as something placed at random by the poet; it was consciuosly placed to keep on making a preference gradation towards both female figures, i.e. she mentions the hug -something that brings closeness- connected wth Wulf and states that her relationship with Eadwacer is very easily separable as it was never well established (18-19). Thus, her being close to Wulf -what is always joined- and being apart from Eadwacer -what is always disunited- are very clearly stated by means of a metaphor in which a paralinguistic element plays an important role.

3.4. CONTEXTUAL SYSTEM

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[1] Trans: "When the bold warrior laid his arms about me./ I took delight in that and also pain (op. cit: p. 85)".

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As far as the relations with the environment, with the immediate context, are concerned, the only contextual system present in *Wulf and Eadwacer* is related to the natural background. Society is completely absent[1] from this poem -at least, in a direct way-, and the things we are told take place within nature, inside a non-social environment, which is free from conditionings, maybe due to the characteristics of the relationships between the poetic narrator and both male figures -lover and husband, the latter set inside the social sphere and the former totally outside it[2]-. I think that this can set off the importance of the personal as opposed to the social behaviours[3]. Thus, the explicit absence of social environment would remark not only the condition of the poetic narrator as someone who lives on the edge of society (Tasioulas;1996: 14), but also her "exiled" condition.

The previously mentioned references to isles, fens, weather, wolves and woods[4] -connected with a given psychological state- highlight the interest that the poet has in expressing the narration of certain facts in an almost neuter enviroment, which is only defined by natural parametres (Gameson; 1996: 464), to remark the importance of the psychological expression, of certain personal relationships outside society, whose ideological aims would have to be dealt with deeply in the next stage of this analysis.

4. THE CONCEPTUAL LEVEL IN W & E

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[1] "Leodum" -"people"- and "beaducafa" -"warlike man, bold warrior" are the two only words that belong to the semantic field of the Anglo-Saxon social sphere and are directly mentioned.

[2] Marriage and the poetic narrator's relationships outside marriage are topics that have been dealt with in several articles. To mention some interesting ones, Gameson 1996: 463, Whitbread 1941, Luecke 1983 and Rivers 1991.

[3] Regarding this, what Hugh Magennis (1996: 114-115) points out is very interesting: "Wulf and Eadwacer illustrates strikingly the conflict between prescribed social norms and the impulsion of personal emotion, a recurrent theme throughout literature, though one not generally associated with Old English. Wulf evidently has his existance outside society (…) and the speaker in her longing for Wulf also sets herself apart from society (…) The relationship with Wulf may or may not be adulterous but it is certainly one carried on at odds with the expectations of society". Again, the social/ personal dichotomy sets clear the relevance of individual feelings in a communal society.

[4] That is to say, "iege", "eglond", "ige", "fenne", "renig weder", "wulf", "wuda".

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I will proceed now with the identification and analysis of the intelligible cultural systems that appear in the text and spin around several parametres, which build its *weltanschauung*. I offer next the study of the parametres found in *Wulf and Eadwacer*.

4.1. THE PERSONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPRESSION OF THE FEMALE 'IC'

Following the ideas that I have been developing in the previous analytical stages, I think that the main thematic core of *Wulf and Eadwacer* is composed by the personal expression of a very intense and passional psychological/ mental state, which is revealed through the female voice of the poetic narrator.[1] The relevance of the psychological/ personal element is going to appear not only as the main thematic crux of the text, but also as the only topic that could be directly deduced from it. The other parametres found -as we'll see- are going to be based on the psychological element as well.

Basically, the poem shows how a woman expresses both her love feelings for an absent man and the anxiety she feels due to his being away[2]:

> Leodum is minum   swylce him mon lac gife;
> willaĺ hy hine apecgan,   gif he on preat cymeĺ.
> Ungelic is us.
> Wulf is on iege,   ic on operre.
> Fæst is pæt eglond,   fenne biworpen.
> Sindon wælreowe   weras pær on ige;
> willaĺ hy hine apecgan,   gif he on preat cymeĺ.
> Ungelice is us.[3] (1-8)

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[1] Although there is total agreement in this, there are always differing voices which have never been conclusive (mainly Eliason 1974 and his senseless interpretation, which has been properly answered by Desmond 1990, and more recently, by Aert-sen 1994 and Gameson 1996). I argue for a female poetic narrator not only because of the coherence of the story that is being narrated but also due to the existance of some grammatical facts: "it is the grammar that tells us so, because the adjectives reotugu and seoce have feminine inflectional endings (Aertsen 1994: 121)". Curious-ly enough, both adjectives belong to the psychological semantic field.

[2] My interpretation of the poem assumes that the most clearly inferable relationship between the main characters is the following: the female poetic narrator is Wulf's lover and Eadwacer's wife. Moreover, this has been adopted as the main interpretation by a wide number of critics.

[3] Trans: "It is as though my people had been given/ A present. They will wish to capture him/ If he comes with a troop. We are apart./ Wulf is on one isle, I am on

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These lines display a situation full of distress and anxiety, because she is afraid of his being away and of what could happen to him at the hands of the "waelreowe weras" who dwell in the island, perhaps due to the adverse reaction Wulf causes upon the "leodum minum" of the poetic narrator. Certainly, the conscious repetition of the "willaÍ" sentence emphasizes her psychological anxiety and her fear of what is to come. All this situation of distress forces her to remember how that mental suffering comes from the past. In the following lines the poetic narrator offers a very deep expression of her past feelings:

> Wulfes ic mines widlastum   wenum dogode;
> ponne hit wæs renig weder   ond ic reotugu sæt,
> ponne mec se beaducafa   bogum bilegde,
> wæs me wyn to pon,   wæs me hwæpre eac laÍ.[1] (9-12)

Here, the poetic narrator shows her feelings and her thoughts with deep emotion by means of a wide number of psychological expressions: personal suffering -"ic dogode"[2]- due to an anxious waiting -"widlastum wenum"- within a melancholic environment in which her sadness -"reotugu"- is con-

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another./ Fast is that island set among the fens./ Murderous are the people who inhabit/ That island. They will wish to capture him/ If he comes with a troop. We are apart (op. cit: p. 85)". For "ungelic is us" Hamer's translation is somewhat strange to me. For different reasons I prefer "it is different with us", which has been the most adopted translation, with some variants in several cases.

[1] Trans: "Grieved have I for my Wulf with distant longings./ Then was it rainy weather, and I sad,/ When the bold warrior laid his arms about me./ I took delight in that and also pain (op. cit: p. 85)". I do not understand at all the translation of "ic reotugu sæt" as "I sad", when it should read "I sat mourning/ in a sad mood, etc", which agrees more with the original text.

[2] I admit the MS hapax legomenon "dogode" and reject the amendment to "hogode" just as most critics do (f.i. Whitbread 1941: 152, Gameson 1996, Hamer 1970: 84-85). For different reasons, I think it would be rare, although there are a few critics who keep on doubting this without offering an alternative solution (f.i. Aertsen 1994: 137, Baker 1981). However, most of those who accept "dogode" translate it as "pursued, followed" (Gameson 1996: 458), or even keep the translation of the amendment and melt both terms, rendering it as "thought about" -which would be the translation for "hogode"- but keeping "dogode" in their editions (Aertsen 1994, Baker 1981). I understand the verb as "suffered" (just as Giles 1981 or Hamer 1970 who translates "grieved"), being this meaning supported by Bosworth & Toller (1972: 206): "**dógian;** p. ode, pp. od, To bear, suffer; -Ic dogode I suffered, Exon, 100b; Th. 380, 17; Rä, 1, 9."

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nected with an adverse natural background -"renig weder" and the past mo-
ments of tenderness with the "beaducafa" are remembered. This point has
been very controversial for the critics who have devoted some of their time to
the study of *Wulf and Eadwacer*. The identity of the brave warrior mentioned
in these lines -"beaducafa"- has been multifarious. As it always happens with
controvertial issues, this fact depends on the personal interpretation of each
critic. Some of them state that he is her husband Eadwacer, hence the
ambiguity of line 12 (Aertsen 1994, Baker 1981, Jones 1985); there are other
who defend that he is Wulf (Greenfield 1986, Kerling 1980); and finally there
is a constant growing number of them who state -very accurately, I think- that
we have not enough clues to define it clearly, so he could be both.[1] I explain
this ambiguity interpreting "beaducafa" as Wulf, because of the
aforementioned paralinguistic reasons and to mantain certain thematic
coherence with what the text says and my own interpretation. Thus, with
these two lines (11 y 12), the poetic narrator remebers Wulf's hugs as some-
thing evidently pleasant and painful, because their relationship, being secret,
has to be brief perforce. This is something which can be very easily deduced
from the psychological condition of the poem -which, by the way, is very
coherent with the text -, being thus resolved, in my opinion, the ambivalence
of the personal expression in these lines.[2] After this, the poetic narrator re-
turns to her current psychological expression:

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[1] Fiona and Richard Gameson (1996: 459) are right in their explanation: "Line 11 se
beaducafa: 'the battle-brave one'. The issue here is the identity of the individual in
question: Wulf or Eadwacer?. It is genuinely difficult to be certain. In support of
Wulf is the fact that he seems an active figure, thus fitting such an epithet, and that
the embrace was a single event in the past; while in favour of Eadwacer is the
circumstance that the speaker seems to be in close proximity to him and thus he
presumably had greater opportunity to embrace her".

[2] Regarding this, it is very convenient to choose an interpretation that is coherent
with the general context of the overall interpretation, as I think I have made. We all
should be modest in defending our views, allowing for the rest of them, because, as
Fiona and Richard Jameson said -Ibid- it is difficult to be completely sure. Aertsen's
opinion (1994: 138) is also worth mentioning here: "Others think it is a reference to
Wulf, but this is unlikely, perhaps even impossible, (…) and why in that case
should the speaker dislike the embraces if it was Wulf who laid his arms around her?
Greenfield believes that the embraces are Wulf's all right, (…) and he explains the
speaker's ambivalent feelings of line 12 as resulting from 'the peril and brevity of
their time together', an explanation I find improbable in the light of what follows".
Greenfield's (1986: 12) view is very coherent and coincides with my own. Perhaps,
Aertsen is very rigid when stating the impossibility of such an explanation, bearing
in mind that the reasons he posed for such impossibility are just another inter-

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> Wulf, min Wulf,   wena me pine
> seoce gedydon,   pine seldcymas,
> murnende mod,   nales meteliste.
> Gehyrest pu, Eadwacer?   Uncerne earne hwelp
> bireĺ wulf to wuda.
> pæt mon eape tosliteĺ   pætte næfre gesomnad wæs,
> uncer giedd geador.[1] (13-19)

The poetic narrator states thus the anxiety of her mental state. The expression of suffering is again mental/ psychological, not physical, because neither the wish for food -"meteliste"- nor her state of loneliness is what worries the poetic narrator, being both logical situations due to her nonsocial behaviour[2]. It is her being away from Wulf the source of all her concerns (13-15). In her only mention of Eadwacer, the poetic narrator addresses him with a final statement of individuality and negation. These lines are also controversial and subjec to many interpretations. My interpretation is, again, coherent with the overall vision I'm offering. Henk Aertsen (1994: 139) summarises very properly the ambiguity of lines 16-17:

> Her threat is full of ambiguities, some of which may be intentional, as *double entendres* designed to conceal the truth from Eadwacer: who are the referents of the possesive *uncerne?* what is the meaning of *earne?* who or what is the *hwelp*? who or what is the *wulf*?

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pretation, as worth mentioning as the rest. It is very risky to say that something is totally impossible, specially when studying such a text as Wulf and Eadwacer.

[1] "O Wulf, my Wulf, my longing for your coming/ Has made me ill, the rareness of your visits,/ My grieving spirit, not the lack of food./ Eadwacer, do you hear me?. For a wolf/ Shall carry to the woods our wretched whelp. / Men very easily may put asunder/ That which was never joined, our song together *(op. cit:* p. 85)".

[2] P. J. Frankis (1962: 172, note 32) states this possibilty: "Line 15b is best interpreted not as an arbitrary comparision, but as an implication that the woman had actually been compelled by her circumstances to go short of food".

I agree with the possible conscious ambiguity of these final lines[1], and my interpretation could be framed within the metaphoric vision defended by many critics, although with some variants[2]. Thus, I understand the following: "uncerne" = "We (Eadwacer and the poetic narrator)", "hwelp" = "the relationship existing between Eadwacer and the poetic narrator", "wulf" = "a metaphor hiding the name of her lover Wulf" and "bireĺ to wuda" = 'will carry to the woods', being this a sort of idiomatic expression (Gameson 1996: 459, Keough 1976: 559), which means "to destroy, to finish, to end with". This connects very well with the expression of the final lines 18-19, in which "uncer giedd geador" would stand for the relationship that exists between Eadwacer and the female poetic narrator; so, under "hwelp" and "giedd" the same idea is enclosed. Schematically and gloss-like, I understand that the poetic narrator tries to say the following in lines 16-19: "Do you hear, Eadwacer? Wulf will destroy what exists between you and me, if it is possible to destroy what has never existed, really". The final lines of the poem are a very ambiguous and cryptic way of closing the expression of her mental/ psychological state, declaring a) the uselessness of a socially admitted relationship with Eadwacer, b) her distressing but supposedly rewarding relationship with Wulf, and c) the relevance of the expression of her personal feelings.

The psychological expression is the thematic and conceptual centre of *Wulf and Eadwacer*. The poem also reveals the presence of a very conscious individuality by emphasizing the personal psychological expression, which comes from the relationship with Wulf.[3] So, the poetic narrator underlines that the emotions focused on herself and Wulf are personal psychological

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[1] Practically in almost all the works cited in this article -and I refer the reader to them-, there is a different interpretation of these lines. "Uncerne" has been understood as "ours, Wulf's and the poetic narrator's" and "ours, Eadwacer's and the poetic narrator's"; "hwelp" has been interpreted as "their son, Wulf's and the poetic narrator's" and "their son, Eadwacer's and the poetic narrator's". As regards "earn", differnt meanings with and without amendments to the MS are offered, being "wretched", "poor" and "coward" the most frequent. As I have explained before, there is also a metaphoric school, which is the one I have followed.

[2] Thus, "uncerne hwelp" is understood as a metaphor for the relationship between Eadwacer and the poetic narrator, by Fanagan 1976, or between Wulf and the poetic narrator, by Greenfield 1986 and Aertsen 1994.

[3] I have already mentioned the importance of the repetition of the personal pronoun in a few lines -"ic: 3", "me: 3", "me, mec, min, mines, minum"- and of the repetition of Wulf, connected with possesive pronouns, pointing out a sort of preferential gradation that establishes the poetic narrator's stronger link with Wulf.

expressions (Gameson; 1996: 463), which have manifested the importance of the personal/ psychological element as the thematic binder of the conceptual world shown in this poem.

4.2. SPACE AND TIME: THE ABSENT AND THE PRESENT

As I began to expose previously, *Wulf and Eadwacer* opens a connection between the past facts and the present situation, which is subject to the aforementioned psychological expression and describes the present to move to the past and to be back to the poetic narrator's present time again (Giles;1981: 470). So, it seems that there is some insistance in contrasting the present and the absent:

> Wulf **is** on iege,   ic on operre.
> Fæst **is** þæt eglond,   fenne biworpen.
> **Sindon** wælreowe   weras þær on ige;
> willaĺ hy hine apecgan,   gif he on preat cymeĺ.
> Ungelice **is** us.
> Wulfes ic mines widlastum   wenum dogode;
> ponne hit **wæs** renig weder   ond ic reotugu sæt,
> ponne mec se beaducafa   bogum bilegde,
> **wæs** me wyn to pon,   **wæs** me hwæpre eac laĺ.[1] (4-12)

Thus, the use of the verbs "is/ sindon" and "wæs" -past and present forms of "beon"- points out that the poetic narrator is conscious of what *exists* in her present time -distance between both lovers[2] who are in different and isolated spacial positions, so the poetic narrator and Wulf are in the same

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[1] Trans: "Wulf **is** on one isle, I am on another./ Fast **is** that island set among the fens./ Murderous **are** the people who inhabit/ That island. They will wish to capture him/ If he comes with a troop. We are apart./ Grieved have I for my Wulf with distant longings./ Then **was** it rainy weather, and I sad,/ When the bold warrior laid his arms about me./ I took delight in that and also pain (op. cit: p. 85)".

[2] Although the reason of their being away from each other is not directly stated, I suppose it has been due to a sort of clandestine situation. However, the critics do not agree in deciding whether Wulf belongs to the narrator's tribe or not. Maybe, the first lines shed some light in favour of their belonging to different tribes; this is more coherent with the narrator's fear. Even though, some critics (f.i., Bravo 1984: 22) point out that exile is the reason of their being appart; an exile I suppose motivated by a secret and nonsocial relationship.

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time but in different spaces- and forces her mind to remember a past space/ time in which both were together. Her imagination offers a very powerful emo - tional recreation of the absent facts, and her comeback to reality in the fol- lowing lines (13-15) emphasizes the space/ time distance from those facts, pointing out that the distressing past conditions her current distressing situation.[1] So, space and time in *Wulf and Eadwacer* -its definition, its usage- is subject to -or serves as a coherent background- the psychological expression of the poetic narrator.

4.3. THE INFLUENCE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AS CONTEXT

When pointing out the presence of several terms refered to the natural world, I began to state that the natural background played an important role as the only contextual system, which is directly mentioned in the text, and as an element that conditions the poetic narrator's mood.

Thus, two islands -natural background, a classical symbol standing for loneliness and isolation- constitute the background where the narration is de- veloped. The poetic narrator gives no description of her island, of her most immediate context, but she does describe the island in which her lover is forced to dwell. This description is highly negative, and in it she uses a series of descriptive elements that are frequently used in Old English poetry to de- fine the adverse condition of nature (Bravo 1984: 23):

> Wulf is on iege,   ic on operre.
> Fæst is pæt eglond,   fenne biworpen.
> Sindon wælreowe   weras pær on ige;[2] (4-6)

The poetic narrator is mentally absent from the environment in which she is immersed, being this a feature that emphasizes the introspective intensity of what is being told in the poem. So, the use in *variatio* of the word "island" -"iege, eglond, ige"- is a symbol of her own private isolation, of her need for

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[1] Some critics have seen in this abrupt return to the real world a sort of parallelism with the dream scene of The Wanderer, 45-50 (f.i. Shippey;1972: 73).

[2] Trans: "Wulf is on one isle, I am on another./ Fast is that island set among the fens./ Murderous are the people who inhabit/ That island (op. cit: p. 85)".

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inward thinking, of the island every human being is inside himself or herself. And in that very personal island, the psychological is connected with an adverse nature only once: "Wulfes ic mines widlastum wenum dogode;/ ponne hit wæs renig weder ond ic reotugu sæt (9-10)".[1] In spite of being a brief reference, I think that connecting her suffering, -"dogode"-, her sadness and her anxious state of mind -"reotugu"- with rainy weather has not been made by chance, and it could be used just as it was used in *The Seafarer*, *The Wanderer* and *The Wife's Lament*: as the conditioning background of a psychological expression (Bueno 1998: 192-194, 261-265, 385-388).

Although another two elements belonging to nature[2] are also mentioned, and some critics have seen hints of sea voyages[3] and of a certain kind of natural symbolic use, which is not clear in my opinion[4], I think that the most relevant feature to take into account when studying the natural environment and its influence in *Wulf and Eadwacer* is both the mention of the isle as a meaningful background and the connection of the psychological with the natural element.

5. CONCLUSION

In 1842 Benjamin Thorpe, the first editor of the *Exeter Book*, was also the first critic to state the immense complexity of *Wulf and Eadwacer* and the extreme difficulty of its interpretation. This intertwining of complexity and difficulty has been kept through the ages, as H. Aertsen (1994: 119) points out:

> The first editor of the Exeter Book, Benjamin Thorpe, wrote in 1842 in a note to what he considered to be the first of the Exeter book riddles: "Of this I can make no sense, nor am I able to arrange the

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[1] Trans: "I suffered far-wandering hope of my Wulf,/ When it was rainy weather and I sat mourning (Giles;1981: p. 468)".

[2] "Wulf" and "wuda", which I have already explained before.

[3] Bravo (1984: 22): " El viaje por mar sólo se insinúa cuando se menciona hasta tres veces la isla en la que se encuentra Wulf y ello implica que Wulf tuvo que hacer un viaje por mar desde su patria".

[4] As regards l. 11 Peter Clemoes (1995: 177) points out: "Se beaducafa (11a) in combination with the woman weeping in rainy weather, his arms like boughs or bows, acts as a symbol of masculinity free of any particularities of identity". This symbolic use is not so clear as the previous ones, refered to the isle or even to Wulf.

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verses" (…). A hundred years later Kemp Malone wrote that "Eadwacer is one of the most obscure poems in the English language. We make no attempt to interpret it.

Bearing in mind the difficulty with which the text is endowed beforehand, the critics are constantly tempted to suggest different interpretations, which have been classified by Aertsen himself (1994: 121) as inner or outer interpretations, if they are based on data taken from the poem or on mythological situations in which to insert the text. The text has been understood as a riddle, a fragment from a longer dramatic soliloquy, a charm, a dialogue about a hunting scene, a love story whose main characters are dogs, a *Frauenlied*,[1] a mother's lament for her son (Osborn 1983, Tasioulas 1996, Lücke 1983), or as a cryptic conversation between two poets (Eliason 1974).

All this multifariousness has forced some critics to think that the poem is incoherent, incomplete or subject to an old story the audience knew and we have not been able to identify yet[2]. Perhaps, this diversity of interpretations could mean that the ambiguity is consciously aimed at by the poet (Davidson 1974). So, I think there are basically two ways of approaching *Wulf and Eadwacer*: either admitting the existance of unknown sources, which were widely known by the poem's audience, or assuming that the darkness of the text could be overcome by having a look at the psychological expression that is directly observed and narrated. I have ascribed myself to the latter, because I have understood the text as a poem in which there are a series of psychological, emotional and introspective implications, which set its thematic foundations. Using Fanagan's words (1976: 138): "no interpretation can go far wrong if we stay within the bounds of the human emotions depicted therein".

My interpretation of the text makes me think that we literary critics should understand the poem as psychological expression, which is the thematic core

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[1] Aertsen 1994 and Giles 1981 make a good summary of these interpretations. I recommend their reading to get a complete bibliographical reference.

[2] Many sources have been suggested, but none of them have been conveniently proved. Giles (1981: 469) offers a good summary of the main ones: "Some suggestions have been: and Old Norse source; a story found in certain introductory chapters of the *Volsungasaga*; a story found in the *Hildebrandslied*; an account of the historical Eadwacer; a rendition of the Wolfdietrich B story; a story from the Volundkarviĺa; and a story from the Frankish Dietrich legend". Calder et al (1983: 61-62) mention a new one in an Irish poem from the IXth Century called It é saigte gona súain, which they translate as Créide's Lament for Dínertach.

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of my own understanding of *Wulf and Eadwacer*. The crux of the poem is the psychological element, the expression of what is emotional, of a feeling that could be universally shared by all the readers and hearers who have faced the text through the ages.

Although I defend a particular interpretation of *Wulf and Eadwacer*, there could be many other different viewpoints as valid as mine. However, I think that the interpretation offered in this article -together with my previously quoted studies- contributes to identify the psychological element as one of the possible foundations of an inclusive elegiac poetic discourse.[1]

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[1] The development of a complete taxonomy of that inclusive elegiac poetic discourse, from a literary anthropological theoretical assumption, has been the main aim of my Ph. D. Dissertation (Bueno 1998). After offering this essay and the previously mentioned studies as an advance of my investigation in progress, it is my aim now to publish forthcomingly a volume to provide the academic community with the definitive results of my research.

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