Universidade da Coruña

Facultade de Filoloxía

Máster en Estudos Ingleses Avanzados

"This World Is Rotten": An Analysis of Eco-Fascist

Discourse

Advisor: Luís Miguel Puente Castelo   Student: Lucía Paz Moskowich-Spiegel

PUENTE
CASTELO LUIS
MIGUEL

Year 2023

Table of contents

Abstract

The 20th century saw the birth and replication of a new, dangerous ideology: fascism. Over the past century, it has led to a variety of subtypes, one of which interests us specially: ecofascism. This dissertation explores how the English language is used by ecofascists and spread through the internet through the use of discourse analysis. In the past few decades of the 20th century, discourse analysis appeared and branched into three main approaches. The last of these approaches, that is, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), utilises a mixed methodology in which linguistic, textual and social elements are considered. The present study has been carried out by following CDA and, more particularly, Fairclough's approach to it, which involves looking into different linguistic features through the glass of socio-historical context. Fairclough's model emphasises the division of the three levels present in CDA: the textual dimension, the discursive dimension and the social dimension. Corpus studies have also been a part of this analysis to aid in the creation of the most objective study possible, by comparing a corpus created with ecofascist texts specifically for this dissertation with two control corpora, the BNC and the COCA. This dissertation shows how, by scrutinising the published material in as much detail as a work of this magnitude and kind allows, the use and repetition of certain terms and other linguistic subtleties has a very real and relevant ideological purpose. To this end, I have focused on elements such as pronouns, modal verbs and rhetorical devices used in a linguistic context. This analysis has proven that my initial hypothesis that linguistic and textual elements are being used for the writers' own profit, thus influencing the readership, is correct.

Keywords: CDA, corpus linguistics, ecofascism, global North, global South, discourse, racism.

Introduction

The far-right movement had its peak in the early-to-mid 20th century, yet it is undeniable that it is on the rise again. The far right the world is exposed to nowadays is not a unified movement, but rather a compendium of dissimilar projects. This decentralisation of the group leads to it being found from online forums and social media, on street demonstrations, to even political offices and other powerful spaces. This structurisation is not random, however, as the splits within the far right somewhat follow the separated strands in it, either an authoritarian state—of whatever nature it may be—, a race-driven supremacist movement, and the execution of excessive violence. These parts of fascism do not exist independently, however, but rather feed from each other and evolve together.

This dissertation intends to study the manner in which defendants of this ideology use their discourse to interweave their political views and climate change, also aiming to study how that may hypothetically affect others, and, eventually, the main population as well. This analysis will focus on texts of this type obtained from several websites and forums during the past seven years, so from 2015 to 2023, in hopes of portraying the contemporaneousness of the language as well as the possible slang and jargon used, while also taking into account the ongoing increase in internet users as the years approach present times. This study will carry out a variety of approaches so as to be able to obtain the most exact results possible. For this, the material will be compiled into a corpus and compared to two other corpora with the main English varieties, American—through the COCA—and British—through the BNC—, which will serve as reference corpora.

This analysis will be carried out using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), an approach that looks at the sociocultural context when linguistically studying a text. Within CDA, Fairclough's approach will be used, which divides the analysis into three parts or levels: the

textual or micro-dimension, the discursive or meso-dimension and the social or macro-dimension.

To achieve my aim, I have structured this work so that section 1 will inspect the theoretical approach adopted, explaining important concepts relating to the study and offering a review of the literature. Section 2 will focus on the methodology chosen and the account of the texts under scrutiny. It will, thus, delve into the methods typical of Critical Discourse Analysis before describing the texts selected in some detail. Section 3 will portray how ecofascist discourse shows its views on issues regarding the planet, the global South, etc., by using corpus linguistics and CDA and, more precisely, Fairclough's approach to this discipline. This will be followed by a section containing some final remarks.

1 — Background

1.1 — Literature Review and Key Concepts

Before broaching the topic of this dissertation deeply, there is a series of relevant studies that must be overviewed, as well as certain terms most utilised and pertinent for this work. Henceforth, to clarify and set some definitions in order to aid the readers and to further my own knowledge on the topic at hand, I have read a number of texts.

The first keyword that must be defined to set the background for this work is *fascism*, the concept from which ecofascism appears. The definition of *fascism* seems to be a point of contention among experts on history and politics. Kevin Passmore (2002) agrees on this but affirms that "[a]ll the same, it is quite legitimate to emphasize either general or specific aspects, according to one's interests and questions — so long as the concepts used allow for other perspectives" (p. 12). José Ortega y Gasset (1927) also points the term's difficult flexibility in his "Sobre el fascismo"—taken from Passmore's book, saying that "[f]ascism has an enigmatic countenance because in it appears the most counterpoised contents. It asserts authoritarianism and organises rebellion. [...] It seems to pose itself as the forge of a strong State, and uses means most conducive to its dissolution, as if it were a destructive faction or a secret society" (n.p.). Nevertheless, the concept is still definable.

The *Encyclopædia Britannica* defines *fascism* as a "political ideology and mass movement" which "had many characteristics in common" between its different facets and the cultures that adopted it. Among these are "militaristic nationalism, contempt for electoral democracy and political and cultural liberalism, a belief in natural social hierarchy and the rule of elites, and the desire to create a *Volksgemeinschaft* (German: "people's community")" (2023, n.p.). On another note, Robert Paxton defines *fascism* as

> a form of political behavior marked by obsessive preoccupation with community
>
> decline, humiliation, or victimhood and by compensatory cults of unity, energy, and

purity, in which a mass-based party of committed nationalist militants, working in uneasy but effective collaboration with traditional elites, abandons democratic liberties and pursues with redemptive violence and without ethical or legal restraints goals of internal cleansing and external expansion. (2004, p. 216)

Another view is seeing fascism as "a modern political phenomenon, revolutionary, anti-liberal and anti-Marxist" which is focused on totalitarian militarism and also has a "mythical, virilistic and anti-hedonistic foundation […] which affirms the absolute primacy of the nation, understood as an ethnically homogenous organic community" (Gentile, 2013, p. 14, my translation). From these definitions one can build a mental image of what fascism can be, that is, in as little words as possible, a totalitarian ideology that thrives on an "us-versus-them" mentality.

As mentioned above and as may be seen from its etymology, from fascism comes the term *ecofascism*. Defining this term is of special interest, as it sets the delimitations, the scope, of this dissertation's study, and is not a mere clarification for the context. Michael E. Zimmerman, environmental historian and philosopher, defines the term as "a totalitarian government that requires individuals to sacrifice their interests to the well-being of the 'land', understood as the splendid web of life, or the organic whole of nature" (2004, p. 531). This definition mirrors the concepts of *Volksgemeinschaft*, elitism and totalitarianism seen in fascism, clearly signalling the roots of ecofascism, substituting the concept of the state/leader by that of nature. *Dictionary.com* describes it as "a right-wing ideology that blames environmental harm mainly on poorer nations and on marginalized groups, such as immigrants and people of color in richer nations, and that consequently advocates remedial measures that unfairly target or even attack people who are already oppressed" (2023). This description, in contrast with the previous one, highlights another issue with ecofascism: the focus on discriminating against minorities, especially racial minorities.

Sam Moore and Alex Roberts put forth in their book *The Rise of Ecofascism* (2022) quite an interesting take when they connect ecofascism to other ideas and present its end goal:

> For some, the core of the alt-right turned out to always have been a particular relation of whiteness to nature. Unlike the governmental far right, they don't have to show how they would govern society, nor how they would reproduce capitalist social relations. […] Accordingly, their figurations of 'nature' are broader, encompassing disquisitions on masculinity, the wilderness, spiritual- ism, food, 'conspirituality', neo-paganism, primitivism, a simplified and purified 'metapolitics', various forms of reactionary 'drop out' culture, modernity as such, the left's failure to break with capitalism and their promise to do just that. Where nature is invoked, it is more often than not as a regulatory norm for how humans should behave rather than indicative of a sustained interest in the natural world. 'Climate change' is present as a generic apocalypse, the content of which turns out often to have a distinctly racial character: the apocalypse as the end of racial history, as the slow degradation of racial potency and purity by capitalist 'excess'. (p. 73)

Moore and Roberts's insights on ecofascism add a fascinating point of view, especially linking whiteness to it and to nature—which has already been hinted at in the *Dictionary.com*'s definition—and, more importantly, to blaming climate change, which is seen as an almost unstoppable apocalypse—on racial minorities.

There are two other definitions that mirror each other and pertain to ecofascism, and they are the ideas of global north and global south. This simply means that "[r]icher countries are almost all located in the Northern Hemisphere, with the exception of Australia and New Zealand" and "[p]oorer countries are mostly located in tropical regions and in the Southern Hemisphere" (Royal Geographical Society, n.d., p. 1). Nonetheless, this view of the world is too one-dimensional since there are countries mapped as the Global South that have above-

average GDP per capita, such as Argentina, Malaysia and Botswana, and vice versa with countries such as the Ukraine. Also, "there is substantial evidence that inequality between the world's richest and poorest countries is widening" (Royal Geographical Society, n.d., p. 1). Closely related to these two concepts is the *Brandt Line*, which "is a way of visualising the world that highlights the disparities and inequalities between the wealthy North and the poorer Global South. […] North–South divide in terms of levels of economic development, relative inequality, economic power, and political satisfaction" (Lees, 2021, p. 85). These three concepts, although imperfect, shall appear in the texts analysed in this dissertation.

1.2 — Theoretical approach

As stated above, the approach to the texts under study falls within what has been referred to as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA); therefore, establishing a definition of the term discourse seems in order before anything else. This term was first defined by Foucault (1972) as "a group of statements that belong to a single system of formation; thus [one] should be able to speak of clinical discourse, economic discourse, the discourse of natural history, psychiatric discourse" (Foucault, 1972, p. 107). However, since its meaning is so broad, there are multiple definitions that have been brought forward from his seminal work. This way, Baker and Ellece (2011) suggest multiple possible definitions, among which is the one referring to discourse as "particular contexts of language use […]. For example, we can conceptualize political discourse (the sort of language used in political contexts) or media discourse (language use in the media)." (Baker and Ellece, 2011, p. 31). Gee (1989), in turn, brings forth an interesting approach when he defines it as the "ways of being in the world; they are forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes" (Gee, 1989, p. 6). Much more than language is thus included under this integrated view of discourse.

As claimed, it is vital to understand the basic shades of discourse to be able to carry out a discourse analysis. As Foucault addressed different areas of study in his life, his ideas also developed differently. That is, similar to how there are multiple definitions for discourse, there are different branches within what has been called Discourse Analysis. Hodges, Kuper and Reeves (2008) describe the three main approaches in their article "Discourse Analysis". The first one, called Formal Linguistic Discourse Analysis, focuses on written and oral language and is based on the microanalysis of linguistic, grammatical and semantic uses of the text; secondly, Empirical Discourse Analysis (e.g., conversation analysis) is grounded on the language in use, taking samples of written texts and oral language, as well as data on its uses within a social situation; and lastly, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) or Foucauldian Discourse Analysis includes characteristics of the two previous methods, but also the information on the institutions and individuals who produce and are shaped by the texts. This approach examines how discourses guide individuals and institutions toward what they need to think and say (Hodges, Kuper and Reeves, 2008, p. 571). In other words, CDA takes into account both linguistic manifestations and the socio-historical context in which they are produced. It is this broader approach the one that has been chosen for this project.

A particularly useful approach within CDA used for this dissertation has been Fairclough's approach, described in his *Discourse and Social Change* (2006). In it, he proposes three dimensions of analysis; the first one, the textual dimension, includes a purely linguistic analysis—from syntax to vocabulary (p. 74). The second dimension encompasses a more discursive practice, which "involves processes of text production, distribution, and consumption, and the nature of these processes varies between different types of discourse according to social factors" (p. 78). The third and last one, the social dimension, focuses on the socio-political events surrounding the discourse under analysis, as the name suggests. All these concepts will be dealt with in more detail throughout this dissertation.

Furthermore, Corpus Linguistics[1] has been used in this work as a methodology, so defining this concept is in order. It is somewhat recent compared to other branches of linguistics and can be defined as "the study of language based on examples of real life [*sic*] language use" (McEnery and Wilson, 1996, p. 1). Corpus linguistics has been extensively used in discourse analysis since the academic interest generally lies in searching for the connection between discursive practices and social practices associated with them. This explains why "there are [two] important points of contact between corpus linguistics and discourse analysis" (p. 114): firstly, computer-aided research simplifies the study of the texts, as well as accelerates the process and makes it more objective; secondly, corpora possess great prospective in discourse analysis as control data.

In the next section, I will explain the methodology and the process taken for the analysis of this dissertation's topic.

---

[1] For more information, read Baker, P., (2010) *Sociolinguistics and Corpus Linguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

2 — Methodology for Data Collection and Analysis

2.1 — Description of Data and Collection Processes

The materials in this dissertation include 28 primary texts produced between 2015 and 2023. These contain online articles, tweets and essays, procured from different blogsites and users. There has not been any separatory methodology done, as all of the texts pertain to ecofascism in some manner, although some are against it and others appear to support it in some level. The texts have not been separated into the countries the authors are from due to the internet's cross-cultural and boundaryless nature, as well as the fact that, from a linguistic standpoint, the possible difference among linguistic varieties is not of interest, although it could be for other studies. Since I intend to study linguistic manifestations primarily from the scope of Critical Discourse Analysis, the criterion for selection was simple: if the texts included relevant mentions of ecofascism and extremist ecological issues, they were accepted for consideration. The obtention and analysis of primary sources for this dissertation followed a very exhaustive methodology. In what follows I provide an account of data collection and the steps taken for the analysis itself.

Once the candidate texts had been selected and classified, I began the close-reading phase. After selecting the most productive blog sites and tweets focused on the topic at hand, the majority of the readings in them were discarded either because they were not fully relevant to the subject, or they barely mentioned it without specifying anything. This means that, after reading over a hundred blog posts, tweets and Reddit posts, only 7 were carefully chosen, which has amounted to a 5000-word corpus. This resulting corpus has then been compared to two control corpora, the BNC and the COCA, to properly compare the findings in the created corpus. The BNC (British National Corpus) and the COCA (Corpus Of Contemporary American English) have been chosen for this comparison to attempt to represent the most used English varieties utilised on the internet as appears in the chosen texts.

Each of the selected online texts focuses on a slightly different issue regarding the topic of ecofascism. Among these works, one may find the following topics: overpopulation, climate change, racism, indigenous practices, hunting, veganism, abortion, global North, global South and race.

Below can be observed the different texts of this corpus, including title, authorship, and date of publication.

Title	Author	Date of publication
"Ecofascism" Is Just a Cheap and Stupid Accusation to Prevent Honest Discussion about Overpopulation and Its Role in Collapse	u/Tiredworker27	8 Aug 2022
Native Inuits [sic] *Should Not Be Allowed to Hunt Endangered Animals*	u/Rkcart007	24 Jul 2021
Is It Just Me or Does Anybody Else Fear that We're at War with All the Careless Breeders?	u/ishatapecker	2021
Q: Are There Too Many People on Earth? (1)	John Taves	2015
Q: Are There Too Many People on Earth? (2)	Meg Waring	2020
Q: Are There Too Many People in the World?	Anonymous	2017
Wow, This Is Shocking!	Dr William J. Ripple	17 Apr 2023
"Indigenous" Communities Wiped out most Large Mammals	Dr. Jordan B. Peterson	22 Apr 2023

Table 1. Title, author, date of publication pertaining to ecofascist discourse.

2.2—Critical Corpus Analysis

Since it has been decided that the corpus will be analysed following Fairclough's example—thus dividing this third part into three subsections according to his three-dimensional perspective—, a deeper explanation of what each dimension entails is due. Fairclough (2010) considers that "any text can be regarded as interweaving 'ideational', 'interpersonal' and 'textual' meanings" (p. 94). This can be observed in Figure 1 below, where these three dimensions must be understood as being one inside the other; therefore, when analysing the second level (which will be called meso-level), the first level (or micro-level in Fairclough, 2006, p. 72) will be present, and when looking at the social level (or macro-level, as described in p. 72), the other will influence it too.
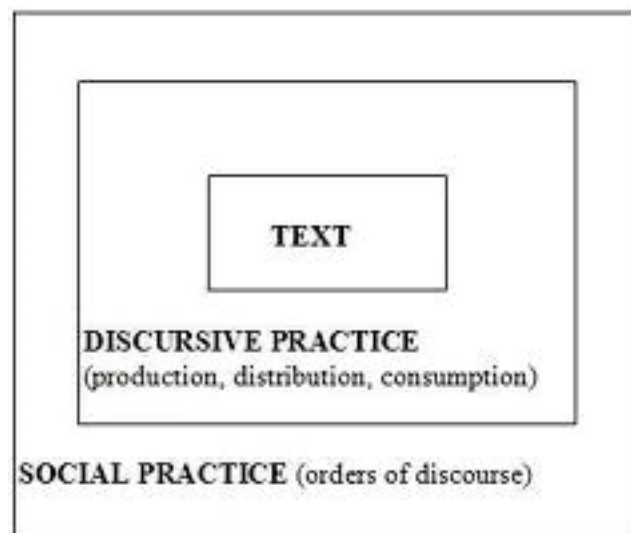
TEXT

DISCURSIVE PRACTICE
(production, distribution, consumption)

SOCIAL PRACTICE (orders of discourse)

Figure 1. Fairclough's three-dimensional conception of discourse, 2006

The first one, the textual analysis, centres around "four main headings: 'vocabulary', 'grammar', 'cohesion', and 'text structure'" (Fairclough, 2006, p. 75). Fairclough goes on to explain that vocabulary deals "with individual words," whilst grammar focuses on "words combined into clauses and sentences," cohesion on "how clauses and sentences are linked together," whilst, finally, structure "deals with large scale organizational properties of texts" (p. 75).

This micro-analysis is done by examining the type and organisation of sentences, the choice of words—along with their compounding and combination. The relation between this level and the other two is clear: certain words and structures are chosen to respond to certain social purposes. While a purely linguistic analysis of the texts is interesting since "any sort of textual feature is potentially significant in discourse analysis" (Fairclough, 2006, p. 74), this must be put into perspective with the meso- and macro-levels. A key point of interest in the analysis of this dissertation has been, as Fairclough says, "alternative words and their political and ideological significance, upon such issues as how domains of experience may be 'reworded' as part of social and political struggles […]. Another focus is word meaning, and particularly how the meanings of words come into contention within wider struggles" (2006, p. 77). This is especially true when regarding ecofascist language—for example, as will be analysed later on, through the use of certain terms and devices such as sarcasm.

The meso-level, the discursive practice, involves "text production, distribution and consumption" (p. 78)— the relationship between the text and its immediate surroundings. This dimension studies the context of the text because they "are consumed differently in different social contexts" (p. 79). In this respect, the distribution of the texts selected is quite vast, as they are online resources accessible to whomever chances upon them. The discursiveness can be further observed in these blogposts by the comments left by some of the readers, which, although they are not the focus of my work, are also quite interesting from a discursive viewpoint. What Fairclough calls "orders of discourse," i.e., "total configurations of discursive practices in particular institutions, or indeed in a whole society" (p. 9), must also be considered. In the case of this dissertation, these orders are quite small and/or close, as the intended circle of influence does not intend to reach far.

There are three more headings apart from the ones mentioned above, and those are "the 'force' of utterances […] (promises, requests, threats, etc.) […], the 'coherence' of texts; and

the 'intertextuality' of texts" (p. 75). The force discusses whether the emitter is being forceful or assertive, giving orders or promises, asking, etc. Coherence entails the relationship between the parts of the text so that they make sense to the reader and the message can be properly understood. Finally, intertextuality indicates the ability texts possess to affect and refer to each other—whether to agree or not. This is observable in a number of the articles chosen (Fairclough, 2006).

The final dimension, the social practice, tries to illustrate how discursive events belong to larger social practices and contexts. For this, power plays an important role according to Fairclough (2006, p. 86), and he divides his focus into hegemony and ideology. Hegemony is understood as "the power over society" (p. 92). It "is about constructing alliances, and integrating rather than simply dominating […], to win their consent" (p. 92). This is an especially insightful perspective when one considers how it has been mentioned that the authors under analysis appear to write to like-minded persons. With this in mind, it becomes clear how one of the goals of their publications may be to smother reluctance in the readers' minds. Therefore, hegemony and discourse are linked through the set of certain discursive practices (the aforementioned "orders of discourse") that are affected.

Regarding ideology, Fairclough (2006) provides a Marxist sociolinguistic interpretation. He creates three claims about it:

> [T]he claim that it has a material existence in the practices of institutions […]; that ideology 'interpellates subjects', which leads to the view that one of the more significant 'ideological effects' which linguists ignore in discourse […] is the constitution of subjects […], that 'ideological state apparatuses' […] are both sites of and stakes in class struggle. (p. 87)

Bearing these theoretical claims in mind, Fairclough explains that he understands ideologies "to be significators/constructions of reality" (p. 87). This means that ideology is interweaved

within discursive practices and contributes to its changes. Additionally, a key point Fairclough explains is that "[t]he ideologies embedded in discursive practices are most effective when they become naturalized, and achieve the status of 'common sense'" (p. 87). This may also be observed in the blog posts, as it appears to be a resourceful form of propaganda.

The microprocess of choosing the texts through close reading should be explained. It has already been mentioned that I had read dozens of texts that did not make the cut for this essay, as they may have lacked a specific key word or expression. I focused on both collocations and specific words and expressions; however, what is told overtly is not my only interest, as I wanted to analyse what is implicit too. For this, the texts consulted and mentioned in my "Literature Review" regarding the relevant socio-politics have been of great use. I looked for specific features and personal discourse to be able to back up the statements I will make in the analysis of the data in the section that follows.

After delving into Fairclough's three-dimensional practice, it must be mentioned that this introductory section will not include a general study of the texts; the ecofascist discourse has too differing ideas and methods to be grouped into a homogenous analysis. Therefore, the analysis will be done below, within the corresponding subsections.

3 — Analysing the Data

In what follows, we are following Fairclough's approach, as can be seen in the three divisions below:

3.1 — Textual Dimension

As explained above, this dimension focuses on the linguistic phenomena that can be found in the texts. Fairclough's four headings (2006) that would correspond to this microlevel (vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structure) will be studied here; however, due to the interrelations among these headings, no classifying separation will be made among the four. In what follows I will provide a general analysis that focuses on the most relevant occurrences. It is important to bear in mind that many aspects discussed in this subsection will be further analysed in the other dimensions. By way of illustration, I have chosen different examples that set out Fairclough's (2006) model regarding the four headings. Following his proposition, the most relevant idea to focus on is the careful choice of specific vocabulary at the hands of defendants—whether conscious or not—of ecofascist discourse.

After the close-reading phase, it became obvious that a highly repeating word was the plural pronoun *we*—and, with less frequency, *us*, *ours* and *our*—, although some had a more prevalent usage than others. Its utilisation seems to align with the idea that they speak to like-minded individuals with similar goals, hence grouping them all together with them when expressing their opinions, as seen in example (1) and (2) below:

(1) The only way how <u>we</u> could somehow prevent or at least minimize the effects of collapse is to reduce the population. (u/Tiredworker27, 2022)

(2) People need to stop acting like she's [Nature] an omnipotent being who speaks to <u>us</u>, because it just makes humanity sound like ignorant morons who can't grasp basic science. (Waring, 2020)

This appellative use also tries to create a stronger connection between the author and the readership so that its message reaches them more effectively. This serves a double purpose: to create an "us-versus-them" mentality, placing humans as almost irreparably evil at one end, and Nature as an almost helpless victim at the other, and to generate even more affinity so that the readers may adopt some of the opinions and ideas if they did not previously have them or were not completely convinced. It must be noted, however, that *we* and the other words are also used in their most traditional manner, that is, to refer to more than one person without any additional connotation or purpose.

The importance of these such words seems to be backed up by quantitative research, as shown when comparing the 7.4 uses per thousand words in this dissertation's corpus to the COCA's one-billion-word corpus, with a result of circa 5.1 uses per thousand and the BNC's approximate 3.47 words per thousand in their hundred-million-word corpus.

Conversely to this notion, the singular personal pronoun *I* in (3) and (4) and its derivations and related words (such as *my*, as can also be seen in example (3)) also appear numerous times, as can be seen in what follows:

(3) I was born at the height of human decadence, and my generation will see the span of time that runs from opulence to destruction. (Waring, 2020)

(4) I need help. I need others that can comprehend this, and figure out how to explain this to population experts. (Taves, 2015)

(5) Is it just me or does anybody else fear that we're at war with all the careless breeders? (u/ishatapecker, 2021)

The use of this pronoun, intercalated with *we* and similar words, achieves multiple goals. Firstly, it serves as a way to propose a more clearly opinionated viewpoint, which the authors attempt to, to attain the second purpose, that is, connecting to their audience through more emotional means. They thus recollect their memories and appeal to their personal experiences

to express them to their readers and to support their ecofascist views. Additionally, this helps supports the "us-versus-them" mentality explained in the previous paragraph, adding a deeper, more complex layer of "me-versus-others", meaning by "others", people with different viewpoints.

Once again, looking at the quantitative research in our corpus in comparison to the BNC and COCA, one may see 4.4 words per thousand in our corpus. On the other hand, one may see that the BNC has approximately 8.58 uses of the personal pronoun per thousand words, while COCA has circa 1 word per thousand. The differences between these two groups are quite large since the use of *I* in the texts here selected has been proved to serve a specific purpose above described, whilst the numbers in COCA and BNC approach the personal pronoun in general, without minding qualitative research. It is also interesting how the data between the BNC and the COCA is so differing, and how our corpus sits in the middle.

Unsurprisingly, the word *overpopulation*, as in (6) and its derived forms such as *overpopulated* (also in (6)) also appear in multiple of the selected texts. This is due to the term being one of the main concerns in ecofascist rhetoric, to which they propose a series of morally reprehensible solutions—from eugenics, to forced birth control and even genocide of "undesirables".

(6) Every time someone brings up the devastating effects of <u>overpopulation</u> on humanity and the planet and its role in collapse - many people will get foam before their mouths and scream "Ecofascism" and claim that we are far from being <u>overpopulated</u> and that you want to kill billions of people and whatever. (u/Tiredworker, 2022)

Since they present humanity as a whole and not merely powerful corporations responsible for the natural disasters that we are experiencing because of climate change, blame is put on the layperson. The people who share these believes place themselves against this supposed "overpopulation problem" and see those who "breed" as inferior and irrational, which is rhetoric

taken from fascist discourse. This, apart from developing more of the aforementioned "us-versus-them" mindset, also establishes a hierarchy in the mind of such individuals as these, with them being above—usually from a rational, such as this case, or intellectual point of view—from the rest, who are so dumb and irrational that they "will get foam before their mouths and scream" (u/Tiredworker, 2022).

It is interesting to look at what the corpora show in their data for *overpopulation* and *overpopulated*, as it is used 0.00001 per thousand words in the COCA, while in the BNC it appears 0.000047 times per thousand. In our corpus, however, it appears approximately 1.8 per thousand words, which is a considerably higher figure than the other two. This makes sense, as the topic of overpopulation is one that tends to preoccupy ecofascists and their sympathisers the most, much more than the regular population, as is reflected by these numbers.

In relation to what has been discussed regarding the previous example, a word that does not appear in the majority of the selected texts but that does have a highly profound connotation is *breeder* and its plural form (example (7)) and others such as *breed*, such as in example (8), as can be seen bellow:

(7) Is it just me or does anybody else fear that we're at war with all the careless breeders? (u/ishatapecker, 2021)

(8) There is no way that the human race will volunteer to selectively breed itself into controlled numbers, so disease and warfare would be helpful. (Waring, 2020)

It is obvious that was what meant by these examples in relation to the previous ones is true. The people who choose to have children are being presented as being inferior to those who choose not to due to overpopulation concerns. This is done through a very interesting yet common technique: dehumanisation. When one talks of *breeders* or *breeding* one may imagine cattle, sheep and other domestic animals, and the use of this word is deliberate in this sense, to animalise and dehumanise the people who they perceive to be against them. This is another

characteristic taken from fascism, the supremacy of one type of human and the dehumanisation of another kind.

After the close reading phase of this study, the quantitative research in our corpus as compared to the BNC and the COCA shows interesting results for the words *breed*, *breeders* and others derived from them. In the smaller BNC, these words appear an approximate number of 0.023 times per thousand words, while in the bigger COCA, it appears a total of 0.087 times per thousand words. In the corpus for this dissertation, *breed* and other related words appear 1.4 times per thousand. This, as it happened with *overpopulation*, shows the increased interest in this niche group as compared to the general population, whose use can be seen in the two control corpora. Therefore, the increased worry over this topic can very clearly be seen in ecofascist discourse through these figures.

Another technique apart from us-versus-them and dehumanisation of the people who do not agree with their views is the utilisation of sarcasm. The words of Dr Ripple reflect this perfectly:

> (9) Wow, this is shocking! The number of diverse wild mammals changed quickly & dramatically with the arrival of humans. Since then, wild land mammal biomass has declined by ~85%. Humans & livestock are now the dominant mammals, a major factor in the biodiversity and climate crisis. (@WilliamJRipple, 2023)

Sarcasm as a linguistic feature is not easy to define or describe but can be seen as containing "some sort of incongruity between what is said and the situation in which sarcasm is used" (Skalicky and Crossley, 2018, p. 7). Therefore, in this example (9), the exclamative tone of "Wow, this is shocking!" pretends to imitate a surprised or shocked verbal response, which looks to mock those people who lack the knowledge Ripple provides in the text that follows the exclamation. With this technique, the author pretends to make people feel foolish, thus placing the ecofascist rhetoric as intellectually superior—Ripple tries to show through the surprise that

the data he provides should be common knowledge and, if one does not know it, they are not intelligent enough.

There is another method that people following ecofascist discourse obey, which is the dialogic and easily intelligible manner of speech. This makes their points in their posts and tweets to be unequivocally understood, which can be seen in the generally short sentences they write. The use of active sentences such as in example (10) help the content be more approachable to the readership, as can be seen below:

(10) Everyone <u>needs to</u> know that we *must* average less than 2 babies world wide [*sic*] until we no longer <u>require</u> the use of non-renewables to keep our numbers alive. (Taves, 2015)

(11) Everyone <u>needs to</u> know that to average less than 2 babies you *must* not have more than 1. You *must* not have a baby if that would give your parents more than 3 grandchildren. You *must* not have a baby if that would give your grandparents more than 7 grandchildren. (Taves, 2015)

In this example (10), can also be seen the use of the modal verb *must* (in italics), which is utilised to provide a more authoritative tone by guiding and ordering the readership what the best course of action would be. The people who disperse this type of rhetoric believe to have the voice of reason, so they are regularly seen giving orders and assertive advice in their posts. In example (11), this can be clearly seen. It should also be taken into account that *need*, when accompanied by *to*, is often considered a semi-modal, or a periphrastic modal (Biber, 1999, p. 483), and is used in a similar manner.

The difference between modals such as *must* and semi-modals such as *need to* is that the latter can be marked for a specific person or tense, as well as happen as non-finite forms. Both of these verbs are considered of "obligation or necessity," according to Biber (1999, p. 485) and both have what is considered intrinsic meanings—related to the aforementioned

necessity, along with others. These intrinsic verbs carry agency of the subject, as well as a dynamic characteristic of "an activity or event that can be controlled (p. 485), as can be clearly observed in both examples (10) and (11). Biber also puts forth interesting findings in this book, as he expresses how more common modals and semi-modals are in conversation as compared to written texts, especially semi-modals. It can be argued that internet register is the hybridisation of conversation and writing, and this can be seen in the examples (10) and (11), as well as all throughout the texts selected.

In this last instance, it is also interesting to compare qualitative and quantitative research for *must* and *need to*. In the COCA, *must* is used approximately 0.04 times per thousand, while in the BNC, it occurs circa 0.02 times per thousand; *need to* appears 0.04 times per thousand in the COCA, and in the BNC, it turns up roughly 0.02 per thousand. In the corpus of this project, *must* comes up a little over 1.2 times per thousand and *need to* appears at the same frequency. The use of these expressions shows insistence on the part of the author, who is trying to make their stance clear. This is especially true for the users of ecofascist discourse in this dissertation's corpus, as they use both modals at a much higher rate than in the BNC and the COCA.

In the section that follows I will dive into the meso-dimension that also encompasses this one, so references to it will also appear.

3.2 — Discursive Dimension

This intermediate level, which focuses, as its name suggests, on the discursive aspect, has been also discussed before. This segment of the dissertation centres around how the texts directly affect their surroundings, including how far they are meant to reach and how much they actually manage to affect their surroundings. Fairclough (2006) includes three additional headings for this dimension apart from the four textual ones, which are the following: the force of the utterances—essentially what causes the direct emotional reaction on the reader; the coherence within the text, or how understandable and well written a text is; and its intertextuality, or the relationship a text establishes with other texts akin to itself or not. The following subdivisions will delve into this meso-analysis following these three headings, partly taking into account what has been explored in the textual dimension.

When it comes to the force that ecofascist discourse carries with it, the microanalysis has already briefly scrutinised some parts of it. The use of assertive and self-assured language is constantly prevalent throughout the internet posts, as previously demonstrated, whether it be through techniques such as the "us-versus-them" technique or through the use of other specific linguistic forms. The utilisation of the "us-versus-them" and sarcasm has already been explored in the discussion about the previous dimension, so it is unnecessary to delve into it further. However, it ought to be mentioned that the use of specific modal verbs manages to exacerbate this effect. This group of modals, called "of 'obligation' and 'logical necessity'" by Quirk *et al*. (1985, p. 142), includes verbs such as *must* and *should*, both of which appear a number of times—especially *must*, which is quite frequent. This can be seen in examples (10) and (11), which have been shown beforehand:

> (10) Everyone needs to know that we <u>must</u> average less than 2 babies world wide [sic]
>
> until we no longer require the use of non-renewables to keep our numbers alive. (Taves,
>
> 2015)

(11) Everyone needs to know that to average less than 2 babies you <u>must</u> not have more than 1. You <u>must</u> not have a baby if that would give your parents more than 3 grandchildren. You <u>must</u> not have a baby if that would give your grandparents more than 7 grandchildren. (Taves, 2015)

This force on the utterances causes the authors to sound not only assertive and/or sure of the outcomes as in the example (11), but also creates a somewhat forceful tone. This means that the authors try to express that the point(s) they are trying to make is/are the only one(s) valid, as they leave little to no space for any other viewpoint with the assertiveness expressed by these modal verbs. This claiming of authority through obligation verbs (as explained in the previous section) causes their ideas to be able to reach and convince the target audience with far more ease, managing to create little doubt in the readers' minds.

Even though Fairclough (2006) conceives a varied number of utterances that fit into this heading such as promises, requests and the like, it is these more self-assured ones that pervade most often. Nonetheless, one may understand that the constant use of insults and other crasser words also manage to feed into the text's force.

(12) "Where is most excess population coming from?" - This is a <u>nonsense</u> question. (Taves, 2015)

(13) People need to stop acting like she's [Nature] an omnipotent being who speaks to us, because it just makes humanity sound like <u>ignorant morons who can't grasp basic science</u>. (Waring, 2020)

(14) "Ecofascism" is just a <u>cheap and stupid accusation</u> to prevent honest discussion about Overpopulation and its role in collapse (u/Tiredworker27, 2022)

As can be seen in these three examples ((12), (13) and (14)), the direct use of more vulgar words and expressions builds up the force of the utterances, and the negative connotation of them along with the wording utilised by the authors provokes a deeper negative sensation in the

readership. It is obvious how this also separates the people against their thoughts, who are seen as lower and/or slower-minded, and the likeminded individuals who support them.

The use of sarcasm such as in this example (9) aims to create multiple sensations in the reader.

(9) Wow, this is shocking! The number of diverse wild mammals changed quickly & dramatically with the arrival of humans. Since then, wild land mammal biomass has declined by ~85%. Humans & livestock are now the dominant mammals, a major factor in the biodiversity and climate crisis. (@WilliamJRipple, 2023)

Firstly, it tries to create an atmosphere of intellectual superiority for himself and for his like-minded followers or Twitter users; secondly, it attempts to belittle those who disagree with him, as he presents evidence that supports his views. This, therefore, has two effects: on the one hand, the writer and his fellow Twitter users are intellectually elevated, being seen as mentally adept enough to be able to use sarcasm and other complex discursive traits. On the other hand, this sarcastic statement attempts to belittle the reader's intellect, thus reinforcing the already-explained "us-versus-them" point of view.

According to Fairclough (2006), another intra-textual focal point to study apart from the force is coherence within the text. The most obvious sign of it is the proper use of connectors; however, ecofascists and their endorsers do not seem to use too many of them, as they are rather scarce. In the table below, marked as Table 2, one may observe most of the ones that appear in the texts.

Connectors Considered for this study
Actually
Also
And
But

Even though
However
In addition

Table 2. List of some of the connectors studied in the texts.[2]

The explanation for the scarcity of connectors may lie in the fact that, as already mentioned, due to the conversational tone these authors have when writing, they are more direct and less focused on linking ideas. Moreover, the prevalence of the aforementioned short sentences in this style does not fathom the use of too many connectors. Additionally, they may believe that this intensifies their assertiveness as if every sentence possesses important pieces of information.

What the posts and tweets lack in connectors is compensated with ample use of deixis throughout the texts, as can be seen in examples (16) and (17). This ensures that the ideas remain connected while maintaining the assertiveness and almost forcefulness characteristic of the texts.

(16) To get that education started, our population scientists need to comprehend this. (Taves, 2015)

(17) The of ignorance humanity towards the overpopulation situation is comparable to the ignorance of the bacteria in their petri dish. (Waring 2020)

Once all the texts have been read, one may see that there are barely any temporal deictic elements. This is due to the abstractness of the topics they cover, which leaves most deixis to be either spatial—only when referring to ideas—, such as in example (16), or personal, such as in (17).

---

[2] See Biber (1999) 10.2.8.9 and 10.4.3 to see references to these linking words.

Finally, intertextuality is present in some form or another in every text. There are two main forms of it, which I have decided to name "primary" and "secondary intertextuality." On the one hand, primary intertextuality refers to that in which a text directly responds to another—be it in a tweet answer, giving answer to a question posted on Quora, or simply commenting on a post directly. On the other hand, secondary intertextuality indicates that which makes reference to a specific part in a wider topic—this is especially true for Reddit. For instance, participating in with ecofascist rhetoric in a specific subreddit, such as *r/overpopulation*, would be secondary intertextuality. This will all be we further explained down below.

This primary intertextuality can be seen in a variety of texts (examples (18) to (20)), most of which are connected by the same idea:

(18) Are there too many people on Earth?

[…] I know I'm coming off as a dick, but it's plain science. There are too many of us, and there needs to be fewer. A nice zombie apocalypse or a plague that kills billions would actually be a windfall for the human race, and the planet in general. Unfortunately, it's pretty obvious that we would not learn, and we would simply indulge in sloth and gluttony and lust and ruin everything anew. […] (Waring, 2020)

(19) Are there too many people in the world?

We would be better off without 99.9% of the world population. (Anonymous, 2017)

(20) Are there too many people on Earth?

We require the use of non-renewables to keep the current 7.2 b humans alive. This proves that there are too many people. (Taves, 2015)

In these textual examples, all three individuals participate in a common conversation without allegedly knowing each other or the poster of the query. This format of post, in which the question posted is the centre of it and the answers exist around it, allows for the internet user to navigate through the answers freely, therefore possibly finding one that allures them more than

the previous one. What is interesting is that the webpage already recommends similar questions to the one the reader is seeing (see example (19)), and this can be seen in part of the omitted text in example (18):

(21) Are there too many people on Earth?

 […]

Related

Are there too many humans on Earth? If so, should we do something?

 In this example (21), as well as the previous ones, one may see the importance of hyperlinks to refer to other parts of the website, thus creating some sort of hyperconnected mycorrhizal network. In this manner, the reader is encouraged to participate actively in the discussion, putting forth their own opinions, or passively, reading related post after related post.

Conversely, the previously-mentioned secondary intertextuality, that in which a text participates in a wider topic—a Twitter thread or a subreddit, for instance—appears in the rest of the texts not yet mentioned in this subsection. The function it serves, however, is quite similar to that primary intertextuality, although the resulting network is not as teeming and interconnected as the other one.

(22) r/collapse

u/Tiredworker27

"Ecofascism" is just a cheap and stupid accusation to prevent honest discussion about Overpopulation and its role in collapse

(23) r/antinatalism2

u/covidovid

Birth is a bigger tragedy than death

(24) r/unpopularopinion

u/Rkcart007

native inuits [*sic*] should not be allowed to hunt endangered animals

(25) Dr Jordan B Peterson

@jordanbpeterson

"Indigenous" communities wiped out most large mammals in the western hemisphere within a few thousand years after crossing the Bering land bridge. And the earth is not your mother.

(26) Dr. William J. Ripple

@WilliamJRipple

Wow, this is shocking! The number of diverse wild mammals changed quickly & dramatically with the arrival of humans. Since then, wild land mammal biomass has declined by ~85%. Humans & livestock are now the dominant mammals, a major factor in the biodiversity and climate crisis.

In these five examples ((22)-(26)), an important notice should be taken, and that is that they come from different websites with different formatting and ways of functioning.

Intertextuality in Twitter, from where example (25) and example (26) were taken, favours users (*@username*) over any other form; this is why both hyperlinks that appear in the tweet go back to the users' profiles. Nevertheless, there is an option on the platform to respond to tweets and to add articles, photographs and other outside sources, which is quite interesting from an intertextuality point of view. However, none of the texts selected for this dissertation had these characteristics, as the ones that possessed them did not meet the criteria to be included in the corpus. Contrarywise, Reddit does offer a bit more liberty when navigating it from a single post, as, as can be seen from examples (22), (23) and (24), one may access the Subreddit (*r/subreddit*) in which the text has been published, as well as the poster's profile (*u/username*). Different answers and opinions from other redditors can also be seen below the original post, creating a intriguing web of opinions. Figures 2 and 3 below show an example:
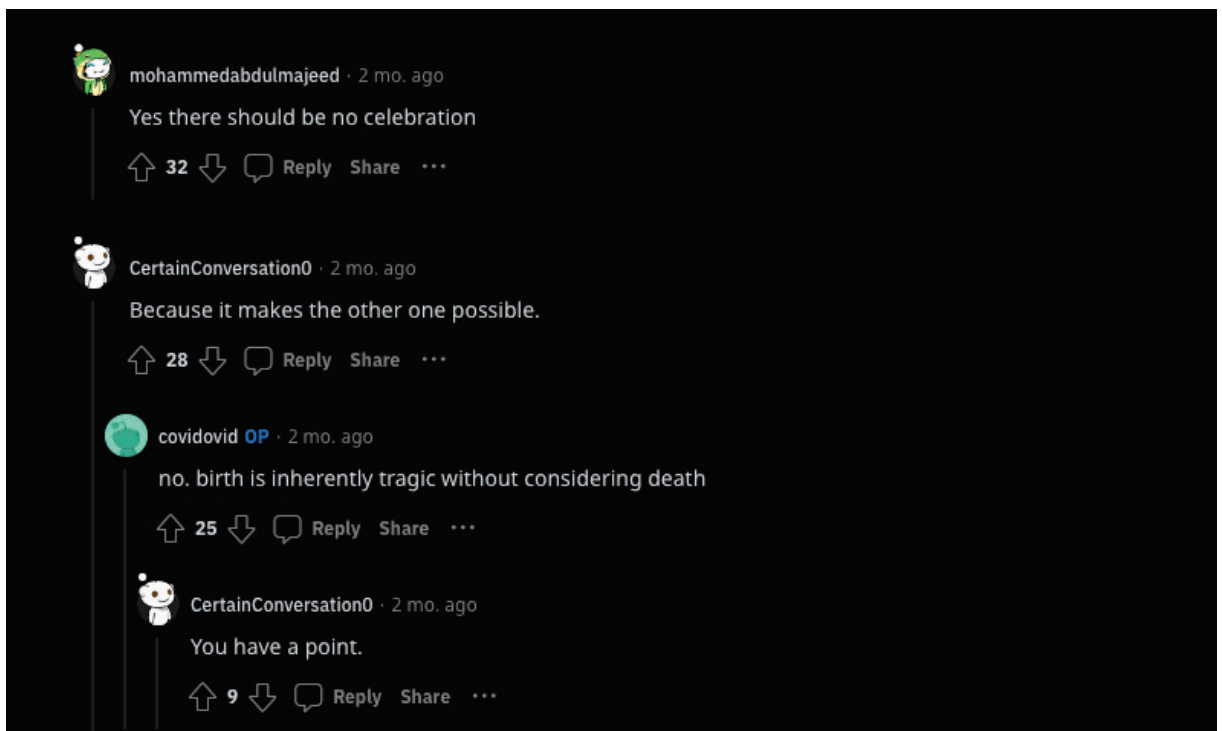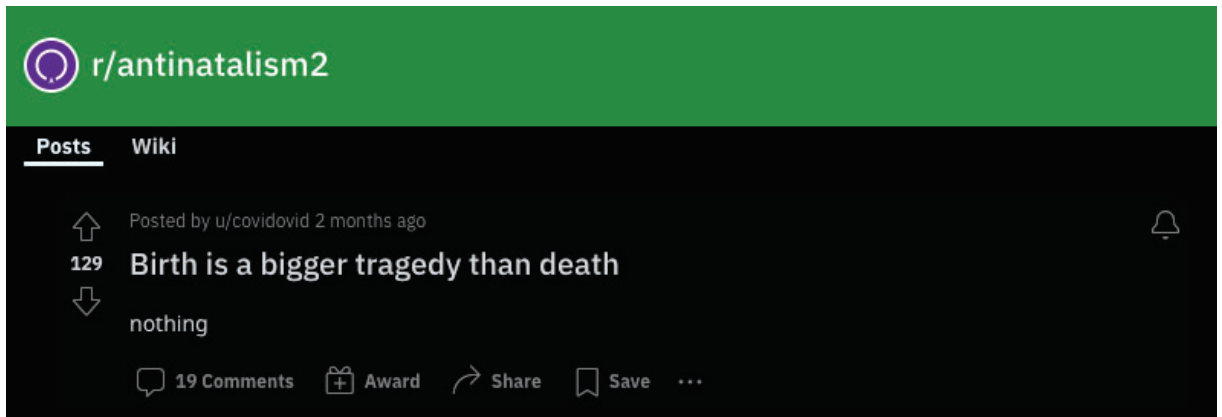
Figures 2 and 3. Reddit thread on the r/antinatalism2 subforum.

As can be observed, the Reddit thread, as happens in other internet platforms such as Tumblr, the users who keep responding to each other are organised in a stair- or step-like manner, which is a very visual form of seeing who is responding to whom and to see the interactions among users regarding a particular topic. Also, in this website, the author of the thread is signalled by two blue letters: OP (Original Poster).

In the final section I will dive into the macro-dimension, which encompasses the two previous ones as well, so references to them will also appear.

3.3 — Social Dimension

The final dimension proposed by Fairclough (2006), the social macro-level, has already been described as focusing on power—more specifically on both hegemony and ideology. The societal currents that influence the viewpoints of the people who possess these streams of thought can be observed in the texts through the linguistic and discursive levels. To explore the different aspects of these two concepts, this third subsection will include other definitions and also expose new ideas, external and personal.

Once again following Fairclough's subdivisions (2006), hegemony consists of "constructing alliances, and integrating rather than simply dominating" (p. 92). In the particular context of this dissertation, this entails the almost propagandistic attempts to connect with the readership, mainly by tapping into their anger and fear. Ideology has also been said to directly affect reality, which makes it be interlocked with discursive practices, thus constantly changing both. It is important to remember Fairclough's words when he explains that "[t]he ideologies embedded in discursive practices are most effective when they become naturalized, and achieve the status of 'common sense'" (2006, p. 87). In relation to this idea lies what is often called *language ideologies*, *linguistic ideologies* or *ideologies of language*, defined by Woolard as to how they focus on language itself without being so "encoded *in* or *through* language" (2020, p. 1). Related to this, Irvine explains in her article that linguistic ideologies are both politically and morally charged representations of the structure, nature and utilisation of languages in societies (1989).

Bearing all this in mind, the origins of ecofascist discourse should be explored. This genesis is not as clear as pinpointing a manifesto as the beginning or one single individual as its originator. Rather than this, the beginning of this seems to be a plurality of sources and personages that have been interacting with each other and creating their own narratives. Political leaders and even some scientific experts are the ones who generate this more ecofascist

speech, born from fascism and supremacy mixed with a worry—or alleged preoccupation—for the wellbeing of our planet. From this, regular individuals are the ones who magnify and multiply this (both) misinformation *and* disinformation through their discourse, as this dissertation has explored.

> (25) Dr Jordan B Peterson
>
> @jordanbpeterson
>
> "Indigenous" communities wiped out most large mammals in the western hemisphere within a few thousand years after crossing the Bering land bridge. And the earth is not your mother.

In example (25), already introduced in the previous section, one may see Jordan B Peterson, famous psychologist, author and internet personality (jordanpeterson.com), blaming Indigenous Americans for the extinction of dozens of species. Even if Peterson has not created ecofascism, he is clearly one of its loudest voices There are two interesting ecofascist points in this tweet: putting the blame on indigenous peoples for catastrophic events, and separating humanity from Nature ("the earth is not your mother" (@jordanbpeterson)).

This first point is clearly rooted in racism, which is defined by *Britannica* as "the belief […] that there is a causal link between inherited physical traits and traits of personality, intellect, morality, and other cultural and behavioral features; and that some races are innately superior to others" (Smedley, 2023). It is this last point, along with the alleged difference in intellect and morality, that Peterson, as many other users of ecofascist language, consciously or subconsciously support. This topic will be important further down the dissertation.

The second argument, the separation of the continuum human-Nature also appears in other texts, as it has become prevalent in ecofascist discourse.

> (27) First off "Mother Nature" is a figurative concept. "She" is not a conscious entity, sending us warnings. People need to stop acting like she's an omnipotent being who

speaks to us, because it just makes humanity sound like ignorant morons who can't grasp basic science. (Waring, 2020)

The humanisation of Nature is a common device to help people feel more connected and closer to it, but individuals with power like Peterson manage to convince people like Waring to keep spreading their discourse, repeating the "us-versus-them" discourse that has already appeared multiple times. The comparison of example (25) with example (27) makes this influence these personages make over laypeople, and like this there is a myriad of others.

However, the scope of this goes beyond smaller celebrities with an online presence—such as Peterson—since politicians have also been known to affect the public in these manners. Such is the case of Vilhelm Junnila, former Minister of Economic Affairs from Finland, who is known to be extremely far-right in his politics and has been accused of being a neo-Nazi. He was made to resign from his post in the Finish government after claiming that the best solution against climate change was to force African people to go through "climate abortions" to reduce their population (Mac Dougall, 2023). He is another example of fascist views hidden behind worries about climate, especially using the pretext of a supposed overpopulation for this. The global South—especially places such as Africa and South Asia—has often been the focus of this discourse, linking also racism to climate, as it is people with darker complexions as the ones seen as the problem, instead of other issues such as overconsumption of the global North. Because of the prevalence of these kinds of conversations among the elites, it is to be assumed that people who speak of overpopulation, as seen in one way or another in examples (6), (7), (8), (14) and (22), hence often think of ethnic minorities. This blatant promotion of ethnic cleansing is also clearly linked to fascism and thus can be seen how it affects this concept of ecofascism.

It is unclear, however, how much of this discourse developed by mainstream relevant individuals such as Junnila and internet microcelebrities such as Peterson is *dis*information or

*mis*information. That is, the limits of how intentional their conversations are, how much they believe in them, are blurred. While some parts of their speeches and some posts on the internet have later been acknowledged as false and promptly removed, it is the frequency of these incidents what one must also bear in mind. Also, the intention loses importance once it is seen that a person of status—be it an online philosopher or a politician—has true power and responsibility over their words. It is the same case as being distracted by something genuine or being under the influence when driving being used as a defence for reckless driving; the driver would need to be responsible with how they drive, and so should influential people be responsible with how they use their voices.

One last point that should be mentioned is how these text *on* ecofascism have propelled the creation of texts *about* it (i.e., ecofascist discourse has created the need for discourse regarding it, mostly the issues it brings). When reading these texts, discerning between the two types may be difficult at first, at least for some of them, but the distinction between them becomes clearer as times goes on. A great example of this is Tom Dispatch's *Not a Green Bone in Their White Bodies: How Ecofascists Are Fueling Racism and Deadly Violence* (2023). Dispatch's text is born from a worry of how racism hides behind worries about the climate to attack racial minorities and people below the Brandt Line. The author perfectly words this when he says the following:

> (28) The pervasive theme in such circles is that, in an already overpopulated America, more millions of dark-skinned immigrants, having supposedly wreaked ecological destruction in their own countries in the Global South, are now crossing our borders in ever larger numbers. They will, so the thinking goes, despoil this country's environment, too—and the way to stop them is by using ever more violent means. (Dispatch, 2023)

This clearly shows an anti-ecofascist idea, born as a response to the ever-growing prevalence of ecofascism, as activists unite and try to convince others and show other people what

ecofascism truly is—since, as already discussed, it is not always as obvious as it has been shown in some of these examples.

These violent tendencies within ecofascism have been observed also on the other side of this—that is, on ecologists. John Vidal, in his 2020 article entitled "Armed Ecoguards Funded by WWF 'Beat up Congo Tribespeople" is an exemplary read of this. It also showcases the pervasiveness of the idea that Western methods (in this case, of climate change control) will always be superior to those employed in the global South. However, it is the fact that supposed allies to the environment are also aiding ecofascism in its expansion that creates a whole scale of greys that may sometimes make the distinction of a text as ecofascist or not more difficult.

(29) "Baka men find they can no longer go into the forest to obtain honey. They fear that they are no longer able to trap small animals without running the risk of being severely punished by the ecoguards. There are numerous reports of Baka caught in the forest being beaten." […] The investigators also identified multiple failures of the UNDP to adhere to human rights policies and standards, and said little consideration had been given to the impact of the project on the Baka peoples. […] Not only were communities given little information that their customary land was to be turned into a protected area, but funders had assumed that the conservation project would bring environmental and social benefits, says the report. Investigators also said they found no evidence that the UNDP had taken into account the risk of co-financing the project with palm oil and logging companies whose work by its nature threatens large-scale biodiversity loss. (Vidal, 2020)

Vidal here exposes in example (29) how some ecologist groups avertedly or invertedly propagate violence and ecofascism by excusing abuses of indigenous peoples in their rightful land, implying that they are more knowledgeable on its maintenance, but also by lobbying

companies whose job is to destroy parts of the environment, with little to no regard as to who occupies the land.

To summarise these final ideas, the social dimension is the last layer that wraps around the other two levels, and, in what concerns this dissertation, it focuses on how fascism affects it, and how it all comes back to violence, racism and the intentions behind the discourse. Ecofascists, whether they know they are or not, have certain views and therefore their discourse affected by them, which is consequently reflected in their speech.

4 — Final Remarks

In this dissertation, I have tried to analyse the specific language used by ecofascist and their followers to see how they utilise discourse, including linguistic phenomena, intra- and intertextuality to convey their beliefs to their like-minded readers. To do this, I approached the internet posts following CDA, that is, focusing on the socio-ideological context, key concepts, and the particular beliefs of individuals. I was more precise in my approach by including Fairclough's methodology, which divides discourse and its analysis into three levels: the textual dimension, the discursive one and the social one.

After performing a close reading, I decided that adding quantitative data to my qualitative research would greatly benefit my dissertation, especially comparing my small corpus to two of the main ones used in research today, the COCA and the BNC. Hereafter, I extracted those terms and constructions I considered more relevant for my analysis and concentrated on words with full meaning, such as *overpopulated* or *breed*, but also on grammatical entities apparently innocent words such as personal pronouns.

There have been two main problems that I approached while creating this dissertation, however: attempting to classify texts with the adequate topic and having to read the texts themselves, as explained below. The issue with the classification of texts lay generally on having to discern whether a post was *on* ecofascism or *about* it, that is, whether the discourse that they participate in is regarding ecofascism itself—whether it *is* ecofascist—or whether it merely talks about it. The distinction between these two may seem non-existent at first, or at least to someone who has not had contact with these types of posts, but, once an amount of them has been read, the scale of greys between texts *on* or *about* ecofascism becomes clearer. When it comes to the problem with needing to read the posts themselves, it lies on the fact that most of them possess rather ludicrous ideas and concepts that contradict the author of this

dissertation's personal views. Because of this, multiple breaks had to be taken both during the close-reading phase and during the analysis and writing stage.

My analysis seems to confirm, nonetheless, that language is a powerful weapon, both due to what it expresses overtly and to what is silenced. In this sense, CDA and, more concretely, Fairclough's input, along with corpus linguistics, have proved to be an adequate approach for this study of its inextricable connection with reality.

The structures analysed were used with the intention to convince and provide an interpretation of reality at the service of these people's beliefs and ideologies. The tripartite analysis that Fairclough proposed and that I adopted for my research has proven to provide a more profound and diverse study. The more evident social and ideological focus it has helped create has been able to construct a well-rounded dissertation that expands from merely linguistic phenomena and shows how language is used in niche socio-cultural contexts to expand to wider environments.

References

Anonymous (2017). Answer to *Are There too Many People in the World?* Quora. Retrieved 10 May 2023, from https://www.quora.com/Are-there-too-many-people-in-the-world/answers/28385742?no_redirect=1.

Baker, P., (2010). *Sociolinguistics and Corpus Linguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Baker, P. and Ellece, S. (2011). *Key Terms in Discourse Analysis*. Continuum.

Biber, D., et al. (1999). *Longman Grammar Of Spoken And Written English*. Longman.

Bron, R.T. (2008). *Enciclopedia of Religion and Nature*. Continuum.

Davies, M. (2004) *British National Corpus* (from Oxford University Press). Available online at https://www.english-corpora.org/bnc/.

————. (2008-) *The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*. Available online at https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/.

Dictionary.com. (n.d.). Ecofascism. In *Dictionary.com*. Retrieved 10 March 2023, from https://www.dictionary.com/browse/ecofascism.

Dispatch, T. (2023). "Not a Green Bone in their White Bodies: How Ecofascists Are Fueling Racism and Deadly Violence". *Portside: Material of Interest to People on the Left*. Retrieved 16 March 2023, from https://portside.org/2023-04-26/not-green-bone-their-white-bodies.

Fairclough, N., 2006. *Discourse and Social Change*. Polity Press.

————, 2010. *Critical Discourse Analysis. The Critical Study of Language*. Routledge.

Foucault, M., 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*. Pantheon Books.

Gee, J. P., 1989. *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*. Routledge.

Gentile, E. (2002). *Fascismo: Storia e interpretazione* (translation by me). Editori Laterza.

Hodges, B., Kuper, A. and Reeves, S., 2008. Discourse analysis. *BMJ*, 337(August), 570–572. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.a879.

I Shat a Pecker [u/isthatapecker] (2021). *Is It Just Me or Does Anybody Else Fear that We're at War with All the Careless Breeders?* [r/overpopulation]. Reddit. Retrieved 4 May 2023, from https://www.reddit.com/r/overpopulation/comments/o7cck6/is_it_just_me_or_does_anybody_else_fear_that_were/.

Irvine, J.T. (1989). "When Talk Isn't Cheap: Language and Political Economy." *American Ethnologist* 16 (2): 248–267. https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1989.16.2.02a00040.

Lees, N. (2021). The Brandt Line after forty years: The more North-South relations change, the more they stay the same? *Reviews of International Studies*, 47(1), 85-106. doi:10.1017/S02602105000039X.

Mac Dougall, D. (2023). *Embattled Finland Minister Quits Amid New 'Mass Abortions for Africa' Scandal*. Euronews. Retrieved 2 May 2023, from https://www.euronews.com/2023/06/30/embattled-finland-minister-quits-amid-mass-africa-abortions-scandal?utm_source=flipboard&utm_content=user%2Feuronews.

McEnery, T. and Wilson, A. (1996). *Corpus Linguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Moore, S. and Roberts, A. (2022). *The Rise of Ecofascism: Climate Change and the Far Right*. Polity Press.

Ortega y Gasset, J. (1927). "Sobre el fascismo," in *Fascism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford.

Passmore, K. (2002). "'A and not A': what is fascism?", *Fascism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford.

Paxton, R.O. (2004). *The Anatomy of Fascism*. Alfred A. Knopf.

Peterson, J.B. [@jordanbpeterson] (22 April 2023). *"Indigenous" Communities Wiped out most Large Mammals.* [Tweet]. Twitter. Retrieved 2 May 2023, from https://twitter.com/jordanbpeterson/status/1649836392212578304.

——— (n.d.) About Jordan Peterson. *Jordan B. Peterson.* Retrieved 7 April 2023, from https://www.jordanbpeterson.com/about/.

Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., and Svartvik, J. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. Longman Press.

Ripple, W.J. [@WilliamJRipple] (17 April 2023). *Wow, This Is Shocking!* [Tweet]. Twitter. Retrieved 2 May 2023, from https://twitter.com/WilliamJRipple/status/1648368465856843776.

Rkcart [u/Rkcart007] (24 July 2021). *Native Inuits [*sic*] Should Not Be Allowed to Hunt Endangered Animals.* [r/unpopularopinion]. Reddit. Retrieved 14 March 2023, from https://www.reddit.com/r/unpopularopinion/comments/oqf53s/native_inuits_should_not_be_allowed_to_hunt/.

Royal Geographical Society (n.d.) *A 60 Second Guide to… The North/South Divide*. RGS.

Skalicky, S. and Crossley, S.A. (2018). "Linguistic Features of Sarcasm and Metaphor Quality". *Proceedings of the Workshop on Figurative Language Processing*. Association for Computational Linguistics.

Smedley, A. (2023, July 5). racism. Encyclopedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/topic/racism.

Soucy, R. (2023, April 28). *Fascism*. *Encyclopedia Britannica.* Retrieved 10 March 2023, from https://www.britannica.com/topic/fascism.

Taves, J. [John Taves] (2015). Answer to *Are There Too Many People on Earth*? Quora. Retrieved 6 May 2023, from https://www.quora.com/Are-there-too-many-people-on-Earth/answer/John-Taves.

Tired Worker [u/Tiredworker27] (8 August 2022). *"Ecofascism" Is Just a Cheap and Stupid Accusation to Prevent Honest Discussion about Overpopulation and Its Role in Collapse* [r/collapse] Reddit. Retrieved 5 May 2023, from https://www.reddit.com/r/collapse/comments/wj5lcv/ecofascism_is_just_a_cheap_and_stupid_accusation/.

Vidal, J. (2020). "Armed Ecoguards Funded by WWF 'Beat up Congo Tribespeople". *The Guardian.* Retrieved 12 March 2023, from https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/feb/07/armed-ecoguards-funded-by-wwf-beat-up-congo-tribespeople.

Waring, M. [Meg Waring] (2020). Answer to *Are There Too Many People on Earth*? Quora. Retrieved 6 May 2023, from https://www.quora.com/Are-there-too-many-humans-on-Earth-If-so-should-we-do-something.

Woolard, K.A. (2020). Language Ideology. *The International Encyclopedia of Linguistic Anthropology*, pp. 1–21. Doi: 10.1002/9781118786093.iela0217.

Zimmerman, M.E. (2004). "Ecofascism: An Enduring Temptation". In Zimmerman, M.E.; Callicott, J.B.; Clark, J.; Warren, K.J.; Klaver, I.J. (eds.) *Environmental Philosophy, from Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*. Prentice Hall.