ESSENCE & CRITIQUE: JOURNAL OF LITERATURE AND DRAMA STUDIES
E-ISSN: 2791-6553 ★ VOLUME III.I ★ JUNE 2022

'The Humours' Revisited: Kenneth Grahame's Mole, Toad, Rat and Badger.
(A modern appreciation of *The Wind in the Willows*)

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CITATION
Oppermann, Eva. "'The Humours' Revisited: Kenneth Grahame's Mole, Toad, Rat and Badger. (A modern appreciation of The Wind in the Willows)." *Essence & Critique: Journal of Literature and Drama Studies*, vol. III, no. I, 2021, pp. 21–37, journalofcritique.com.

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the four main characters of Grahame's children's classic according to the theory of the four humours. Mole is described as the melancholic, Toad as the sanguine, Rat as the phlegmatic and Badger as the choleric. It is an attempt to move away from the characters' being described according to their positions in Edwardian class society, which has been the general interpretation so far. This investigation is based mainly on Hallesby's (1940) highly practical concept of the four humours but it also takes into consideration its anthroposophical version and, where appropriate, concepts as old as the Middle Ages.

KEYWORDS
children's literature, character, the four humours, Kenneth Grahame, society, identification

1. Introduction

Ever since its publication in 1908, *The Wind in the Willows* (*WW*) has had its faithful readers, especially among adults, who have adopted the book for themselves (Oppermann 2005, 172). Reasons for this are manifold; apart from its nostalgia, *The Wind in the Willows* has been called "one of the most perfect wish-fulfilment books of all times" (Lippman 410). It is also highly entertaining, and therefore, such sentences as "Stop driving like Toad!" directed to a somewhat reckless driver, come as no surprise. An article in *The Guardian* (Jun 09, 2014) states that "*The Wind in the Willows* deserves recognition as a novel in which adult readers will find wisdom, humour, entertainment and meaning, as well as many passages of great literary power, together with characters who live on in the English literary unconscious" (n.pag).[1]

One of the highly recognized topics concerning *The Wind in the Willows* is the class system which has frequently been discovered in Grahame's work, and which generally serves to explain certain qualities of the characters. In 2017, McCooey and Hayes (50) still emphasize this sociological structure of *The Wind in the Willows*: The fellowship in the book is "limited and always hierarchical in nature, usually relating only to the novel's central characters … Toad and Badger are the gentry, Rat and Mole the bourgeoisie, and the stoats and weasels the proletarian mass" (48, 50). Smyth (45) identifies "the class basis of the conflict with which the text closes …: various conservative elements (landed gentry, old aristocracy and bourgeoisie) combine to quell the discontented lower orders as represented by the weasels, stoats, and ferrets". Both annotated editions comment on the class system in Grahame's book (e.g. Lerer 18, 36, 79; Gauger xxix, 1-2, 12, 20). The strongest statement in this context, however, is Robson's (80): "the Badger is an aristocrat: n*othing else can account for the invisible authority he yields over the River Bank as well as the Wild Wood*" (emphasis added). Although I accept his interpretation, and the sociological approach in general, its exclusivity as the only explanation of Badger's authority I do not.

In this contribution, therefore, I would like to attempt another approach which also interprets the characters' special qualities but is not limited to any allusion to the Edwardianor, in fact, any social system: the concept of the four humours. In contrast to the Edwardian class system, which has been outdated since WW I (and which should be difficult to apply nowadays with such social classes as the landed gentry and the original bourgeoisie practically no longer existing), the four humours are still present in many minds. A short survey of the Internet reveals

[1] This adoption by adult readers goes so far that, in Germany, the book has been called unsuitable for children because animals who, contrary to nature, are able to talk, were said to make the kids put down the book – it was too early for them to understand such unnatural behaviour (Osberghaus, 45). This judgment, in my opinion, is extremely far-fetched (especially with the traditions of the beast fable and the fairy tale considered!), especially in a guidebook on suitable reading for kids. It also stands in a strong contrast to Jacques' introduction to Gauger's annotated edition: "And why not? Why shouldn't moles whitewash ceilings, rats paddle boats, badgers sit snoozing in armchairs, and toads have hilarious escapades on various forms of transport?" (xi).

914.000 Google hits for"choleric"1.490.000for "phlegmatic", 25 million for "sanguine", and 77 million for "melancholic". With such a high number of hits, it can also be assumed that most readers of *WW* are roughly familiar with the descriptions which fit these character qualities, so that they will be able to recognize them in the four central characters. Even though the knowledge and use of the single names for the temperaments does not necessarily mean that the four humours are known as a complex system of character qualities, it is likely that these qualities are connected to these names – more or less stereotypically. Furthermore, whereas the Edwardian class system might be known to Grahame's readers on the Island, it is not as well known outside of Britain. The four humours, in contrast, have been part at least of Western culture from Antiquity onwards. Thus, readers from outside Britain will also be able to recognize the hierarchy among the four main characters, and their typical qualities, by using this concept. In short; even though the concept's medico-psychological meaning is outdated, parallels between Galen's version of the concept and modern psychological approaches to temperamental studies are still valid (Rothbart 2012, 5), the names of the four temperaments, and, supposedly, their descriptions still are so present in common knowledge that they can even nowadays be recognized in the four characters' qualities.[2] In my opinion, as much as each of the four main characters in Grahame's work represents a certain social class (see Lerer18), he also represents one of the four humours; melancholic, choleric, sanguine and phlegmatic:[3] This approach was justified by Breitinger (240) in 1984:

> The four main characters; Toad, Mole, Water Rat and Badger, are obviously anthropomorphised (they are "ourselves in fur"), in correspondence to the traditions of the fable and the beast tale, and *also to the concept of the four humours from the 17th and 18th centuries*. According to this, Toad is the extrovert, loud and easy-going, Mole is the down-to-earth introvert, and Badger the active organizer.[4] (Breitinger 240, emphasis added)

In order to develop this approach further, I will work mostly with Ole Hallesby's *Temperament and the Christian Faith* which, despite its relative age and religious contents (which are

[2] Since I have found both "temperaments" and "humours" in the sources I used, I decided to use both terms synonymously.

[3] That the characters are not simply seen as representing different Edwardian classes is excellently proved by Michael Thompson, for whom "Mole" represents "the Cockney Indigenes, the invading trendies, and the recent immigrants" of certain London quarters (39); none of which corresponds to the lower bourgeoisie, to which Mole generally is counted.

[4] "Die Hauptfiguren der Erzählung, die Kröte, der Maulwurf, die Wasserratte und der Dachs tragen erkennbar menschliche Züge (sie sind "ourselves in fur") in Anlehnung an die Fabel- und Bestiarien tradition sowie an die *Temperamentelehre des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*. Die Kröte ist der extrovertierte, laute Leichtfuß, der Maulwurf der Introvertierte, Bodenständige, der Dachs der Aktive, Arbeits- und Organisationsfreudige."If not stated otherwise, all translations are my own.

neglected in this paper), has proved a highly practical approach for character investigation[5] and which is the only study of temperament which exists in an authorized translation into English. I will further add Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophical approach, in the form of Frans Carlgren's account, when appropriate. Although both approaches are dated, they still contain the fundamental characteristics of the four humours which I am going to apply to Grahame's characters.

In his *Englische Kulturgeschichte* (1995), Dietrich Schwanitz combines the four humours with the four elements and their major qualities:

> Thus, dry and cold earth corresponds to the black gall, cold and wet water corresponds to phlegm, hot and dry fire corresponds to the yellow gall, and wet and warm air corresponds to blood. So, the sanguine is an airy spirit, the phlegmatic a slimy water-sprite, the choleric a fiery devil, and the melancholic a cool lump of earth. (Schwanitz 112)[6]

A comparison of these to the four main characters also shows some of the relations which become visible in *The Wind in the Willows*:

	Wet		**Dry**	
Hot	**Air:**	**TOAD** loud unstable high-flying vain chatty	**Fire:**	**BADGER** hard practical bold courageous hot-tempered
Cold	**Water:**	**RAT** lazy easy-going content supercilious contemplative	**Earth:**	**MOLE** sensible sensitive over-critical difficult faithful

Table 1: The four characters, their elements, humours and qualities.

Both the individual characters, their respective humours, and their relationships will be

[5] Hallesby's work has been intended for popular use. Nevertheless, since its author had a chair at the University of Oslo, one can expect at least some scholarly work at the base of his publication. Hallesby uses the masculine pronoun only, which reveals that his work is dated. However, since I do not discuss any explicitly female character in this paper, and since all four characters are (more or less obviously) male, I do not consider this case of gender bias as problematic. Florence Littauer's version of the four temperaments in Personality Plus (1982) is similar to both Hellwig's and Hallesby's, but since it is even less precise than Hallesby's, I have not taken it into consideration.

[6] "Der schwarzen Galle entspricht dabei die trockene und kalte Erde, dem Phlegma das kalte und feuchte Wasser, der gelben Galle das heiße und trockene Feuer und dem Blut die feuchte und warme Luft. Entsprechend ist dann ein Sanguiniker ein Luftikus, ein Phlegmatiker ein schleimiger Wasserbold, ein Choleriker ein heißer Feuerteufel und ein Melancholiker ein kalter Erdkloß." Unfortunately, I could not find any discussion of the concept in English which is as detailed and rich as Schwanitz's.

analysed below in greater detail.

It is likely that Grahame was aware of the four humours when he wrote *The Wind in the Willows*. Grahame was well read in Renaissance literature: "[His] essays are peppered with short quotations and allusions. Shakespeare, …, Jonson, Marvell ... and others are jumbled together in a casual eclectic way, appropriate to informal, conversational writing" (Kuznets 1987, 21). Furthermore, his friendship to Frederick James Furnivall, the founder of the Early English Text Society, is well known, and Furnivall may have influenced Grahame accordingly (see also Oppermann 2009, 33 and Lerer 2). And last but not least, at the turn of the century, there was an occultist wave of "new paganism" (Kuznets 1987, 26) which was also connected to Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy. "There was a good deal of 'Bohemian' posturing, and … Grahame … found [himself] on the fringes of this society" (Hunt, 6), which developed round *The Yellow Book*. Characters such as Annie Besant were topic in this circle, if not at times present in person.

As part of this wave, and especially in Germany, the concept of the four humours was reintroduced. Among the most important corresponding works are Bernhard Hellwig's *Die Vier Temperamente bei Erwachsenen* [*The Four Temperaments in Adult Age*] (1888) and *The Four Temperaments in Childhood* (1889) the second of which was widely read and commented on. His description of the four humours is strikingly similar to Hallesby's nearly eighty years later – with the only difference that Hallesby rather emphasizes the melancholic's deep perception and sensitivity (see below), which Hellwig characterizes as the source of gross reaction. In front of this background, therefore, my approach of discussing the four main characters in *The Wind in the Willows* as representations of the four humours seems sufficiently justified. Nevertheless, Grahame did not create his characters as prototypes of the four humours. McCooey and Hayes correctly speak of "the text's unique characters" (46), and both "short [and] stout" Toad (*WW* 13) and Mole with his supposedly round body do certainly not correspond to the rather slim body types which Carlgren ascribes to the sanguine (129) and the melancholic (130) respectively.

In the following, I will investigate each main character according to his humour. Since Robson's comment first initiated this investigation, I begin with my study of Badger.

2. Badger: The Choleric

Badger shows several characteristics of the choleric humour. Gaarden (44) calls him the severe and somewhat distant father-figure, Hunt (66-7) adds his friendliness to this description. Badger is the highest in the River Bank hierarchy. He also is a *miso-zoon*(see Oppermann2005, 180)who reveals by his "H'm! Company!" (*WW* 12) that he "simply hates society", as Rat and Otter emphasize (*WW* 12, 39), and which shows his "domineering haughtiness" (Hallesby 67). At times, Badger is just not interested in others. Nevertheless, he is the protector of Rat, Mole and

the Hedgehogs (see Poss 84) once they are stranded at his home, and he is too much Toad's friend not to try to re-educate him for the better.

The scenes in Badger's home also reveal his "great capacity for action" (62) and his practicality; two qualities which Hallesby emphasizes: "[T]he choleric sees what is to be done right here and now" (63):

> The kindly Badger thrust them down on a settle to toast themselves at the fire, and bade them remove their wet coats and boots. Then he fetched them dressing-gowns and slippers, and himself bathed the Mole's shim with warm water and mended the cut with sticking-plaster till the whole thing was just as good as new, if not better. (*WW* 60-1)

Nevertheless, Badger is not so blindly driven by action (as a sanguine would be) that he could not wait for the proper moment.

His practicality, "keen mind" (Hallesby 63) and "quickness and boldness in emergencies" (64) are visible in his commanding the attack on the Weasels at Toad Hall, so is the aggressiveness commonly ascribed to cholerics: "They were but four in all, but to the panic-stricken weasels the hall seemed full of monstrous animals, grey black, brown and yellow, whooping and flourishing enormous cudgels, ..." (*WW* 230). Remember: These are the same armies which drove Rat and Mole away!

One negative quality that Hallesby (65) attests to the choleric is his hardness. Badger reveals this quality when Toad is to be re-educated: "He took Toad firmly by the arm, led him into the smoking-room, and closed the door behind them. ...Through the closed door [Rat and Mole] could just hear the long continuous drone of the Badger's voice, rising and falling in waves of oratory ..." (*WW* 103). His "common way" of calling Toad's speeches "gas" (*WW* 241), also reveal Badger's boldness. I suppose that this is the quality which causes him to be so respected:

> By this time they were all three talking at once, at the top of their voices, and the noise was simply deafening, when a thin, dry voice made itself heard, saying: "Be quiet at once, all of you!" and instantly everyone was silent.
>
> It was the Badger, who, having finished his pie, had turned round in his chair and was looking at them severely. When he saw that he had secured their attention, and that they were evidently waiting for him to address them, he turned back to the table again and reached out for the cheese.
>
> And so great was the respect commanded by the solid qualities of that admirable animal that not another word was uttered until he had quite finished his repast and brushed the crumbs from his knees. (*WW* 216)

[2] Animal advocates point out that "the loss of a pig's life is no less ethically troubling than the loss of a baboon's life" because both are "sentient, cognitively complex mammals" (Orlans et al. 62).

This may also be the reason why Robson classifies Badger as an aristocrat, and why Hunt sees him as a squire. However, neither his superior age nor his lineage alone can be held responsible for this. Badger further gains his commanding position from many choleric qualities in his character. His practicality, activity and "domin[ance]" (Hallesby 67), as well as his passion, boldness and courage make Badger a natural leader – like many other choleric characters. Thus, Badger not only corresponds to Breitinger's choleric description, he also fulfils Hallesby's criteria.

The element connected to the choleric is fire, and indeed, there is no fire as warm as Badger's when he rescues Mole and Rat from the terrors of the Wild Wood. It fills Badger's kitchen with "all the glow and warmth" which the two now are in need of:

> The floor was of well-worn red brick, and on the wide hearth burnt a fire of logs, between two attractive chimney-corners tucked away in the wall, well out of any suspicion of draught. A couple of high-backed settles, facing each other on either side of the fire, gave further sitting accommodation to the socially disposed. … The ruddy brick floor smiled up at the smoky ceiling, … and the merry firelight played over everything without distinction. (*WW* 59-60)

Nancy Barnhart's illustration best shows this (see Gauger 83). Not even Mole's fire can challenge this one (compare *WW* 89-97), the less so when we remember that Mole End must have been cooled out from neglect when Mole and Rat arrive there in midwinter. In contrast, they can "toast themselves" at Badger's fire which is obviously the dominant feature of his kitchen. Mole later "basks" (*WW* 62) in this fire, which burns "brightly" (*WW* 65) again when the two come down for breakfast the next morning. Therefore, also the element fire, which can be associated to him, proves Badger a choleric, even though his choleric qualities are not as 'fiery' as in the common opinion of this temperament.

Badger fulfils Hallesby's criteria of the choleric in a positive way because his hardness is not so domineering that it becomes hurtful to his charges (except to the weasels!). His choleric qualities also make him the natural leader of his crew, and his active benevolence is their constant support.

3. Toad: The Sanguine

Grahame describes only Toad with regard to his humour as "much the same *sanguine*, self-satisfied animal that he had been of old." (*WW* 139, emphasis added); a phrase which goes uncommented by both Lerer (167) and Gauger (191). In scholarship, Toad generally has the part of the rebel: Graham sees him as "a sort likely run into trouble at school" (184), Hunt calls him "the frustrated adult rebel" (74), and Robson "never ... more than a naughty child" (80) whereas

Green is as bold as to name him "The Id personified" (282). Only Breitinger describes Toad's qualities according to his humour, although without connection to the relevant quotation from *The Wind in the Willows*. Nevertheless, qualities of the sanguine appear in criticism, too. Hunt mentions Toad's "short attention span" (70) and Gauger (40, FN 26) remarks that "[p]atience is something Toad lacks completely", which corresponds to one typical sanguine quality: "Impressions from without have easy access to mind and heart. … he cannot bear to lose any of them" (Hallesby 13-14). This becomes especially obvious with his quickly changing obsessions:

> "Once it was nothing but sailing", said the Rat. "Then he tired of that and took to punting. Nothing would please him but to punt all day and every day, and a nice mess he made of it. Last year it was house-boating, and we all had to go and stay with him in his house-boat, and pretend we liked it. ... All the same, whatever he takes up; he gets tired of it, and starts on something fresh."
>
> "Such a good fellow too," remarked the Otter reflectively, "but no stability – especially in a boat!" (*WW* 13).

Similarly quickly, "the real thing" becomes a "horrid, common canary-coloured cart" (*WW* 25 and 34) once Toad has met with the automobile. This is the only obsession Toad will not tire of, but then, an automobile is much faster and much less exhausting than either a boat or a gypsy cart. Therefore, the fact that "whatever he takes up; he gets tired of it, and starts on something fresh"is not just a sign of Toad's wealth, as Gauger (23) says, but indicates his sanguine nature as well. "Otter's 'no stability' introduces the central feature of Toad's character and the "threat he poses to the River Bank" (Robson 92).

The sanguine's emotions also change quickly (Hallesby 15), and so do Toad's. When, after his escape from jail, he steals another automobile, this becomes obvious:

> He picked himself up rapidly, and set off running across country as hard as he could ... till he was breathless and weary, and had to settle down into an easy walk ... "Ho ho" he cried, in his ecstasies of self-admiration. "Toad again! Toad, as usual comes out at the top! ... O, how clever I am! How clever, how clever, how very clev-"
>
> A slight noise at a distance behind him made him turn his head and look. O horror! O misery! O despair. (*WW*199-200)

Furthermore, Toad's similarly sanguine quality of acting without thinking (Hallesby 15) becomes apparent here.

Toad also is "chatty, lively, and entertaining" (Hallesby 16), especially when boasting of his adventures, and Rat must stop Mole from further supporting this quality of their fallen friend. In such moments, his vanity appears, too, but if it really is as "naïve and unfeigned" as Hallesby (47) states can be doubted. The barge woman has a reason for throwing him into the canal:

'So you're in the washing business, ma'am? said the barge-woman politely as they glided along. 'and a very good business you've got too, …

'Finest business in the whole country,' said Toad airily. 'all the gentry come to me …

'…And are you *very* fond of washing?'

'I love it,' said Toad. I simply dote on it. Never so happy as when I've got both arms in the wash-tub. But then, it comes so easy to me. No trouble at all. A real pleasure, I assure you, ma'am.'

'What a bit of luck, meeting you,' observed the barge-woman thoughtfully. …

'Why, what do you mean?' (*WW* 182-3, emphasis original)

Taylor (61) correctly calls Toad "a little fat fellow overborn by his fat, little ego". He does not for a moment consider what his boasts may lead to.

According to Carlgren (128) and, thus, to anthroposophy, the sanguine is the humour associated with childhood and youth although, of course, it is not restricted to a certain age. Hallesby also says of the sanguine: "He is a big child" (15). Indeed, as stated above, Toad is the most childlike and childish of the four. His "playing motor-car-accident" time and again (Oppermann 2005, 191-2) is one of the best examples: Philip says that "though adults can daydream while sitting quietly, a child needs stage-properties" (303, see also Lerer 152, FN5). This makes the more sense since Toad is the most important reflector figure for many child readers (Robson 95), including Alastair Grahame himself (Philip 307).

The sanguine element is air, and in this respect Toad shows the least affinity of all four characters. Kuznets, however, gives one revealing hint: "Only Toad's home is totally anthropomorphic and *above ground*, ... in an artificial position for a Toad, a reptile [sic!][7] that would not erect a Tudor or Georgian mansion but would burrow in the mud" (1977, 120, emphasis added), and McCooey and Hayes mention "some *airborne* moments (mostly associated with Toad)" (50, emphasis added). Toad also has to abseil from his bedroom window in order to escape. Literally "airborne" he only becomes in Horwood's sequel to Grahame's work, *The Willows in Winter,* in 1993. Last but not least, Toad's plans can be regarded as "lofty', especially in comparison with those of other characters, especially Rat: "The open road, the dusty highway, the heath, the common, the hedgerows, the rolling downs! Camps, villages, towns, cities! Here to -day, and off to somewhere else to-morrow! Travel, change, interest, excitement" (*WW* 25). Toad, the sanguine, is as high-flying as he is "active and restless" (Hallesby 14). Again, Breitinger is correct, and Hallesby's criteria are met.

4. Mole: The Melancholic

Whereas the two characters discussed so far are associated with their humours rather by their

[7] Toad is not a reptile but an amphibian.

qualities, the two who follow now are rather connected by their elements. Earth, according to Schwanitz "cool and dry" (112), is connected to the melancholic, and in *The Wind in the Willows*, this part is Mole's. He, "an *underground* animal by birth and breeding" (*WW* 64, emphasis added), is surrounded entirely by 'his' element both at Badger's and at Mole End, and, in contrast to Rat, he enjoys his stays in the earth: "'Once well underground', [Mole] said, 'you know exactly where you are. Nothing can happen to you, and nothing can get at you. ... Things go on all the same overhead, and you let 'em and don't bother about 'em. When you want to, up you go, and there the things are, waiting for you'" (*WW* 70). The natural coolness of the melancholic in contrast to choleric heat may be another reason why Mole's fire is not as expressively warm as Badger's. Although Mole's return to Mole End after his Christmas visit is unlikely, his experience of utter protection and welcome in his underground home are forever connected to this place (see Thum 27, Hunt 34, and Nodelman and Reimer 206).[8] Nevertheless, Mole is aware of the fact that he also is excluded from the "things that go on all the same overhead". According to Hallesby, the melancholic's "mental world is not only dark but narrow" (39). Thus, Kuznets' statement that Grahame chose his characters also for their typical dwellings (1977, 119) is fulfilled by Mole especially. However, one should be careful to ascribe to Mole too much selectivity and distance. He is the reflector figure of nearly half the book, and as such, readers experience everything new along with him. Without an escape from a dark and narrow underground home, Mole could not enjoy his spring experience half as much:

> Never in his life had he seen a river before - this sleek, sinuous, full-bodied animal, chasing and chuckling, gripping things with a gurgle and leaving them with a laugh, to fling itself on fresh playmates that shook themselves free, and were caught and held again. All was a-shake and a-shiver – glints and gleams and sparkles, rustle and swirl, chatter and bubble. (*WW* 3)

Tabbert (422) comments:

> [W]hen the narrator opens the focus from the narrow mole's tunnel to the openness of a meadow, and changes lighting from half shade to blazing sunlight, he also communicates the feeling of freedom. … Happiness is presented so strongly that it makes reality have meaning. [9]

[8] In later interpretations or sequels to Grahame's classic (including those of Horwood and de Board), Mole does return to Mole end but Grahame himself emphasizes that he remains at Rat's. This is contrastive to Clausen's strong argumentation in favour of Mole's return (146-8); we should not overlook that, on p. 146-7, Clausen leaves out the decisive quotation from *The Wind in the Willows*. (See *WW* 98; the missing sentence is: "[Mole] did not at all want to abandon the new life and its splendid spaces, to turn his back to sun and air and all they offered him and creep home and stray there; the upper world was all too strong, it called to him still, even down there, and he knew he must return to the larger stage."). However, I agree that the connection between Mole End and the experience of homecoming is very strong and, therefore, certainly the driving force behind this later development.

[9] "[W]enn dann der Erzähler den Fokus von der Enge eines Maufwurftunnels zur Weite einer großen Wiese öffnet und die Beleuchtung von Halbdunkel auf strahlenden Sonnenglanz stellt, so vermittelt er zugleich ein Gefühl der Befreiung ... Glück wird so unverschämt eindringlich dargestellt, daß es zugleich der Wirklichkeit einen Sinn gibt"

This quotation also reveals what Hallesby calls the greatest melancholic strength; a "rich, sensitive nature", which is "not only delicately attuned, but deep" (40). So melancholics also perceive, and it comes as no surprise that Mole's return to Mole Endtouches him so deeply: "Mole is home again" (Taylor 114), and nothing else matters.

A second important melancholic quality is faithfulness in friendship (Hallesby41), which Mole shows to both Rat and Toad. After Toad's return, Mole listens to his adventures when nobody else does, no matter if he may "egg on" the boaster or not (*WW* 215, 226-7). He also promises to stay with Rat although he would rather travel with Toad:

> [Rat said]: "I'm not coming, and that's flat. ... And what's more, Mole's going to stick to me and do as I do, aren't you, Mole?"
>
> "Of course I am", said the Mole *loyally. "I'll always stick to you, Rat, and what you say is to be - has to be*. All the same, it sounds as if it might have been – well, rather fun, you know!" (*WW* 26-7, emphasis added).

Mole may feel obliged to follow Rat but this does not contradict his being faithful to him, too. Nevertheless, another melancholic quality may also account for Mole's loyalty here; passivity (Hallesby 47). He obeys Badger's every order, which turns him into "Badger's first lieutenant" (Carpenter 60) because this is easier than to defend his own needs (e.g. *WW* 233-6). He also is "a fellow … for giving in" (*WW* 89) as Rat says, which further shows Mole's typical melancholic pessimism (Hallesby 46): "he really goes out of his way to look for something depressing". Mole cannot see that Mole End has qualities which are equal to the houses of his friends. He measures it according to his "ideal standards" (Hallesby 46) of Rat's "cosy quarters – or Toad's beautiful hall – or Badger's great house" (*WW* 84) and is disappointed. Similarly, Mole, "sensible fellow that he is" (Smyth 59), idealizes Badger himself (*WW* 40), which gets him into the Wild Wood in a cold and dark winter night, and he romanticizes the autumn harvest (*WW* 176), which saves Rat from going the wrong way. So, this melancholic quality is not just negative in Mole. Furthermore, his tendency to idealize does not necessarily lead to the disappointment which Hallesby ascribes to the melancholic, and which causes this to be "the suffering temperament" (Hallesby 38). In this respect Mole is lucky because his ideals prove their value, especially with Badger. Furthermore, in the easy, carefree ways of living at the River Bank, Mole's daydreams do not result in any waste of time or life. Thus Mole does not simply suffer from melancholia; it is his natural humour.

5. Rat: The Phlegmatic

Like Mole, Rat is characterized by his element, water, in the form of the River:

> "So - this - is - a - River!"
>
> "*The* River", corrected the Rat.
>
> "And you really live by the river [sic!]? What a jolly life!"
>
> "By it and with it and on it and in it", said the Rat. "It is brother and sister to me, and aunts, and company, and food and drink, and (naturally) washing." (*WW* 8, emphasis original).

Rat's house is "open to the River's ebb and flow" (Kuznets 1977, 119). How close Rat really is to the River becomes evident when he has to leave it:

> [Toad said:] "... Talk about your old river!"
>
> "I *don't* talk about my river", replied the patient Rat. "You *know* I don't, Toad. But I *think* about it", he added pathetically, in a lower tone; "I think about it – all the time!" (*WW* 29, emphasis original)

With this in mind, it is easy to guess what the "something very different" (*WW* 31) is that Rat has on his mind the following day. Even though he can leave his River for a while, homesickness is the price. In "Wayfarers All", Rat is confronted with a situation of temptation; he is the only "boarder[] who [is] staying on" (*WW* 155), so that everybody else's *wanderlust* also affects him. However, this experience is entirely new to him, as Grahame emphasizes:

> Restlessly the Rat ... lay looking out towards the great ring of Downs that barred his vision hitherto, his Mountains of the Moon, *his limit behind which lay nothing he had cared to see or to know*. To-day, to him gazing south *with a new-born need stirring in his heart*, the clear sky over their long low outline seemed to pulsate with promise; to-day the unseen was everything, the unknown the only real fact of life. (*WW* 161, emphasis added)

Meeting Sea Rat in this moment leaves him "spellbound" (*WW* 171) and not himself.[10] For Ratty, sea life "won't do, he's a fresh-water Rat, not a salt-water Rat" (Kuznets 1977, 129). Mole, who knows about Rat's tendency towards homesickness from the adventure on the open road, does not keep him from going off as he desires to but from becoming unhappy again. (Fresh-)Water is, and remains, Rat's element even without turning him into a "slimy water-sprite".

A look at the qualities which Hallesby ascribes to the phlegmatic shows that Rat shares some of these too. Especially, he is "good natured and easy to get along with" (Hallesby 81), and he easily forgives both Toad and Mole – "What's a little wet to a water-rat?" (*WW* 17) – their mistakes although he also severely rebukes them. This shows that he has a tendency to be

[10] In the Cosgrove Hall puppet trick version of the chapter (1984, season 1, episode 9) the hypnotic quality of Sea Rat's tale is strongly emphasized so that Rat's being mesmerised also becomes strongly visible. The effect is further supported by singing in the background.

supercilious and knowing better (Hallesby 89). Robert de Board, who must have found this tendency in Grahame's work, elaborates it in *Counselling for Toads*: "[Mole] was always standing in Rat's shadow. If they were boating, Rat would usually tell him, that he was not doing it right, like not feathering the oars properly ....If they got lost, Rat always knew the way ..." (2). Rat would never defy his friends, but their faults, he does.

Hallesby (81) further attests to the phlegmatics that they neglect their own ideals for comfort. He even calls them "opportunist" (ibid). Rat would never leave his friends for his own comfort but the fact that he rejects the far horizon (Robson 86) shows this tendency: "Beyond the Wild Wood comes the Wide World, … and that's something that doesn't matter, either to you or me. … Don't refer to it again, please." (*WW* 10) Furthermore, once he was taught to, it is always Mole who rows, and Rat asks him to open the door (*WW*99) during breakfast, which Gauger (34, FN 10-12) regards as a hint that Rat makes Mole his servant because Mole is of a lower class, but which I rather see as a proof of Rat's phlegmatic nature. Nevertheless, he is not openly "lazy" (Hallesby 88) neither is he "plump and round", as Hallesby (82) describes the phlegmatic.

Generally, Rat is a cool character. Apart from the extreme situation in "Wayfarers All", he appears most content with his life on the River Bank: "It's my world, *and I don't want any other*" (*WW* 8, emphasis added). In addition, "he has a practical mind" (Hallesby 84) by which he finds Mole's duster and his meagre supplies although he has been in Mole End only some minutes. "The phlegmatic takes his time and considers everything carefully before he acts. Whatever he does is therefore well done. One can always depend on his work" (Hallesby 84); be it the preparation for the attack on Toad Hall (*WW* 228) or Rat's search for Mole in the Wild Wood. In this situation, he also reveals his ability to reflect on what he perceives.

Therefore, Rat is the character who fits most closely with his element. His character also shows the greatest deviations from Hallesby's description, and Breitinger does not comment on him at all, supposedly for this reason. All of his typically phlegmatic qualities will, again, be easy to recognize in one or two comrades in every not too small group.

6. Conclusion

The analysis of Badger, Toad, Mole and Rat's temperaments has shown that, indeed, each represents one of the four humours. Badger is active, bold, naturally dominant with a tendency to be aggressive and somewhat misozooistic, he is also hard and a little hot-tempered, which gives him the "aristocratic" (Robson, 80)position in the River Bank hierarchy. Mole's sensitivity makes him responsive both to the joy of a sunny spring morning, a lustily gurgling river, and a homecoming of utter acceptance and without reproof. Toad is the high-flyer whose emotions and interests change very quickly, and who has the richest experiences and the best talent for telling

his adventures. And Rat's content and practicality make him the saviour of both Toad and Mole more than once.

Toad and Rat have been friends for a while before they meet Mole, and both live on the River Bank. Mole and Badger also are very close. Mole and Rat both share the coolness which enables them to live together so well. Furthermore, Toad and Mole appear as two opposing characters, and so they are generally regarded, e.g. by Graham (182-3). This is supported by the fact that both their humours are governed by opposing qualities; cold and dry (Mole), and wet and hot (Toad). Therefore, Breitinger's hint at of the four humours as one concept on which the four main characters in *The Wind in the Willows* were based has proved correct.

However, the four humours are not just an additional way of analysing the four main characters' qualities. With the Edwardian social system subject to partial oblivion, the four humours' names are still present enough to be recognized and understood. Therefore, in my opinion, readers of all ages can identify the characters' special qualities even without sufficient knowledge about the social system which may originally have inspired Grahame. Children can recognize the different qualities in people around them and in books. Once sufficient knowledge of the four humours has been gained, the recognition of them will soon follow. Furthermore, and in addition to the book's appeal due to its embodying "some of mankind's deepest and most ineradicable yearnings: the pastoral dream, the Golden Age, the search for lost innocence" (Green, 263), *The Wind in the Willows* offers chances to recognize one's own character qualities in at least one of the characters, and thus enables its readers to enter the world in which these yearnings are fulfilled.[11]

In this respect I regard the concept of the four humours as one parallel step to approach *The Wind in the Willows*, especially for readers who are not (yet) aware of the British Edwardian class system. The sociological approach, so much favoured until now, is not outdated by it (once one sees more in the Weasels than simply the villains in the book it gains its original importance) but added to. With the knowledge of the Edwardian Class system a second approach will be possible.

According to Green (191), Grahame "saw very clearly that any writer who wishes to give his characters permanency must work from inner, rather than external, characteristics", and indeed, these show in Mole, Toad, Rat and Badger's temperaments. Apart from "satirizing contemporary society (Green, 240), Grahame also mastered the task of "constructing an ideal model of the Good Life" (Green, 240) by combining the four characters in a well equilibrated relationship according to their temperamental qualities. This, I am sure, will only increase his work's status as a timeless classic to be read and enjoyed at all ages.

[11] It has often been remarked how much Grahame himself can be identified with Mole (e.g. Green, 278).

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BIO

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