

A CRITICAL APPROACH TO SOCIAL FUNCTION  
IN *SERMO LUPI AD ANGLOS*

DOLORES FERNÁNDEZ MARTÍNEZ  
Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

RESUMEN

Este trabajo propone una aproximación crítica al estudio del *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* basado en el papel de los participantes implicados en el texto como centro de estructura y acción. La dinámica generada por los patrones lingüísticos a través del análisis de categorías socio-semánticas, grupos nominales y sistemas identificativos, por una parte, y esquemas de transitividad, por otra, desvela la mecánica estratégica que opera en el sermón con el fin de naturalizar su carácter persuasivo y la autoridad de Wulfstan dentro del marco de una realidad extralingüística dominada por el control de la ideología cristiana y cuestiones de desigualdad social.

ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a critical approach to the study of *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* based on the role of the participants involved in the text as both a centre of structure and action. The dynamic generated by linguistic patterns through the analysis of socio-semantic categories, nominal groups and identification systems, on the one hand, and transitivity schemes, on the other, unveils the strategic mechanism that operates in the sermon in order to naturalize its persuasive character as well as Wulfstan's authority within the framework of an extralinguistic reality dominated by the control of Christian ideology and issues of social inequality.

---

## INTRODUCTION

*Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* (*The Sermon of the Wolf to the English*), composed by Wulfstan II in approximately AD 1014, is one of the most important and powerful sermons of the Anglo-Saxon world<sup>1</sup>. Wulfstan, Archbishop of York (1002-1023), was an important homilist and law-writer who in addition to his religious and literary career, played an important role as one of England's leading statesmen. *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, regarded as the most topical of Wulfstan's homilies and as the supreme achievement of his facet as a sermon-writer, is an address given by Wulfstan to his congregation to warn them of the consequences if they do not strive to live pious Christian lives. But the sermon, presented with extreme rhetorical force, is for the most part a rebuke to the English for their sins and a call to repentance. *Sermo Lupi* needs to be placed in the context of the extreme instability of 1012-16, especially the crisis of early 1014. In April 1012, a Viking force pelted the Archbishop of Canterbury to death. The martyrdom of the Archbishop "would have provided Wulfstan with an alarmingly clear emblem of the overthrow of Christian order as well as leaving him as ranking ecclesiast in the land, from whom spiritual leadership was now particularly important in a time of crisis" (Wilcox 2004: 378). At the opening of 1014, it must have looked as if the early medieval phenomenon of the Viking invasions had finally given way to full-scale conquest. In the production of this sermon, Wulfstan rose to the challenge of giving a persuasive response to the suffering inflicted by Viking incursions.

The aim of this paper is to analyze that persuasive nature of Wulfstan's response from a critical perspective premised on the linguistic realization of the different individuals involved in the text<sup>2</sup>. The analysis of the individuals or participants as members of the social scheme is based on their enactment as both a centre of structure and action<sup>3</sup>: "Centring the concept of social practice allows an oscillation between the perspective of social structure and the perspective of social action and agency – both necessary perspectives in social research and analysis [...]" (Chiapello and Fairclough 2002: 193). Accordingly, the role of each participant is contemplated from a double angle, being both perceptions complementary

in the assessment of the individual and necessary in order to establish disparities with the other participants in the text. The individual has to be valued as a social agent placed in a network of relationships with other members in such a way that what really matters in discourse is not the isolated role of each member, but their relationships with the rest of the participants. This feature involves the assessment of social function in a relative way. Assuming the flexibility of functional grammar in the study of Old English (Cummings 1980, 1995; Davies 1996; Möhlig and Klages 2002), Martin's (1992) discourse-semantics system of identification, Halliday's (2004) nominal group and van Leeuwen's (1996) socio-semantic categories are employed in the examination of the presentation of participants as a centre of structure, whereas Halliday's (2004) transitivity constructions are used as regards to their function as a centre of action<sup>4</sup>.

The structure and rhetoric of *Sermo Lupi* have been subject to repeated analysis (Fowler 1966; Dien 1975; Hollis 1977; Jurovics 1978; Orchard 1992; Green 1995; Wilcox 2000, 2004), occasionally somehow resembling a functional perspective (Fowler 1966; Green 1995). Wulfstan's sermons have been assessed as outstanding instruments of national culture (Bethurum 1966: 210), which suits their study in terms of the dialectical relationship between discourse and society defended by critical analysts<sup>5</sup>. Also, the appraisal of *Sermo Lupi* as Wulfstan's most effective and powerful sermon (Bethurum 1966: 215; Stenton 1971: 460; Blair 1977: 359; Godden 1994: 156; Wilcox 2000: 408) fits the value of the text as a tool of control. Over this background of authority and power there is a further religious enterprise that exemplifies the crafted application of rhetorical skills to the moral ends of Christian faith<sup>6</sup>. Wulfstan's double implication in ecclesiastical and state matters (Bethurum 1966: 210; Blair 1977: 359; Rabin 2006) enhances a critical analysis that tackles the study of the influence of Christian ideology in the text in terms of the lack of exclusion between a religious domain and a purely secular one. Wulfstan was also very interested in the maintenance of a hierarchical society and in the interrelationship between social strata (Jurovics 1978: 204-206; Wormald 1991: 13; Wilcox 2000: 417, 2004: 378; Cowen 2004: 411). His interpretation of the catalogue of crimes included in the sermon gives

evidence of his concern with the breaches of faith and loyalty between social members.

The sermon shows Wulfstan's supreme rhetorical skills to propose a solution to the crisis of early 1014, but rather than as a simple observer, Wulfstan would have been deeply concerned as a significant participant with the events. His worry with social order acquires a performative nature, emerging from his twofold role as homilist and statesman, as a means to establish a well-organized Holy society, "one in which his 'beloved men' fully recognize 'what the truth is'" (Rabin 2006: 414). This fact allows us to carry out a critical study that values the extent to which Wulfstan connects social order with the persuasive nature of the text in terms of that association between truth and power which is linked, in turn, to his role as a spiritual leader in a turbulent period of English politics. Premised on the critical assumption of naturalization and opacity of ideology, through which ideological representations acquire the status of common sense, this paper analyzes how Wulfstan presents each participant or group of participants in order to portray social order, to favour Christian ideology and to display his authority<sup>7</sup>. A critical perspective may unveil the way in which the presence of implicit strategies of power and control enriches the sermon by also matching and complementing, from a different angle, some of the observations made about the text by previous research.

## 1. CENTRE OF STRUCTURE

Martin's (1992) system of identification examines the way in which language is structured to refer to the participants in discourse. Considering that "The more central the participant [...] the more likely it is to provide a referent for a phoric item [...]" (Martin 1992: 107), this system helps to evaluate the relevance of individuals in accordance with the referential chains they generate. However, the method of analysis employed here tries to face the main limitation brought about by the account of the participants identification in Martin's system, to be precise, its lack of attention to the way they are introduced through the nominal group (Halliday 2004: 311-335), especially as depicted by the

experiential metafunction which is concerned with the way experience is construed. Halliday's structure is also used as a base to specify the critical and sociological relevance of the participants in terms of the socio-semantic inventory established by van Leeuwen (1996), whose categories for the representation in discourse of what he calls social agents play an important role within a critical perspective, in which what really matters is the fixed association of certain categories to some participants.

Following Martin's (1992) paradigm, four main identification systems have been distinguished in the text, namely those referring to the addressee of the sermon, a first person singular and a first person plural, whereas a fourth one including additional subgroups encompasses the rest of individuals implied in the social scheme used by Wulfstan to support his arguments. Consider table 1.

<b>Addressee:</b> Leofan men
<b>First person singular:</b> ic
<b>First person plural:</b> we, us
<b>Social scheme:</b> man manna gehwilcum, mannum, fela manna, sume men  worolde folces, þas þeode to mænege, godsibbas & godbearn to fela man, oðran ealles to manegan þe man unscyldgige, cristenes folces to fela man  Godes þeowas, Godes þeowum,  Antecristes, þæt deofol hæþenum þeodum  wydewan, ceorle, earme men, fremdum, cradolcild, rypera, gesib, þe fremdan, gehadode, læwede  fæder [...] his bearne, bearn [...] his aġenum fæder, broþor [...] oþrum, fæder [...] bearn, bearn [...] his modor, broþor [...] oþerne fremdum, ænig [...] oþerne, mæst ælc [...] oþrum, mæst [...] his hlaforðes

Table 1  
Identification systems

Van Leeuwen's (1996) catalogue of socio-semantic categories perpetuates the systematic differences between these identification systems. As specified in table 2, the sub-group of religious participants in the fourth one is justified by the distinctive character they present in the text in opposition to the categories and structures that encode the presentation of the other subgroup referred to as 'common people'.

<b>Addressee:</b> genericization
<b>First person singular:</b> individualization
<b>First person plural:</b> assimilation (collectivization)
<b>Social scheme:</b> COMMON PEOPLE indetermination assimilation (aggregation, collectivization) genericization relational identification  CLERGY genericization functionalization

Table 2  
Socio-semantic categories

The nominal phrase that initiates *Sermo Lupi* (*Leofan men* [line 7]) exerts an opening strategic function that imposes from the very beginning the universality purpose of the message. This purpose is attained through the general reference (genericization) to the addressees that underpins the plural noun *men*. Godden (1994: 156) has stressed the function of the title of the sermon to bring forward its potential to display authority: “its very title asserts its role as an address to the nation by a figure of great authority”. This same potential matches the beginning of the sermon through the vocative, whose structural pattern, originally attributed exclusively to Wulfstan, initiates a great part of his sermons (Orchard 1992: 250). However, the inclusion of the evaluative epithet *Leofan* adds an interpersonal nuance that may be valued as an approaching tactic of the author towards the addressees with the aim of counteracting any evident manifestation of control. Although the first referential system is only materialized through this initial nominal group, the identification chain enacted by the first person plural calls for the acknowledgement of an implicit second person who remains as a receiver throughout the

whole text. Thus, this first person plural expands the first and second identification systems in opposing ways. On the one hand, Wulfstan establishes his own presence through the repetitive use of the first person singular (*ic*), although his relevance as a participant remains implicit via the first person plural. From a critical perspective, this 'inclusive we' conveys a high degree of authority to the text in terms of which the author acts in representation of all the participants by inflicting an institutional identification on them (Fairclough 2001: 106). Through the fusion of all the identification systems it entails, the reference scheme enacted by the first person plural exercises a function of control so as to impact on an extensive audience and hence reinforce the universality purpose of the sermon. According to Green (1995: 115), the employment of the first person plural in Wulfstan's homilies suggests the intention of the author to obtain the agreement and approval of the receiver. Beyond the desired concurrence with his audience, the first person plural strengthens the presence of the first person singular as well as the control of the author over an audience that nonetheless, by being institutionalized, is assigned some noteworthy identity. In view of that, this inclusive *we* complies with an oscillating and seemingly contradictory attitude that alternates Wulfstan's explicit manifestations of control with some other implicit affective positions of closeness and suspension of power that contribute to apparently enriching the identity connotations of the receiver. The category of individualization in the first person singular concedes a unique and distinguished characterization to the author that is reinforced with the plural, although that pluralization makes the addressee lose strength even despite the somewhat enhancement of identity conveyed by institutional connotations. In other words, collectivization (*we*) increases the relevance of individualization (*ic*) at the expense of the category of genericization (*men*) which in turn performs a mere discourse support at the service of Wulfstan's display of authority.

The vast social dimension of the religious project exposed by Wulfstan is illustrated by the ample catalogue of social distinctions integrated in the fourth referential system which includes the socio-semantic category of genericization in the noun phrases containing the indefinite pronoun *manna* [e.g. lines 14, 26, 66], and also the feature of indetermination in

those structures using *man* [e.g. lines 15, 25, 153] and *in sume men* [line 81], with the further indefinite character added by *sum*. Genericization and indetermination contribute to increasing the dimensions of that variety of social distinctions which reinforce the universality purpose of the text. Similarly, the nominal groups constituted by the nouns *folc* [e.g. lines 9, 184], *peod* [e.g. lines 12, 28, 51] or *worold* [e.g. lines 7, 11, 72] underpin the collective character of this system through the socio-semantic class of collectivization and also through the institutional connotations provided by *peod* and *worold*<sup>8</sup>. Beyond the institutional imposition of the first person plural, this further institutional label represents them as a mass group with a sense of state unification which increases the scope of the attempt to concur with the audience mentioned by Green (1995: 115). More specifically, that concurrence is nurtured by the swinging movement from individualization (*ic*) to genericization and its implicit category of indetermination, the latter one evincing a lack of relevance in their identity as participants and hence matching their function at the service of the author's relevance and control. The high significance of this social catalogue had been somehow noted by earlier research. Hollis (1977: 186) explained the effectiveness created by the combination of personal references with some others projected on a national level, in which nouns such as *peod* are included, and contemplated the dynamic of identification systems as a resource to emphasize the magnitude of the catastrophic atmosphere described in the text. Indeed, the total of the identification systems of the sermon are to be taken as a collective participant, a wounded collective body who, with its propagation to the whole population, represents the entire nation. From a critical perspective, this fact shows how the presentation of participants as a centre of structure is underpinned by a strategic purpose conveying a feeling of fear and destruction to the reader in order to facilitate his subtle manipulation.

In order to increase the proportions of disaster, participants are also presented in terms of quantity or statistics through the socio-semantic category of aggregation generated by the use of indefinite quantifiers functioning as numerals in *to manege* [line 43], *manige* [line 96], *godsibbas & godbearn to fela man* [line 78] or *cristenes folces to fela man* [line 83]. Hollis (1977: 186-187) claimed that intensifiers such as *to fela* function as stylistic



resources to stress Wulfstan's notion of the coming of Antichrist, whereas according to Jurovics (1978: 215), the intensifiers added to the nominal groups included here within the fourth referential chain contribute, in the form of little details and in conjunction with some broader structural resources, to the full effectiveness of the sermon. Thus, far from being materialized as particularized entities, the social panorama of *Sermo Lupi* as portrayed in the fourth identification system is to some extent premised on indefinite realizations of individuals that convey the impression of a mass reference. Nevertheless, within this system, a significant variation is introduced regarding religious members (*Godes þeowum* [line 36], *Godes þeowas* [line 37]). Their distinguished realization conveys a relevance of identity through the two categories of functionalization and relational identification that illustrate respectively their social function and ideological impact in terms of their link with God. At a syntagmatic level, the category of relational identification establishes a connection with Christianity performing in an explicit way the presence of the religious project in the text.

The religious criterion affecting the fourth identification system offers a further facet by way of the references to paganism and Antichrist in the sub-group integrated by the noun phrases *Antecristes* [line 9], *þat deofol* [line 11] or *hæpenum þeodum* [lines 27-28]. Accepting Hollis' (1977) and Greenfield and Calder's (1986: 90-91) views according to which Antichrist refers to the Viking invasions, these noun groups illustrate the fusion of religious and secular sides which characterizes the extralinguistic context at that time<sup>9</sup>. Additionally, Hollis (1977: 185) ponders on the fact that *Sermo Lupi* evinces how the Christian institution faces the power of the Viking control but also the inversion of social order. This synthesis of religious and secular domains in the text is also exemplified through the submission of Wulfstan's project of moral regeneration to the national institutional unification conveyed by the category of collectivization and above all, through the further institutional association assigned to the first person plural. As regards to the function of genericization in the fourth identification system, the use of generic nouns made by Wulfstan implies an inclusive selective function in which the catalogue of social delinquency displayed in the

text exerts an implicit effect over the receiver “at all apprehensive into a mode of self-examination, each noun pragmatically effecting a review of one’s innocence or vulnerability” (Green 1995: 122). In view of that, this process of social self-examination acquires religious connotations with the association of religious terminology to the Viking menace. This process encompasses an area of concern with social order via the category of relational identification which marks personal or kinship relationships between participants, either through *his* [e.g. line 115] or through *oper* [e.g. line 63], a fact which fits the critical tenet according to which the individual is valued as a social agent placed in a network of relationships with other members.

Considering the preceding data, several resources can be detected relating to Halliday’s (2004: 61) interpersonal metafunction, the one specifically concerned with the way social relationships are enacted in the text. As shown in table 3, the use of this metafunction has diverse purposes: it naturalizes Wulfstan’s authority counteracting more explicit manifestations of control, contributes to a favouring presentation of religious members motivated by his ideological conformity with the Christian institution and illustrates the role of participants in terms of their relationship with other individuals.

PARTICIPANT	NOUN GROUP / CATEGORY	FUNCTION
Addressee	Evaluative epithet ( <i>Leofan</i> )	Approaching attitude to addressee
Clergy	Functionalization Relational identification	Flattering presentation of social function Link with God
Common people	Relational identification	Assessment of the participant in terms of his relationship with other participants

Table 3  
Interpersonal metafunction

In this section, we have examined the strategic intention that sustains the linguistic realization of participants as a centre of structure as well as the way in which the different identification systems and categories complement themselves. Wulfstan’s authority is subtly performed. It is

favoured by his double implication in religious and state domains, by the wide social schema in the fourth identification system, by the several devices that support the universality purpose of the text, the unification strategies and the combination of explicit manifestations of control with other approaching tactics, such as the ones conveyed by the noun phrase *Leofan men* or by the concurrence with the audience through the first person plural.

## 2. CENTRE OF ACTION

As regards to the presentation of participants as a centre of action, Halliday's (2004: 168-305) transitivity scheme represents reality in terms of the three components of participants, processes and circumstances. Despite the difficulty Old English exhibits in order to establish fixed rules to which the syntactic designs generated by the different kinds of verbs are submitted (Mitchell 1985: 449-464), Halliday's experiential patterns provide a valid framework to specify the relationships enacted by the different types of verbs that, at the same time, deals with the divergences produced by the tendencies of verbal reactions according to which the same verb can take different constructions in the same sentence, in the works of different writers or even in different places in the works of the same writer (Mitchell 1985: 453). The analysis of the transitivity structures in terms of the four identification systems previously set up offers some relevant information which complements, from a critical view, the considerations discussed in the preceding section concerning the enactment of individuals as a centre of structure. Consider table 4.

senser	process	phenomenon	
Leofan men	gecnawað	þæt soð is	[line 1]

(a)

carrier	process	attribute	
þæt ic secge	is	soð	[lines 37 and 187]

(b)

senser	process	phenomenon	circumstance	
we	witan	þæt to miclan [...] ahte acwencan	ful georne	[lines 23-25]
we	witan	hwær seo [...] egeslice dæda	georne	[lines 92-95]
we	witan	þæt nu [...] mistlice forligru	ful georne	[lines 129-138]

(c)

senser	process	phenomenon	
we	gebiden	fela byrsta & bysmara	[lines 17-18]
we	þoliað	ealne þæne bysmor	[lines 123-124]

(d)

actor	process	goal	
þe [þa yrmða]	onsittað	us	[lines 20-21]
stalu & cwalu [...] rypera reaflac	dereðe	us	[lines 57-58]
ungylða	gedrehtan	us	[lines 58-59]

(e)

actor	process	goal	
he [manna gehwilcum]	gyrne	Godes lage	[line 26]
he [manna gehwilcum]	gelæste	Godes gerihta	[lines 26-27]
cristene	griðian	Godes þeowas	[lines 36-37]

(f)

actor	process	goal	
man	beswice	his hlaforðes saule	[line 74]
fæder	gesealde	bearn	[lines 92-93]
þræl	afylle	þegen	[lines 105-106]

(g)

actor	process	goal	
[we]	lufian	God	[line 192]
	fylgean	Godes lagum	[line 193]

(h)

carrier	process	attribute	circumstance	
[we]	habban	sume getrywða	us betweonan	[line 197]

(i)

Table 4  
Transitivity structures

The transitivity configuration ‘senser + process + phenomenon’ (*Leofan men, gecnawað þæt soð is* [table 4.a]) that opens *Sermo Lupi* condenses its intended project of dominion through the initial manipulation of the

addressee's predisposition towards the truthfulness of the text<sup>10</sup>. In order to achieve a complete effectiveness, this construction merges the legitimacy of the message presented in the clause *þæt soð is*, the purpose of universality of the socio-semantic category of genericization in *Leofan men* and the mental process *gecnawað*. This mental process is justified by Wulfstan's belief in the fact "that the nation has been blinded to the truth by the influence of the devil [...]" (Hollis 1977: 193). This statement matches an interpretation of this structure as an epitome of the link between truth and power which pervades the rest of the message and affects an extensive audience approached strategically (*Leofan*). This same purpose is reiterated by means of the relational process 'carrier + process + attribute' in (*þæt ic secge is soð* [table 4.b]) in which Wulfstan certifies the legitimacy of his own words as sayer of the verbal action *secge*. By means of this structure the sermon establishes a further link between truth and the second referential system, which increases Wulfstan's power and authority, whereas its reiterated appearance throughout the text moves the reader from a position of merely receiving the message to a feeling of acceptance. Wilcox (2000: 409-410) considers as very characteristic of Wulfstan's style these key structural patterns in which the sermon deals with the idea of an authenticity projected towards the preceding and following segments of the text. Hollis (1977: 181) had previously stressed their contribution from a different perspective, namely as an emphatic mechanism to encourage the repentance of the receiver. Seen from the viewpoint of the connection between truth and power, repentance would emerge as one of the resulting actions of Wulfstan's display of power through the transmission of truth.

The combination of the following transitivity structures [table 4.c, d, e] highlights the persuasive character of the text by appealing to the idea of truth via the first person plural. In the first group [table 4.c], Wulfstan uses *we* as a centre of reflection through the cognitive mental process *witan* with the aim of presenting an experiential reality supported by the consensus of all the participants in terms of the socio-semantic category of assimilation that *we* embraces. The structural similitude brought about by the reiterated process *witan* and the circumstance element *georne* illustrates the repetitive character attributed to the sermon (Orchard 1992; Fowler

1966), whereas the recurrence of the intensifier *ful* corroborates Wulfstan's concern with emphatic elements that has been linked to the energetic and effective style of the text (Hollis 1977; Orchard 1992; Green 1995). But beyond the effectiveness of this repetition technique referred to by previous research, these experiential patterns manifest a further version in the presentation of the idea of truth that repositions participants from individualization (*ic*) to genericization (*men*) and now to assimilation so as to profit from the consensus and institutional unification of social members conveyed by this category and hence to support a sort of institutionalized account of truth.

The patterns exemplified in the next diagrams [table 4.f, g, h, i] contribute to a two-sided procedure of naturalization that brings together the implicit overall appeal to action they suggest with some experiential structures [table 4.d, e] in which the author warns the readers about the situation of disaster and despair that surrounds them. In this case, their position is materialized either as sener of mental processes (*gebiden*, *þoliað*) that denote their suffering [table 4.d], or as object (*us*) of material actions in which adversity itself exerts the function of actor in different ways [table 4.e]. The representation of the first person plural as a menaced element makes the acceptance of truth rely on a strategy of transmission of fear previous to the activation of a subsequent pattern of action to follow. These constructions embody the view that the sermon evolves by elaborating the tension between the idea of an audience aware of the sin and their guilt and the conviction imposed on them by the necessity to soothe the wrath of God and follow his commands (Jurovics 1978: 212). Matching those previous structures, action is activated on the addressee by means of some constructions that depict the coordinates of the behaviour of participants belonging to the fourth referential chain within a contextual framework that does not polarize between religious and secular domains [table 4.f]. As stated by Jurovics (1978: 205), "as law sets forth practical rules of conduct, the sermon sets forth the Christian imperative for moral action, the underlying reason for an individual's accepting and following a law enjoined both by state and church". One of the keys in their conduct is unveiled by material processes that promote the ideological adherence to Christianity, whereas the category

of indetermination that supports the noun *manna* is justified by the participants' irrelevance of identity in order to focus the attention of the reader on their actions.

Premised on that interrelationship between religious and secular fields, the transitivity patterns that enact the framework of power embrace not only an approaching attitude to Christianity, but also other issues concerning social order [table 4.g]. Rabin (2006: 389) argues how Wulfstan locates Anglo-Saxon subjectivity "at the nexus between the interior moral obligations of the Christian self and the public legal responsibilities of the English *ðegn*". The sermon's appropriation of both domains matches Wulfstan's role as both ecclesiastic and statesman and hence permits him to equate the institution of English law with the origins of their Christian identity. The experiential patterns assigned to the fourth referential system of identification evince Wulfstan's concern with the relationships of reciprocity between social members by means of the distribution of their positions, either as actor or goal, within the same experiential structure. The text ends by fixing the actions of a first person plural in terms of Wulfstan's two main concerns, namely ideological [table 4.h] and social [table 4.i]<sup>11</sup>. Thus, the situation of social anarchy transmitted by previous structures allows Wulfstan to manage the arrangement of a new social order under the ideological criterion of Christianity. After a process of self-reflection, the first person plural is enticed to join Christianity and respect social loyalty. Participants are led to reject moral and social decomposition in order to permit the reconstitution of society in accordance with the dictates of the socio-religious agenda articulated in the sermon.

In general terms, the enactment of the participants as a centre of action exerts an implicit and double-sided purpose by means of which the discourse stresses a social panorama submitted to social and moral disaster as a strategic device to activate the action of the reader and to systematize the ideological and social keys of a renewed organizational disposition. The examination of the individual's behaviour complies with a discursive religious and social project which invites the reader to reflect and act according to the promotion of the institutional adherence to Christianity. "For Wulfstan, builder of the Holy Society, the religious was

political and the political religious” (Cowen 2004: 411). As also stated by Cowen (2004: 404), *Sermo Lupi* reflects the metaphor of the sinner as belonging to a wider discourse of the body, as a site of sin or virtue. Sin can be tackled at the level of the community, through shared law and shared repentance. Wulfstan’s focus is on the public sphere and on the community, for him the moral life of the individual is structured by the interventions of others.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper has been to present a critical analysis of *Sermo Lupi* in order to gain further insight into the tactical quality of the text and verify the subtle manipulation of Wulfstan’s message through the examination of nominal groups, socio-semantic categories and identification systems, on the one hand, and transitivity patterns, on the other. The dynamic generated by the linguistic presentation and behaviour of the participants has enabled us to formulate the linguistic patterns that naturalize the display of Wulfstan’s authority, the influence of Christian ideology and the implication of issues of social inequality and control. The strategic mechanism engendered by linguistic patterns through the two-dimensional analysis of the participants, both as a centre of structure and action, suits previous statements made about the sermon, whereas the data obtained have conferred, in turn, a new perspective to this background of previous research. The critical examination carried out in this paper reveals a further perspective in the way in which *Sermo Lupi* operates to portray its persuasive nature as common sense assumptions which manufacture a new Anglo-Saxon reader and participant within the framework of an extralinguistic reality dominated by the control of the Christian institution and its relationship to issues of social dissimilarity.



## REFERENCES

- ANGENENDT, ARNOLD 1986: The Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons Considered against the Background of the Early Medieval Mission. *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo* 32/2: 747-792.
- BERGNER, HEINZ 1992: The Pragmatics of Medieval Texts. In Stein, Dieter ed. 1992: *Cooperating with Written Texts. The Pragmatics and Comprehension of Written Texts*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 163-177.
- BERGNER, HEINZ 1995: The Openness of Medieval Texts. In Jucker, Andreas H. ed. 1995: *Historical Pragmatics: Pragmatic Developments in the History of English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 37-54.
- BETHURUM, DOROTHY 1966: Wulfstan. In Stanley, Eric Gerald ed. 1966: *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*. London: Nelson. 210-246.
- BETHURUM, DOROTHY ed. 1957: *The Homilies of Wulfstan*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- BIBER, DOUGLAS and Victoria Clark 2002: Historical Shifts in Modification Patterns with Complex Noun Phrase Structures: How Long Can You Go without a Verb? In Fanego, Teresa, María José López Couso and Javier Pérez Guerra, eds. 2002: *English Historical Syntax and Morphology. Selected Papers from 11 ICEHL, Santiago de Compostela, 7-11 September 2000*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 43-66.
- BLAIR, PETER HUNTER 1977 (1956): *An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- CHIAPELLO, EVE AND NORMAN FAIRCLOUGH 2002: Understanding the New Management Ideology: A Transdisciplinary Contribution from Critical Discourse Analysis and New Sociology of Capitalism. *Discourse & Society* 13/2: 185-208.
- COWEN, ALICE: *Byrastas and Bysmeras: The Wounds of Sin in the Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*. In Townend, Matthew ed. 2004: *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York. The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers. 397-411.
- CROSS, J. E. AND ALAN BROWN 1989: Literary Impetus for Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi*. *Leeds Studies in English* 20: 271-291.
- CUMMINGS, MICHAEL 1980: Systemic Analysis of Old English Nominal Groups. In McCormack, William C. and Herbert J. Izzo, eds. 1980: *The Sixth LACUS Forum 1979*. Columbia, SC: Hornbeam. 228-242.
- CUMMINGS, MICHAEL 1995: A Systemic Functional Approach to the Thematic Structure of the Old English Clause. In Ruqaiya, Hasan and Peter Howard Fries, eds. 1995: *On Subject and Theme: A Discourse Functional Perspective*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 275-316.
- DAVIES, MARTIN 1996: Theme and Information until Shakespeare. In Berry, Margaret, Christopher Butler, Robin Fawcett and Guowen Huang, eds. 1996: *Meaning and Form: Systemic Functional Interpretations*. Norwood, N. J.: Ablex. 113-149.
- DIEN, STEPHANIE 1975: *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*: The Order and Date of the Three Versions. *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 76/4: 561-570.

- FAIRCLOUGH, NORMAN 1995: *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman.
- FAIRCLOUGH, NORMAN 2001 (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.
- FOWLER, ROGER 1966: Some Stylistic Features of the *Sermo Lupi*. *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 65/1: 1-18.
- GODDEN, MALCOLM 1994: Apocalypse and Invasion in Late Anglo-Saxon England. In Godden, Malcolm, Douglas Gray and Terry Hoads, eds. 1994: *From Anglo-Saxon to Early Middle English: Studies Presented to E. G. Stanley*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 130-162.
- GREEN, EUGENE 1995: On Syntactic and Pragmatic Features of Speech Acts in Wulfstan's Homilies. In Rauch, Irmengard and Gerald F. Carr., eds. 1995: *Insights in Germanic Linguistics I: Methodology in Transition*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 109-125.
- GREENFIELD, STANLEY B. AND DANIEL GILLMORE CALDER 1986: *A New Critical History of Old English Literature*. New York: New York University Press.
- HALLIDAY, MICHAEL ALEXANDER KIRKWOOD 2004 (1985). *Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- HOLLIS, STEPHANIE 1977: The Thematic Structure of the *Sermo Lupi*. *Anglo-Saxon England* 6: 175-195.
- JUROVICS, RAACHEL 1978: *Sermo Lupi* and the Moral Purpose of Rhetoric. In Szarmach, Paul E. and Bernard F. Huppé, eds. 1978: *The Old English Homily and Its Backgrounds*. Albany: State University of New York Press. 203-220.
- LEES, CLARE A. 2002: Didacticism and the Christian Community: The Teachers and the Taught. In Iuzza, R. M. ed. 2002: *Old English Literature: Critical Essays*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 236-270.
- LENDINARA, PATRIZIA 1991: The World of Anglo-Saxon Learning. In Godden, Malcolm and Michael Lapidge, eds. 1991: *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 264-281.
- MARTIN, JAMES R. 1992: *English Text: System and Structure*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- MITCHELL, BRUCE 1985: *Old English Syntax*. Vol. 2. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- MÓHLIG, RUTH AND MONIKA KLAGES 2002: Detransitivization in the History of English from a Semantic Perspective. In Fanego, Teresa, María José López Couso and Javier Pérez Guerra, eds. 2002: *English Historical Syntax and Morphology. Selected Papers from 11 ICEHL, Santiago de Compostela, 7-11 September 2000*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 231-254.
- ORCHARD, ANDREW PHILIP MCDOWELL 1992: Crying Wolf: Oral Style and the *Sermones Lupi*. *Anglo-Saxon England* 21: 239-264.
- RABIN, ANDREW 2006: The Wolf's Testimony to the English: Law and the Witness in the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*. *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 105/3: 388-414.
- STENTON, FRANK M. 1971 (1943): *Anglo-Saxon England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- VAN LEEUWEN, THEO 1996: The Representation of Social Actors. In Caldas-Coulthard, Carmen Rosa and Malcolm Coulthard, eds. 1996: *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Routledge. 32-70.

- WILCOX, JONATHAN 2000: The Wolf on Shepherds: Wulfstan, Bishops, and the Context of the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*. In Szarmach, Paul E. and Deborah A. Oosterhouse, eds. 2000: *Old English Prose: Basic Readings*. New York: Garland Publishing. 395-418.
- WILCOX, JONATHAN 2004: Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* as Political Performance: 16 February 1014 and Beyond. In Townend, Matthew ed. 2004: *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York. The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers. 375-396.
- WORMALD, PATRICK 1991: Anglo-Saxon Society and its Literature. In Godden, Malcolm and Michael Lapidge, eds. 1991: *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1-22.

#### NOTES

- 1 References are to Bethurum's (1957: 267-275) EI version by line number.
- 2 Discourse analysis with critical purposes takes a particular interest in issues of ideological power and inequality and presents discourse as an instrument of control that maintains a dialectical relationship with the situation, institution and social structures that frame it (Fairclough 1995).
- 3 Martin (1992: 129) provides a definition of 'participant' as "a person, place or thing, abstract or concrete, capable of functioning as Agent or Medium in transitivity [...]", although the term is just confined here to people.
- 4 From a diachronic perspective, Biber and Clark (2002) highlight the distinctive character conveyed by the noun phrase in written discourse as a main structural focus of discursive complexity, whereas Möhlig and Klages (2002) defend the usefulness of Halliday's transitivity structures in order to tackle some functional aspects that may help explain verbal syntactic constructions.
- 5 As stated by Cross and Brown (1989: 28), "there are many elaborations and examples in Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi* which are rightly identified by reference to events and activities of Wulfstan's own time and would have greater impact because of such reference to experienced events".
- 6 A proper understanding of the Anglo-Saxon text can only be obtained by assuming an order of phenomena centred on the idea of God and Christ (Bergner 1992, 1995). The Christian Church displayed an absolute influence as an institution of social and economic power (Angenendt 1986), bringing also literacy on a very ambitious scale and setting up education as a complementary service to God (Lendinara 1991; Lees 2002). The establishment of a regular diocesan administration provided the English Church with an organised government that would enable them to override narrow political boundaries (Blair 1977: 145, 171).
- 7 "A dominant discourse is subject to a process of *naturalization*, in which it appears to lose its connection with particular ideologies and interests and become the common-sense practice of the institution" (Fairclough 2001: 89).

- 
- 8 Wulfstan's exhortations "would be applicable to all the people [...] at least to all the people who self-identified as downtrodden and defeated, if now reprieved, members of the English *þeod* ('nation'/'people') [...]" (Wilcox 2004: 385).
  - 9 This perspective faces Godden's (1994: 153) interpretation of the presence of Antichrist in the text that maintains that the emphasis on the Vikings' role as agents of divine punishment for the sins of the English seems to distinguish them from Antichrist. Approached from a different side, Cowen (2004: 397-398) looks "at the way the Vikings and their violence function as a topic and imagery within the structure of a call to repentance, arguing that Wulfstan's treatment of the violence of Vikings against the English can be linked to a metaphor common in penitential texts, that of the wounds of sin".
  - 10 Jurovics (1978: 210) refers to this regular beginning of warning in Wulfstan's sermons: "It opens with a general admonition to understand that worldly conditions deteriorate as the Apocalypse approaches".
  - 11 Jurovics (1978: 205) assesses the value of the two first structures [table 4.h] in conjunction with *utan*: "Wulfstan seeks to define the meaning of Christian life and to teach it to his flock [...] Wulfstan would have the knowledge of God translated into direct action".