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Editorial

Daniela Francesca Virdis*

Ecstylistics: Texts, methodologies and approaches

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This Special Issue of the *Journal of World Languages* has the specific aim and objective to further the state of research in the cutting-edge field of ecostylistics. More precisely, this Special Issue features research contributions by scholars whose work falls within the aims and scope of stylistics, and who apply the theoretical framework of this discipline and its diverse methodologies to the examination of several literary and non-literary texts with ecological and environmental concerns.

The first scholar to have deployed the term “ecostylistics” and to have promoted an ecological turn in stylistic practice was the ecolinguist and stylistician Andrew Goatly. At the 30th International Conference of the Poetics and Linguistics Association (PALA), “2010 PALA Conference: The Language of Landscapes”, held in Genoa, Italy, in July 2010, he delivered a plenary speech titled “Edward Thomas, the Landscape of Nature, and Ecostylistics”; a written version of it subsequently appeared as Goatly (2017). The research question of his spoken and written contributions was whether ecological criticism and the philosophy of Romantic Ecology as studied by Jonathan Bate (1991) could be expanded so as to become more linguistic in nature and focus, namely whether ecological criticism and Romantic Ecology could move towards an ecostylistics. In the concluding paragraph of his written contribution, Goatly (2017: 121) states: “the concept of this relatively new discipline [ecostylistics] can be extended further both in analysis of poetry, novels [...] and other media”.

Since Andrew Goatly’s plenary speech at the 2010 PALA Conference, the area of ecostylistics has indeed been extended further in the investigation of literary and non-literary media and text types. Scholarly interest in ecostylistic perspectives on text and discourse has been rising internationally, and ecostylistics is growing into a recognized field in its own right. In new conference presentations and academic publications, depictions of natural scenery and discourses about the environment

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are more and more often being scrutinized by adopting stylistic paradigms and methods, rather than ecolinguistic, ecocritical, or discourse analytical theories and approaches. Scholars engaging and advancing research in ecostylistics work at various institutions around the world; the authors most actively involved in the field are members of or collaborate with LAND-SIG,¹ a PALA Special Interest Group on the stylistics of landscape, place and environment coordinated by Ernestine Lahey (University College Roosevelt), Daniela Francesca Virdis (University of Cagliari), and Elisabetta Zurru (University of Genoa) (for a more detailed overview of ecostylistics, see Virdis 2022: Section 2.3).

Moving from this background, this Special Issue on ecostylistics includes contributions complying with methodologies and approaches which are purely stylistic and, as such, different from those employed in, for instance, ecolinguistics, ecocriticism, or discourse analysis. A number of these methodologies and approaches have traditions of their own which are not necessarily stylistic; nevertheless, they have long been utilized in stylistic analysis, as recent work in the area has clearly shown and confirmed (among other examples, see the articles collected in Burke 2014; Sotirova 2016; Stockwell and Whiteley 2014). These methodologies and approaches are as varied as Systemic Functional Grammar, figuration and tropology, opposition, Text World Theory, conceptual metaphor theory, conceptual blending theory, frame semantics, and cognitive grammar. Equally varied are the text types under investigation in the Special Issue contributions: poems, novels, website posts and Facebook posts, non-fictional prose, the Bible, and travel writing. These contributions share an overall research purpose: to prove that stylistics can fruitfully be adopted to study literary and non-literary texts celebrating nature, the environment and the ecological and emotional interconnectedness of all human animal, non-human animal, and vegetable species on the planet.

The Special Issue is fully relevant to the fields and topics that the *Journal of World Languages* gives special attention to. Firstly, the Special Issue and its contributions all focus on ecological and environmental questions of current interest, as required by this type of academic publication. Secondly, the Special Issue is devoted to ecostylistics, which is one of the neighboring disciplines of ecolinguistics in its Hallidayan Tradition (Fill 2018: 4–5). Thirdly, the Special Issue covers several areas which have been adopted and adapted within the interdisciplinary field of stylistics, such as Systemic Functional Grammar, cognitive linguistics, and the relations between language, ecology (in its literal meaning), and (an unecological) society.

The features and contents of the Special Issue as outlined above are its main strengths; that is to say, a variety of stylistic methodologies is applied to a variety of texts with ecological and environmental priorities. This is undertaken in order to

1 <https://www.pala.ac.uk/land-sig.html> (accessed 10 December 2022).

advance research in the area of ecostylistics moving from the results achieved in, for example, Douthwaite et al. (2017), Viridis (2022), and Viridis et al. (2021). A number of these methodologies (e.g. opposition) and a number of these text types (e.g. travel writing) are deployed in ecostylistics and scrutinized from this disciplinary perspective for the first time.

Another main strength of the Special Issue is the strong coherence between its contributions. From a methodological viewpoint, all of them are entirely composed of or feature major sections which are cognitive in nature. To name just the seemingly least obvious contributions, Andrew Goatly's article places ecostylistics within a cognitive linguistic framework; Elżbieta Chrzanowska-Kluczevska's approach to figuration and tropology is cognitive at its core; Daniela Francesca Viridis' contribution defines and identifies canonical conceptual oppositions. Furthermore, Andrew Goatly's, Salvador Alarcón-Hermosilla's, and Maria-Eirini Panagiotidou's articles comply with diverse aspects of cognitive linguistics and cognitive grammar; Elżbieta Chrzanowska-Kluczevska's and Daniela Francesca Viridis' contributions deploy different theoretical and analytical approaches to antithesis and opposition; both Esterino Adami and Karolien Vermeulen utilize Text World Theory; figuration and tropology in general and conceptual metaphor theory in particular are explored and adopted by Elżbieta Chrzanowska-Kluczevska, Karolien Vermeulen, and Salvador Alarcón-Hermosilla. From a text type viewpoint, Andrew Goatly's, Karolien Vermeulen's, and Maria-Eirini Panagiotidou's contributions analyze poetry; Andrew Goatly, Elżbieta Chrzanowska-Kluczevska, and Esterino Adami examine fictional prose; non-fictional texts and materials are studied in Daniela Francesca Viridis' and Salvador Alarcón-Hermosilla's articles and in part of Esterino Adami's. Therefore, as emerges from the brief introduction to the seven contributions below, all of them are neatly linked to the Special Issue theme and specific aim in their stylistic theoretical and analytical orientations, in the ecologically- and environmentally-oriented data they investigate, and in the methodologies they employ.

The Special Issue opens with Andrew Goatly's article "Five Themes for Ecostylistics". This is a programmatic contribution providing a comprehensive and elaborate description of five themes for the field of ecostylistics from several theoretical perspectives and analytical approaches. The overall framework integrating these various perspectives and approaches is the theory of the two dimensions of meaning, namely similarity/paradigm/metaphor versus contiguity/syntagm/metonymy, in relation to Wernicke's area and Broca's area respectively, which are the two areas of the brain primarily responsible for language processing (Jakobson 1987). Modern culture tends to overemphasize Wernicke's area's similarity dimension over Broca's area's contiguity dimension; therefore, Goatly proposes that ecostylistics oppose this tendency by examining and celebrating the main topics and stylistic

patterns characterizing a number of representative poems and novels, i.e. texts by Gerard Manley Hopkins, Edward Thomas, Alice Oswald, and William Golding. In his detailed study, the author utilizes the systemic functional model of transitivity analysis (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004) and forges links to quantum physics, Daoism, and other process philosophies, in order to explain these topics and patterns and how the ecological value system they convey can contribute to preventing a long-term environmental crisis.

The contribution “Lost Landscapes of Childhood: An Ecostylistic Analysis of *The Issa Valley*”, by Elżbieta Chrzanowska-Kluczevska, investigates Czesław Miłosz’s text as an existential treatise and an ecological novel. It depicts a Polish gentry boy’s early years and adolescence in the eponymous Issa Valley in Lithuania, thereby paying tribute to both childhood memories and Lithuanian nature. Chrzanowska-Kluczevska scrutinizes the English translation of the text by adapting Leech and Short’s (2007) taxonomy of stylistic features to be explored in fiction, like context, lexicon, syntax, and figuration. Moreover, the author complies with the analytical methodology she developed (Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2013) to thoroughly examine figuration and its function in portraying the Issa natural scenery. Her ecostylistic study demonstrates the following points: (1) Master tropes (simile, metaphor, synecdoche, irony, and antithesis) work at three different textual levels (micro-, macro-, and megatropical); (2) The master trope of antithesis is the prevailing stylistic characteristic making the text an example of what the author defines as “existential ecology”; (3) The primary role of figuration in the text is to relay the young protagonist’s profoundly physical experience of the natural world.

In her article “Opposition in Ecological Discourse: An Ecostylistic Scrutiny of SpeakGreen Ecological Posts”, Daniela Francesca Virdis also investigates antithesis in text and discourse, but from another theoretical and analytical standpoint. Her contribution examines the ecological priorities in a sample of posts appearing on the website and Facebook page of the community organization speakGreen. Virdis’ ecostylistic investigation adheres to Jeffries’ (2010) stylistic model of opposition; via a close systematic reading and interpretation of the text of each post, the author pinpoints the stylistic devices championing beneficial stories and those resisting destructive stories (Stibbe 2021). Her investigation proves that: (1) Conventional opposites are less fruitful in communicating beneficial stories than unconventional opposites, which are textually-generated and based on canonical conceptual oppositions; this is due to the predictable contrasts expressed by the former and the surprising antitheses signaled by the latter; (2) The environmentally-concerned text type of the speakGreen post can effectively be studied through the stylistic model of opposition. As a result, the article could contribute to our knowledge of the way unconventional opposites are employed for rhetorical and ideological purposes.

Esterino Adami, in his contribution “PLACE IS TEXT: Representing the Architecture of Landscape, the Human and Non-human in Arundhati Roy’s Prose”, undertakes a careful and in-depth scrutiny of the writer and activist Arundhati Roy’s use and construction of place in her literary and non-literary prose, especially in her novels *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Place is meant and stylistically built both literally and figuratively, as a metaphor for Roy’s political, social, and ecological message. Inspired by ecocriticism (Garrard 2004), this ecostylistic analysis is conducted by means of Text World Theory (Gavins 2007); Adami also examines the practices of point of view, figurative language, and defamiliarization. His key research purpose is to study the text-worlds revolving around the physical environment and how language indexes social and political issues of precarity. The conceptualization of place as text emerging from this investigation highlights the diverse and dynamic character not only of the Indian city of Delhi, but of the entire Indian subcontinent, and emphasizes how its environmental, geographical, cultural, human, and more-than-human components interact in a broader biosphere.

The article “Growing the Green City: A Cognitive Ecostylistic Analysis of Third Isaiah’s Jerusalem (Isaiah 55–66)”, by Karolien Vermeulen, also applies Text World Theory. In this case, the author scrutinizes a text from the Hebrew Bible by describing how different text-worlds are created and contrasted. Text World Theory is complemented by conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff and Johnson 2003) and conceptual blending theory (Fauconnier and Turner 2002). This cognitive approach is combined with the ecostylistic interest in the linguistic techniques deployed to depict the green city of Jerusalem. This methodological combination works effectively to examine how city and nature are conceptualized in the text, as well as the stylistic and cognitive mechanisms utilized to represent them. A new text-world is created by urban and natural world-builders which, employed together, portray an apparently inconsistent space blending utopian and real traits. The thorough study carried out by Vermeulen yields a new reading of the text, distinct from those offered by mainstream biblical and eschatological scholarship. In addition, this interpretation encourages contemporary readers to reappraise biblical Jerusalem in particular, and urban spaces and their connections with nature in general.

In his contribution “Ambience and Nature in Travel Writing: An Ecostylistic Study of *The Old Patagonian Express* and *Eastward to Tartary*”, Salvador Alarcón-Hermosilla also utilizes conceptual metaphor theory as a theoretical and analytical framework (Kövecses 2002), combined with frame semantics (Sullivan 2013). The aim of his article is to investigate the travel writing of two American authors, Paul Theroux and Robert D. Kaplan. More precisely, Alarcón-Hermosilla’s contribution scrutinizes how their lexical choices, especially the adjectives they select, concur in shaping the ambience, and the related notions of tone and atmosphere, of

sequences describing landscapes. Consequently, the contribution is of special interest, since little has been written so far in the cognitive stylistics literature about how these notions have relevance for nature depictions. This ecostylistic analysis shows that the metaphors in the sequences suggest the authorial texture and the ideological attitude of the two writers: on the one hand, Theroux adopts a more benevolent stance on the natural sceneries and the peoples he visits; on the other hand, Kaplan takes a more analytical and detached position on them.

Maria-Eirini Panagiotidou, in her article “Paradise Lost: Cognitive Grammar, Nature, and the Self in Diane Seuss’s Ekphrastic Poetry”, also complies with a cognitive linguistic methodology and approach. The author supplies an additional application of the cognitive grammatical model for stylistic examination, and her cognitive poetic study of ekphrasis is an illustrative example of the affordances of the model. She discusses the first poem in Seuss’s collection *Still Life with Two Dead Peacocks and a Girl* to scrutinize the relationship between the poetic persona and her physical environment. Panagiotidou draws on the idea of construal (Langacker 2008) to explore the perspective and the level of specificity of the natural descriptions, and on the concept of image schema (Johnson 1987) to identify the several realizations of the CONTAINER image schema underpinning the semantics of the poem. From an ecostylistic viewpoint, the author detects the linguistic manifestations of the poetic persona’s anthropocentric perspective, thus pinpointing the textual aspects of an anthropocentric discourse. This examination proves that this anthropocentric portrayal of nature is conveyed by highly granular lexical choices and figurative expressions, and that a sense of confinement is evoked by the CONTAINER image schema.

To sum up, the seven articles in this Special Issue show that the various stylistic methodologies and approaches adopted in them can be productively applied to investigate texts considering ecological questions, representing the natural world, and constructing the physical environment we humans are a part of. Furthermore, the rigorous study characterizing stylistics enables the analyst to distinguish the linguistic strategies and patterns treating and conceptualizing nature from the micro-level of the individual word and phrase to the macro-level of the entire discourse. Hence, thanks to these accurate stylistic methodologies and approaches, the analyst is enabled to determine whether the linguistic strategies and patterns they distinguish are ecocentric practices celebrating the natural world and our human connection with more-than-human life (which should accordingly be promoted), or whether they are anthropocentric practices depicting our alienation from the other animal and vegetable organisms and our estrangement from the environment embracing us (which should therefore be avoided).

Acknowledgments: I owe a debt of deep gratitude to several colleagues for helping me to bring this Special Issue on Ecostylistics to fruition. The authors of the research articles entrusted me with their work and contributed to the Special Issue with their forward-looking research in the area of ecostylistics, as well as with their investigations of ecological and related issues in literary and non-literary texts. Professor Wei He (何伟), the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of World Languages*, invited me to undertake this project, which she fully supported and positively contributed to seeing through to completion. Dr. Wei Shen (沈维), the Assistant Editor of the *Journal of World Languages*, and his work and assistance were, in a word, priceless. The anonymous reviewers devoted their time and energy to carefully reading previous drafts of the research articles, and offered insightful feedback and constructive suggestions. I couldn't have wished for a better and more cooperative working group and environment.

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Andrew Goatly*

Five themes for ecostylistics

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Abstract: Fundamentally, meaning is organized along two dimensions, similarity and contiguity, corresponding to two areas of the brain primarily responsible for language processing, Wernicke’s area and Broca’s area, respectively. Modern culture has tended to overemphasize the similarity dimension through money/commodification in capitalism, and mathematics in science, with disastrous ecological consequences. Ecostylistics can celebrate and analyze themes and linguistic patterns of poetry and novels which challenge this overemphasis. Five such themes are suggested in this article. To counter overemphasis on similarity (1) individuation. To celebrate Broca’s area’s contiguity dimension (2) dynamic process, and (3) interrelatedness and communication with the natural world. However, concentration on local contiguities of time, manifest in the contemporary English-speaking novel, distracts from the global contiguities of (4) long-term ecological change. (5) The two dimensions are also manifest in metaphor, which challenges conventional similarity-based classification, and narrative, which expands the contiguity dimension beyond the clause. These themes are illustrated by poetic examples from Wordsworth and Edward Thomas, and detailed analysis of the following texts: Gerard Manley Hopkins’ “As Kingfishers Catch Fire” and “Nature is a Heraclitean Fire”; Edward Thomas’s “The Word”, Alice Oswald’s “Sonnet” and “Birdsong for Two Voices”, and, returning to a text whose analysis by Michael Halliday was seminal for Stylistics, William Golding’s *The Inheritors*. Transitivity analysis within the framework of Systemic Functional Grammar is used throughout, and connections are made with quantum physics, Daoism, and other process philosophies.

Keywords: cognitive semantics; contiguity; process philosophy; quantum theory; similarity; Systemic Functional Grammar

1 Introduction

Meaning is organized along two dimensions, similarity and contiguity, corresponding to two areas of the brain largely responsible for language processing,

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Wernicke's area and Broca's area (Goatly 2022; Jakobson 1987). Similarity is associated with abstraction, categorization, quantification, and metaphor, while contiguity is associated with the experience of cultural practice and activities in context, connectivity, and metonymy. Modern culture has tended to over-emphasize the similarity dimension through money/commodification in capitalism, and mathematics in science, with disastrous ecological consequences. Ecostylistics can celebrate and analyze themes and linguistic patterns of poetry and novels which challenge this overemphasis. This article aims to suggest five such themes.

This article is structured as follows: Section 2 attempts to bring diverse philosophical and linguistic approaches to ecostylistics together by using a cognitive linguistic framework. In Section 2.1, I introduce a framework first proposed by Roman Jakobson (1987) for understanding two dimensions of meaning, contiguity and similarity. After explaining these concepts I relate them to the structure of the noun-phrase and the clause. Then, in Section 2.2, I attempt to show how an overemphasis on the similarity dimension in economics and mathematics has posed threats to ecology. In Section 3, I suggest five possible themes in ecostylistics which challenge similarity and celebrate contiguity, especially the global contiguities that bind us together in the web of life. Section 3.1 discusses individuation, countering the noun-based categorizing tendencies of the similarity dimension. The text analyzed here is Gerard Manley Hopkins' "As Kingfishers Catch Fire", based on Duns Scotus's concept of *haecitas* ('self-so' or 'nature'), which resembles the Daoist concept of 自然 (*ziran*, 'self-so' or 'nature'). Section 3.2 focuses on dynamic process, celebrating the contiguity of verbs, and building on the insights of Daoism/Buddhism and quantum physics. The texts analyzed here are: Hopkins' verb-dominated "Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and the Comfort of the Resurrection", whose sequence of transmuting elements, derived from Heraclitus' process philosophy, resembles the operation of 阴 (*yin*, 'dark') and 阳 (*yang*, 'light') in Daoism; the Alice Oswald poem "Birdsong for Two Voices", which demonstrates the use of nominalization for emphasizing process; extracts from Wordsworth's *The Prelude* which illustrate how grammar can be modified to turn phenomena in mental processes and tokens in relational processes into dynamic actors in material processes, and how ergative verbs impart energy to natural, even "inanimate" elements. Section 3.3 explores interrelatedness and communication with the natural world, recognizing contiguity within processes, again citing observations from quantum physicists, but also outlining the interconnectednesses of Gaia theory. Oswald's poem "Sonnet" and extracts from Edward Thomas's poetry show how personification and co-ordination of the natural, human and human-made blur the traditional animate/inanimate distinction. Interrelatedness involves communication, and Thomas's fascination with birdsong and its ineffable

messages is exemplified in “The Word”. Section 3.4 addresses the ignoring of long-term ecological change, warning against the limitations of time and place in local contiguity, and advocating global contiguity. The local contiguities of the contemporary novel exclude global and epochal forces recognized in epics, and hence, as Amitav Ghosh (2016) points out, such novels are inadequate in addressing the problems of climate change. I propose William Golding’s *The Inheritors* as an example of a novel that is epochal, dealing with the Neanderthal-homo sapiens transition. Halliday’s seminal grammatical analysis showed how the mind-style and life-style of the Neanderthals, reflected in intransitive verbs and animism/personification, contrasts with those of homo sapiens with its transitive verbs indicating a domination of nature that has led to our tragic ecological crisis. Section 3.5 deals with narrative and metaphor, relating to both contiguity and similarity. Narrative, an expansion of the textual contiguity of the clause, and the “stories-we-live-by” (Stibbe 2021: 6), which are more similarity-based and abstract, both attempt to make sense of events and solve problems. Metaphor is reliant on similarity, but it is an unconventional categorization, which highlights features that conventional categorization ignores. Several stories-we-live-by and metaphors for nature are evaluated in terms of their positive implications for ecology and society. Section 4 is the summary and conclusion.

2 Ecostylistics within a cognitive framework

The five themes illustrate diverse philosophical and linguistic approaches to ecostylistics but I have attempted to bring them together using a cognitive linguistic framework which suggests two vectors of meaning, contiguity and similarity, associated with two different language processing areas of the brain.

2.1 Two dimensions of language

Roman Jakobson (1987) used Saussure’s distinction between the paradigmatic axis and the syntagmatic axis (Saussure 1960) to suggest two axes or dimensions of meaning, similarity/metaphor and contiguity/metonymy.

The development of a discourse may take place along two different semantic lines: one topic may lead to another either through their similarity [paradigmatic] or through their contiguity [syntagmatic]. The metaphoric way would be the most appropriate term for the first case and the metonymic way for the second, since they find their most condensed expression in metaphor and metonymy respectively. (Jakobson 1987: 109–110)

Evidence for this distinction came from research into two kinds of aphasia, language impairments arising from brain injury. Injury to Wernicke's area (in the temporal lobe) led to deficiencies in the paradigmatic selection axis (metaphor/similarity). Injury to Broca's area (in the posterior inferior frontal lobe) caused deficiencies in the syntagmatic combination axis (metonymy/contiguity) (see Figure 1).

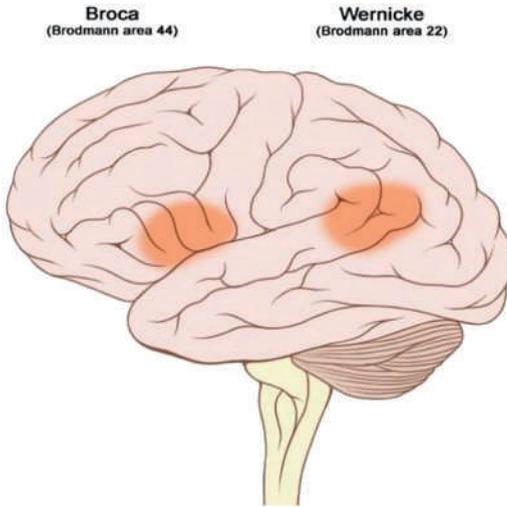


Figure 1: Areas of the brain associated with language processing.

Aphasics deficient on the paradigmatic axis (Wernicke's area injury), in terms of selection and substitution, had to rely on the syntagmatic axis and metonymy. "Phrases like 'knife and fork', 'table lamp', 'to smoke a pipe', induced the metonymies *fork, table, smoke*; the relation between the use of an object (toast) and the means of its production underlies the metonymy *eat for toaster*" (Jakobson 1987: 105). The metonymies here depend upon contiguities in the context of activities like eating a meal, smoking, and preparing toast to eat, and in the first three examples these are reflected in typical textual adjacency/contiguity.

Conversely, aphasics deficient on the syntagmatic axis of contiguity and combination (Broca's area injury) often utter one-word sentences, but can still select on the paradigmatic axis, relying on similarity/metaphor:

The patient confined to the substitution set (once contexture is deficient) deals with similarities, and his [sic] approximate identifications are of a metaphoric nature, contrary to the metonymic ones familiar to the opposite type of aphasics. *Spyglass for microscope* or *fire for gaslight* are typical examples of such quasi-metaphoric expressions [...]. (Jakobson 1987: 103)

Note that this compensation made by aphasics suffering from Broca's area injury does not just involve metaphor, but the conventional similarity relationships of superordinate to hyponym, in this example *fire for gaslight*, since gaslight is a kind of fire.

With some reservations, Jakobson's theory has been evidenced by later research. Uri (1992) and Aitchison (1994) support Jakobson's distinction between the two aphasias and the impairment of contiguity and similarity dimensions. Aitchison (1994: 82–97), summarizing the research current at the time, showed that the most important psycholinguistic links between words are co-hyponymy (as in *butterfly* and *moth*, both flying insects), and collocation, i.e. typical co-occurrence in textual proximity (as in *blue moon*, and *yellow fever*). Co-hyponymy depends upon similarity, since the co-hyponyms share the same superordinate – *flying insect* for *butterfly* and *moth* – and therefore belong to the same class. Whereas collocation reflects experience of textual contiguity – our frequent use of *blue* and *moon* or *yellow* and *fever* next to each other in text.

Later research also supports Jakobson's distinction, with the significant addition that processing of nouns is associated with Wernicke's area, and verbs and clauses with Broca's area.

Increased activity is observed in the temporal lobe [the location of Wernicke's area] while speaking or thinking in nouns, whereas speaking or thinking in verbs activates Broca's frontal area (Raichle 1994). By the same token, impairments in finding nouns are associated with temporal lobe pathology, whereas impairments in finding verbs are associated with left frontal damage and Broca's aphasia (Ardila and Rosselli 1994; Damasio and Tranel 1993). (Ardila 2010: 380–381)

The only reservation is that language production and grammar are not confined to these areas of the brain (Ardila 2021; Tremblay and Dick 2016).

Having established the similarity/contiguity distinction, we need to define or elaborate on what exactly we mean by these terms. Similarity I take to be the sharing of features. So, classifications, metaphors, superordinate-hyponym relations (e.g. *bird* – *penguin*) depend upon it. Contiguity means contextuality, and context is often that of action genres/action schemas. Literally, it means “touching” including relationships such as part to whole, place to object/event/person in that place. But also, by extension, time to object/person/event at that time, and cause and effect. Metonymy depends upon these relationships. Using the concepts of frame (for the stereotypical knowledge of objects) and schema (for the stereotypical knowledge of activities and events), contiguity might be defined in terms of intra- and inter- frame and schema relations (Goatly 2022).

Cause and effect relationships, inter-schema, may depend upon the local contiguities of two action genres, but can also extend to global contiguities, which have enormous significance for ecology. A famous example comes from chaos theory, in which the schema of a butterfly flapping its wings in Brazil may cause, or at least affect the course of, a tornado in Texas.

Table 1: The structure of the noun phrase (after Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 329).

Pre modifiers				Head	Post modifiers	
					prepositional phrases	clauses
deictic	numerative	epithet	classifier	thing	descriptive/restrictive modifiers	
<i>those</i>	<i>two</i>	<i>awful, old</i>	<i>diesel</i>	<i>trains</i>	<i>with dirty carriages</i>	<i>arriving at the station</i>

The significance of these two dimensions can be observed in the elements of the noun phrase and the clause. In Table 1, we notice some elements that anchor the utterance of this noun phrase to the contiguities of physical context. These comprise most deictics, namely the specific ones including demonstratives and possessives, in this case *those*. In addition, attitudinal epithets, like *awful*, reflect the attitude of the speaker, part of the interpersonal context. The remainder of the elements reflect the similarity dimension by classification: through the noun-thing label (the exception being proper names), e.g. *train*; through sub-classification by the objective epithets, e.g. *old*; by classifiers, e.g. *diesel*; and by post-modifiers if they are restrictive, e.g. potentially *with dirty carriages* and *arriving at the station*. Note that once classes have been established by similarity, the members of those classes can then be quantified by numeratives.

In this article, the transitivity system within the framework of Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004) is used throughout for text analysis. Transitivity concerns the type of process represented by the clause, the participants in this process, and circumstances associated with the process. Among the three components, the process is the central one. Halliday (1994) categorizes our experiences of the world into six major types of processes: the material, mental, verbal, relational, behavioral, and existential processes. For readers unfamiliar with the transitivity system, Table 2 shows the choice among process types and their corresponding participants.

The contiguity dimension of action genres is reflected in the textual contiguities of clauses, as in the material process clause in Table 3 (Broca's area is associated with the processing of clauses as well as verbs). (1) The material process verb (*fried*) establishes a relationship between participants, actor (*I*) and goal (*the chicken*), a syntagmatic contiguity mirroring the contiguities or context of the cooking action genre. (2) The place circumstance (*on the new gas burner*) fills in another aspect of context and (3), the time circumstance (*Yesterday*), another. (4) The tense (*-ed*) also locates the action in a time prior to utterance.

Table 2: A simplification of the transitivity process types and participants in the clause (excluding behavioral processes).

Process	Meanings	Participants	Examples
Existential	existence	Existent	There are <u>6 moons of Uranus</u> .
Relational	states, relationships possession	Token, Value: – Carrier, Circumstance – Carrier, Attribute – Identified, Identifier – Possessor, Possession	<u>The book is on the table.</u> <u>Peter remained a teacher.</u> <u>Boris is the Prime Minister.</u> <u>Paula has a cat.</u>
Material	actions, events	Actor, Goal – Actor, Scope	<u>Snow blocked the road.</u> <u>John wrote a letter.</u>
Mental	perception thought emotion	Senser, Phenomenon Phenomenon, Senser	<u>The cat saw the bird.</u> <u>He decided to go home.</u> <u>Dogs always annoyed Matt.</u>
Verbal	communication	Sayer, Receiver, Verbiage	<u>Paul told Mindy to go home.</u>

Table 3: A typical material process clause displaying contiguity relations.

Time circumstance	Actor	Material process	Goal	Place circumstance
Yesterday	1	fried	the chicken	on the new gas burner
	1			
3		4		2

It is worth highlighting important distinctions between nouns (associated with Wernicke's area processing) and verbs (associated with Broca's area processing) that are significant for the remainder of this article. As Langacker (1991) pointed out, nouns and verbs typically refer to objects and energetic processes or interactions, respectively (see Table 4). Noun referents are typically instantiated in space, are spatially compact, but temporarily unbounded, i.e. relatively permanent. Verb referents, by contrast, are instantiated in time, and are temporally compact, i.e. of brief duration, but spatially unbounded, i.e. having effects beyond themselves, perhaps, as in the butterfly-tornado example, even effects of global reach. Moreover, verbs, because, as we saw in clauses, they have to relate to noun phrases in syntax, are seen to be dependent on co-text, whereas nouns are regarded as independent or autonomous.

Table 4: The contrasting cognitive aspects of noun and verb referents.

	Objects	Energetic interactions
Instantiated	In space	In time
Extension	Spatially compact Temporally unbounded	Temporally compact Spatially unbounded
Autonomy/Dependence	Autonomous	Dependent
Word class	Noun	Verb

2.2 The overemphasis of the similarity dimension

During classification objects which are unlike in their particularities are included in an abstract similarity-based category. Consequently, all members of the class are felt to be somehow equivalent to another and therefore measurable/countable, realized in the clause by numeratives or other quantifiers. This section explores two areas in which contemporary capitalist and scientific culture have over-emphasized the similarity dimension, with harmful consequences for the environment: monetization and mathematics.

Once countable or measurable, noun phrase referents can attract a monetary value, which equates objects with each other. For instance, 20 dollars establishes a most abstract category which includes all the goods in their various numbers and quantities that can be bought for 20 dollars: 2 meters of X, 2 kilos of Y, or 150 Zs now all belong to the abstract category 20 dollars. Or to put it another way, these quantities of X, Y, and Z belong to the same category because they are similar in sharing an identical value of 20 dollars. “As Marx noted, money reduces the use values of the multidimensional ecosystem, human desires and needs, and subjective meanings to a common measurable objective standard which everyone can understand” (Harvey 1996: 150–151). Of most significance in this quote is the phrase “multidimensional ecosystem”, because it implies a reduction of many dimensions to a single monetary one, with qualitative differences ignored in favor of an abstract similarity. Or as Schumacher (1999 [1973]) puts it:

In the market place, for practical reasons, the innumerable qualitative distinctions which are of vital importance for man [sic] and society are suppressed; they are not allowed to surface. Thus the reign of quantity celebrates its greatest triumphs in “The Market”. Everything is equated with everything else. To equate things means to give them a price and make them exchangeable. (Schumacher 1999 [1973]: 30)

If we believe in market economics enough, we maximize its efficiency by commodification, bringing as many objects as possible, belonging to noun-based

quantifiable classes, into the money-based system. Market capitalism has increasingly turned humans and nature into market commodities. Think of blood banks, gene banks, sperm banks, and stem cell banks. Or consider the ways in which elements of the environment/ecology have been commodified. Before imperialist invasion, the idea of ownership of land was alien to native Americans and Africans, but now land is a commodity. Water can be owned by the state for the common good, or shared for free by local communities, but increasingly it is privatized, as in France and England. Plants foraged and used in traditional medicine, such as the neem tree in India, have now been patented by corporations. And one such corporation, Monsanto, has patented seeds which, subjected to terminator technology, only produce plants with sterile seeds, so that farmers have to buy new seeds from Monsanto every year. Some environmental economists have even suggested that the best way to ensure the survival of a sustainable environment is to put a price on nature, a movement labeled the Natural Capital Agenda. The various flaws in this approach have been cataloged by Harvey and Monbiot (Goatly and Hiradhar 2016), the most obvious being the idea that nature can be separated into independent parts, and the ironic assumption that we can save nature by recourse to the same capitalist system that is causing its destruction.

The monetary measure of economic well-being, gross domestic product (GDP), is often at odds with well-being, physical and ecological. If I walk to work, this contributes nothing to GDP. If I go by car, or “better still” sit in a traffic jam with my engine running, this counts as contributing to GDP. But walking to work is far better for my health and for our ecology, though it counts for little. I was shocked when, after the Kobe earthquake, economists welcomed the increase in GDP that would accrue from building reconstruction. It caused enormous human suffering: 6,433 people died, nearly 27,000 people were injured, and more than 45,000 homes were destroyed.¹ At this point, I realized that human happiness had been severed from economics.

The second and related area where qualitative differences have been subsumed under quantitative similarities is mathematics. It began with Pythagoras, who discovered that the qualitative differences between musical notes from a single vibrating string depend on the length of the string: the shorter the string the higher the note. A difference in quality is explained by a difference in quantity. “If the ultimate nature of things depends on mathematical relationships, then it follows that the world as perceived by our senses must be logical and intelligible as mathematics” (Habgood 2002: 6–7).

¹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/17/newsid_3375000/3375733.stm (accessed September 5, 2021).

Following Pythagoras, mathematics has been the benchmark for science. Galileo exhorted “measure what can be measured, and make measurable what cannot be measured” (Gaarder 1996: 203). Aldous Huxley pointed out that the scientist selects “from the whole of experience only those elements which can be weighed, measured, numbered, or which lend themselves in any other way to mathematical treatment” (Peat 1996: 239). In 1998, at an event in the White House, Stephen Hawking made the following prediction: “We shall have to rely on mathematical beauty and consistency to find the ultimate Theory of Everything. Nevertheless, I am confident we will discover it by the end of the 21st century, and probably much sooner” (Gleick 2021: 36). Gleick (2021: 36) responded: “Why should the universe, which grows more gloriously complex the more we see, be reduced to one set of equations and formulae?”

To put this in context, we might, following Habgood (2002), posit a ladder of academic disciplines investigating different kinds of reality (see Figure 2). Explaining one level in terms of another is distorting. “At each stage entirely new laws, concepts and generalizations are necessary [...] Psychology is not applied biology, nor is biology applied chemistry” (Anderson 1972: 393). And none of the disciplines above it is simply applied mathematics.

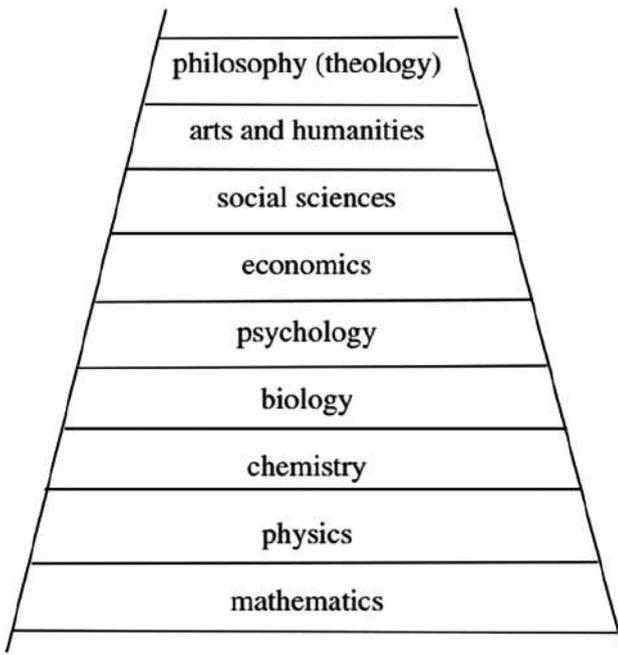


Figure 2: Ladder of academic disciplines.

Of most importance is the danger of the potential hegemony of mathematics over ecology/biology. Ilya Prigogine, the founder of chaos theory, in fact, wished to work in the opposite direction, towards a biological view of physics rather than a mathematical one (Horgan 1998). The problem is that it is distorting to employ numerical models to measure nature and ecological crises. “Verification and validation of numerical models of natural systems is impossible” (Oreskes et al. 1994: 641) since natural systems are always open, making our knowledge of them incomplete, or, at best, approximate, and factoring out the unknown and unmeasurable. These mathematical models might be thought of as a work of fiction (Horgan 1998: 202–203).

An obvious danger in emphasizing the similarity dimension is its disregard for diversity. Directly or indirectly, the embrace of the capitalist system and mathematics in interaction with science/technology, have led to a catastrophic decline in bio-diversity. Industry depends upon standardization, interchangeability for a specific purpose, and increasingly nature has been industrialized leading to monocultures (Josephson 2002). Moreover, biodiversity loss seems to correlate with language attrition, in which languages and cultures which have been sustainable over millennia are dying, along with the diverse forms of flora and fauna which sustained them and which they respected.

We cannot be reminded of biodiversity loss too often. The last few million years of life on earth have produced the greatest biodiversity ever. There may now be up to a trillion species, 9 million of them macroscopic. But now we humans have arrived, ushering in the Holocene extinction event. Tragically, 300 years ago our modern, noun-based, similarity-based, and mathematically-based science facilitated the technology of the Industrial Revolution using fossil fuels, whose exploitation also allowed an explosion of human population. The result is that more than one in five species on Earth now faces extinction, and that may rise to 50% by the end of the century. The following groups of species are most at risk: amphibians, 40%; conifers, 34%; reef corals, 33%; sharks and rays, 30%; mammals, 25%; and birds, 14%. The current rate of extinction is up to 10,000 times higher than the average historical extinction rate and may eliminate most species on the planet Earth within 100 years (‘Biodiversity’,² ‘Species Extinction Rate’³).

2 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biodiversity> (accessed March 2, 2021).

3 <https://www.theworldcounts.com/challenges/planet-earth/forests-and-deserts/species-extinction-rate/story> (accessed March 2, 2021).

2.3 Problems with local contiguity

It is worth warning, therefore, about the problems and distortions brought about by overemphasis of the similarity dimension through monetization/commodification, mathematics, and the capitalist-industrial complex. But celebrating local contiguity has its own dangers. Our local experience of contiguity begins with the primary scenes of infancy when, in Western culture, we participate in action schemas like eating in the high chair, going for a ride in the car, changing diapers, feeding ducks at the pond, building a block tower, taking a bath, putting away the toys, feeding the dog, going grocery shopping (Bruner 1983). And the repertoire of culturally-recognized action genres we participate in expands beyond these as we become adults.

However, it is limiting to think of contiguity only in terms of our immediate sensory perceptions of material process activities in a specific time and place with specific props and co-participants. It is only by moving away from the local contiguities of experience that we can appreciate the ultimate interconnectedness, the web of global contiguity which binds us together with each other and the universe. Scientific experimentation with measuring instruments and apparatus expands our perceptions, and these instruments can be conceived as extensions of our nervous systems (Bateson 1975).

They may, of course, introduce an extra level of distortion of everyday experience in doing so. The distortion introduced by the microscope and telescope was objected to by Alexander Pope: “Why has not man a microscopic eye? For this plain reason, man is not a fly.” (Pope 1867 [1734]: 18), and satirized by Swift in *Gulliver’s Travels*. However, only by the de-contextualization of natural phenomena in the lab, and by introducing elaborate stagings of artificial scientific apparatus which take us beyond the limitations of our perceptual faculties are we able to develop quantum theory, Gaia theory, both discussed below, or to understand the phenomenon of climate change. And the measurements made by such apparatus are necessarily reported in mathematical, statistical terms.

Our perceptual apparatus is very attuned to change, but within a very short time frame. Climate includes abstract temperature and precipitation patterns, and climate change is slow and involves considerable day-to-day variation. This means climate and climactic changes are difficult to perceive – “weather” refers to what is perceptible in our commonsense world of local contiguities.

3 Themes for ecostylistics

I have sketched a framework for cognitive semantics based on two dimensions of meaning based on the distinct areas of the brain, Wernicke’s and Broca’s, important for language processing: similarity-metaphor-classification-nouns-autonomy-permanence;

contiguity-metonymy-context-verbs-dependency-transitoriness. I now proceed to discuss five possible themes for ecostylistics within this framework, with examples mainly from poetry, but also novels. I will relate these to process philosophies, Daoism/Buddhism, as well as scientific theories such as quantum and Gaia theory.

3.1 Theme 1: Countering the overemphasis on similarity and classification – individuation

The medieval philosopher Duns Scotus, along with his theory of the Logos, developed the notion of *haeccitas*. This concept is a challenge to the similarity dimension of meaning with its classifications, because it is defined as the features in a particular object that make it different from other members of its class.

Haeccitas inhered in every created thing, inanimate, animal or human. It was the mark of its Creation by God, and it was active. So it was lived out in action and in movement: each thing veered towards a particular destiny or purpose. This process involved the will, the expression of individuality.⁴

It is interesting to observe some obvious parallels between Duns Scotus and Daoism, between the concepts of divine creative force and the Dao on the one hand, and *haeccitas* and *ziran* on the other. Dao is the force at the root of creation and the cycles of nature, the mother of all that keeps nature and society in harmony. As humans we need to live in harmony with the Dao, by adopting 无为 (*wuwei*, ‘inaction’)– going along with the grain of the Dao in spontaneous non-action or minimal interference (Kohn 2001). *Wuwei* allows each being to unfold according to its own nature and connection with the Dao, so as to realize its *ziran* (Konjathy 2014). “*Ziran* is best understood as ‘suchness’ or ‘being-so-in-itself’ [...] it is simultaneously one’s natural condition and the manifestation of the Dao through one’s being” (Konjathy 2014: 85).

Gerard Manley Hopkins, the nineteenth century Jesuit priest and poet, studied Duns Scotus (cf. the poem “Duns Scotus’ Oxford”) and adopted his concept of *haeccitas*. William Blake had earlier resisted the worldview of universal mathematical laws, seeing “infinity in a grain of sand and eternity in an hour”, and pleading “May God us keep from Single vision and Newton’s sleep” (Lent 2017: 361): in his engraving Newton is measuring with dividers or compasses.⁵ But

4 <https://crossref-it.info/articles/187/Inscape-and-instress> (accessed Decemeber 20, 2020).

5 <https://www.williamblake.org/Newton%20in%20Detail%20William%20Blake.jpg?ezimgfmt=rs:848x651/rscb4/ng:webp/ngcb4> (accessed October 20, 2021).

Hopkins is significant for his emphasis on individuality and process philosophy, important themes of this article. He developed the concepts of *inscape* and *instress*. *Inscape*, synonymous with *haeccitas*, is the uniqueness of all natural phenomena, whether leaf, snowflake, or fingerprint. Every individual, including humans, the most fully individuated, actively expresses its identity, “selves”. *Instress* is the interaction between selving and the human response to it, the reaching out in love to this uniqueness. Hopkins believed that instress was a response to the divine, since the individuation of inscape derives from God as creator (Goatly 2022).

These ideas are most clearly expressed in the poem “As Kingfishers Catch Fire” (Hopkins 1967: 90).

As kingfishers **catch** fire, dragonflies **draw** flame;
 As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
 Stones **ring**; like each tucked string **tells**, each hung bell's
 Bow swung **finds** tongue to **fling** out broad its name;
 Each mortal thing **does** one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one **dwells**;
Selves – **goes** itself; *myself* it **speaks** and **spells**,
Crying *What I do is me: for that I came.*
 Í **say** more: the just man **justices**;
Keeps gráce: thát **keeps** all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he **is** –
 Christ. For Christ **plays** in ten thousand places,
 Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
 To the Father through the features of men's faces.
 (Hopkins 1967: 90)

It is difficult to express individuation using words, as their senses inevitably involve categories, but by stressing the “each” Hopkins is attempting to point to the uniqueness of every member of the category. Each different plucked string, swung bell, indeed every mortal, impermanent, transitory thing expresses its individuated essence, selves its inscape, thereby fulfilling its divine purpose. The instress response to dynamic divine creativity is to recognize Christ in these selving objects and in the ten thousand different faces or unique features of every human face. Notice the predominance of verbs (in bold) in this active process of selving, which brings us to the topic of the following section.

3.2 Theme 2: Celebrating verb-based process and the dynamism of nature

In Hopkins' poem, individuation is dependent on dynamic processes both for inanimate objects like bells and stones, and animate kingfishers and dragonflies.

Such an emphasis, reflecting Broca's area activity in processing verbs, is fundamental in quantum physics, Buddhism and Daoism. For quantum physics, considers these quotes and Figure 3.

Actually, relativity implies that neither the point particles nor the quasi-rigid body can be taken as primary concepts. Rather these have to be expressed in terms of events and processes. (Bohm 1980: 123–124)

The best image of process is perhaps that of the flowing stream whose substance is never the same. On this stream one may see an ever-changing pattern of vortices [...] which evidently have no independent existence as such. Rather they are abstracted from the flowing movement, arising and vanishing in the total process of the flow. (Bohm 1980: 48)



Figure 3: Process abstracted as “thing” in a whirlpool.

Impermanence and process are fundamental to Daoism, too.

Finally the Dao is understood as the universe as cosmological process, specifically as expressed in the constant patterns of oscillation between *yin* and *yang*. In this sense the Dao is the universe, but it is a universe of constant change and transformation. (Konjathy 2014: 98)

The processes recognized in quantum physics and Daoism depend on energy inherent in what we regard as objects. Matter changes spontaneously and is incredibly dynamic at the molecular, the atomic, and the subatomic levels. Molecules are not rigid and motionless, but their atoms oscillate according to their temperature and in harmony with the thermal vibrations of their environment. Within the vibrating atoms, the electrons are bound to the nuclei by electric forces which keep them as close as possible, and responding to this confinement whirl around extremely fast. And in the nuclei, the protons and neutrons are squeezed into a minute volume by the strong nuclear forces, and consequently race about at unimaginable speeds (Capra 1982).

Modern physics, then, pictures matter not at all as passive and inert, but as being in a continuous dancing and vibrating motion whose rhythmic patterns are determined by the molecular, atomic and nuclear structures. This is also the way in which the eastern mystics see the material world. They all emphasise the universe has to be grasped dynamically, as it moves, vibrates and dances; that nature is not in a static, but in a dynamic equilibrium. (Capra 1982: 215)

In Daoism, this spontaneous dynamic process is what gives rise to individuation, the *ziran* we mentioned earlier. “But [...] Dao is also order – clearly manifest in the rhythmic changes and patterned processes of the natural world [...] Its patterns are what the Chinese call ‘self-so’ or ‘nature’ [*ziran*], the spontaneous and observable way things are naturally” (Kohn 2009: 23). And, again, we are reminded of “As Kingfishers Catch Fire” with its concentration on what objects and humans do, the processes by which they selve: “catch fire”, “draw flame”, “ring” “flinger out broad [their] name”, and the coinage of the denominal verb “justices”.

The cosmic transforming energy of the Dao can take creative or destructive forms. In a creative sequence wood produces fire, fire produces earth, earth produces metal, metal produces water, and water produces wood. In the destructive sequence wood is cut by metal, metal is melted by fire, fire is extinguished by water, water is dammed by earth, and earth is plowed by wood (Kohn 2001). These creative and destructive sequences are balanced through *yin* and *yang* (Goatly 2022). *Yin* and *yang* in their creative and destructive processes can be understood by referring to Table 5.

Table 5: The operation of *yin* and *yang* (adapted from Kohn 2001: 44).

<i>Yin/yang</i>	Phase	Season
lesser <i>yang</i>	wood	spring
greater <i>yang</i>	fire	summer
<i>yin-yang</i>	earth	
lesser <i>yin</i>	metal	fall
greater <i>yin</i>	water	winter

Besides Duns Scotus, another philosopher who informs Hopkins’ work is Heraclitus. Heraclitus’ description of *logos* is almost identical to the concept of the Dao as the principle of maintaining the balance and harmony of natural processes:

All things are in flux; the flux is subject to a unifying measure or rational principle. This principle (*logos*, the hidden harmony behind all change) bound opposites together in a

unified tension, which is like that of a lyre, where a stable harmonious sound emerges from the tension of the opposing forces that arise from the bow bound together by the string.⁶

Also prominent in Heraclitus are the transformations of elements by their interaction, as in *yin* and *yang* (Table 5), though in his system wood disappears and metal is replaced by air as an element. A relevant quote is “Fire lives in the death of earth, air lives in the death of fire, water lives in the death of air, and earth lives in the death of water”.⁷

This brings us to an analysis of Hopkins’ poem “That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection” (Hopkins 1967: 105–106) where the parallels with Daoism are striking.

Cloud-puffball, tom tufts, tossed pillows | **flaunt** forth, then **chevy** on an air-
Built thoroughfare; heaven-roysterers, in gay gangs | they **throng**; they **glitter** in marches.
 Down roughcast, down dazzling whitewash, | wherever an elm **arches**,
 Shivelights and shadowtackle in long | lashes **lace**, **lance**, and **pair**.
 Delightfully the bright wind boisterous | **ropes**, **wrestles**, **beats** earth bare
 Of yestertempest’s creases; | in pool and rutpeel **parches**
Squandering ooze to squeezed | dough, crust, dust; **stanches**, **starches**
Squadroned masks and manmarks | treadmire toil there
Footfretted in it. Million-fuelled, | nature’s bonfire **burns** on.
 But **quench** her bonniest, dearest | to her, her clearest-selved spark
 Man, how fast his firedint, | his mark on mind, is **gone**!
 Both are in an unfathomable, all is in an enormous dark
Drowned. O pity and indig | nation! Manshape, that **shone**
 Sheer off, disseveral, a star, | death **blots** black out; nor mark
 Is any of him at all so stark
 But vastness **blurs** and time | **beats** level. Enough! The Resurrection,
 Heart’s clarion! Away grief’s gasping, | joyless days, dejection.
 Across my foundering deck **shone**
 A beacon, an eternal beam. | Flesh fade, and mortal trash
Fall to the residuary worm; | world’s wildfire, **leave** but ash:
 In a flash, at a trumpet crash
 I *am* all at once what Christ *is*, | since he *was* what I *am*, and
 This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, | patch, matchwood, immortal diamond
 Is immortal diamond.
 (Hopkins 1967: 105–106)

Significantly, Gardner’s (1948) commentary on this poem shows that, besides fire, the transformations and differentiations involve water, earth, and air, and are

⁶ http://www.gerardmanleyhopkins.org/lectures_2000/heraclitus.html (accessed September 20, 2020).

⁷ <https://www.ourcivilisation.com/smartboard/shop/warnerr/presoc/hrclts.htm> (accessed September 20, 2020).

achieved by opposing forces in strife with each other (as, we might add, by *yin* and *yang*).

Air and water give us the “Cloud-puffball etc.” of the opening lines. Clouds turn to rain, so that water and earth give us “pool and rut” – the mud which is parched, peeled, squeezed and then dust-blown by the boisterous wind; moreover the principle of change through strife is clearly suggested in the words “ropes, wrestles, beats earth bare”. The obliteration of man’s footprints in the mud affords a natural transition to the more vital symbol – the fourth element, fire. In the general flux, the mental image [the inscape, nature’s clearest-served spark] of the dead man fades from the mind of the living as surely as the diversely active, adventurous body [“world’s wildfire”] is reduced, as in cremation, to a handful of ash. (Gardner 1948: 162–163)

So, water creates air in clouds, air in the form of wind dries up the water and the earth, water quenches fire, and fire destroys wood in the form of matchwood, while it also creates earth in the form of ash and diamond. In the sequence in the poem, as in Heraclitus and Daoism, there is the sense of processual change through the conflict or balance of opposing forces.

A stylistic analysis reveals an emphasis on material process verbs, marked in bold, and participial adjectives, underlined. They only give way to relational process verbs, italicized, in the last four lines, with their intimations of immortality transcending change, symbolized by the indestructible diamond emerging from fire (For these process types see Table 2).

One stylistic device that may be used to convey the primacy of process is nominalization (Goatly 2007). Though it may have negative effects, such as hiding responsibility for ecological destruction or pollution by omitting agents, and smuggling in presuppositions (Goatly and Hiradhar 2016), it may equally well blur the distinction between nouns and verbs. Like metaphors, it can work in two directions. Processes can be seen as things, but things as processes. Particularly impressive are poems where a nominalization becomes an actor in a material process interacting with other nominalizations as goals of the action. This represents the world of interacting processes discovered by Daoism, Buddhism, and quantum physics. There is not the space to unpack the nominalizations in “Nature is a Heraclitean Fire”: “**puffball**”, “**thoroughfare**”, “**roysterers**”, “**marches**”, “**roughcast**”, to mention just a few, all at least partially derived from verbs (in bold). Instead, I will examine the power of nominalizations (in bold) in a poem by Alice Oswald, “Bird-song for Two Voices” (Oswald 2008).

a spiral ascending the morning,
climbing by means of a **song** into the sun,
to be sung reciprocally by two birds at intervals
in the same tree but not quite in time.

a song that assembles the earth 5
 out of nine notes and **silence**.
 out of the unformed gloom before dawn
 where every tree is a problem to be solved by **birdsong**.

Crex Crex Corcorovado,
 letting the pieces fall where they may, 10
 every dawn divides into the distinct
misgiving between alternate voices

sung repeatedly by two birds at intervals
 out of nine notes and **silence**.
 while the sun, with its fingers to the earth, 15
 as the sun proceeds so it gathers instruments:

it gathers the yard with its **echoes** and **scaffolding** sounds,
 it gathers the **swerving** away sound of the road,
 it gathers the river shivering in a wet field,
 it gathers the three small bones in the dark of the eardrum; 20

it gathers the big bass **silence** of clouds
 and the mind whispering in its shell
 and all trees, with their ears to the air,
 seeking a steady state and singing it over till it settles
 (Oswald 2008: 8)

“Birdsong” is a nominalization of (*birds*) *sing*. Moreover, as expressed here “a song to be sung” (2–3), the thing has no existence independent of the process *sing* and is a scope, one kind of goal (see Table 2). As a transitive actor birdsong is powerful, because it “assembles the earth” (5), solves the problems of the tree (8), and lets “the pieces fall” (10). Song and sun are blended, phonologically, “by means of a song into the sun to be sung”, and because the spiral of the song climbs into the sun (2), so the sun is “singing” as well (24) accompanied by its “instruments” (16). The sun, merged with the song, is a powerful transitive actor: it, with the birdsong, “gathers [...] instruments [...] the yard with its echoes and scaffolding [...] the swerving away sound of the road [...] the river [...] silence of clouds [...] the mind [...] all trees [...] bones in the [...] eardrum”, the last emphasizing nature’s power over humans.

Besides “birdsong” other nominalizations emphasize process – “misgiving” (12), the lack of synchronization of the corncrakes’ singing, “scaffolding” (17), the assembly/disassembly of scaffolding that produces sounds, “echoes” (17) and “swerving” (18). Note that in these last three examples in lines 17–18 we have one process, birdsong merged with the sun, interacting with other nominalized processes, very much in tune with quantum theory and Daoism. The nominalizations of the form *-ing* have their form repeated in present participles: “shivering”, “whispering”, “seeking” and “singing” suggesting continuing repeated processes. One might conclude that this poem uses nominalization to emphasize the process

basis, the vibrations as instruments producing sounds, reflecting post relativity or string theory.

But matter is not only process in Daoism/quantum theory: it is also dynamic process, that is, it has an incredible inherent energy. I explored elsewhere (Goatly 2007; Goatly and Hiradhar 2016), the methods by which poetry might acknowledge this dynamism. Obviously, natural elements can be represented as actors in transitive material process clauses, for instance the sun/birdsong in “Birdsong for Two Voices”. More subtly poetry might use grammatical metaphors that represent the “environment” or observed phenomena as actors. Or employ ergative verbs which recognize the energy inherent in “inanimate” objects. A few examples from Wordsworth’s *The Prelude* (1970) will illustrate.

Firstly, we can metaphorically reconstruct experiences in mental process clauses as though they were actors in material processes, activation of phenomena e.g. *I noticed the river* → *the river arrested my gaze*, or *we love the forest* → *the forest touches our hearts*. Let’s call this **activation of experiences**. Here are some examples from Wordsworth’s *The Prelude*:

- Oh there is blessing in this gentle breeze,/A visitant that while it fans my cheek/Doth seem half-conscious of the joy it brings/From the green fields, and from yon azure sky. (cf. I enjoyed the breeze fanning my cheek)
- [...] my favourite grove,/Tossing in sunshine its dark boughs aloft,/As if to make the strong wind visible,/Wakes in me agitations like its own (cf. I fear my favourite grove/my favourite grove worries me)
- Yet, hail to you/Moors, mountains, headlands, and ye hollow vales,/Ye long deep channels for the Atlantic’s voice,/Powers of my native region! Ye that seize/The heart with firmer grasp! (cf. ? I adore/love/worship/am obsessed with the moors, mountains, headlands etc.)

Secondly, to insist on nature’s dynamism we can metaphorically reconstruct relational and existential processes into material ones. These activations of tokens or existents turn nature from static environment to active participant. For example: *five trees are in the valley* → *five trees stand in the valley*, *there is a boulder on top of the hill* → *a boulder tops the hill*. Again from *The Prelude*:

- The beacon crowning the lone eminence
- The garden lay/Upon a slope **surmounted** by a plain/Of a small bowling-green;
- There rose a crag,/That, from the meeting-point of two highways/Ascending, **overlooked** them both

Instead of ‘being at the top of’ an eminence or slope or two highways, the plain or beacon or crag “crowns”, “surmounts”, or “overlooks” them (Goatly and Hiradhar 2016).

Thirdly, we may employ ergative verbs. The difference between ergative verbs and non-ergative verbs is that when two participants actor/instigator and goal/medium are involved, in other words in the transitive or effective version, the clause is extended in a different directions (Table 6). With non-ergatives the clause is extended to the right, with ergatives to the left.

Table 6: Ergative and non-ergative clauses.

	Non-ergative	Ergative
Intransitive/middle	John (Actor) swallowed	The cloth (Medium) tore
Transitive/effective	John (Actor) swallowed a grape	Paul (Instigator) tore the cloth
Extension direction	→	←

Ergative verbs without an object, i.e. intransitive or middle, represent changes to an object, the medium, as self-generated. For example “the door opened” locates the energy for this process in the door. When so-called inanimate natural objects are agents in such clauses they suggest they are dynamically active. Consider the use of ergative verbs *sweep*, *spin*, *wheel*, *ring*, and *tinkle* in this famous passage, which describes the young Wordsworth ice-skating (the mediums are underlined).

So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
 And not a voice was idle; with the din
 Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
 The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron;
 [...]
 [...] and oftentimes,
 When we had given our bodies to the wind,
 And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, **spinning** still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
 Have I reclining back upon my heels,
 Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me even as if the earth had rolled
 With visible motion her diurnal round!
 Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
 Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
 Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.
 (Wordsworth 1970: 14)

The passage and the highlighted clauses in the last ten lines illustrate a dynamic interaction between humans and nature, as though the skater’s movement makes him aware of an energy inherent in the banks and cliffs.

Mühlhäusler (1996: 123) suggests that the use of middle ergative verbs is one of the features of Australian aboriginal languages which reinforces the identity between people and things. The ergative verbs of these languages are usually middle, making human agency a special case. The inseparability of humans from nature as they co-evolve and co-exist in local and global contiguity is the theme of the next section.

3.3 Theme 3: Celebrating contiguity and interrelatedness

Global contiguities, recognized for centuries in Daoism and Buddhism, have increasingly become apparent in the theories of quantum physics and in Gaia theory. The Dao is “the ongoing flux of life in which everything is relative and related to everything else” (Kohn 2001: 21). The unity of the Dao is the underlying unity of existence, and *qi*, the sum of the matter/energy of the universe, is the unitary force behind body and mind. In this holographic universe, the whole is enfolded and manifests in the smallest part. Everything is interrelated and affecting everything else, including one’s own *qi* which should be in harmony with the notes of the Dao (Kohn 2001). The experience of oneness with the surrounding environment is the main characteristic of Daoist meditation. In a meditative state, every form of fragmentation has ceased, fading away into undifferentiated unity (Kohn 2001).

The holographic notion takes us to quantum theory’s emphasis on interrelatedness. David Bohm used the hologram as an analogy for the whole of the universe being enfolded in each of its parts. If any part of the hologram is illuminated the entire image will be reconstructed (Bohm 1980). To underline the point: “Inseparable quantum interconnectedness of the whole universe [global contiguity] is the fundamental reality, and [...] relatively independently behaving parts are merely particular and contingent forms within this whole” (Bohm and Hiley 1975: 102).

Since, as ecostylists, we are particularly interested in ecology, it is worth concentrating on Gaia theory’s conception of interrelatedness. The Gaia hypothesis states that the world, including the atmosphere, the oceans, the living things, the rocks and minerals of the crust, functions as one large self-regulating organism. Global contiguities include “non-living” parts of the biosphere.

Specifically the temperature, oxidation state, acidity [...] are at any time kept constant, and that this homeostasis is maintained by active feedback processes operated automatically and unconsciously by the biota [...] Life and its environment are so closely coupled that evolution concerns Gaia, not the organisms or the environment taken separately. (Lovelock 1988: 19)

The homeostasis in dynamic equilibrium of the Gaia organism is observable in the various cycles: water, nitrogen, sulphur, etc. In the latter, sulphur is washed by rivers into the sea. Algal seaweed produces dimethyl-sulphide. The sulphur element rises into the atmosphere, where it is oxidized into sulphuric acid. This provides the condensation nuclei, the seeds, for cloud formation and consequently the rain, which then washes it back to earth (see Figure 4). Weather functions as part of a larger organism, of which only one part, the algae, are traditionally viewed as living (Lovelock 1988: 140–145).

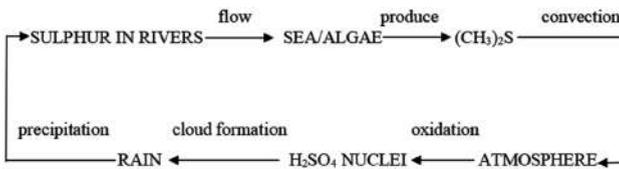


Figure 4: The sulphur cycle (Goatly 2021: 5).

What can literature do to reflect this inter-relatedness? I suggest two techniques to blur the distinction between the human and non-human elements of nature, employed by Edward Thomas and Alice Oswald: (1) personification and dis-personification and (2) co-ordination of the natural, human and human-made.

In the poems of Edward Thomas (Thomas 1949), activation of tokens, already noted in Wordsworth, often overlaps with personification, problematizing the human/non-human distinction. For instance, in the examples below he uses the verbs *stand* and *lie* to activate natural elements that would otherwise be tokens in relational clauses meaning ‘is at/on/in’, with these rather conventional personifying metaphors revitalized by “idle”, “ankle-deep” and “naked”:

- The moon and I/Live yet and here **stand idle** over a grave
- Some ash trees **standing ankle-deep** in brier/And bramble act the parts
- The roads **lay** as the ploughland rude/Dark and **naked**, on the hill.

Personification is more common than other kinds of metaphor in Thomas (Goatly 2017). It is noticeable that it is applied to what might conventionally be regarded as inanimates – landscape, and weather:

- On all sides then, as now, paths **ran** to the inn;
- And now a farm-track **takes you** from a gate.
- All day the air triumphs with its two **voices**/Of wind and rain:/As loud as if in anger it **rejoices**
- As if the mighty sun **wept tears of joy**.
- When mist **has been forgiven**/And the sun has **stolen out**

However these are less frequent than the personification of birds by verbal process verbs:

- With loud long **laughter** then a woodpecker/**Ridiculed** the sadness of the owl's last cry.
- [T]he small brown birds/**Wisely reiterating** endlessly/What no man learned yet, in or out of school.
- I tasted deep the hour/Between the far Owl's **chuckling** first soft cry/And the first star.

Another poem by Alice Oswald, "Sonnet", illustrates the personification of chalk, like landscape, part of the biosphere's mineral crust thought of as inanimate, though, like sulphur, intimately involved in Gaia.

towards winter flowers, forms of *ecstatic* water,
 chalk lies dry with all its *throats* open.
 winter flowers last maybe one frost
 chalk drifts its heap through billions of slow sea years;
 rains and pools and opens its *wombs*, 5
 bows its *back*, shows its *bone*.
 both closing towards each other
 at the dead end of the year – one
woken through, the others thrown into flower,
holding their wings *at the ready* in an increasing state of crisis. 10
 burrowed into and crumbled, *carrying*
 these small *supernumerary* powers founded on *breath*:
 chalk with all its *pits* and *pores*,
 winter flowers, smelling of a sudden entering elsewhere
 (Oswald 2008: 28)

All the italicized vocabulary personifies the chalk. "Pits" (13) is a conventional metaphor for small depressions in the skin, but here the direction of metaphorical application is reversed. Even "supernumerary" (12) is part of this personifying pattern meaning a temporary employee or extra member of a social group. The chalk/body is often sexualized. So "breath" (12) is ambiguous – is it the heavy breathing of the chalk through its open throats waiting for the penetration by flowers? Or, less of a personification, is it the carbon dioxide which forms the basis of the calcium carbonate of the chalk; and also the gas which the flowers take in and photosynthesise into oxygen, the kind of processes Lovelock highlights in Gaia theory (Goatly and Hiradhar 2016)?

Incidentally, we observe some of the grammatical tricks and patterns discussed in earlier sections. In the context of so much sexualized personification "lies" (2) activates "chalk" from a token into an intransitive actor, as though lying

on a bed. “Last” (3) might be seen as an activation of an existent – “continues to exist”. “Drifts” (4) is an instance of the conversion of an intransitive verb into an ergative effective verb (see Table 6). As we perceive the chalk and its shapes and formations it is static. But from the perspective of billions of years of geological processes, “drifts”, “rains”, “pools”, “opens its wombs”, and “bows its back” make us see the shapes of the chalk as active. This is a kind of radical activation of nature. A more familiar candidate for activation of tokens is “closing” (7) equivalent to the less active meaning that the flowers and the chalk ‘are close’.

We noted the use of participles in “Nature is a Heraclitean Fire” as indicators of processes. In ‘Sonnet’ the past participles “woken”, “thrown”, “burrowed”, “crumbled”, and “founded” are worth discussing. The actors here can be inferred from the context in most cases – it is probably the flowers that have woken, burrowed, and crumbled the chalk. But the actor who threw the flowers and founded the chalk is less certain. This conforms to a pattern common in Thomas where the frequent use of passives and past participles suggests a force (Logos, the Dao?) behind the natural world (Goatly 2017). A similar effect comes from the nominalization, “entering” (14). We are not sure what is doing this entering – water entering the chalk perhaps, or flowers the chalk? Counter-intuitively, it seems to be the flowers, traditionally seen as female, that are more like males entering the throat or womb of the chalk. The fact that we cannot easily attach a specific actor to these past participles or to “entering” perhaps hints at the primacy of process, as in quantum physics and Daoism.

Oswald’s “Birdsong for Two Voices”, discussed earlier, also shows personification problematizing the human/non-human distinction. The sun has “fingers”, with which it gathers instruments to accompany the song (15–16). The river is “shivering” (19), and the trees have “ears” (23). But we have dis-personification, too, where the mind whispers in its “shell” (22), presumably the human skull.

A second pronounced stylistic feature in Thomas is the co-ordination of human, natural, and human-made elements in noun phrases. Often the co-ordination/ listing involves the persona, “I”, who may be variously included with machines, planets, weather, trees, animals, and especially birds:

- And but **the moon and I**/Live yet and here stand idle over a grave
- And **I and star and wind and deer**,/Are in the dark together
- So that I seem a king/Among **man, beast, machine, bird, child**
- As if **the bird or I** were in a dream.
- Naught’s to be done/By **birds or men.**
- I never knew a voice,/Man, **beast, or bird**, better than this.
- ‘Twas home; one nationality/We had, **I and the birds** that sang.

The poem “Aspens” exemplifies an especially interesting instance of co-ordination working in tandem with personification/dis-personification (Goatly 2017).

Whatever wind blows, while they and I have leaves
 We cannot other than an aspen be
 That ceaselessly, unreasonably grieves,
 Or so men think who like a different tree.
 (Thomas 1949: 157)

Teasing out the metaphorical structure into source and target levels reveals that one of the co-ordinated noun phrases or one part of the inclusive “we” has a literal relationship (target) with the rest of the clause, while the other has a metaphorical relationship (source):

TARGET	They have leaves/I have (leaves ‘paper’)
SOURCE	leaves
TARGET	They [we] cannot other than an aspen be/I
SOURCE	cannot other than an aspen be
TARGET	An aspen /I unreasonably grieve
SOURCE	unreasonably grieves

“Aspens” as also “Birdsong for Two Voices” exemplify the fact that, if we are so closely inter-related with nature, then we might expect this to involve communication of some kind, with nature as a sayer. An analysis of all the clauses with natural elements as participants in Thomas’s *Collected Poems* reveals birds as by far the most important sayers, with weather/seasons and months a long way behind in second place (Figure 5).

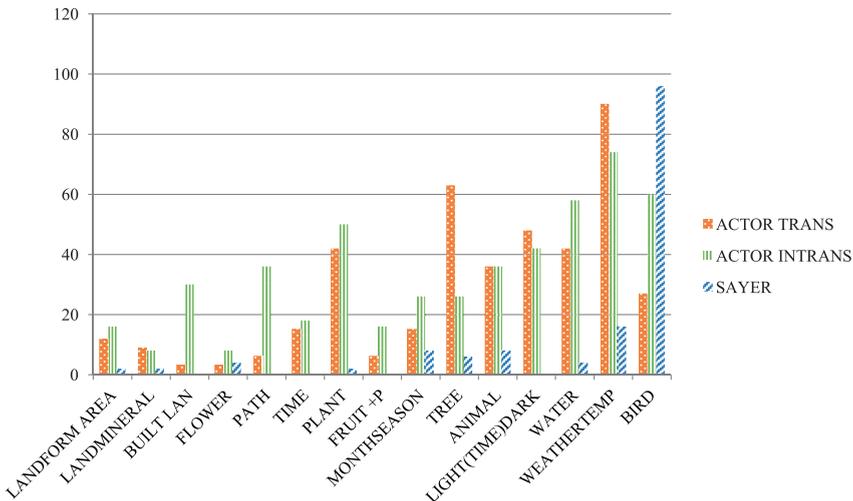


Figure 5: Natural elements as Actors and Sayers in Edward Thomas’s *Collected Poems* (Goatly 2017: 99).

For Thomas, birdsong had a religious element. In “March 3rd”, he claims “the birds’ songs have/The holiness gone from the bells.” It was a special language, “The thrush sings well/His proverbs untranslatable” (Thomas 1949: 122), which imparts knowledge beyond human education or even understanding. In “Sedge Warblers”, we hear “the small brown birds/Wisely reiterating endlessly/What no man learnt yet, in or out of school.” (Thomas 1949: 113) Unlike human language, birdsong reveals to the few initiates esoteric secrets that escape ordinary language.

[...] and if I could sing
 What would not even whisper my soul
 As I went on my journeying,
 I should use, as the trees and birds did,
 A language not to be betrayed;
 And what was hid should still be hid
 Excepting from those like me made
 Who answer when such whispers bid.
 (Thomas 1949: 100)

In “The Word”, Thomas recounts an experience of a thrush’s song which is a name without referent, “an empty thingless name” pointing to a pure, transcendent, immortal reality, beyond betrayal.

There are so many things I have forgot,
 That once were much to me, or that were not,
 All lost, as is a childless woman’s child
 And its child’s children, in the undefiled
 Abyss of what can never be again.
 I have forgot, too, names of the mighty men
That fought and lost or won in the old wars,
Of kings and fiends and gods, and most of the stars.
Some things I have forgot that I forget.
 But lesser things there are, remembered yet,
Than all the others. One name that I have not –
 Though ’tis an empty thingless name – forgot
 Never can die because Spring after Spring
 Some thrushes learn to say it as they sing.
 There is always one at midday saying it clear
 And tart – the name, only the name I hear.
 While perhaps I am thinking of the elder scent
 That is like food, or while I am content
 With the wild rose scent that is like memory,
This name suddenly is cried out to me
 From somewhere in the bushes by a bird
 Over and over again, a pure thrush word.
 (Thomas 1949: 154)

Besides the obvious participant role of birds as sayers here, nature is also a phenomenon to the receivers of the verbiage, the thrush word. In fact receivers might be thought of as a subset of sensors, with the verbiage a kind of phenomenon. In the poem, I have underlined the phenomena/verbiage.

The question that will exercise us in the next section is how we can sense the phenomena of nature and respond to its messages if we are confined temporally and spatially to local contiguities, and how this might affect narrative fictions.

3.4 Theme 4: Long-term and global ecological change

My examples so far have all come from poetry. I turn now to discussion of literary narrative. Narrative fiction, using Labov's model of narrative structure (Labov 1972), can be seen as an expansion and repetition of the textual contiguity found in the clause. The orientation in narrative, which describes the location and time setting, is an expansion of circumstantial adjuncts, and involves relational clauses. The complication and resolution are a succession of material, verbal, and sometimes mental process clauses. The characters are the participants in these clauses, mainly actors and goals, sayers and receivers, or sensors and phenomena.

The question is whether the contiguities manifest in the clauses and expanded in literary narrative reflect local or global contiguities. In Section 2, we noted the dangers of limiting ourselves to the local contiguities of a specific location and time, with specific individual participants, contiguities available to our immediate naked sensory and perceptual experience unaided by scientific instruments.

According to Amitav Ghosh in *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016), the contemporary novel's restriction to these local contiguities has amounted to a failure of imagination, a failure to recognize the possibilities of a different way of living that recognizes the non-human epochal and global forces involved in climate change.

The great, irreplaceable potentiality of fiction is that it makes possible the imagining of possibilities. And to imagine other forms of human existence is exactly the challenge that is posed by the climate crisis: for if there is any one thing that global warming has made perfectly clear it is that to think about the world only as it is amounts to a formula for collective suicide. We need, rather, to envision what it might be. But [...] this challenge has appeared before us at the very moment when the form of imagining that is best suited to answering it – fiction – has turned in a radically different direction. (Ghosh 2016: 128–129)

There are several reasons for its inadequacy. Firstly, limitation to specific places and times excludes “forces of unthinkable magnitude that create unbearably intimate connections over vast gaps in time and space” (Ghosh 2016: 63). This

contrasts with epics. *The Odyssey* ranges over wide spaces, *The Ramayana* over eras and epochs. This is an extract from the sixteenth-century Chinese folk epic 西游记 (*Xiyouji*, ‘*The Journey to the West*’):

At this point the firmament first acquired its foundation. With another 5,400 years came the Tzu epoch; the ethereal and the light rose up to form the four phenomena of the sun, the moon, the stars, and the heavenly bodies. [...] Following P’an Ku’s construction of the universe [...] the world was divided into four great continents [...] Beyond the ocean there was a country named Ao-lai. It was near a great ocean, in the midst of which was located the famous Flower-Fruit Mountain. (Ghosh 2016: 61)

In contemporary novels, no one mentions how the continents were created or refers to the passage of thousands of years (Ghosh 2016: 61–62). Contrast this with Alice Oswald’s “Sonnet” which recognizes geological time as “chalk drifts its heap through billions of slow sea years”.

Secondly, time is conceived as linear where change equals a “progress” brought about by separation of humans from the rest of the planet and its history (cf. Hegel and Marx). Concentrating on the avant-garde erases “every archaic [traditional] reminder of Man’s kinship with the nonhuman” (Ghosh 2016: 70).

Thirdly, then, there is no place for the non-human in the modern novel. “Nature remains off-limits to Culture, the knowledge of which is consigned entirely to the sciences” (Ghosh 2016: 71). Ghosh was shocked that during a period of surging carbon emissions “very few of the literary minds [...] were alive to the archaic voice whose rumblings, once familiar, had now become inaudible to humanity: that of the earth and its atmosphere” (Ghosh 2016: 124). Ghosh tried to give an example of a different contemporary fiction in *The Hungry Tide* (2004) in which the typhoon and its tidal surge, along with the Sundarbans mangrove forest on the Bay of Bengal become important protagonists (Zurru 2017).

Instead of the forces of nature or collective social forces, contemporary novels fixate on the individual characters and their moral choices, reflecting John Updike’s view of the novel as an “individual moral adventure” (Ghosh 2016: 77). But, individual moral choice is an impotent response to climate change. The tragic irony is that just as we realize “global warming is in every sense a collective predicament, humanity finds itself in the thrall of a dominant culture in which the idea of the collective has been exiled from politics, economics, and literature alike” (Ghosh 2016: 80–81).

Ghosh concludes that the contemporary novel is failing us by ignoring climate change, pollution, and resource depletion, and by missing the opportunity to address ecological problems with collective action, and to imagine a different world that takes into account global and epochal forces beyond individual moral choice.

Ghosh suggests that science fiction might provide a better narrative than the contemporary realistic novel. However, I shall briefly consider a novel which, I think, does avoid some of the problems Ghosh laments, namely William Golding's *The Inheritors*. This novel is familiar because Halliday's (2002 [1971]) analysis of it was one of the founding texts of literary stylistics. Consideration of this novel will also remind us of themes and philosophies sketched earlier which I believe ecostylistics can usefully take into account.

The novel is about the encounter between Neanderthals and homo sapiens/new people. *Homo sapiens*, like us, have technology – bows and arrows, daggers, sailboats – religion, alcohol, clothes, complex sex, etc. Most of the novel is seen through the eyes of the Neanderthal Lok, who, gentle and generous, does not understand the behavior of the new people, especially their aggression. *Homo sapiens* directly or indirectly bring about the death of all the members of the Neanderthal tribe except Lok and the baby, whom they kidnap and adopt. During the course of the novel the ice begins to melt and the ensuing flood of melt water sweeps away a fleeing member of the Neanderthal tribe. The climax of the novel is when Lok discovers the burnt bones of his dead daughter, Liku, whom the homo sapiens have sacrificed to appease their fear of Lok's tribe. Deprived of his tribe, Lok simply lies down and dies. At the end of the novel the homo sapiens tribe, with the baby, sail upstream away from the Neanderthals they feared. The novel can be read as an account of the fall of man from the simple and innocent Neanderthal to the complex, violent, and technologically advanced homo sapiens, set at a time when the world was coming out of the ice age and changing to a warmer climate.

It is clear from this plot outline that the novel does not fall prey to the inadequacies that Ghosh lamented. Though restricted in place, it is epochal in time. It gives a double sense that it represents two distinct eras: first the era of the Neanderthals being replaced by the era dominated by homo sapiens; second, the ice-age era transitioning to a post-ice-age climate. Though the novel involves individual characters with moral or intellectual choices, they also represent types, Neanderthals and homo sapiens, like the fall of man in the biblical Genesis story where Adam represents the whole of humanity. The moral choices made and the ways of thinking and acting of the old people and the new people are representative of the two sub-species of hominids.

The grammatical correlate of these different ways of thinking and acting was the topic of Halliday's seminal article, which I will now briefly summarize. The grammatical style of the novel in pages 1–216 – Language A, contrasts with that in pages 223–233 – Language C. In Language A, we see the world from the point of view or mindstyle (Leech and Short 1981) of Lok the Neanderthal. It is sufficiently strange to us that we may not at first realize, in the extract of passage A below, that the homo sapiens man is turning sideways, pulling on his bowstring so that the

bow bends, and firing an arrow that hits the tree and sticks in it, an arrow with a flight of goose feathers and a poisoned bone tip. In Language C, our more comprehensible language, we are seeing the world from the point of view of the new people/homo sapiens.

Halliday (2002 [1971]) took a representative sample from each section and analyzed the grammatical patterns or norms summarized here.

Sample of Language A:

The bushes twitched again. Lok steadied by the tree and gazed. A head and a chest faced him, half-hidden. There were white bone-things behind the leaves and hair. The man had white bone things above his eyes and under the mouth so that his face was longer than a face should be. The man turned sideways in the bushes and looked along his shoulder. A stick rose upright and there was a lump of bone in the middle. Lok peered at the stick and the lump of bone and the small eyes in the bone things over the face. Suddenly Lok understood that the man was holding the stick out to him, but neither he nor Lok could reach over the river. He would have laughed if it were not for the echo of the screaming in his head. The stick began to grow shorter at both ends. Then it shot out to full length again.

The dead tree by Lok's ear acquired a voice.

“Clop!”

His ears twitched and he turned to the tree. By his face there had grown a twig: a twig that smelt of other, and of goose, and of the bitter berries that Lok's stomach told him he must not eat. This twig had a white bone at the end. There were hooks in the bone and sticky brown stuff hung in the crooks. His nose examined this stuff and did not like it. He smelled along the shaft of the twig. The leaves on the twig were red feathers and reminded him of goose. He was lost in a generalized astonishment and excitement. He shouted at the green drifts across the glittering water and heard Liku crying out in answer but could not catch the words, They were cut off suddenly as though someone had clapped a hand over her mouth. He rushed to the edge of the water and came back. On either side of the open bank the bushes grew thickly in the flood; they waded out until at their farthest some of the leaves were opening under water; and these bushes leaned over.

The echo of Liku's voice in his head sent him trembling at this perilous way of bushes towards the island. He dashed at them where normally they would have been rooted on dry land and his feet splashed. He threw himself forward and grabbed at the branches with hands and feet. He shouted:

“I am coming!”

(Golding 1961 [1955]: 106–107)

Firstly, Halliday (2002 [1971]) noted that human actors are often in intransitive clauses, not affecting their environment, e.g.

- Lok steadied by the tree [...]
- The man turned sideways in the bushes [...]
- [...] he turned to the tree.
- He rushed to the edge of the water and then rushed back.
- He dashed at them [...]
- He [...] grabbed at the branches with hands and feet.

Secondly, parts of the body are frequently *actors* (*sayers*), rather than the whole person, e.g.

- His ears twitched [...]
- A head and chest faced him, half-hidden.
- [...] the bitter berries that Lok's stomach told him he must not eat.
- [...] his feet splashed.

Thirdly, actors are just as likely to be non-animate as animate, e.g.

- The bushes twitched again.
- A stick rose upright and there was a lump of bone in the middle.
- The stick began to grow shorter at both ends. Then it shot out to full length again. (Compare "Someone pulled the bow back")
- The dead tree by Lok's ear acquired a voice. (Compare "The arrow hit the tree and made a noise")
- The bushes grew thickly in the flood; they waded out until at their farthest some of the leaves were opening under water; and these bushes leaned over.

What is clear here is that the animate/inanimate distinction is not made by Lok/the Neanderthals. They are part of the whole of nature, not separate or different. Nor do they dominate it or have much effect on it.

Sample of Language C:

The sail glowed red-brown. Tuami glanced back at the gap through the mountain and saw that it was full of golden light and the sun was sitting in it. As if they were obeying some signal the people began to stir, to sit up and look across the water at the green hills. Twal bent over Tanakil and kissed her and murmured to her. Tanakil's lips parted. Her voice was harsh and came from far away in the night.

"Liku!"

Tuami heard Marlan whisper to him from by the mast.

"That is the devil's name. Only she may speak it."

Now Vivani was really waking. They heard her huge, luxurious yawn and the bear skin was thrown off. She sat up, shook back her loose hair and looked first at Marlan then at Tuami. At once he was filled again with lust and hate. If she had been what she was, if Marlan, if her man, if she had saved her baby in the storm on the salt water –

"My breasts are painning me."

If she had not wanted the child as a plaything, if I had not saved the other as a joke – He began to talk high and fast.

"There are plains beyond those hills, Marlan, for they grow less; and there will be herds for hunting. Let us steer in towards the shore. Have we water – but of course we have water! Did the women bring the food? Did you bring the food, Twal?"

Twal lifted her face towards him and it was twisted with grief and hate.

"What have I to do with food, master? You and he gave my child to the devils and they have given me back a changeling who does not see or speak."

The sand was swirling in Tuami's brain. He thought in panic: they have given me back a changed Tuami; what shall I do? Only Marlan is the same – smaller, weaker but the same. He peered forrard to find the changeless one as something he could hold on to. The sun was blazing on the red sail and Marlan was red. His arms and legs were contracted, his hair stood out and his beard, his teeth were wolf's teeth and his eyes like blind stones. The mouth was opening and shutting.

“They cannot follow us, I tell you. They cannot pass over water.”

(Golding 1961 [1955]: 228–229)

Halliday (2002 [1971]) made two important observations about Language C. Firstly, the majority of the clauses (48 out of 67) have a human subject, e.g.

- the people began to stir, to sit up and look across the water at the green hills.
- Twal bent over Tanakil and kissed her and murmured to her.
- Now Vivani was really waking. They heard her huge luxurious yawn. She stood up, shook back her loose hair and looked first at Marlan then at Tuami.
- If she had saved her baby in the storm on the salt water –
- He thought in panic: they have given me back a changed Tuami; what shall I do?
- He peered forward to find the changeless one as something he could hold on to.

Secondly, most of these are material actions and transitive verbs with a goal. Human agents are acting on external objects and other people, e.g.

- Twal [...] kissed her
- If she had saved her baby in the storm [...]
- they have given me back a changed Tuami
- He peered forward to find the changeless one as something he could hold on to.

In step with its epochal scope, this novel represents the transition from the Neanderthal mind style and life style to that of homo sapiens. This amounts to a technological revolution, a beginning of the process taken to disastrous extremes during the last 300 years in Europe, and now spread to much of the rest of the world. The technological advances of the Industrial Revolution allowed the mass production of manufactured goods and their distribution through transport systems like railways. From the 1920s capitalist manufacturing industry became organized around highly mechanized Fordist production lines. Its massive capital investment favored over-production, necessitating persuasion to consume: in the last seventy years electronic mass media – radio, TV, internet, etc. – facilitated widespread advertising, the whole population was targeted as potential

consumers. Latterly capitalism has embraced globalization, seeking out locations for production which are cheaper, because of weak labor and environmental regulations, in order to maximize profits. The ecological downsides to this technological domination, exploitation, and industrialization of nature, obsession with profit and with economic growth include massive carbon footprints and pollution, the using up of non-renewable resources, and problems of waste-disposal in a finite environment (Goatly and Hiradhar 2016). Additionally, our technological prowess has given us the doubtful benefits of nuclear energy, and the tools for genetic modification, which also pose serious dangers to our future.

Our human ability to act on our environment and other people is frightening. It is usually put to misuse even in the novel, through magic and witchcraft used for oppression, drunken sexual orgies, and pre-meditated murder. Unlike the Neanderthals, who have a taboo on killing animals, homo sapiens are hunters and meat-eaters. After this fall of man, we are enslaved to the erroneous idea that we can dominate and separate ourselves from nature, rather than live in harmony with it. However there is also a redeeming intimation that art may be more important than violence: Tuami, one of the homo sapiens, fashioning a dagger at the end of the novel, wonders whether the intricate ivory carving of the handle is more important than the blade.

While this section is attempting to demonstrate that novels may escape the limitations of time and individuality of local contiguity which Ghosh deplors, it also happens to demonstrate two important themes from previous sections of this chapter. First, the interconnectedness of humans and nature, through the animistic beliefs of Lok. These are not personifications for him, as his mind-set accepts that bushes can literally “wade” and “lean over” just as humans can. Second, we see exemplified in Lok’s lifestyle, and the intransitive clauses representing it, the Daoist notion of *wuwei*, non or minimal interference. Note, incidentally, that according to my analysis of Thomas’s poems (Figure 5) for 10 out of 15 of the nature categories intransitive actors are more frequent than transitive. It is as though nature can be observed and celebrated doing its own thing without impact beyond itself. I do not have the space here for another section entitled “in praise of intransitivity”. Daoism had its origins in the Warring States period and might have developed as a resistance to the use of technology for war where actions have literal impact on others. The sympathy for the Neanderthals in this novel may have similar origins in Golding’s distaste for violence, primitive or nuclear, displayed in *Lord of the Flies*.

3.5 Theme 5: Narrative and metaphor

In Arran Stibbe's book *Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology and the Stories We Live By* (2021: Ch. 10), narrative takes on a wider sense than the narrative literary fictions discussed above. I have associated narrative with an expansion of the clause along the contiguity dimension. However, narratives have a point or sometimes even a moral and thereby illustrate abstract themes (Goatly 2022). On the similarity dimension, they could, like proverbs, be specific hyponymic illustrations of a general superordinate theme. In the Labovian model of narrative (Labov 1972), the coda, if it contains a moral, as in a fable, and more especially the abstract which comes at the beginning, indicate the point of the story and this larger more abstract sense we can make of it. In the core of the narrative, we move from orientation/complication, which represents a problem, to a resolution/coda that represents its solution. By contrast, many of these "stories-we-live-by", unlike narratives in the literary sense, are expressed in abstract, nominalized terms: profit and success, economic growth, technological progress. They are, nevertheless, like narrative fiction, attempts to both make sense of events, and also to illustrate solutions to problems.

Stibbe (2021: 2) alludes to these stories-we-live-by, which present illusory solutions to problems. In the profit and success story poverty is a problem and a sign of failure. Individually we can rise above poverty and become rich and successful by our own efforts in creating profitable businesses. This is a harmful solution because (1) money is the most extreme form of reducing complexity to make everything equivalent to everything else in market exchange and (2) it suggests individuals exist and succeed separate from the rest of society and the environment – the success of the individual often depends on educational and other social resources and leads to exploitation of others.

In the economic growth story, poverty and the misery caused by it are a problem for large sections of society. It can be solved by increasing economic activity measured in terms of growth to GDP which will make people happier. This is a harmful solution because (1) beyond a certain level of GDP increasing it does not make people happier (Seligman 2002) (2) as pointed out earlier, GDP is not a good measure of happiness or health (3) increasing growth/GDP in mature economies is like a cancer destroying the environment and, in the medium-to-long term, threatening people's lives and making them poorer (Goatly and Hiradhar 2016), and (4) GDP (and money) cannot be applied to natural ecological systems, and therefore exclude them (Harvey 1996).

In the technological progress story lack of civilization in primitive societies is a problem. The solution is to become civilized by using technology to control

elements of nature, e.g. clothes and shelter against cold weather, skyscrapers against gravity, dams against seasonality of rains/flooding, using (up) natural resources (e.g. fossil fuels) for heating, cooking, building, and industry. In this story, any problems we encounter or create, e.g. climate change, lack of energy supplies, or resource depletion can have a technological fix. These solutions are harmful because (1) nature is just as powerful as us (2) the resources of this globe are finite (3) we do not understand the natural world sufficiently to predict the effects of technology (4) nature has evolved over billions of years into a diverse world of trillions of interdependent species; interfering with this partially-understood process is destroying natural abundance and our own life support systems, and (5) technological fixes (e.g. recycling to combat resource depletion) only partially solve the problems we have created. Witness the transition from Golding's technology-free Neanderthals to the technologically minded homo sapiens.

Flat figures, let alone objects, have to depend on more than one dimension. So the similarity dimension, whatever its dangers if overemphasized, is essential to language and discourse and literature: words cannot have meaning unless they establish classes of entities. Metaphor, even more than "stories-we-live-by", belongs to this dimension, but it is important because a variety of metaphors suggests alternative classifications which allow a diversity in ways of thinking and acting. If *haeccitas* insists on the qualities which are ignored in classification, metaphor's alternative classifications (Glucksberg and McGlone 1999) may recognize these qualities. Similarly, a diversity of languages is also vital as their categories may not match our first language, and may be radically different (see my discussion of Blackfoot in Goatly 2007, 2022).

Harré et al. (1999) discussed various metaphors for nature and our interaction with it and what follows relies heavily on them. They start with a historical European perspective. In the Middle Ages, the seventh to fourteenth centuries AD, nature was regarded as a book written by God, for human instruction about the nature of the divine. The role of humans was to understand the signs in this book, not to rewrite or improve it, which suggests positively an attitude similar to *wuwei*, and an openness to nature as sayer or communicator. Nature is created for humankind and a means of bodily salvation/healing, just like a religious text is a means of spiritual salvation. The questions we might ask about this metaphor and its implications are whether nature needs to point beyond itself in order to have value, and if the point of nature is its value to humans (God).

In the Renaissance, the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries, the natural universe (the macrocosm) corresponded to a human body (microcosm) or the state (the body politic). The macrocosm has an intimate cause-effect relationship with the human-body (and human society). Human body and nature are reflections of

each other, e.g. the aging of the earth produces wrinkles on its surface, the water cycle is like the circulatory system of blood, e.g. *veins* of the earth.

This conception of nature is still observable in current English lexis. It is quite common to personify places, especially natural landscapes, using as metaphors parts of the human body. From the top downwards: **head** ‘upper part’ (*the head of the valley*), **fringe** ‘edge of an area’, **face** ‘front slope of a hill or mountain’, **mouth** either ‘estuary of a river’ or ‘entrance to a cave’, **arm/finger** ‘promontory’, **backbone/spine** ‘central row of hills or mountains’, **foot** ‘lower part’.

Actions performed on the landscape are metaphorically actions on a human body, often violent, not **environmentally-friendly**: **gash** ‘deep trench’, **scar** ‘scrape the vegetation off’, **rape** ‘environmental destruction’. Verbs and adjectives personify the landscape: as we saw in Thomas, **lie**, **sit** and **stand** can all mean ‘be situated or positioned’; **bald/bare** can mean ‘without vegetation’, **hospitable** ‘with good living and growing conditions’, **virgin** ‘unused, uncultivated’, **treacherous** ‘very dangerous’ (*this swamp is very treacherous, keep to the path*).

Conversely, metaphors may dispersonify. Types of soil or rock are applied to humans as evaluative nouns or adjectives: **grit** ‘bravery’, **clod** ‘stupid person’, **flinty** ‘severe and hostile’, **gravelly** ‘rough and low (of a voice)’. The shape of land dispersonifies the human body and its parts: **contour** ‘shape of the body’ (*your bikini shows off your contours wonderfully*), **furrow** ‘lines or wrinkles in the forehead’, and by implication, **stubble** ‘short growth of beard’ which grows out of the skin as cereal crops from the ground (Goatly and Hiradhar 2016).

We already noted the positive aspects of these personifications and dispersonifications in blurring the boundary between the human and non-human, suggesting that we are intimately connected and cannot be separated. In addition, personification allows environmental destruction to be seen in terms of morality (for example *rape of the countryside*) (Harvey 1996: 389).

In this metaphorical pattern, the correspondences between the macrocosm and microcosm also hint at, at least, a holographic universe. Moreover, and as a consequence, this and the book of God metaphor also positively encourage us to look at nature as a phenomenon or sayer, as Thomas does, rather than a goal.

From the Enlightenment onwards, the seventeenth century to the present, nature has often been metaphorized as a machine – for instance a clock, steam engine, or computer. Nature as machine seems to be one of the most dangerous and misleading metaphors. Unlike the earlier metaphors, nature/human body are no longer givens (book/macrocosm-microcosm) but invented. Machines are created to produce standardized outputs, according to mathematically-based science and technology, and can therefore be understood in mathematical terms. But, as we discussed in Section 1 of this article, biological systems cannot be understood by or reduced to mathematics. Because machines are made for a

purpose they have built in controls, but nature is not controllable – it breaks free into spontaneous change, according to Daoism, quantum theory, and the Gaia hypothesis. Machines can be improved and bring about “progress” – so, according to this metaphor, humans can improve nature. However, our technology has not brought ecological progress. Machines have parts and can be taken apart to see how each operates independently. But nature is a whole and parts of it cannot be ultimately considered separately or, as discussed, valued in isolation (Harvey 1996). The only positive I can see to this metaphor is the idea that the “parts” of nature are all connected to each other, as in a machine.

Harré et al. (1999) go on to discuss more modern metaphors for nature. One such is our environment as a tapestry or the web of life (*web* originally meaning ‘weaving’). They suggest positive grounds for this metaphor: they are a mixture of the natural and human-made, compare Thomas’s co-ordination of human, natural, and the human-made; both do well if not interfered with too much by humans, compare the concept of *wuwei*; they are used and are trodden on and made dirty and they may need cleaning occasionally; both are finite in area and lifespan; only the surface is visible; they are quicker and easier to destroy than to create; different kinds of carpet/environment are suitable for different locations; parts are “woven” together and interdependent – destroying one part risks destroying the whole (Harré et al. 1999: 101). The problem with such metaphors is that the intended positive grounds may also allow negative ones: if a carpet wears out we can replace it; we own carpets and they have a monetary value; they are manufactured by us.

The same problems arise with the metaphor of earth as our home, inherent in the etymology of *ecology*. Positive grounds are that we care for a home because it is the place where we live most comfortably. But negative grounds are that we may own the earth (in fact we may just rent or lease it), so we have the right to do with it what we want, even sell it; that though we are in it we are separate from it and can leave it if need be; and that only tame and domesticated animals and small plants can live within it (Meisner 1995).

Besides the uncertainty of grounds, there is the problem that ways of referring to nature may be influenced by cognitively entrenched lexicalized metaphors of which we are often unaware, reflecting a latent ideology. *Environment* means surroundings, and therefore tends to be interpreted according to the metaphor theme IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL: **central** means ‘most important’ (*investment was central to our economic success*), **centrepiece** ‘most important, interesting or attractive feature’, **center** ‘the place which exerts the most important influence’ (*Boston became a center for genetic modification*), **core** ‘most basic and important’. By contrast, the unimportant or less important elements are **peripheral**, **marginal**, or **fringe**. The implication of the term *environment* is that humans are central and thus more important than nature. This idea is reinforced by grammar, in which the

environment is very often represented as a circumstance (*circum-* echoing the metaphor of being around). Anthropocentrism is not always ecologically positive: putting nature center stage is.

4 Summary and conclusion

In Section 2, I introduced Jakobson's theory that meaning is organized along two dimensions, similarity and contiguity corresponding to the two areas of the brain largely responsible for language processing: Wernicke's area and Broca's area. The former concentrates on the processing of nouns, the latter of verbs and clauses. I demonstrated how these dimensions are instantiated in the classificatory and deictic elements of the noun phrase, and how clause structure establishes contiguities of text reflecting contiguities in action genres or schemas. I proceeded to sketch how overemphasis of the similarity dimension through money and mathematics has had adverse effects on ecology, as market capitalism has led to increasing commodification of humans/nature, and mathematics has established hegemony over other disciplines.

In Section 3, I suggested five themes for ecostylistics which could resist or modify, to a greater or lesser extent, this overemphasis, and celebrate aspects of contiguity, and I introduced relevant poetic and novel texts that might exemplify this resistance.

- (1) Individuation, countering classification, as celebrated in the Daoist concept of *ziran*, and Duns Scotus's concept of *haecitas*, is manifest in the Gerard Manley Hopkins poem "As Kingfishers Catch Fire".
- (2) Dynamic process, celebrating verbs, is associated with quantum physics, doctrines of Buddhism/Daoism, and the philosophy of Heraclitus, remarkable in its resemblance to Daoism's balancing of *yin* and *yang*. The texts illustrating this theme, Hopkins's "Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and the Comfort of the Resurrection", and Alice Oswald's "Birdsong for Two Voices" were analyzed for their emphasis on verbs, and nominalizations, the latter especially significant when both actor and goal depict nature as interacting processes. Grammatical techniques for turning phenomena in mental processes and tokens in relational processes into actors in material processes, to show nature's dynamism, were exemplified in Wordsworth.
- (3) Interrelatedness, underlining contiguities both local and global, are evident in Daoism/Buddhism, quantum theory, and Gaia theory. A technique reflecting this, personification/activation of tokens, was found to be widespread in the poetry of Edward Thomas, and illustrated in Oswald's "Sonnet". Another technique in Thomas is the use of co-ordination in noun phrases of the

- natural, human and human-made. While personification and co-ordination tend to blur the dividing line between humans and nature, interrelatedness also involves communication between them, and this too was explored in Thomas, especially in the poem “The Word” where birdsong is presented as a mystical language.
- (4) Long-term ecological change addresses the inadequacies of overemphasis on local contiguity, by discussing Amitav Ghosh’s criticism of the contemporary English novel for ignoring the global and epochal of epics. William Golding’s novel, *The Inheritors*, is an exception to this as it represents the transition from the era of Neanderthals to that of homo sapiens, from the Ice Age to a warmer climate. Halliday’s analysis of Neanderthal and homo sapiens mind-styles (Leech and Short 1981) as manifest in intransitive and transitive material processes respectively, aligns Neanderthals with the Daoist concept of *wuwei*. And Lok’s animism dissolves the human-nature division more thoroughly than personification.
 - (5) Narrative and metaphor are essential aspects of ecostylistics. While literary narratives are extensions of the contiguity dimension, the “stories-we-live-by” tend to the abstraction of the similarity dimension, functioning like superordinate categories. They do, however, share with literary narratives the aim of making sense and problem-solving. Metaphors, obviously enough, depend on similarity for the interpretation for grounds. But by resisting conventional classification and providing a wide variety of alternatives, they have a vital role to play in language which is, after all, necessarily dependent on similarity as well as contiguity. Some negative stories-we-live-by were critiqued, and some dominant historical and modern metaphors were evaluated in relation to ecology.

I suggest these themes, mostly stressing challenges to the similarity dimension, and recognizing process and global contiguity, could be important in the ecostylistics project, an exercise in positive discourse analysis (Martin 2004). They take account of some of what we currently know of the nature of physical reality and ecology, aspects of which have been recognized in medieval and Eastern philosophy. The lexico-grammatical and discourse strategies discussed here – predominance of verbs and nominalizations, intransitive and ergative verbs, activations of natural phenomena and tokens, personification of nature, co-ordination of human and non-human, narratives and metaphors – are merely a selection from the repertoire of linguistic and discursal resources which literature might use in the service of these themes. However, it would seem fruitful to use any or all of these approaches to analysis in the ecostylistics project.

I also hope that Jakobson's framework of two dimensions of meaning, which I elaborate at length elsewhere (Goatly 2022), is useful for making sense of these ecostylistic themes, by locating them in the wider context of cognitive linguistic theory.

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Lost landscapes of childhood: An ecostylistic analysis of *The Issa Valley*

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Abstract: *The Issa Valley*, a novel by the renowned Polish émigré poet and writer Czesław Miłosz, is a partly autobiographical rendition of Miłosz’s early years spent on his family estate at Szetejnie in Lithuania. The omniscient narrator presents the early years and adolescence of a Polish gentry boy, Thomas Dilbin; the second, equally important protagonist of the novel is the eponymous Issa Valley. The book is an homage paid to the beauty of Lithuanian nature and to the world of childhood memories; as such, it invites an attempt at an ecostylistic interpretation, which is the main aim of this study. The methodology applied to analyze its English translation partly follows Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short’s taxonomy of linguistic aspects relevant when studying fiction, such as context, lexicon, syntax, and figuration. Furthermore, this ecostylistic analysis focuses on figuration and its imagistic potential in picturing the Issa landscape. Master tropes (simile, metaphor, synecdoche, irony, and antithesis) work at three textual levels: *micro-*, *macro-*, and *megatropical*. This scrutiny proves that the novel is an instance of what I call *existential ecology*, with *antithesis* as a dominant textual backbone; it also demonstrates that figuration reflects an intensely corporeal experience of nature by the young Thomas. The main contribution of this article to Miłosz’s scholarship is that it offers an ecostylistic reading of *The Issa Valley*, which has not been applied to the novel so far, specifically from lexical, grammatical, and tropological perspectives.

Keywords: antithesis; childhood landscapes; existential ecology; Lithuanian nature; micro-/macro-/megatropological

1 Introduction

In 1955, Institut Littéraire in Paris publishes a novel titled *Dolina Issy* by the then little-known Polish émigré poet and writer Czesław Miłosz. Its first translation into French appears in 1956, followed by the first German translation in 1957. The

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situation changes dramatically after 1980, when Miłosz is granted the Nobel Prize in Literature and the eyes of the world turn with curiosity and interest toward his oeuvre. 1981 marks the first appearance of *Dolina Issy* in Poland, following a long period of political ban on Miłosz's writings imposed by the Communist regime, and the same year witnesses the first English translation, *The Issa Valley* by Louis Iribarne, issued in New York. Translations into other languages will crop up for several decades, with the first translation into Lithuanian, *Isos Slėnis*, appearing in Vilnius in 1991, a year after the re-establishment of the Republic of Lithuania as a nation-state independent from the Soviet Union.

By and large, what Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* stands for in the French literary tradition, *The Issa Valley* stands for in the Polish culture related to the former eastern and north-eastern Frontiers (Polish *Kresy*) of Poland. This borderland had a long and involved history, in the course of which Poles remained in not always easy contact with Ukrainians, Belarussians, Lithuanians, Russians, and Germans. The half-real and half-mythical Issa Valley, situated in the heart of ethnic Lithuania, is a symbol of the past shared for centuries by the Polish and Lithuanian inhabitants of the region. To this Land of Lakes of unusual beauty, we are transported by Miłosz, reviving the cherished memory of his childhood and youth experiences, to which social upheavals and the remapping of state borders as a result of two World Wars put a definite end.

Miłosz was born in 1911, in the vicinity of the village of Szetejnie (Lithuanian *Šeteniai*, near Kėdainiai, in the Kaunas region), on the River Niewiaża (Lithuanian *Nevėžis*, renamed Issa in the novel), into a family of Polish landowners. He stayed on their estate in his early years (1911–1913) and later, between 1918 and 1920, after which he moved to Vilnius to continue his education at a secondary school and at the John Casimir University. During World War II, he stayed in Warsaw, where he attended underground lectures in philosophy conducted by Władysław Tatarkiewicz and aided Jews. Following the war, he served as a Polish cultural attaché in Paris and Washington, D.C. In 1951, he defected to the West, becoming a voice lost to the Polish readership for three decades. His nonfiction book *The Captive Mind* (Miłosz 1953) became a classic of anti-Stalinism.

The Issa Valley was written in France, according to the author (Fiut 1981: 32) as an act of “autotherapy” in the period of his acute solitude as an émigré criticized by various milieus for escaping Poland, which coincided with an abatement of poetic inspiration. Paradoxically, this personal and creative torment resulted in the birth of a piece of poetic prose of unusual charm, a nostalgic tribute paid to the lost landscape of his homeland.

Later, Miłosz moved to the United States where, between 1961 and 1998, he acted as a Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of California at Berkeley. He became a U.S. citizen in 1970. In 1980, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for his poetic output, essays, fictional and nonfictional prose. In 1989, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, he divided his time between Berkeley and Kraków, becoming a voice regained by the Polish society. He visited Lithuania in 1992, trying

to spot the traces of the paradisiac childhood spent in his native manor house, amidst Lithuanian nature so dear to his heart. The poetic cycle *Lithuania, After Fifty-Two Years* (Miłosz 2008 [1996]: 402–419) offers an ambivalent summary of his “search of lost time”. He died in Kraków in 2004 and is buried there in the Graves of the Meritorious Poles in the Paulist Basilica “Na Skalce”.

In this article, *The Issa Valley*, the English translation by Iribarne of Miłosz’s original *Dolina Issy*, will be the object of ecostylistic analysis. Section 2 introduces the novel and the landscapes it depicts. More precisely, Section 2.1 presents the novel as, simultaneously, an existential treatise, addressing some basic issues related to the duality of human and natural life along the axes of GOOD VERSUS EVIL, ALIVE VERSUS DEAD, REAL VERSUS MYTHICAL, and an ecological work, a laudatory reminiscence of Miłosz’s Lithuanian homeland. Section 2.2 addresses the ecological question of how the cherished memories of childhood landscapes can and should be preserved. Section 3 outlines the theoretical foundation and the research methodology of the article, which follows a slightly modified and simplified taxonomy of Leech and Short’s (2007) categories for studying fiction, and combines them with an ecostylistic approach. Sections 4 and 5 focus on the stylistic analysis of the text, mostly on the rendition of nature in the novel. To be more specific, Section 4.1 draws an indispensable contextual setting for the novel, a sketch of the historical, social, and linguistic background of the Polish-Lithuanian milieu in which the story develops. Section 4.2 directs the reader’s attention to the very special lexicon used throughout the novel, marked by a regional stylization associated with the so-called Lithuanian Polish. From the perspective of ecostylistics, a rich specialized vocabulary, crucial in picturing the landscape of the Issa Valley, is the second lexical aspect worthy of attention. Section 4.3 provides a very brief list of the most conspicuous syntactic characteristics of Miłosz’s poetic prose, all contributing to the creation of a unique atmosphere of the Issa world. Section 5 tackles the pivotal issue of how the landscape of the Issa Valley is construed by figurative means. Section 5.1 presents a triple-level functional model of analyzing tropes in a literary text, developed by Chrzanowska-Kluczevska (2013b), informed by Vichian tropology, deconstructionism, and cognitive poetics, and adopted in the present stylistic analysis of the novel. Consequently, Section 5.2 discusses the overt level of predominant microtropes, that is, figures operative within the phrasal and sentential scope (simile, metaphor, synecdoche, antithesis, etc.). Section 5.3 turns to the overt middle-level of textual troping, at which macrometonymies, macrosynecdoches, and macroirony operate across larger stretches of text (paragraphs and chapters). Section 5.4 discusses the tacit level of megatropes that structure the entire text. Miłosz’s existential-ecological approach to nature becomes clearly visible in his consistent application of mega-antithesis. Section 5.5 concludes the aforementioned ponderings with a claim about the fundamental role of tropes as cohesion- and coherence-building mechanisms of artistic discourse. This is followed by a discussion and conclusions in Section 6.

Given these wide-ranging topics and the methodologies adopted in this examination, the article hopes to inscribe itself into the broader research program of ecostylistics, showing how the tools of stylistics and of a specific tropological paradigm can be applied in an analysis of a literary text that pays homage to nature and to the human presence in it.

2 Literature review

2.1 *The Issa Valley*: Existential treatise and ecological novel

Despite its English subtitle *A Novel*, *The Issa Valley* is a genological conundrum, described by Miłosz himself (Fiut 1981: 33) as an “oddity”, “a masked theological treatise”, but also a partly autobiographical rendition of his early years spent at Szetejnie. The protagonist of the novel, the young Tomasz (Thomas) Dilbin, lives in the village of Ginie (Gine), on the magical Issa River, whose fictive name refers to the real Niewiaża, in the manor house of his maternal grandfather Kazimierz (Casimir) Surkont. The omniscient narrator, who very consistently refers to himself as a “chronicler”, presents the early years and adolescence of Thomas. The story ends around 1921, when Thomas – almost 14 years old – is taken by his mother to Vilnius (or to Poland), to receive formal education. Several metatextual commentaries that make excursions into the future obliterate a distinction between the empirical author, narrator and Thomas, whose voices and thoughts seem to coincide (see also Łoziński 2011). The unhurried narration, similar to the flow of the eponymous Issa, proceeds in an irregular way, often broken by long descriptions and commentaries; its imagistic technique of presenting the plot has been claimed to possess some cinematographic qualities (Horbowicz and Skrzypek 2011; Rybka 2000).¹

It soon appears that the second main protagonist of the novel, signaled by its title, is a fragment of the Lithuanian landscape with the Issa in the center. The place seems an idyll or Paradise, as some critics claimed (Bailey 1981, see also Marek Zaleski’s afterword in Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 268), yet, actually, it is a source of several antagonistic sentiments – a landscape as experienced by a growing-up boy, at first emotionally and with time also rationally. We soon realize that we are facing not just

¹ A feature film, *Dolina Issy*, with an excellent cast, appeared in 1981, directed by the well-known Polish writer and film-maker Tadeusz Konwicki, upon the request of the Miłosz family. Konwicki commented that the reason for deciding to create a screen adaptation of the novel was his own provenance from Lithuania. Even after 30 years of having departed from his homeland, he kept vivid memories of “the scent of forests, taste of water, shapes of clouds, hues of grass” (<https://culture.pl/pl/dzielo/dolina-issy>). These perceptual reminiscences are very close to Miłosz’s own experience of Lithuanian nature.

a realistically rendered post-glacial terrain of undulating hills, pristine forests, meadows, and farmland; indeed, the description of the Issa signals an unusual ambience of its surroundings:

It's time to pass from the general landscape to the Valley itself, which in many ways is an anomaly in the Land of Lakes. The Issa is a deep, black river with a lazy current, thickly bordered with reeds; a river whose surface is barely visible in places under the lily pads, which winds through meadows and between gentle slopes noted for their fecundity. [...] The Issa Valley has the distinction of being inhabited by an unusually large number of devils. (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 5–6)

Nature around the Issa contains not only human and animal life, but is pregnant with old, mysterious powers; it is nature personified and imbued with the presence of the supernatural, not solely the devils in several varieties, ironically described in Chapter 2. The magic surrounding the Issa has its source in a mixture of pagan beliefs that have wound their way into the folk tradition of native people from the ancient polytheistic pantheons of Lithuanian and Slavic deities, accompanied by demonic forces of various shapes, merged with – for ages – a rather superficial Christianity. The Christian God resides mostly in the village church and even the mound topped by an overgrown cross is a “spooky place” to the eyes of Thomas. We soon learn about the celestial couple, the Moon and his wife the Sun (Lithuanian *Saulė*), accompanied by Aurora (Lithuanian *Aušra*, ‘dawn’) and the Evening Star waiting on her (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 5, 202); the invisible witch Laume, changing her shapes at will (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 91); Ragutis, the “corpulent idol of liquor and lusty living”, seemingly a distant relative of Bacchus, or Liethua, a divine guardian of pagan liberty, to whom the words of an old song were addressed: “Little Liethua, precious freedom. Hidden in the sky, where are you?” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 143, referring to Narbutis’s 1805 *History of Lithuania*; see also Łoziński 2011, quoting Moszyński 1968–1969 [1929–1939] on pagan beliefs in old Lithuania).

Later, following the lore passed to Thomas by Antonina, a Lithuanian housekeeper in the Surkonts’ manor, we become acquainted with the noisy witch Ragana, mounted on a devil assuming the shape of a flying goat, apparently hidden in the whistling of the wind (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 169). Finally, the goddess Varpeia sits in heaven spinning the threads of fate, with stars dangling from them; a falling star accompanies the cutting of the thread of somebody’s existence (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 247).² Not only do the celestial bodies or more abstract concepts become personified

² Folk beliefs with pagan roots, either intertwined with or running parallel to Christian teachings, are nothing uncommon across Europe. Patrick Leigh Fermor, in his erudite travelogue *Mani* (1958), described the folklore of one of the most isolated and, at that time, archaic regions of the Southern Peloponnese, the mountainous Mani Peninsula, where villagers still cherished beliefs in ancient mythological personages – Charon, Nereids, gorgons, and most importantly the Three Moirae, or the Three Fates, to whom the Lithuanian Varpeia bears a strong resemblance.

as parts of nature, but also earthly creatures, such as water snakes, who are treated as “sacred beings”, never killed from fear of “tempting fate” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 95).³

The area is haunted by other non-human and non-animal powers, like a “column of vapor”, resembling a “white pillar” that chased a manor weaver, Pakenas, in the vicinity of the eerie place called *Borek* (‘a clump of trees’, preserved in its original spelling by Iribarne), where an old shepherd once choked to death and was buried (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 27). Another odd monstrosity was a log mounted with three Tartar heads, whose body was repulsively soft and which followed the steward Shatybelko to the Surkonts’ manor itself, a reminiscence of the presence of Tartar prisoners of war in the Gine area in the distant past.

A special place in this company of magical and supernatural forces is held by Magdalena, the sexy housekeeper of the parish priest Peiksva, who, after an indecent affair with him, is relocated to another parish, where she commits suicide out of utter despair. Her body, apparently not decomposed, returns to Gine, where Father Peiksva buries it/her near the cemetery grounds, in the non-sacred earth, according to the then-observed rules for dealing with suicidal cases. Yet, Magdalena – as a revenant and Poltergeist in one person – refuses to leave the earth in peace and starts haunting the new, elderly curate, clattering utensils and preparing unworldly meals in the rectory’s kitchen. She thus becomes an unwanted linkage between the living and the dead, getting more and more aggressive in her behavior. She even appears to forester Balthazar in the evening, riding stark naked on a white horse to bathe in the Issa.⁴ The barbaric yet apparently efficient ritual (known also in the Slavic folk tradition), carried out by the elders of Gine at night, which consisted of decapitating the body of Magdalena, not violated by death, and piercing the coffin with an alder spike, puts an end to her annoying extravagances on the borderline of earthly and otherworldly existence. Since that time, Magdalena would return to Thomas only in dreams, lamenting over her lost carnality decomposing inside the grave, the motif

3 A very apt (and in a sense complementary to Miłosz’s account) description of all kinds of demonic powers peopling Russian folk tradition can be found in Langleben’s (2017) study of Turgenev’s “Bezhin Meadow”, a hunting story of the mid-nineteenth century. Langleben points out a coexistence of old Slavic beliefs with Russian Orthodox Christianity, a situation close to the one described by Miłosz for Lithuania, where paganism intermingled with Roman Catholicism.

4 Łoziński (2011) relates this incident to a wandering motif of the naked woman riding a horse, cropping up in the English eleventh-century legend of Lady Godiva; I would rather turn to the etymological connection of the noun “nightmare” with an evil mare which, according to Anglo-Saxon legends, bore on its back an incubus coming to suffocate a sleeper. Swiss painter Johann Heinrich Füssli (later Henry Fuseli), in the second version of his famous image “Nightmare” (1790–1791), shows a horrific white mare with unseeing, bulging eyes, peeping through the curtains while an incubus torments a sleeping beauty (see Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2020: 75–77).

which inscribes itself into one of the leading themes of the novel – the inescapability of ultimate demise.

The Issa Valley emerges as a work that pays homage to the half-real and half-mythical land of child memories seen from the perspective of an adult, a mixture of down-to-earth non-fictional prose and magical realism that poses very fundamental questions about the presence of the forces of good and evil in a world where living creatures constantly face death: “Whatever has been cannot endure; it fades, flickers, scatters” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 184). For this reason, I treat the novel as a masterpiece of what I call *existential ecology*, in which nature – mythologized and sacralized in a visibly pagan way – is a constant witness to the seasonal circle of birth and death: “Autumnal smells, the origin of which, the blendings of which lay beyond his or any other man’s power to describe: the rot of leaves and needles; the dank effluvium of fungi and white filaments embedded in black, beneath the slime of decaying, peeling debris” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 139).

2.2 *The Issa Valley*: Landscapes lost and regained?

As mentioned in the introductory Section 1, Miłosz’s voice remained lost to the Polish readership between 1955 and 1980, until the time when the Nobel Prize turned him into a “voice regained”. *The Issa Valley*, likewise, became a voice regained to the worldwide readership, including Lithuanian readers (since 1991). In her study devoted to Lithuanian literature and aimed at Western audiences, Paulauskiene (2007) talks about Lithuanian voices lost to the general readership and brings forgotten works by Lithuanian authors to the attention of her American (and Anglophone) receivers. She also quotes Miłosz, reminiscing on how exotic his personal ties with Lithuania appeared to Western audiences and how discouraged he felt in talking about his Polish-Lithuanian background to Americans: “How many times I had remained silent because, having come from those foggy expanses that books, even textbooks rarely provide information about [...] I would have had to start from scratch” (Miłosz 1968: 2, quoted in Paulauskiene 2007: 7).

Lithuania as a native countryside was lost to Miłosz for several decades, and his return to the country of his youth after 52 years of absence was a sentimental but also an equivocal encounter with the landscapes and places either partly preserved or utterly destroyed. The disappearance of the Miłosz family’s manor, pulled down in 1969, during the Soviet rule in Lithuania, brought to life the poem “The Manor” (Miłosz 2008: 405; see also Chrzanowska-Kluczewska 2012: 228), a resigned lamentation over the home and garden of his youth erased forever from the face of the earth.

The arcadian memories of nature seen and emotionally experienced in our childhood may never return to us in our adult life in their original shape for a variety of reasons, political and social changes being only one of the factors responsible for this loss. And yet, “Such scenes remain fixed forever in one’s memory” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 174), a precious receptacle for holding and sharing with others the natural imagery once dear to our hearts. Recollections in literature may also prove to be a life-saving strategy, allowing nature, pristine and unspoiled, to stay alive within language after its disappearance from reality. Ecological literature thus plays a role similar to other efforts to preserve natural areas and safeguard them against the often soulless decisions of passing regimes and mindless fashions. “Let there be wooded lands where animals could run wild”, was one of Thomas’s dreams about the closed Kingdom of Forest he wanted to establish in the future. Fortunately, such dreams resurge nowadays in the ecological programs of “rewilding” Europe, introduced in several European countries.

3 Theoretical foundation and research methodology

The novel by Miłosz boasts a vast critical literature, mostly in Polish, presented mainly from literary-theoretical, philosophical, ethnological, and anthropological perspectives. More formal linguistic studies have dealt so far mostly with the Lithuanized language of the novel, while stylistically-oriented analyses are due to Rybka (2000) and Dyszak (2005), the latter – presenting the “linguistic image of the world” of Miłosz’s childhood and youth – being the closest to the perspective adopted below. We are in a vicarious position so far, as our textual analysis will be carried on the English translation by Iribarne.⁵ Yet, despite a partial disappearance of the overlay of regional features characteristic of Lithuanian Polish which – of necessity – will be lost in any translation, I consider this translation excellent from an esthetic viewpoint and faithful enough to allow us to ponder on those linguistic aspects of the novel that remain in a direct relationship with its ecological message.

In my stylistic analysis, I propose a mixed methodological paradigm, following partly Leech and Short’s (2007) taxonomy of categories relevant when studying fiction, namely: (1) context, (2) lexicon, (3) syntax, and (4) figuration. I combine them with an ecostylistic approach, influenced by Goatly’s (2017) study of Edward

5 Louis M. Iribarne (1940–2020), born and educated in the USA, was a Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Toronto. He knew Miłosz personally and translated several of his major works into English. He translated also the works of “exacting” Polish writers such as Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Witold Gombrowicz and Stanisław Lem.

Thomas's poetry. In accordance with this theoretical and analytical framework, it is important to explore the context, lexicon, and syntax of the novel, particularly in the editorial and scientific context of the *Journal of World Languages*. Lithuanian Polish, which is still alive in some parts of Lithuania, deserves some scholarly attention. Although its syntax does not directly relate to the ecostylistic profile of the novel, the regional stylization by means of its lexicon remains an inextricable value of the novel; hence, as a regional stylization employed in a literary text and as an archaic sociolect, it belongs to both the area of stylistic studies (Adamson 2016; Hodson 2016) and the Haugenian tradition of ecolinguistic studies (Haugen 1972). The discussion of the lexicon will be divided into two parts, with the first one briefly devoted to the regional and sociolectal aspects of Lithuanized Polish, and the second one to the specialized vocabulary in its ecostylistic aspect (Section 4.2). A very concise mention of the most conspicuous syntactic effects utilized by Miłosz complements his regional and archaic stylization evocative of the north-eastern Frontier Polish ("Lithuanian Polish") (Section 4.3).

Section 5, devoted to figuration, is purely ecostylistic in nature. All the examples of troping selected for analysis co-create the unique landscape of the Issa Valley and point to a complex network of relationships between nature, human beings, animals, and plants. Methodologically speaking, the analysis will follow my own model (Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2013b) of a triple-tiered functional approach to figuration (explained in detail in Section 5.1 below), in order to show that Miłosz's ecological troping follows an intricate textual pattern, expanding gradually from phrases and sentences to cover paragraphs and larger sections, to ultimately construe a holistic, tacit megatropical interpretation of the text.

This article is meant as a continuation of my previous ponderings on the Proustian motifs of happy childhood memories in Miłosz's poetic output; in fact, Miłosz's poems devoted to his Polish-Lithuanian motherland and the novel-treatise on the symbolic Issa should be taken as complementary to each other (Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2012, 2019).

4 Analysis: Context, lexicon, and syntax

4.1 Context

The natural setting of the Issa Valley stages a variety of human activities for the simple reason that the biosphere can never be separated from the semiosphere – the area where language and ideology belong. Consequently, a brief contextual setting, a sketch of a wider frame of reference, is needed to help the reader understand rather entangled historical, religious and social undertones of the narration. The plot of the

novel is situated on the territory that historically belonged to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, formed in 1240 and since 1385 united into one political organism with the Kingdom of Poland. This union was strengthened twice, in 1413 and 1569, into what was ultimately dubbed the Republic of Two Nations, extending over a huge territory inclusive of the contemporary states of Belarus and Ukraine. Over the ages, several Polish noble families migrated to the Lithuanian territory, partly on the invitation of the princely Radziwiłł family, and settled there for centuries. Even if, with time, their way of life deteriorated and made them fall into the class of yeomanry, often hardly distinguishable from native Lithuanian peasants, their feeling of Polishness remained very strong, likewise their social affiliation with the landed gentry. Some of the Lithuanian noble families underwent Polonization, as did several townspeople and Catholic priests. The Republic of the Two Nations ended its life in 1795, when the Lithuanian territory and a part of the Polish Crown fell into the hands of Tsarist Russia.

The historical setting of the novel includes the period of World War I and its termination, with the Republic of Lithuania being declared an independent state in 1918. In 1920, in the wake of the success of the Polish army in the Polish-Bolshevik War, Poles took over Vilnius and its environs and held them until 1939; that disputed military-political act resulted in the breaking of diplomatic connections between Lithuania and Poland. A meandering motif of an age-long and sociologically unsurprising animosity between the Polish lords (Polish *pan*, ‘master’, ‘lord’) and the native peasantry forms the background of the relationship between the Surkont and the Bukowski families, both sturdy in their Polishness, and the local peasantry. Paradoxically, Thomas Dilbin is instructed in Polish by a local teacher, a Lithuanian nationalist, Joseph the Black, full of hatred towards the Slavs (Poles and Russians alike) (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 81). It has to be remembered, however, that the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were ethnically quite complex – Casimir Surkont had German ancestors, as did Grandmother Dilbin (born Ritter); several villages and towns had also their Jewish communities. The narrator emphasizes that Thomas was largely ignorant of those national antagonisms, and compares his situation to that of a young Englishman brought up in Ireland or a Swedish boy raised in Finland (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 32). Even in his adult life, Thomas felt a “distrust whenever heated reference was made in his presence to any flags or emblems” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 33). Miłosz himself possessed a double identification, clearly Polish as far as the language of his literary creation was concerned, but with a high dose of affinity with Lithuania, the stance that engendered several controversies among his critics, continuing after the author’s death. Like Socrates, who preferred to be “a citizen of Cosmos” rather than of Athens, Miłosz thought of himself as “the last citizen of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania”,⁶ in which context it comes as no surprise that he was granted an Honorary Citizenship of Lithuania in 1992.

6 <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/inmemoriam/czeslawmilosz.htm> (accessed 10 October 2022).

4.2 Lexicon

Against this historical, social, and linguistic background, Lithuanian Polish, spoken both by the gentry of Polish descent and by Polonized Lithuanians, had two variants: (a) The “high” variety, used by the upper and middle classes, that is, nobles and educated town dwellers, was the general Polish with several regional elements typical of north-eastern Frontiers (Polish *Kresy*); (b) The “middle” variant was spoken by the yeomanry and was closer to the language of local peasants, with Lithuanian borrowings.

Lithuanized Polish in variants (a) and (b), despite its strong regional flavor, has been classified as an independent linguistic system, a *gentry sociolect* rather than a dialect. Apart from regionalisms, it contained dialecticisms common to other areas of ethnic Poland, archaisms, and neologisms (Sawaniewska-Mochowa 1985; Sawaniewska-Mochowa and Zielińska 2007).⁷ In turn, peasants used the “low” variety, which was a specific mixture of Lithuanian with strong Polish and noticeable Belorussian influences. In *The Issa Valley*, Lithuanian was the mother-tongue, while Polish an acquired language for the bilingual children of Akulonis, Józciuk, and Onutė, who played with the young Thomas, as well as for bilingual servants on the Polish manors.

A regional and dialectal stylization present in conversations and folk songs forms an inalienable attribute of the atmosphere created in *Dolina Issy*. The translator had to cope with it either by standardizing regional expressions (*ajer* is rendered as “sweet flag” or “calamus”) or explicitation (*skierdź* as “old shepherd”; *bitnik* from Lithuanian *Bite* “bee” as “bee-keeper”). Some Polish words are kept in the original (*pan* “master”, “lord”; *baba* – an augmentative for a “country woman”). Few Lithuanian expressions appear as well, with explanation added: *shutas*, a vulgar Lithuanian epithet, and the exclamation of boys jumping into water *Ei virai!* (“Forward, men!”). Male Christian names have been translated into English whenever their equivalents exist (Polish *Tomasz* “Thomas”, *Kazimierz* “Casimir”, *Dyonizy* [archaic Polish] “Denis”), while female names are kept in the original Polish spelling (*Misia*, *Antonina*, *Bronisława*, *Barbarka*), and so are the names of Romuald

⁷ An average contemporary Polish reader of *Dolina Issy* would probably be struck by its exotic linguistic stylization of the spoken parts and some folk songs, and would be unable to distinguish the regionalisms proper only to Lithuanian Polish from more widespread dialecticisms or archaisms. For this reason, Jędrzejewski (2011: 171–175) appended a very useful “Small Lithuanian Dictionary of Miłosz” to his study, where no distinctions are drawn between particular categories of expressions. Interestingly, Lithuanian Polish is still used by the Polish minority in Lithuania (ca 6.6% of the population, according to Apanasewicz, Kłopotowski and Lubina 2015), residing mostly in the Vilnius and Kaunas regions (Sawaniewska-Mochowa and Zielińska 2007).

Bukowski's hunting dogs (Zagray, Dunay, Lutnia, Karo, with the first two marked by a slight phonetic-orthographic adaptation to English).

A regional flavor is carried by the diminutive suffix *-uk*, borrowed from Belorussian and Ukrainian, used as a term of endearment placed on Christian names like *Józiuk* ("young Joseph"), which the translator keeps in the original (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 20). However, the same suffix employed on *psiuk* (from "dog") or *kudłuk* (from "curly"), functioning as terms of endearment for hunting dogs, was replaced with "hound". The same *-uk* suffix was also used in the sense of "the son of", thus Thomas is called *Dilbiniuk* by the Lithuanian villagers, which becomes "the Dilbin kid" in translation (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 82).

Another salient regional quality was a high amount of exclamations, often reduplicated, where the translation strategies differ: *Oje, oje*, a lamentation of Grandmother Dilbin, is dropped altogether; *Ojejeje!*, uttered by Luczek Juchniewicz, becomes "Oh, oh, oh!"; a common religious exclamation, *Jeżus Maria!*, is either dropped or substituted with "Holy Jesus!"; and the onomatopoeic rendition of hounds barking in the forest, *Ach, ach*, becomes "Arf, arf".

The only linguistic feature that has disappeared from the translation altogether is the so-called *akanie*, typical of Lithuanian Polish, which results in the leveling of inflectional suffixes into *-a*: *-ę>-e>-a*. The *-a* suffix is employed on verbs; for instance, *Prośza, prosza zakąsywać*, instead of standard Polish *Proszę, proszę zakąsywać*, is standardized into "Please – help yourselves" (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 36), an unavoidable translation technique for non- or weakly inflected languages.⁸

From the angle of our ecostylistic analysis, however, of greatest import seems to be the *specialized vocabulary* used by Miłosz to recreate the abundance of all forms of life in the Issa Valley. Miłosz is very particular about being truthful to reality in his description of the Issa habitat. He emphatically stresses the absence of beech trees and even criticizes Adam Mickiewicz for some inadequacies in presenting Lithuanian nature in the famous Polish national epic poem *Pan Tadeusz* (for instance, not *greyhounds* but *hounds* were kept there for hunting) (Fiut 1981: 121). Let us divide this specialized vocabulary into categories and mention the most important terms, referring to plants, birds, and animals of that part of Lithuania as thriving in the early decades of the twentieth century:

- (a) *trees*: alder, birch, blackthorn, bird cherries, hazel, hornbeam, linden, maple, oak, pine, spruce;

⁸ An analysis of *The Issa Valley* from a translation perspective would require a separate study. It is worth noting that Horbowicz and Skrzypek (2011), in their contrastive analysis of the translations of the novel into Swedish and Norwegian, come to the conclusion that the latter, based on standardization rather than on applying dialectalisms, which occurred in the Swedish version, appears more successful. We should be weary of imposing the dialects of target languages onto the source language, as this may easily engender unwanted connotations.

- (b) *crops*: buckwheat, clover, flax, hops, oats, potatoes, rye;
- (c) *fruit*: apples, pears;
- (d) *garden flowers and plants*: asters, gillyflowers, cowslips (“keys of St. Peter”), dahlias, lilacs, mallows, night-scented stocks, peonies, reseda, rue;
- (e) *wild plants*: daphne, globe flowers, morning glory, mulleins, orchids, plantain;
- (f) *domestic animals*: dog, hound, pointer;
- (g) *domestic fowl*: duck, goose, hen;
- (h) *wild animals*: bear, buck, ermine, fox, hare, marten, roe, squirrel, wild pig, wolf;
- (i) *waterfowl*: grebe, mallard, garganey, snipe, wild duck;
- (j) *birds*: black cock, black grouse, bullfinch, cuckoo, goatsucker, goshawk, hazel grouse, hoopoe, jay, kinglet, oriole, eagle owl, ptarmigan, sparrow, starling, stork, swallow, thrush, wild pigeon, woodgrouse, woodpecker (dappled and black);
- (k) *reptiles and amphibians*: adder, black snake, frog, water snake;
- (l) *insects*: bee, beetle, hornet, spider, wasp.

As can be inferred from this list, of all these groups the young Thomas’s greatest fascination goes to birds – he even produces his own *Book of Birds* with detailed ornithological descriptions (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 150). This highly specialized ecolexicon is one of the outstanding features of Miłosz’s prose; it also requires some kind of specialized knowledge of the biosphere on the reader’s part.

4.3 Syntax

The novel is an instance of poetic prose, well cadenced as Miłosz was concerned about the rhythmicity of his text. The most striking stylistic features are as follows:

- (a) *non-canonical word order* – several sentences are marked with *fronting (topicalization)*, e.g. “Of the customs and cares of those who stir in realms above us, we know very little” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 202);
- (b) *elliptical constructions* that may call to mind theatrical or cinematographic didascalies (Horbowicz and Skrzypek 2011: 295, quoting Rybka 2000), e.g. “No luck” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 36, about Balthazar’s spiritual torments); “Tall for his age” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 99, about Thomas’s appearance);
- (c) *sequences of nominal constructions, often asyndetic*: “A blue dress, a bronzed face, surrounded by a disk of real gold” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 43, a description of Virgin Mary in a holy picture); “A flock of ducks: a floating city, a concentration of blotches wrapped in mist” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 197), which – additionally – plays on a double nominal metaphorization;

- (d) *frequent questions*, either (i) *rhetorical (erotesis)* or (ii) cases of *aitiology*, when the answer is provided: (i) “And why were bears thought to be so nice and gentle? Was it because they were so hairy?” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 104); (ii) “Was it God who had decreed that its life should be spared? If it was God’s decision, then He must have whispered to Thomas not to shoot” (of the wild duck Thomas decided not to kill) (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 200);
- (e) *archaic or regional constructions*, used by the protagonists in conversations in the Polish original, are either stylized (“She’s picked it up, but it’s a weak ‘un, she’s gonter have to work at it”, about the bloodhound Lutnia finding the weak smell of a hare: Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 139) or, more frequently, replaced with a standard English syntax.

The above-mentioned syntactic devices yield a complex stylistic effect of peculiar instrumentation combined with an archaic and regional aura, at times presenting actions and imagery in a filmic or theatrical fashion.

5 Analysis: Figuration

In this section, our attention will go to the way Miłosz rendered the landscape of the Issa river and its environs by tropological means. The presence of tropes seems natural in the genre of poetic prose; however, it is worth reminding the reader that Miłosz was critical of poets that tended to overuse figurative devices, calling bluntly such stratagem “a diarrhea of metaphors” (Fiut 1981: 58). Indeed, the prose of *The Issa Valley* presents us with a balanced ratio of literal and figurative descriptions of nature.

5.1 Analytical methodology

The methodological paradigm I assume in this section is the one I elaborated in detail in my monograph (Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2013b), and which is a slightly eclectic approach to figuration. It is cognitive at its core, as I believe that nothing can exist in language that has not received a prior conceptual realization in the mind. The starting point for my description of the leading tropes of human language is the “poetic logic” of Neapolitan philosopher of language and historiographer Giambattista Vico, as expounded in his treatise *The Second New Science* (1984 [1744]). Vico was not only a follower of an earlier stylistic tradition, especially the Renaissance rhetoric of Petrus Ramus, but can be rightly called an early precursor of cognitive poetics. The Vichian tetrad of metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony was claimed to

reflect not only the main modes of human consciousness needed to “tame” the world, but also a discursive pattern in the development of social consciousness – from metaphoric thinking in terms of similarity of events, to the metonymic dispersal and reduction of the world into fragments, to the reconstructive force of synecdoche as the figure of integration, to the decadent trope of irony – the figure of falsehood substituted for truth, of skepticism and self-criticism. The Vichian paradigm found two outstanding contemporary American continuators – Kenneth Burke (1962 [1945]), who famously renamed these four leading figures *master tropes*, defining them as *styles of thought* rather than mere linguistic embellishments. In turn, Hayden White (1987 [1973]), in his ponderings on the nature of historical and literary discourses, defined the basic tropes as “paradigms, provided by language itself, of the operations by which consciousness can prefigure areas of experience that are cognitively problematic in order subsequently to submit them to analysis and explanation”.

What I found of special attraction in this post-Vichian approach to figuration was the escape from the limiting metaphor-metonymy bipolarity advocated by Roman Jakobson, David Lodge, and a number of cognitive linguists following Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). Inspired by a wealth of insights into the tropics of human language voiced by leading deconstructionists (James Hillis Miller, Geoffrey Hartman, Paul de Man), as well as by the ideas of Jurij Lotman (1977 [1970]) developed within his cultural semiotics, I have decided to extend the list of master tropes into a ten-member set inclusive of: (1) *metaphor*, (2) *metonymy*, (3) *synecdoche*, (4) *irony*, (5) *simile*, (6) *antithesis*, (7) *catathresis* (generalized semantic abuse, like paradox, oxymoron, etc.), (8) *hyperbole*, (9) *euphemia* (generalized understatement), and (10) *suppression* (passing over, omission, silence). I assume these figures to function not only in the capacity of stylistic universals, whose presence may be expected across natural languages, but also of *semiotic universals*, that is, figures shaping non-verbal artistic modes of expression, especially the visual arts.

The second methodological assumption I have been developing for years is a recognition of the fact that all figures, and master tropes in particular, possess their own *functional domain of operation* within a text. Consequently, I postulate a triple (and not dual, like in Werth 1994 and 1999) subdivision of tropes according to the level of their occurrence in text:

- (1) *Microtropes* (small figures, overt, conceptual, and verbal), whose scope varies from phrases to clauses and, at most, simple sentences;
- (2) *Macrotropes* (big figures, overt, conceptual, and verbal), whose scope is textual, including sequences of sentences, larger stretches of text, and even entire texts (typically poems); macrotropes often form *figurative chains* that meander through text (see also Semino 2008: Section 1.2.3 on various patterns of metaphors in discourse);

- (3) *Megatropes* (large figures, covert, conceptual), whose scope is discursive (holistic interpretation, “higher meanings”); they have to be read off the entire text and require a more mature literary competence to be recognized; they contain a subset of *metatropes* (reflexive figures that talk about themselves or comment on other figures). The megatropical level of interpretation may enjoy independence from the tropological structure of the two lower levels.

To briefly illustrate how this tropological paradigm can be applied in practice, let us turn to William Wordsworth’s famed poem, known by its incipit “A Slumber did my Spirit Seal” (1798–1799), a part of the collection *Lucy Poems*:

A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthy years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth’s diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.
(Wordsworth 2004 [1798–1799]: 332)

Superficially of a very limited scope, this two-stanza poem is very rich from a figurative perspective. We begin our search for *microtropes* in the first verse. “A Slumber did my Spirit Seal” contains two separate micro-metaphors that together build a *compound metaphor*: a personification of slumber and the concurrent reification of a spirit. “She seemed a thing” is a micro-simile verging on a reifying metaphor. In turn, the subordinate clause “that could not feel/The touch of earthy years” contains a personification of “earthy years” capable of touching the girl. The nominal phrase “earthy years” instantiates periphrasis that refers to the span of human life spent in this world. And so within the first stanza, we come across very typical micro-figures: metaphor, simile, and periphrasis.

The second stanza is a description of the dead Lucy, already interred, whose corpse undergoes the revolution of the Earth as a planet. At the micro-level, we can notice that the poem becomes quite literal, the only personification being the description of the dead body of the girl as “she”. The nominal phrase “earth’s diurnal course” is another periphrasis denoting “the daily revolution of the Earth around the Sun”. However, considering the subject of this stanza, we quickly realize that it is a description of the girl’s fate after her death. Consequently, the entire second stanza can be recognized as an *extended metaphor*, a *macro-metaphor of death*, although the lexeme “death” does not appear in the poem.

We enter now the third level of interpretation, the holistic *megatropical level* of covert meanings. At this level, the whole poem can be assumed to be a *mega-antithesis*: ALIVE VERSUS DEAD, with the first stanza devoted to Lucy in her lifetime and the second reflecting on her state after death. Noticeable is the fact that nowhere on the overt level of troping do we meet pairs of opposites and that antithesis reveals itself to us only upon reflection, imparting the structure to the entire text. Hillis Miller (1986) suggested the following pairs of antinomies that can be deciphered from the text at this stage of interpretation: ALIVE/DEAD OR LIFE/DEATH (the pivotal distinction), WAKING STATE/SUMBER, MASCULINITY/FEMININITY, PAST/PRESENT, IGNORANCE/KNOWLEDGE.

Hartman (1985) discovered the presence of yet another megatrop in Wordsworth's lyric: *mega-euphemy* (*mega-understatement*). Indeed, the description of the departed girl demonstrates an emotional distance of the lyrical ego – a very reserved attitude towards what has happened to him, peaceful sadness and resignation, patient endurance of the fate without any stronger empathy with the dead girl. The feelings of the poetic persona themselves are slumber-like – slowed down, with no signs of despair.

With this tropological paradigm at hand, explicated in relation to the Wordsworthian lyric chosen for the reason that will become clearer further on, we can now turn to a brief overview of the figurative tactics deployed by Miłosz throughout the novel to create the landscape of his youth. Worth emphasizing is a very intense corporeality, intermingled with figurative language, of all the descriptions of the Issa Valley offered to us, as seen through the eyes of both Thomas and the omniscient chronicler. Miłosz (2008 [1996]: 221) called it “the opening of the five senses” in the poem “An Hour”, thus proving an obvious advantage enjoyed by a verbal picturing over a visual representation – the language in its endeavor towards multimodality can refer to visual, acoustic, olfactory, tactile and gustatory perception of the world, which modern neurobiological studies have extended to cover additionally the feeling of temperature, the feeling of space and kinesthetic abilities.

5.2 Microtropes

Moving from the theoretical and analytical background outlined in Section 5.1, this and the following Sections 5.3 and 5.4 scrutinize carefully selected examples from Miłosz's novel and relate them to an ecological reading of the book. At the level of microtropes, unsurprisingly, similes and metaphors are found to dominate, as is often the case in the literature for children or trying to recreate the child's perception of the world (see Hughes 2008 [2005]). Some instances of metonymy and synecdoche occur, as does irony, which – however – appears only in commentaries uttered by the narratorial voice. From the extended Vichian set, antithesis crops up in several

places, while hyperbole is relatively infrequent. Let us quote some instances of this low-level overt figuration:

5.2.1 Similes

- “[...] like human cities, the tree colonies have their own distinct character – forming islands, zones, and archipelagos” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 3)
The simile is aptly combined with metaphor, forming the so-called *hybrid comparison*, which presents the forest landscape in terms of a geographical map;
- “the twigs of bushes standing out like bouquets of gold, lightly tinged with gray and bluish purple” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 24)
A striking feature of this description is its visuality, with a gamut of hues involved;
- “white orchids as luminescent as the white of the narcissus” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 119)
This comparison adds a light effect to the coloring of flowers;
- “First there was the stem, the meatiness of their [the orchids’] bodies, contiguous with flowers concealing a multibranching candelabrum and smelling vaguely of something rotten, wild” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 118–119)
The anthropomorphic metaphor of orchids overlaps with their reification, invoking the sensations of vision, touch (“meatiness”) and an olfactory experience of the antithetical scent and odor.

5.2.2 Metaphors

- “With his grandfather, [...] he wandered through the wonderland of seeds that germinated underground – of shoots, crowns, petals, pistils, and stamens” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 100)
The metaphor, instantly, gives way to a very realistic description of the anatomy of plants; indeed, the close observation of nature had a strongly educational effect on Thomas’s life, who soon started his own herbarium, to be followed by the *Book of Birds*;
- “One proud and self-respecting bear was still remembered in the village of Gine – a bear so partial to sweet pears that if the master of the house invited him to sit at a table, he had to be careful to share everything fairly [...], for, if his pears were too soft or too green, the bear roared with indignation” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 101)
This is an instance of *personification*, a type of metaphor that seems to prevail in the novel; this anecdote of old is also a carrier of benevolent *irony*;
- “It was then that Thomas, for the first time in his life, heard the music of the hounds. [...] a choir muffled by distance” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 139)

The two auditory metaphors refer to one of numerous hunting scenes, presenting dogs personified as singers;

- “Thomas had a kingdom all his own – a paper kingdom, admittedly, but one that could be assembled and reassembled at will” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 147)
Reifying metaphors, like the one describing the imaginary “Kingdom of Forest” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 181) that Thomas construed at the manor, are quite frequent in the novel, forming a counterbalance to personifications of nature;
- “The moorland was a kingdom of fragrance” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 235)
The metaphor of nature as a kingdom is a reappearing theme, in this case with olfactory perception placed in focus;
- “Touch was also a kind of ecstasy – the feel of naked feet [...]” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 19)
This haptic metaphor refers to one of the ways in which Thomas absorbed natural things around him, sometimes combined into a synesthetic experience: “savoring with his toes the slab of ice”;
- “a ballet dancer of remarkable grace and agility [...], a white sickle, arching and straightening” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 24)
This description of an ermine, an apt combination of personification and reification, adds the kinesthetic apprehension of the surrounding world to the list of the traditional senses.

Synecdoche at this level can also be spotted, like in the descriptions below of the young Lithuanian woman Barbarka, Romuald Bukowski’s housekeeper, or of Thomas’s hunting trophy:

- “that lambent stare of hers” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 136)
This nominal phrase is descriptive of a salient bodily feature of Barbarka that had a particular appeal to Thomas;
- “a metallic sheen, a crimson brow, an ivorylike beak” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 176)
A woodgrouse shot down by Thomas and held by the head is depicted via a classical three-part list based on body-part synecdoches. The physical beauty of the dead bird implicitly points to moral problems related to hunting and its inherent cruelty.

Irony appears mostly in connection with the devils peopling the Issa Valley or with some narratorial metatextual commentaries about humans rather than nature itself:

- “Well, you talk to him [a devil], see, real polite-like, then you invite him along” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 125)
This is an instance of how Romuald Bukowski teases Helen Juchniewicz;
- “Dominic emerged as a high priest of truth, because his sense of irony, his implied mockery, was a refutation of his, Thomas’s, superficial knowledge” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 85)

Dominic was a poor village boy, highly intelligent and inquisitive but prone to cruel experiments performed on animals and blasphemous towards God.

Antithesis, the play on opposites and antinomies, often paradoxical, expressed at the microlevel, is an indicator of the reappearance of this trope at the highest level of interpretation:

- In “a sweet and powerful dream, but also horrifying”, Magdalena – already interred – appears to Thomas, asking in a dirge: “Why am I alive, yet not alive?” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 57);⁹
- “Why was it that a superabundance of light always resulted in a diminishment of being?” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 119).

Hyperbole, interestingly, is not a frequent trope, albeit it might be expected in a child’s experience of mysterious and overpowering nature:

- “For Thomas, the river was gigantic and always full of echoes” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 20)

The exaggeration reflects a childish vision of the natural world that, with time, will lose its magnitude and charm, as testified by the sad statement expressed by Miłosz (2008 [1996]: 163) in his poem “Rivers Grow Small” composed in 1963: “Rivers grow small. Cities grow small. And splendid gardens/Show what we did not see there before: crippled leaves and dust”.

5.3 Macrotroping

Macrofigures operate across longer passages and can even structure entire chapters. In Chrzanowska-Kluczevska (2013a), I discussed at some length macrosynecdoches present in Miłosz’s poems; unsurprisingly, they appear in his prose as well.

Macrosynecdoche/macrometonymy (a metonymic-synecdochic chain)

- “To name a bird, to case it in letters, was tantamount to owning it forever. The endless multiplicity of *colors, shadings, mating calls, trills, wing sounds* [...] *The way the light modulated their feathers in flight, the warm, yellow flesh lining the*

9 A comparison with Wordsworth’s *Lucy* (see Section 5.1) is striking – whereas *Lucy* interred is only a dead corpse, completely mute, Magdalena seems to be still alive and asking existential questions. In Zbigniew Żakiewicz’s view (quoted in Maciej Żakiewicz 2021: 37), *The Issa Valley* can also be interpreted as a “fascination with femininity”, yet nostalgic for the passage of time. Such is also Wordsworth’s *Lucy* cycle.

bills of the young feeding in deeply sequestered nests" (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 151, italics mine)

The whole paragraph is structured by the chain of the body-part synecdoches that summarize the essence of birds' beauty and mysteriousness;

- A longer chain appears in the description of the eagle owl, called Squeaky, that Thomas kept as a pet and looked upon with great affection: "*A soundless flight, a rush of air [...] a real owl hoot [...] The softness of his feathers, the russet-gold eyes, the way he nodded, like a farsighted person*" (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 104, italics mine)

This figurative macrostructure organizes two consecutive paragraphs, picturing the bird through its salient body parts but also through the noise he made, with the "rush of air" standing metonymically for his flight. The image of the bird of prey combines the visual, acoustic, and tactile elements that call to mind the way Miłosz describes a magpie in the poem "Magpiety" (Miłosz 2008 [1996]: 128) or a bird of prey (hawk) in the "Ode to a Bird" (Miłosz 2008 [1996]: 134; see also Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2013a: 242), all testimonies to his lifelong fascination with "birdiness".

Macroirony, as mentioned before, appears conspicuously in the imagery related to all kinds of devils that inhabit the Issa Valley and pester their inhabitants (see the entire Chapter 2). Similarly, irony forms the backbone of Chapter 11, in which Balthazar, a tragic figure of a forester haunted by the memory of a pointless crime he committed in the past, converses with his personal devil, appearing in the late eighteenth-century guise of Herr Doktor, the "Little German", with "a goatee, a flickering glance, the meekly folded hands of a city dweller" (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 37). Irony helps the narrator/chronicler to maintain his distance from folk superstitions that mingle the Christian belief in the personified evil in the shape of fallen angels with pagan echoes of demonic powers that stay close to human beings, especially at the time of trauma or when death is approaching.¹⁰

5.4 Mega-antithesis

Not without reason did Miłosz define his novel as a Manichean treatise (Fiut 1981: 33), for at the highest level of interpretation the book comes as a pondering on two major antipodal conceptual pairs: GOOD VERSUS EVIL, LIFE VERSUS DEATH. These two overarching

¹⁰ It is worth noting that the present-day city of Kaunas boasts an unusual Museum of Devils, with their representations collected from all over the world, executed as handicrafts or artworks.

antinomies include also several other opposites. “We are given to live on the border of the human and the bestial, and it is good so” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 284).¹¹

To the young Thomas, the mystery of ever-present death in Nature comes as the more important of the two structuring opposites: “God: why had He created a world where there was only death and death and death” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 247). This dramatic tricolon is the child’s cry in the face of the imminence of passing away, not only among his family members (Grandmother Dilbin) but, even more prominently, in the seasonal course of nature and in the human intrusion into it. A beautiful antithetical prayer over a dying person does not bring much consolation to Thomas: “It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 205). The presence of the pervasive antithesis LIFE versus DEATH as a structuring megatropé makes *The Issa Valley* comparable to the Wordsworthian meditation on a similar subject in the lyric “A Slumber did my Spirit Seal” discussed in Section 5.1 above, albeit the childish sensitivity of Thomas is much more emotional than that of Wordsworth’s poetic persona, a mature man apparently better prepared to cope with the death of the beloved person through resignation. Fiut, a Polish literary critic and a distinguished expert on Miłosz’s life and work, points to a more philosophical aspect of the LIFE versus DEATH antagonism. He claims that Miłosz was intrigued by the status of human beings as “biological creatures that on the one hand belonged to nature, and on the other, paradoxically, were no longer a part of it, owing to their awareness of death” (Fiut and Kaźmierczyk 2021: 3, translation mine).

One of Thomas’s early metaphysical worries remains his involvement in hunting, a traditional pastime of the gentry that, together with fishing, was also a regular occupation of the native inhabitants of the land. Thomas’s attitude towards hunting presents a cognitive dissonance, an internal conflict shown as a fluctuation between the thrill of being a part of the hunting company, ravishment with nature, and a desire to become its master, all the way down to repeated disillusionment while examining a shot bird or animal: “But as he picked it up by the feet, as the wings unfurled and a drop of blood beaded the jay’s beak, he experienced a letdown he was not eager to acknowledge” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 134). Thomas offers antipodal arguments in favor or against hunting: “But one had to be manly, to stifle any squeamishness, if one was to earn the title of hunter and naturalist” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 134). This is contrasted with his rapture at the beauty of an ermine and a decision to spare its life: “[...] no, it was better to feast one’s eyes and let it go at that” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 24). On the one hand he experiences “some magical bond between himself and

¹¹ See also Lotman’s (1977 [1970]: 66) description of the multi-level structure of oppositions that build the ultimate antithesis in a literary text. Lotman considered antithesis as a major figure, similarly to Roland Barthes (1999 [1970]: 61–62), who claimed it to be one of the most persistent tropes.

the animal hunted” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 238), on the other he has to cope with the utter cruelty of the hunt. The climactic moment comes with the senseless killing of a young squirrel by Thomas himself and his participation in its heart-rending agony, which brings a feeling of guilt and an acute remorse: “A being, unique, never to be repeated, never to be resurrected” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 243). This incident stands as the last among Thomas’s hunting “feats”, making him realize that at the moment of killing an animal “the entire landscape would be altered” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 89).¹²

The entire texture of the novel should be taken as an antagonistic, antithetical rendition of the Issa Valley, the place torn between the manorial and rural reality, between the real world and magic powers. Christianity confronts several pagan reminiscences of the old Lithuanian and Slavic beliefs, the Polish gentry is confronted with the Lithuanian population that regains its nationhood. The description of the Issa Valley, represented as the heroine of a basically ecological story, makes us realize that every landscape contains the human element within its confines and that the separation of the natural habitat from its inhabitants, with all their historical, social, cultural and ideological problems, is hardly possible.

5.5 Summary

In *The Tropics of Discourse*, White (1985 [1978]: 2) offers the following summary of his ideas, which is the best way to finish our – of necessity – brief sketch of the figurative potential of *The Issa Valley*: “And troping is the soul of discourse, therefore, the mechanism without which discourse cannot do its work or achieve its end”. Indeed, Miłosz’s novel should be looked upon not only as a simultaneously autobiographical, philosophical, historical, and ethnographic venture, but also as a text in honor of nature, which is presented as neither friendly nor hostile towards people, just a powerful presence within which human histories are deployed (but see Section 6).

The story is exquisitely construed as far as its tropological schema goes. In the triple functional model of figuration I have assumed, the lower overt levels of troping – whether isolated microtropes or their chains and sequences in the form of macrotropes – play a major role in building the overall *cohesion* of the text. In fact, one of my concluding remarks on the role of macrosynecdoche as a structuring device in several of Miłosz’s poems can be repeated here as well (Chrzanowska-

¹² The hunting dilemma calls to mind several of Ted Hughes’s poems for children and teenagers. A skilled hunter himself, but also a devout nature poet, Hughes discloses the waste of hunting in “Somebody” (Hughes 2008 [2005]: 183–185), with the picture of a fox, “an elegant gentleman”, shot for his beautiful black tail as a trophy, with the rest of his body treated “like picnic rubbish”. Hughes (2008 [2005]: 100–101) reverses the scenery in “A Moon Man-Hunt”, where foxes hunt down the gentry turned game who experience an animal scare.

Kluczevska 2013a), namely, the gamut of figures discussed above at the level of micro- and macrotroping should be treated as a *cohesive instrument* per se, in addition to a classic list of such devices postulated in text and discourse studies. The situation differs at the highest level of figuration, which is latent and has to be read off the entire text, like the mega-antithesis discussed above. It is a conceptual enterprise and a *coherence-building mechanism*, either related to or quite autonomous from the tropological mechanisms operative at the lower levels. In Miłosz's novel, it happens to be the former case – antithesis appears at the overt levels in several places but is not as salient as the organizing existential opposition of life facing death or good facing evil that becomes prominent at the mega-level of interpretation.

6 Discussion and conclusion

Even if the world of *The Issa Valley* may appear slightly archaic to the present-day reader and its language – due to stylization effects – not always easy to follow, even if the novel may seem to be overly descriptive and of uneven narratorial tempo, it communicates to us a very modern message. It argues for a need to understand nature from an early age and for being open to genuine fascination with it, which is especially important in an era when technological advancement and a prolonged stay in virtual realities created by it frequently deprive our contemporaries of a direct contact with the richness of the natural life around us. At the time when Miłosz wrote his work, ecological discourse did not exist in the form it has assumed today, but we know that Miłosz remained sensitive to ecological questions and in his later life spoke in defense of the Puszcza Białowieska, the primeval forest on the border of Poland and Belarus (Fiut and Kaźmierczyk 2021: 3). All this encourages an interpretation of the novel through ecostylistic lenses, with due respect paid to the writer's beliefs and care taken not to easily overinterpret his works.

The stylistic analysis proposed in this article remains introductory and selective, due to the space limitations imposed by the format of such a study. However, it should be emphatically stressed that any kind of stylistic approach to a text as rich as Miłosz's literary prose cannot be one-sided. It is impossible to select specific stylistic features without paying attention to the overall content of the work and its contextual setting, especially in the case of a novel such as *The Issa Valley*, which tackles an entire gamut of issues and conceptions, not exclusively related to nature but also to the societal and political problems of the inhabitants of this particular "small homeland".

For this reason, a mixed methodological paradigm was chosen – that of Leech and Short's (2007) stylistic schema for prose fiction in general, combined with an ecostylistic viewpoint. Hence, in Section 4.2 Miłosz's lexicon is briefly discussed first

from a regional, dialectal perspective – the stylization into Lithuanian Polish (partly lost in translation) imparts to the novel a unique atmosphere of an archaized world. Then, in the same section, an ecostylistic perspective is applied, which points to the richness of Miłosz’s vocabulary related to the natural world, both domesticated and wild. A brief commentary on the most conspicuous syntactic features of Miłosz’s language (Section 4.3) has been included in order to point out not only its regional and archaic flavor but its cinematic qualities as well – the Issa Valley is presented as if it were a montage of stills meant to immortalize its landscape and its denizens, human and non-human alike. The most ecostylistic, in my intention, remains Section 5, which discusses the way in which a construal of the Issa imagery has been achieved by tropological means operative at three levels of textual description: micro- and macrofigurative (both overtly given), followed by an implicit megafigurative reading, an “undercurrent” running through the whole work (to use Werth’s formulation; see Werth 1994: 79) that awaits being deciphered from the totality of the text’s structure and content.

Zbigniew Żakiewicz, a Polish Frontier writer of the second generation (born in Vilnius and repatriated to Poland in 1946), comments as follows on Miłosz’s novel, which must have been an inspiration for several of his memoir-like novels:

The paradisiac side of existence consists of the beauty of the world that manifests itself in smells, sounds, colors, unique gestures of people, unique things and works of the manor. In hunting, in mysterious backwoods, in swamps and depths of lakes [...]. (Żakiewicz 2017 [2007]: 464–465, translation mine).

Macrotropes (Section 5.3) are operative at the lowest functional level of the text (of phrasal and sentential scope), as well as of their larger sequences endowed with the macrotropical power of structuring paragraphs and chapters (mostly instances of similes, metaphors, synecdoches, ironies, with only few cases of antithesis or hyperbole; see Section 5.2). My own selection of macrotropes has been carefully drawn from across the entire text of the novel to exemplify descriptions and commentaries on the Issa landscape and the human activities embedded in it. Several of them well illustrate the carnal, sensory experience of nature by the protagonists of the novel, in corroboration of Żakiewicz’s apt remark on the creation of the paradisiac world of the Issa. Obviously, the list of ecologically directed micro- and macrotropes is not complete, yet representative enough to underscore the role of figuration in picturing the Issa land and its inhabitants. This kind of eco-figurative analysis has not been done for this text before and, to my mind, it opens a new path in approaching Miłosz’s works from an eco-perspective.

Crucial for the interpretation of the entire novel is the tacit figure of mega-antithesis. It is not astonishing that this very trope of opposition, not particularly frequent at the lower overt levels of figurative structuring, emerges as its ultimate

backbone. Fiut, in an interview conducted by Zbigniew Kaźmierczyk, claims that “a fundamental principle that Miłosz consistently obeyed was the continuous application of antinomies, pondering on opposing approaches and different answers to the same questions” (Fiut and Kaźmierczyk 2021: 3, translation mine). Antithesis in the Issa world relates not only to human existence in nature (what I call *existential ecology*) but to a wide range of metaphysical, social, ethnic, and national issues.

In 2021, the year marking the 110th anniversary of Miłosz’s birth, the theme of the writer’s attitude towards nature as reflected in his entire oeuvre resurged in the academic discussions held at the University of Gdańsk, collected in the special issue of the journal *Gazeta Uniwersytecka* titled *Świat Miłosza* (*‘Miłosz’s World’*). Bogusław Żyłko (2021: 48–49), a well-known Polish semiotician of culture and theoretician of ideas, recalls his own article of 1999 in which he described the vision of nature in Miłosz’s poems and essays. Some of them expressed a pejorative, even extreme evaluation of nature as a merciless power that regularly deprives of life several, especially weak, creatures.¹³ In turn, according to a more moderate opinion voiced by Fiut, Miłosz’s attitude towards nature was ambivalent rather than straightforwardly negative. Although the order of nature seemed cruel to him, it simultaneously “aroused his delight by its richness, multiplicity of forms and stunning beauty” (Fiut and Kaźmierczyk 2021: 3, translation mine). I fully agree with this opinion in reference to the representation of nature in *The Issa Valley* (see Section 5.5). Yet, further ecostylistic research on the entirety of Miłosz’s pronouncements on natural life could possibly uncover his more complex vision of the biosphere.

In sum, Miłosz’s novel teaches us a valuable lesson that the beloved, precious landscapes, sanctuaries of memory, deserve preservation – whenever possible – over and above ethnic, national, social, and political divides. This ecological message is masterfully inscribed into the novel’s poetic prose, in which the rendition of the scenery and its aura have been achieved owing to a gamut of linguistic means drawn from all the levels of linguistic description. Phonological effects, showing both in the regional stylization and in the overall rhythmicity of the text, have been deftly integrated with syntactic structures. The richness of lexical means, particularly of the specialized vocabulary, has allowed the writer to create the imagery of the natural and the human world as closely intertwined. A palette of stylistic means, especially of tropes, well-balanced in number and deployed functionally from the microlevel of phrases and sentences, via the macrolevel of paragraphs and chapters,

¹³ Such a somber, ominous aspect of nature is highlighted in Langleben’s (2017) discussion of Turgenev’s story “Bezhin Meadow”, where the nocturnal landscape breeds hostile, devilish forces and plays an active part in evoking the atmosphere of dread and anxiety among the protagonists. Langleben (2017: 149, Footnote 26) quotes also from Turgenev’s essay “Nature” (1879), in which the titular elemental force is personified as a merciless albeit majestic woman.

to the covert mega-level of the ultimate interpretation, construe the figurative backbone of the text, imparting to it additional cohesion and coherence. From this emerges an enchanted vision of Lithuanian nature in the early decades of the twentieth century, described through Miłosz's Polish eyes.

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Opposition in ecological discourse: An ecostylistic scrutiny of speakGreen ecological posts

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Abstract: This article explores the posts with ecological concerns published by the community organization speakGreen on its website and Facebook page. The analysis falls within the aims and scope of ecostylistics, and is undertaken by applying Lesley Jeffries' stylistic model of opposition. The main research purpose of this article is to identify the stylistic strategies promoting beneficial stories and those controverting destructive stories, in Arran Stibbe's terminology. A broader research purpose is to assess whether the stylistic model of opposition can fruitfully be utilized to examine ecologically-oriented short texts and the non-literary text type of the speakGreen post. This ecostylistic study firstly demonstrates that unconventional opposites are more effective than conventional opposites in conveying beneficial stories, since their unexpected contrasts surprise the speakGreen website and Facebook users. Secondly, the study proves that two structural triggers of opposition, namely negation and especially parallel structure, are the most frequent in the sample of posts under investigation, due to the stylistic and discursive characteristics of the speakGreen post text type. The sample was also found to feature: (1) The visual trigger of green and red color-coding, which indicates contrast between beneficial stories and destructive stories; (2) Such stylistic devices as foregrounded end-focus and phonological parallelism. All these stylistic traits contribute to making the posts articulate texts relaying refined ecological messages in very few words.

Keywords: beneficial stories; destructive stories; ecological discourse; opposition; speakGreen

1 Introduction

The community organization speakGreen (homepage: <http://speak-green.com/>; Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/speakgreenmovement>) was created in

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January 2014 by the psychologist and international process facilitator Claudia Gross with the intention of raising awareness of linguistic preferences. The speakGreen website (<https://speak-green.com/about-speakgreen/>) states that the organization promotes a fairer type of language use by providing an alternative vocabulary for a fairer and alternative social system (the so-called “speakGreen transitional”); this is summarized by its motto “Words create worlds – choose the green ones”. Words (and phrases, clauses, and sentences) are visually categorized into terms colored in red and their counterparts colored in green. To quote just a few recent examples, the red adjective “busy” opposes the green adjective “balanced” (Facebook, 13 September 2022), the red phrase “hyper connected” contrasts with the green phrase “deeply connected” (Facebook, 29 September 2022), and the red clause “I don’t want to fail” opposes the green clause “I want to succeed” (Facebook, 21 September 2022). The red terms persist in narratives preserving the status quo and causing separation; the green terms help to change these narratives by forming an all-embracing inspirational language typified by assertiveness and inclusiveness and encouraging unity and physical and psychological wellbeing. Therefore, according to speakGreen, we must not utilize the red terms and must prefer the green terms instead, in order to shift human mainstream paradigms and worldviews in all areas of life.

The speakGreen project is animated primarily by three notions and approaches: (1) Appreciative inquiry, a practice involving individuals and organizations in self-determined change (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005); (2) Nonviolent communication, an attitude to a nonviolent, compassionate, and collaborative lifestyle elaborated by Marshall Rosenberg starting in the 1960s (Rosenberg 2015); (3) Positive psychology, the systematic examination of positive human activities and pursuits and of humans thriving in their diverse dimensions (cultural, relational, biological, etc.) (Seligman 2002) (<http://speak-green.com/about-speakgreen/>). In addition to these notions and approaches, the language use advocated by speakGreen has close and explicit associations with the ecologically and socially equitable language championed by the discipline of ecolinguistics; the speakGreen website, on its webpage “sG EcoLingo” (<http://speak-green.com/sg-ecolingo/>; see Note 3), also references Arran Stibbe’s (2015) *Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology and the Stories We Live By* and its online course *The Stories We Live By: A Free Online Course in Ecolinguistics* (see <http://storiesweliveby.org.uk/>).

More precisely, against this theoretical background, the speakGreen posts comprise words, pairs of green and red antonyms, proverbs, and quotations treating topics like everyday interaction, work life, and ecology. As a result, the adjective “green” is consistently employed with the main connotation of “just, unbiased, equitable, impartial” (a connotation not recorded in the Oxford English Dictionary [OED Online 2022]). Consequently, the posts can be considered to be a case of applied ecolinguistics in its second strand of research as recognized by Fill (2018: 3–5; see

Section 2.2): the posts support green grammar and criticize *parole* in Saussurean terms, i.e. discourse and language use; to be more specific, what they criticize is lexical and semantic selections. A number of posts deal with ecological subjects; hence, the following denotation of “green”, dating back to the late twentieth century, also emerges from the texts: “Of, relating to, or supporting environmentalism, esp. as a political issue; (also with capital initial) belonging to or supporting an environmentalist political party” (OED Online 2022, sense 13.a).

As illustrated by the examples quoted above, speakGreen not only contains pairs of opposites, but is founded on them. Accordingly, in this article, I explore a selection of speakGreen posts considering ecological questions through the stylistic model of opposition developed by Jeffries (2010; see also Davies 2014). This scholar defined the strategy of opposition as the particular semantic relation between an opposite pair of lexemes, phrases, or clauses which can be either context-free or context-specific. Underlying this article are also the notions of “beneficial story” and “destructive story”, which derive from the field of ecolinguistics and were elaborated by Stibbe (2021: 222). Based on the stylistic device of opposition and on these two ecolinguistic notions, the main research purpose of this article is to identify the stylistic practices deployed in the speakGreen posts to advertise beneficial stories and to resist destructive stories. The stylistic model of opposition has mainly been employed to study relatively long literary and non-literary texts (Jeffries 2010) and news discourse (Davies 2014); however, it has not been employed to investigate shorter texts and ecological issues so far. Therefore, the wider research purpose of this article is to test whether this model of opposition can effectively be applied to a selection of extremely concise texts with ecological priorities. Given these topics, research purposes, and methods, this article falls within the realm of ecostylistics (Douthwaite et al. 2017; Viridis 2022; Viridis et al. 2021; see also this Special Issue); as such, it is directly linked to the theme, aims and scope of this Special Issue, which includes articles analyzing various environmental discourses in literary and non-literary texts by adopting the discipline of stylistics and its diverse frameworks and methods.

The article is organized into three further sections. Section 2 reviews the most relevant literature to this research, with Section 2.1 defining the stylistic mechanism of opposition, and Section 2.2 outlining the Hallidayan tradition of ecolinguistics and the concepts of beneficial story and destructive story. Section 3 presents the data and methodology of this study and the data analysis. To be more precise, Section 3.1 introduces the speakGreen posts investigated here and the methodology complied with to choose them; the analytical Sections 3.2–3.5 scrutinize these linguistic data by adhering to the stylistic strategy of opposition and to the theoretical framework outlined in Section 2; Section 3.6 provides further remarks about opposition in the speakGreen posts. Section 3 is followed by a discussion and concluding remarks in Section 4.

2 Literature review

2.1 Opposition in discourse: Structural and lexical triggers

In Jeffries' (2010: 2) definition, the phenomenon of the opposite semantic relation between a pair of lexemes which is context-free, not textually constructed, and which is underpinned by the capacity of the two lexemes to be associated by oppositeness (e.g. "hot" vs. "cold") is known as conventional opposition or antonymy. This reflects the fact that members of speech communities implicitly agree that given words are semantically opposite to each other and are codified as such in dictionaries and thesauruses. Conversely, and more interestingly from an ideological perspective, constructed, created, or unconventional opposition defines the semantic relation between a pair of lexemes, phrases, or clauses not conventionally recognized as opposites in everyday discourse, but resulting from their specific lexical and syntactic context and their being placed in a position of opposition by lexical and syntactic triggers. Therefore, this type of opposite semantic relation is a textually and discursively constructed phenomenon, and depends on its context of production and reception and on the ideology of that context (Jeffries 2010: 1). According to this researcher, the contextual creation of opposition is "an example of what Grice (1975) calls a conventional implicature and Simpson (1993: 127–128) calls pragmatic presupposition. This, they claim, is the creation of a presupposition or implicature not through the context-free text, but through the text in combination with its context of use" (Jeffries 2010: 3).

For instance, in the speakGreen examples quoted in the introductory Section 1, the green adjective "balanced" is an unconventional opposite of the red adjective "busy", and the green adverb "deeply" (in the adjective phrase "deeply connected") is an unconventional opposite of the red adverb "hyper" (in the adjective phrase "hyper connected"). What makes their semantic relation opposite in an unconventional way is their use in the social and ecological context of the speakGreen project and on its website and Facebook page. In this ideological context, being "busy" with a large number of (presumably unpleasant) activities is textually and discursively constructed as a negative behavior; this conventionally implies and pragmatically presupposes contrast with the positive behavior of being "balanced" and finding equilibrium in one's occupations. In the same context, being "hyper connected" to electronic devices is textually and discursively outlined as a negative habit implying and presupposing opposition to the positive habit of being "deeply connected" to other people.

Why is it fruitful to scrutinize the stylistic device of opposition construction in discourse and opposites in texts? Firstly, this device is extremely frequent in both

literary and non-literary text types discussing an extensive range of topics. Secondly, Jeffries (2010: 26–27) notes that “Opposites are, I would claim, one of the most important of the linguistic-cognitive structures by which we categorize and organize our world, and thus also our world-view”. This is demonstrated by the fact that a large number of conventional opposites are taught to children from a young age and appear in picture books or early books; children thereby learn to conceptualize human existence and experience in binary terms. Thirdly, in Davies’ (2014: 1) words, “Binary oppositions are part of the standard discourse toolkit for rhetoricians attempting to influence opinion”; hence, both scholars of linguistics and the general public should examine and get to know oppositions in order to identify and resist the ecologically and socially destructive opinions they may relay.

The concept of opposition is profoundly ingrained in many social and ecological aspects of Western cultures; as a result, exploring this linguistic-cognitive phenomenon and its manifestations in text and discourse helps to study ideologically positioned texts, and can contribute to unmasking values and value systems. Investigating this phenomenon proves to be especially useful when opposition is naturalized or barely perceptible, and employed in such an articulate manner that the addressee may not be able to distinguish it; and when it is utilized to present positively certain individuals, groups, and tenets while concurrently stereotyping, stigmatizing and marginalizing other individuals, groups and tenets (Davies 2014).

With a view to analyzing opposites and the phenomenon of antonymy, Jones (2002) initially proposed a typology of syntactic frames for housing co-occurring conventional antonyms (for instance, “We want peace, not war”). Jeffries (2010) and Davies (2012, 2014) adopted a new approach to opposition in discourse accounting for a broader definition of this phenomenon: they developed flexible typologies of syntactic frames and their related functions, and posited that syntactic frames could also act as triggers for unconventional opposites co-occurring in those frames. These authors refined Jones’ typology on this theoretical basis, so that, for example, Jones’ very frequent syntactic frame category of “coordinated antonymy” was found to be redundant, and new syntactic frame categories were introduced, such as “transitional”, “replacive” and “concessive” oppositions (for a table presenting all the new syntactic frame categories and their functions as triggers, see Davies 2012: 49–51, 2014: 60–62). In this article, I apply Jeffries’ (2010: 32–52) detailed stylistic model of opposition, namely the four structural triggers and two lexical triggers of this phenomenon she pinpointed, which are outlined below.

Structural trigger 1a: Negation (conventional opposites)

Among structural triggers, negation is generally realized by an *X not Y* frame, where *X* and *Y* are semantically contrastive lexemes (Jeffries 2010: 33–39). On the one hand, when the two constituents are conventional opposites, the *not Y* constituent is redundant and makes the statement tautological, given that the *X* constituent would

be enough to communicate the intended message. Consequently, conventional opposites can be found as the two constituents of the *X not Y* frame when there is a reason to name them both, for instance, to underscore the message of contrast expressed by the frame, as in Example (1) (all the examples below are taken from Jeffries [2010: 34–51]):

- (1) *I'm not a coward, I'm very brave!*

Structural trigger 1b: Negation (unconventional opposites)

On the other hand, when the two constituents of the *X not Y* frame are unconventional opposites, both of them must be stated, because one cannot be derived from the other. This is the case with Example (2):

- (2) *We are not a colony, we are an equal and valued part of this nation.*
(*Daily Telegraph*, 23 September 2002)

When exploring unconventional opposites, it is important to explain how they work at the conceptual level. In this example, taken from Davies (2008: 108–109; see also Davies 2014: 63–64) and cited in Jeffries (2010: 34–35), it is useful to clarify how the addressee understands or processes the idea of “a colony” as being an unconventional opposite of “an equal and valued part of this nation”. Davies (2008: 108–109) claims that, after being activated by syntactic triggers, unconventional opposites can be understood in terms of conventional opposites by mental reference to canonical conceptual oppositions, which are often layered as various higher level superordinate concepts – at the most general level, GOOD/BAD OR POSITIVE/NEGATIVE (in accordance with the typographical conventions utilized in Davies [2014], canonical conceptual oppositions are in SMALL CAPITALS; furthermore, in the pair of opposites, the positively value-laden term precedes the negatively value-laden term). Jeffries (2010) and Davies (2008, 2014) argue that there are often more than one canonical conceptual oppositions overlapping in the understanding of a pair of unconventional opposites, and operating at any one time to make the unconventional opposites more powerful.¹ Therefore, underpinning the unconventional opposites in Example (2) are the superordinate concepts FREEDOM/OPPRESSION and EQUALITY/INEQUALITY. It follows that the notion of “a colony” reminds the addressee of both the superordinate notions of OPPRESSION and INEQUALITY, and its unconventional opposite “an equal and valued part of this nation” reminds them of the superordinate notions of FREEDOM and EQUALITY alike.

¹ Jeffries (2010: 122) adds: “Given the apparent importance of some basic sets of opposites in helping us to interpret novel opposites, we may even hypothesize that there are socially constructed and over-arching conceptual opposites (GOOD/BAD) that will rank alongside the [conceptual] metaphor set (TIME IS MONEY etc.)”. For further discussion of the relation of opposition with conceptual metaphors and with mental spaces and text worlds, see Jeffries (2010: 122–125); for the role of conceptual relations in opposition triggering, see Davies (2014: 33–35, 93–122).

Structural trigger 2: Parallel structure

Drawing on Leech (1969: 67), Jeffries (2010: 39–42) observes that a parallel structure establishes a semantic relationship between two or more items. Hence, explaining the parallel structure entails realizing that a link between these items exists, and that this link can be one of similarity or dissimilarity. When a parallel structure functions as a structural trigger of opposition, it is normally composed of a reiterated pattern, one positive and the other negative, usually in a complementary or mutually exclusive association, as in Example (3) (positive pattern “We have/the language of X” versus negative pattern “We don’t have/the language of Y”, with the negation “don’t”):

- (3) *We have
the language of stuffed birds, of teacups. We don’t have
the language of bodies.*
(Carol Ann Duffy, *Selected Poems*)

In a parallel pattern, the opposition is not necessarily limited to a meaning connection between two individual lexemes, but may associate two notions requiring full phrases or clauses to be described. Moreover, when interpreting an unconventional pair of opposites, the addressee does so in relation to an underlying conventional pair: they commonly reword the constructed pair in terms of a conventional pair they are more acquainted with. For instance, in the context of Example (3), “stuffed birds, [...] teacups” can be rephrased as “awkwardness”, and “bodies” as “naturalness”.

Structural trigger 3: Coordination

Coordination and all coordinating conjunctions can act as structural triggers of opposition in specific contexts (Jeffries 2010: 42–45). Contrary to copulative “and”, disjunctive “but”, “or” and “yet” are predictable signs of opposition, given that they activate conventional implicatures of contrast. As pointed out by Jeffries (2010: 43–44), Davies (2008: 140–143) introduced the category of contrastive opposition to refer to the use of disjunctive “but”, and the category of concessive opposition elicited by such concessive conjuncts as “while”, “despite”, “(al)though” and “however”. A sentence with a concessive clause signals that the state of affairs depicted in the main clause is unexpected, considering the state of affairs depicted in the concessive secondary clause.

However, copulative “and” can also prompt oppositeness, particularly when other triggers, contrastive lexical selections, or a contrastive semantic context are also present. This is the case with Example (4):

- (4) *I find this difficult, and then again easy,
as I watch him push his bike off in the rain.*
(Carol Ann Duffy, *Selected Poems*)

In this example, copulative “and” produces the same conventional implicature or pragmatic presupposition of oppositeness as disjunctive “but”; this is confirmed by the pair of conventional opposites “difficult” in the first clause and “easy” in the second contrastive clause. Consequently, the two clauses can be rewritten as “I find this difficult, but then again easy”: here, the use of disjunctive “but” makes more explicit the contrast between the two clauses and the opposite situations they portray.

Structural trigger 4: Comparative structures

The fourth and last structural trigger of opposition is the use of comparative structures. The constructions “more ... than” and “less ... than” generally indicate gradable conventional oppositeness (Jeffries 2010: 45–47), as in Example (5):

- (5) *What they ask of women is less their bed,
Or an hour between two trains, than to be almost gone,
Like the moon that turns her pages day by day.*
(Medbh McGuckian, *Venus and the Rain*)

This example features the comparative structure “less their bed, /Or an hour between two trains, than to be almost gone”. The structure sets up a pair of conventional opposites describing two gradable characteristics of women: being absent (“to be almost gone”) and being present (sexually, as conveyed by the noun phrase “their bed”, and cursorily, as relayed by the noun phrase “an hour between two trains”).

Lexical trigger 1a: Explicit mention of oppositional relation

The first lexical trigger of opposition listed in Jeffries’ stylistic model of opposition is explicit mention of oppositional relation (Jeffries 2010: 47–50). This consists of a lexical verb or a phrase whose semantics openly establishes contrast between two ideas or situations, like “X contrast(ed) with Y” and “X opposite/opposed to Y”. Jeffries (2010: 48) argues that this category of lexical triggers resembles the one Davies (2008: 129; see also Davies 2014: 76–80) called “explicit opposition” and Jones (2002: 81–85) called “distinguished antonymy”. In Jeffries’ (2010) model, the category of explicit mention of oppositional relation also comprises such lexical verbs as “compare”, “change” and “transform”, which Davies (2014: 76–77) labels as lexical triggers of transitional opposition. The lexical verb “turned” in Example (6) is a prototypical case of Davies’ (2014) transitional opposition:

- (6) *A rare flash of emotion from a man who has turned cynicism into an art form.*
(*Express*, 1 May 1997)

The verb phrase “has turned” activates the contrast in the clause constituents following it. To be more specific, the clause denotes that the negatively connoted past state of “cynicism” has been changed, transformed, and even elevated into the positively connoted present state of “an art form”. The use of the verb phrase “has

turned” thus implies that the concept of “cynicism” has been changed into its unconventional – and sarcastic – opposite “an art form”.

Lexical trigger 1b: Metalinguistic mention of oppositional relation

Analogous to explicit mention of oppositional relation is the use of metalinguistic or self-aware practices explicitly suggesting that opposite concepts are being conveyed, such as the nouns “oxymoron” and “contrast”, and the non-finite clause “treading that fine line” in Example (7):

- (7) *This game of mirrors makes campaigning difficult for Ashdown, treading that fine line between aspiration and realism.*
(*Guardian*, 1 May 1997)

Like the verb phrase “has turned” in Example (6), the non-finite clause “treading that fine line” prompts opposition between the phrase constituents it introduces, namely between the two contrasting notions of “aspiration” and “realism”. These notions realize conventional opposites in this context, so much so that they are linguistically conceptualized as physical entities divided by “that fine line”.

Lexical trigger 2: Auto-evocation of oppositional relation

At the other end of the spectrum from explicit mention of oppositional relation is auto-evocation, the second and last lexical trigger of opposition (Jeffries 2010: 50–52). This consists of deploying one term only which alone evokes an oppositional association with another unstated term. This trigger mostly applies to conventional opposition, since it relies on the addressee knowing the implicit counterpart. This technique is founded on Grice’s (1975) cooperative principle and on the flouting of the maxim of Quantity, because the natural meaning of the message supplies fewer details than required, but its non-natural meaning relays a conventional opposition. This is the case with Example (8):

- (8) *It is called the suburbs now, but when black people lived there it was called the Bottom.*
(Tony Morrison, *Sula*)

Here, explicit “black people” conventionally contrasts with implicit “white people”. The pragmatically implicated term is elicited by the wider context provided by the semantic loading of two further opposites: conventional “now” versus “when + past tense”, and unconventional “suburbs” versus “the Bottom”.

Based on this stylistic model and on these structural and lexical triggers, the construction of opposition in the communicative experience of the speakGreen posts mirrors the ideological conflicts between an ecological mindset and an unecological one, and eventually sets up the motives, ideals, and practical matters of an ecological agenda. Before examining the speakGreen posts via this model, their relationship to the discipline of ecolinguistics will be dealt with in Section 2.2 below.

2.2 Ecolinguistics: The Hallidayan tradition, beneficial stories, and destructive stories

As anticipated in Section 1, the speakGreen project and the social and ecological messages relayed by its posts are linked to the area of ecolinguistics. Fill (2018: 1–3) states that this area treats the role of language in relation to the environment, regarded in its biological or ecological meaning. To be more precise, ecolinguistics discusses how language and discourse influence the depiction of ecological challenges, but also how they can be a factor in relieving or exacerbating them. Two of the primary aims and preoccupations of ecolinguistics are to scrutinize and criticize language use concurring in ecological devastation, and to support the search for a new language use urging humans to rescue the planet and all life phenomena.

Of the three complementary strands of ecolinguistic research detected by Fill (2018: 3–5), the second is the most relevant to this article. Referred to as the Hallidayan tradition, it was initiated by M. A. K. Halliday with his keynote speech “New Ways of Meaning: The Challenge to Applied Linguistics”, delivered at the 9th Congress of the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) in Thessaloniki, Greece, and published as Halliday (1990). In his paper, this scholar adhered to linguistic constructionism and advocated Benjamin Lee Whorf’s view that language does not merely reproduce the world: language construes the world by playing an active part in shaping reality and by impacting human thought. As a result, the goal of applied linguistics, therefore of ecolinguistics, is to explore and explain how lexis, grammar, and the language system as a whole structure the world and human experience. Halliday (1990) also argued that language is the cause of the divide between humans and other animal and vegetable species. Moreover, language also sustains and propagates several ideologies: sexism, classism, speciesism, and growthism all manifest themselves in the lexicogrammar of languages. The last ideology is particularly remarkable from an ecological viewpoint: it implies that economic growth is the primary goal of human society, and that humans make all their artefacts, actions and occupations grow indefinitely to the detriment of more-than-human organisms (Abram 1996) and of their ecological space.

Since Halliday’s (1990) paper, the Hallidayan strand of ecolinguistic research has analyzed the idea that language partly causes the threats humans pose to nature, rather than creating closeness between themselves, the earth, and the other animals and plants. Furthermore, language, as utilized in modern and contemporary humanities, social sciences, and hard sciences, is devoted to perpetuating and praising the human oppression of the natural world, as well as to countering the ecological embedding of humans and human social systems in this world. In other words, in Fill and Mühlhäusler’s (2001b: 5) view, on the one hand, anthropocentric language

structures make users liable and inclined to ecologically questionable beliefs and, consequently, environmentally exploitative behaviors; on the other hand, such beliefs and behaviors are also spurred by anthropocentric discursive selections made by given users in the language community. The researchers whose articles were reprinted in *The Ecolinguistics Reader: Language, Ecology and Environment* (Fill and Mühlhäusler 2001a) pinpointed a number of measures to face these challenges; among them are “creating an environmentally more correct biocentric language, a solution which is problematic in the absence of any clear idea of what such a language would look like; educating speakers by creating greater awareness that languages are not neutral descriptive tools; or promoting better law-informed discourses (combined with small amounts of lexical enrichment)” (Fill and Mühlhäusler 2001b: 5).

As contended by Fill and Mühlhäusler (2001b: 6), the linguistic discipline of critical discourse analysis also blames language use. Nevertheless, there is a substantial dissimilarity between ecolinguistics and this discipline. On the one hand, critical discourse analysis mostly considers discourse, or Saussure’s *parole*; hence, it examines spoken and written texts and their lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic selections. On the other hand, in addition to *parole*, ecolinguistics critically studies the language system, or Saussure’s *langue*, and how it incites users to conceive fragmentation in the natural world and an unecological disconnection between humans and the biotic and abiotic components of this world. Therefore, according to Fill and Mühlhäusler (2001b: 6), the Hallidayan tradition, or critical ecolinguistics, features two lines of research: a system-critical part investigating *langue*, and a text-critical part investigating *parole*.²

The system-critical line champions and circulates green grammar and accuses the established structures of language; it is the line most directly influenced by Halliday’s paper and by the work carried out by academics like Andrew Goatly, who scrutinized grammatical metaphor and the fragmentation of reality evoked by Western languages (Goatly 1996). The text-critical line more explicitly relies on critical discourse analysis, and is now a flourishing research area. It explores language use and (non-)green alternatives in an extensive variety of text types embracing diverse (un)ecological interests, ideologies, and value systems, such as newspaper, magazine, and web articles on ecological matters, (seemingly) eco-friendly advertisements, and political speeches (to name just a few articles falling

2 It should be emphasized that “[p]oststructuralism [...] rejects structuralism’s view of language as a stable, unchangeable and totalising structure and it dissolves the sharp distinction between *langue* and *parole*” (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 10). However, within the ecolinguistic framework of the Hallidayan tradition, this distinction remains helpful.

within the text-critical line, see those reprinted in Fill and Mühlhäusler [2001a: Part 4], and most of those collected in Fill and Penz [2018: Part II]).

Both the system-critical line and the text-critical line have converged with and are contributing to the current ecological turn in the arts, humanities and social sciences. The objects of study in these fields, ranging, among others, from the human mind, society and culture to human religion, literature, and communication, are not thought of as separate or unconnected entities any longer, but are conceived of as integral and interrelated components of the larger ecosystem and physical environment they originate from. In Stibbe's (2021: 7–8) view, moving from these premises, it follows that the key thrust and the normative goal of the ecological humanities is to concur in conserving and replenishing the planet, and to support the health and wellbeing of all life, human and more-than-human alike. Within the ecological humanities, the discipline of ecolinguistics plays a prominent part: in Stibbe's (2021: 9) words, it “considers the role of language in the life-sustaining interactions of humans with other humans, other organisms and the physical environment”.

Ecolinguistics was recently evolved by Stibbe in the two editions of his *Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology and the Stories We Live By* (Stibbe 2015, 2021). In this book, two of the major terms are “story” and “story-we-live-by”. A story is “A cognitive structure in the minds of individuals which influences how they think, talk and act” (Stibbe 2021: 228); a story-we-live-by is “[a] story in the minds of multiple individuals across a culture” (Stibbe 2021: 228). These cognitive structures store and supply human principles and tenets; as such, they underpin human societies and have substantial ecological and social consequences. Stories are not narratives or plots, like those told in novels or films; they are mental models indirectly, but pervasively, communicated by everyday spoken and written texts and discourses and, above all, shaping those texts and discourses. Stibbe (2021: 22–30) categorized stories and the discourses evoking them into beneficial, ambivalent, and destructive; the types of stories most pertinent to the speakGreen project and to its posts are beneficial and destructive; consequently, they will be accurately defined.

In Stibbe's (2021: 222) words, a destructive story is “[a] story which opposes or contradicts the ecosophy [ecological philosophy] of the analyst (e.g. it is seen as encouraging people to destroy the ecosystems that life depends on)”. Destructive stories are ecologically dangerous and damaging, because they maintain inequality and result in human alienation from other animal and vegetable organisms and in environmental ruin. Highly destructive stories identified by authors in ecolinguistics and the ecological humanities are the story of human separation, the story of human uniqueness or exceptionalism, and the story of human centrality. That is to say, humans are held to be a species radically different, detached from and superior to nonhuman species, with nothing in common with them; as a result, humans are

allegedly fated to subjugate them and to control the entire earth. Of the many destructive stories industrial and imperial nations, civilizations, and social systems are founded on, the most dominant and persuasive are possibly those promoted by the discourses of economics (mainly unlimited economic growth), advertising (mainly consumerism), and intensive industrial agriculture (mainly animals as commodities). These stories set out and justify the unbalanced human interactions with one another, with society, and with the natural world; accordingly, they are increasingly being disputed and doubt is being cast on them by the ecological problems the planet is facing (Stibbe 2021: 3–4, 22–24).

With a view to surmounting ecological problems, destructive stories should be resisted: those which human experience is based on should be exposed, analyzed and rewritten. More precisely, the principal objective of ecolinguistics is to oppose destructive stories, look for beneficial stories in Western societies or in other more ecological societies worldwide (especially traditional and indigenous societies from the Global South), and disseminate them in the unecological Global North. This is also the principal objective of the speakGreen project and of its posts: the red terms in the posts express destructive stories, the green terms reword them so as to signal beneficial stories.

As asserted by Stibbe (2021: 222), a beneficial story is “[a] story which accords with the ecosophy [ecological philosophy] of the analyst (e.g. it is seen as encouraging people to protect the ecosystems that life depends on)”. A beneficial story conveys a mindset inspiring ecological behaviors in humans; it urges them to safeguard the environmental structures sustaining human life and more-than-human life, and contributing to the bodily and mental wellbeing of all humans, animals and plants. Beneficial stories also advocate values and actions like resilience, social equality and reduction in consumption and waste. Instances of beneficial stories are “that the goal of life is to be more not have more; that the aim of society is wellbeing rather than economic growth; that humans are dependent on nature” (Stibbe 2021: 29).

Beneficial stories are not commonly hegemonic or widespread in unecological societies. Hence, following positive discourse analysis (Martin 2004, 2006), beneficial stories must be recognized and examined in order for them to be popularized and championed as alternative ways of representing reality and building social systems. Popularizing and championing beneficial stories does not mean popularizing and championing certain beneficial texts; it means popularizing and championing certain spoken and written stylistic devices suggesting ecological stories, particularly clusters of stylistic devices (for example, specific uses of personal pronouns, syntactic structures, presuppositions, positioning of participants in discourse). These stylistic devices and clusters cross different text types and can be adjusted and encompassed in new text types treating a broad array of human interests. When stylistic devices and clusters relating beneficial stories are embraced by the consolidated discourses

around us, they can positively affect ecological and social ideologies and agendas (Stibbe 2021: 29–30). The speakGreen project and its posts have this very purpose: to alter destructive conventional discourses by means of beneficial unconventional uses of language, thereby triggering new worldviews and value systems. More information about speakGreen and its posts is offered in Section 3 below.

3 Data, methodology, and data analysis

3.1 Data and methodology

The speakGreen website shows a homepage with its posts in reverse chronological order, plus ten webpages. The webpage which is both most suitable for and most useful to this ecostylistic study is “Daily post finder” (<http://speak-green.com/archive/>): it groups the posts together according to author (speakGreen only), month (since January 2014), year (since 2014) and ten categories, ranging from “Books” and “Opposites attract” to “Signs” and “speakGreen philosophy”. The posts can also be found by typing keywords or key-phrases into a search box, which appears on the right-hand side of the webpage when clicking on any author, month, year, or category. Although the project is proceeding, the last posts published on the speakGreen website date back to March 2019; however, those on the speakGreen Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/speakgreenmovement>) are updated on a regular basis, but are not classified into categories. Accordingly, recent Facebook posts not appearing on the speakGreen website are also analyzed in this article for the sake of completeness and topicality. In sum, the linguistic data examined here are the following: (1) The website posts pertinent to ecological subjects published until March 2019; (2) The Facebook posts pertinent to ecological subjects appearing from March 2019 onwards.³

In preparation for this scrutiny, I wanted to make sure to select the posts from the speakGreen website and Facebook page most relevant to ecological concerns. In addition, I did not want to select too many posts, because this investigation is less quantitative than qualitative, and a qualitative investigation requires a representative but comparatively limited sample. Therefore, I retrieved my sample as follows.

³ Further research on the speakGreen website and project could discuss the “sG EcoLingo” webpage (<http://speak-green.com/sg-ecolingo/>). The webpage catalogues words and phrases which should be substituted for their misleading alternatives; for instance, “climate change” should be replaced by “global overheating”, “climate breakdown” or “climate crisis”; and “environment” should be replaced by “nature”, “habitat” or “Mother Earth”. The webpage also sets down expressions, quotes and proverbs concerning animals and the area of ecolinguistics. The contents of the webpage could hence be utilized to round off the ecostylistic scrutiny of the posts and to further specify the speakGreen value system and ecological tenets.

The speakGreen website posts to be studied in this article were collected in July 2022 by accessing the search box and entering one of the three key strings “ecolog”, “environment” and “natur” at a time. Searching for these specific strings allowed me to identify the most appropriate data among a considerable amount of posts on a broad variety of issues, whose exact number is not given (the “Daily post finder” webpage states that the posts authored by speakGreen are 1808). The “ecolog” search did not return any search results among the posts, and returned one result only among the webpages (not considered here). The “environment” search returned nine search results among the posts (four of which were given twice) and one result among the webpages (not treated here). The “natur” search returned six search results among the posts (three of which were given twice) and one result among the webpages (not covered here). With regard to the speakGreen Facebook posts scrutinized in this article, they were gathered manually, also in July 2022: I read those from July 2022 to March 2019 as they appear on the Facebook page, viz. in reverse chronological order, and chose seven of them, those which more explicitly deal with ecological questions. In short, the sample explored here is constituted by nine “environment” website posts, six “natur” website posts and seven ecology-related Facebook posts, which add up to twenty-two total posts. After retrieving the posts, I transcribed their texts, included their sources (website or Facebook) and their posting dates, and retained all their typographical features (for example, capitalizations and punctuation marks). The green parts and the red parts were written on distinct lines; the green words, phrases, and clauses were transcribed with no typographical effect, the red ones with a strikethrough effect.

The twenty-two selected posts composing the sample are presented and analyzed in the following Sections 3.2–3.5. Firstly, the posts were divided into four groups on the basis of Jeffries’ (2010) stylistic model of opposition and the structural and lexical triggers figuring in them. Secondly, the posts in the four groups were organized by syntactic complexity, namely from the least complex, realized by single words and phrases, to the most complex, consisting of clauses and full sentences. Of the four structural triggers and two lexical triggers of opposition, three were found in the sample: negation structural trigger (see Section 3.3), parallel structure structural trigger (alone and in combination with negation; see Sections 3.4 and 3.5), and coordination structural trigger (one case only, in combination with negation and parallel structure; see Section 3.5). In the posts, the three linguistic structural triggers are complemented by the visual mechanism of green and red color-coding (see Section 1). This mechanism is so perceptually salient, consequently effective, that it appears as the only trigger of opposition in two posts from the sample; aligning with Jeffries’ (2010) terminology, it can be defined as visual negation or visual mention of oppositional relation, and is examined separately in Section 3.2 below.

3.2 Visual trigger: Visual negation or visual mention of oppositional relation

As anticipated in Sections 1 and 3.1, the visual device of green and red color-coding can be found in all the speakGreen posts to unequivocally distinguish beneficial stories, signaled in green, from destructive stories, signaled in red (Stibbe 2021: 22–24, 26–30). Furthermore, in two posts out of a sample of twenty-two (Examples (1) and (2)), this visual device is the only opposition trigger, and does not co-occur with structural or lexical triggers. As a result, it was termed visual negation or visual mention of oppositional relation, and is studied in this section.

- (1) *natural*
artificial
 (Website, 22 May 2014)

The post in Example (1) contrasts the beneficial story expressed by the green adjective “natural” with the destructive story indicated by the red adjective “artificial”. In Jeffries’ (2010: 2) model, the two adjectives are conventional opposites or antonyms, i.e. their oppositional relation is not textually built but context-free. Their use in the post suggests that, in an ecological ideology, entities existing in or derived from nature, not made or caused by humans, should be preferred to entities made or produced by humans and not occurring naturally, also given that the latter can be contrived or false (particularly a concept or a situation) and insincere or affected (particularly a person or behavior). Evoked by conventional opposites, this notion is not especially surprising; nevertheless, it is explicitly mentioned on the website, as it conveys a basic ecological tenet.

- (2) *reduce reuse recycle*
throw away
 (Website, 5 June 2014)

In Example (2), the three green imperative verbs “reduce reuse recycle” are opposed to the red imperative verb “throw away”. The green verbs and their meanings are highlighted by the alliteration of the /r/ sounds and by the rhythm created by the first two of them being disyllabic words. The green verbs “reduce reuse recycle” are unconventional opposites (Jeffries 2010: 1) of the red verb “throw away”, viz. their oppositional relation is textually and discursively built and context-dependent. It follows that the green terms would not be considered to be opposites of the red term in a non-ecologically or non-socially oriented context of production and reception. Green “reuse recycle” and red “throw away” can be understood as opposites by drawing on canonical conceptual oppositions (Davies 2014: xiii). That is to say, the

fact that the two ideas of “reuse recycle” contrast the idea of “throw away” is based on the canonical conceptual oppositions CONSERVE/WASTE and CREATE/DESTROY: underpinning “reuse recycle” are CONSERVE and CREATE, and underlying “throw away” are WASTE and DESTROY. To sum up, Example (2) offers their addressee three beneficial alternatives to destructively wasting goods and commodities, namely three beneficial stories as options to choose from so as to controvert the destructive story of consumerism.

3.3 Structural trigger: Negation

Underpinning two posts out of the twenty-two in the sample (Examples (3) and (4)) is the structural trigger of negation, namely an *X not Y* frame.

- (3) *Keep your community clean!*
~~*Please don't litter.*~~
 (Facebook, 23 November 2021)

In Example (3), the negation frame is composed of the adjective “clean” (in the green imperative sentence “Keep your community clean!”) and the negative imperative verb “don’t litter” (in the red imperative sentence “Please don’t litter”). The two words belong to different grammatical categories; however, they can be classified as conventional opposites, as they are founded on the canonical conceptual opposition CLEAN/DIRTY: the idea of being free from dirt, pollutants, or unpleasant substances (“clean”) semantically contrasts with that of leaving rubbish lying untidily in a place (“litter”). The two green and red sentences seemingly have the same grammatical structure, propositional content, and communicative function. However, in the green one the beneficial story relayed by the notion of “clean” has foregrounded end-focus, whereas in the red one it is the destructive story communicated by the idea of “litter” that has foregrounded end-focus. Moreover, in the green sentence the direct object of the predicator “keep (clean)” is present, i.e. the noun phrase “your community”, whilst in the red sentence the direct object of the predicator “don’t litter” is omitted. Accordingly, in the former the possessive determiner “your” and the noun “community” directly involve the addressee of the post in its beneficial story and make its ecological message more personal than that of a standard imperative sentence.

- (4) *When a flower doesn't bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows,*
~~*not the flower.*~~
 (Website, 29 April 2016)

The negation frame in Example (4) consists of the noun phrase “the environment in which it grows” (in the green finite clauses “When a flower doesn’t bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows,”) and the noun phrase “(not) the flower” (realizing a red elliptical clause). The two noun phrases constitute a pair of unconventional opposites, since there is no semantic contrast between the concept of environment and that of flower, and since the textual contrast between the plant and its physical surroundings is discursively constructed by the text of the post. Hence, the “not” negator triggers the unconventional opposition between “environment” and “flower” which, at the conceptual level, is based on the canonical conceptual oppositions *LARGE/SMALL*, *WHOLE/PART*, and *CAUSE/EFFECT*. This text is metaphorical, because it is founded on the root analogy (Goatly 1997) *DEVELOP IS GROW* (in accordance with common typographical conventions, root analogies, like metaphors, are in *SMALL CAPITALS*). Goatly and other conceptual metaphor theorists (e.g. Gibbs 2008; Kövecses 2020; Steen et al. 2010) draw a distinction between conceptual metaphors (and root analogies) and their specific textual realizations; in other words, conceptual metaphors are expressed via many different combinations of lexical items. As recorded in the metaphor database Metalude (Goatly and LLE Project 2002–2005),⁴ in the specific expression provided by Example 4, the root analogy *DEVELOP IS GROW* is activated by the lexical items “flower”, “grows” and especially the intransitive verb “bloom”, which has the literal meaning “produce flowers” and the metaphorical meaning “develop to the best point”. Underlying the metaphorical meaning of the post is its literal meaning: this expresses the beneficial story that the environment necessarily requires adequate work and continuous care to thrive, along with the human, animal, and vegetable species it hosts.

3.4 Structural trigger: Parallel structure

Eleven posts out of a sample of twenty-two (Examples (5)–(15), half of the sample) are based on the structural trigger of parallel structure. Therefore, this is the most recurrent trigger and stylistic trait in the sample, characterizing half of the posts.

(5) *the environment*
~~*our environment*~~
 (Website, 6 November 2017)

(6) *system change*
~~*climate change*~~
 (Facebook, 4 November 2021)

⁴ See <http://www.ln.edu.hk/lle/cwd/project01/web/home.html> (accessed 10 July 2022).

- (7) *Mother nature*
~~*human nature*~~
 (Website, 4 December 2018)
- (8) *compassion-full products*
~~*cruelty-free products*~~
 (Facebook, 18 November 2021)

Examples (5)–(8) are realized by noun phrases underpinned by the parallel structure *determiner + nominal head* (Example (5)) and *premodifier + nominal head* (Examples (6)–(8)); the phrase constituent which is varied from the red version to the green version is the determiner or the premodifier. In Example (5), the green definite article “the”, the determiner of the nominal head “environment”, unconventionally opposes and is substituted for the red possessive determiner “our”; this unconventional opposition is activated by the canonical conceptual oppositions COLLECTIVE/INDIVIDUAL and PUBLIC/PRIVATE. This stylistic choice denies the destructive anthropocentric story that our physical surroundings in particular and the planet in general belong to humans, and signals the beneficial ecocentric story that preserving nature and the earth is a universal tenet and responsibility all humans are accountable for.⁵ The nominal head “change” in Example (6) is premodified by the green noun “system”, which replaces the red noun “climate”. This unconventional contrast is underpinned by the canonical conceptual opposition WHOLE/PART, which is in turn underpinned by the HOLONYM/MERONYM contrast: these oppositions frame “climate” as a part of a broader “system”. The contrast between “system” and “climate” indicates that the destructive story of climate change can be contradicted by beneficially modifying human social, economic, and cultural systems as a whole. In Example (7), the green noun “Mother”, the premodifier of the nominal head “nature”, is an unconventional opposite of the red noun “human”, which it is substituted for; the canonical conceptual opposition ALTRUISTIC/SELFISH prompts this unconventional opposition. As suggested by this substitution, destructive psychological characteristics, feelings, and behavioral traits, as well as the stories they produce, should be resisted; the emphasis should be shifted to the beneficial story conceptualizing nature as a creative and controlling force affecting the world and humans. The nominal head “products” in Example (8) is premodified by the green compound adjective “compassion-full”, replacing the red compound adjective “cruelty-free”. Here, the

5 To some addressees, impersonal “the environment” may seem to be a red term, and personal “our environment” a green term instead. One could argue that, contrary to the definite article “the”, the possessive determiner “our” imposes some responsibility for humans to look after the environment, and does not create an US/THEM opposition between people and their physical surroundings. This reading is apparently confirmed by such other posts in the sample as those in Examples (9) and (13).

message of the post is underlined by further parallel structures occurring at the phonological level and at the syntactic level. The nouns “compassion” and “cruelty” are conventional opposites linked by the repetition of the /k/ sound in word-initial position; they premodify the adjectives “full” and “free” respectively, which are also conventional opposites connected by the repetition of the /f/ sound in word-initial position. As is the case with Example (3), the two green and red noun phrases appear to have the same syntactic structure and propositional content. Nevertheless, these stylistic practices evoke that the post message should not center on the destructive story conveyed by the noun “cruelty”, but on the beneficial story relayed by the noun “compassion” and by the adjective “full”.

- (9) *one with nature*
~~*separate from nature*~~
 (Website, 4 March 2018)

- (10) *Minister for Environment and Climate Change*
~~*Minister of Environment*~~
 (Website, 5 June 2017)

Examples (9) and (10) have similar parallel structures: Example (9) consists of two adjective phrases whose syntactic configuration is *adjectival head + postmodifier-prepositional phrase*, and Example (10) is constituted by two noun phrases with the syntactic configuration *nominal head + postmodifier-prepositional phrase*. In Example (9), the adjectival head and the preposition are the phrase constituents changing from the red text to its green counterpart: the red adjective and preposition “separate from (nature)” become the green adjective and preposition “one with (nature)”. With “one” meaning “the same or identical” in this context, and with the idiom “one with” meaning “forming part of a whole with” (OED Online 2022, sense 8), “one” is a conventional opposite of “separate”. This stylistic change controverts the destructive story that humans are viewed as a unit apart from the other animal and vegetable species on the planet, and communicates the beneficial story that humans are a part of a wider ecosystem which should live in agreement and harmony with the other parts.

In Example (10), the phrase constituent in the red text altered in the green text is the preposition: it is modified from red “(Minister) of (Environment)” to its green unconventional opposite “(Minister) for (Environment)”. Here, the red preposition “of” expresses the destructive story that the Minister of Environment simply has responsibility for and is in charge of nature; conversely, the green preposition “for” signals the beneficial story that the holder of that office is not merely responsible for the natural world, but also sides with, defends and supports it. Therefore, the unconventional opposition between “for” and “of” is elicited by the canonical

conceptual opposition (EMOTIONALLY) INVOLVED/(EMOTIONALLY) UNINVOLVED. Furthermore, the green text also contains the addition of the noun phrase “Climate Change”. Consequently, this indicates another beneficial story: that Ministers for Environment in particular and governments in general should also be officially in charge of plans and courses of action to fight the ecological crisis.⁶

(11) *preserve life*
~~*preserve the environment*~~
 (Website, 6 November 2018)

(12) *working with nature*
~~*working against nature*~~
 (Website, 4 February 2018)

Examples (11) and (12) also have similar parallel structures. Example (11) is realized by the predicator “preserve” (twice) followed by the two direct objects “life” and “the environment”. In Example (12), the predicator “working” (twice) is not followed by direct objects, but by the two adjuncts “with nature” and “against nature”. In the former example, the red direct object “the environment” turns into the green direct object “life”. Not only are they unconventional opposites, but they are also unpredictable opposites, given that red “the environment” has positive connotations in our culture and society, as well as green “life”. However, the unconventional opposition between “life” and “the environment” is founded on the canonical conceptual opposition WHOLE/PART. The fact that the direct object “the environment” is labeled as red denies the destructive story that the environment is simply scenery or the setting for human activities and pursuits. The substitution of green “life” for it suggests the beneficial story that this “scenery” is composed of numberless human, animal, and vegetable living beings, all of which deserve protection.

In Example (12), the red preposition “against (nature)” becomes the green preposition “with (nature)”. In this context, they are conventional opposites, as “against” means “counter to, in opposition to”, while “with” means “accompanied by”. Hence, the former preposition evokes the destructive story that humans are active agents struggling with the passive entity of the natural world. This is contradicted by the beneficial story conveyed by the latter preposition, viz. that both the

⁶ The addition of the noun phrase “Climate Change” in Example (10) does not seemingly accord with the use of “climate change” as a red term in Example (6) and its negation in favor of the green term “system change” in the same example. However, Example (10) dates back to 2017, and Example (6) to 2021. Therefore, the former example is less recent than the latter, which might imply that the speakGreen authors have meanwhile found different stylistic strategies to convey their beneficial messages.

natural world and humans are active agents jointly engaged in the same activities and striving for the same ecological aims.

- (13) *hu/men are part of nature*
~~*man is above nature*~~
 (Website, 7 February 2016)

- (14) *Nature is real,*
~~*money is an illusion.*~~
 (Website, 14 November 2014)

Both Examples (13) and (14) consist of two simple sentences founded on the parallel structure *subject + predicator + subject complement*. In Example (13), the most notable sentence constituent reworded from the red version to the green version is the subject complement: the red prepositional phrase “above nature” (a synonym of “separate from nature” in this context) is replaced by the green noun phrase “part of nature”, which is a conventional opposite. The red sentence relays at least two destructive stories: humans are superior in status and rank to the natural world, accordingly they are separate from it. Both destructive stories are resisted by the beneficial story communicated by the green sentence: since humans pertain to the natural world, they cannot be superior to the other animals and plants on the earth.

The subject and the subject complement alike are rewritten in Example (14). The green subject “Nature” is substituted for red “money”, and the green subject complement “real” for red “an illusion”. The two subject complements are conventional opposites, whereas the two subjects seem to be unconventional opposites. However, the parallel structure of the two sentences in the example expresses that, because “real” conventionally contrasts with “an illusion”, “Nature” should be regarded as an unconventional opposite of “money”, so much so that the two entities are mutually exclusive. This opposition is triggered by the canonical conceptual oppositions NATURAL/ARTIFICIAL, REALITY/ILLUSION, and AUTHENTIC/FAKE. Therefore, these stylistic choices counter the destructive story that humans should base their lives and civilizations on money; on the other hand, these choices signal the beneficial story that human existence and experience should be founded on the actual, non-imaginary values and on the non-deceiving pleasures offered by nature.

- (15) *I'll start listening to your thoughts on global warming as soon as*
~~*you stop taking your private jets to global warming summits*~~
 (Facebook, 3 November 2021)

Example (15) develops the unconventional opposition between “Nature” and “money” by criticizing materialism and consumerism. The example is constituted by

a complex sentence, with a green main clause and a red secondary clause. A number of constituents make the structure of the two clauses parallel: (1) Green subject “I” versus red subject “you” (unconventional opposites); (2) Green lexical verb “start” versus red lexical verb “stop” (conventional opposites); (3) *-ing* form in both the green lexical verb “listening (to your thoughts on global warming)” and the red lexical verb “taking (your private jets to global warming summits)” (unconventional opposites); (4) Noun phrase “global warming” employed as a modifier in two noun phrases, to be more precise as a postmodifier in green “your thoughts on global warming” and as a premodifier in red “global warming summits” (unconventional opposites). Another unconventional opposite does not emerge from the syntax of the sentence, but from its semantics, its use in discourse and the canonical conceptual oppositions ALTRUISTIC/SELFISH, PUBLIC/PRIVATE, and COLLECTIVE/INDIVIDUAL: the contrast between “global warming summits”, fighting global warming, and “your private jets”, warming the planet. Through these stylistic techniques, the text beneficially denounces the destructive story of consumerism (owning private jets) and, most of all, that of the hypocrisy of politicians and policy-makers falsely professing ecological beliefs (“your thoughts on global warming”) their own conduct does not conform to (“taking your private jets to global warming summits”).

3.5 Structural triggers combined: Negation, parallel structure, and coordination

Underlying seven posts out of the twenty-two in the sample (Examples (16)–(22), one-third of the sample) is the combination of the two structural triggers of negation and parallel structure; in Example (22), they co-occur with a third structural trigger, namely coordination.

- (16) *Flies as guests,*
not as pest.
 (Facebook, 7 April 2022)

In Example (16), the structural trigger of negation contrasts the green noun “guests” with the red noun “pest”, which is an unconventional opposite. Moreover, the two nouns are related by two additional structural triggers: the syntactic parallel structure *preposition “as” + noun*, and the phonological parallel structure in their sounds /ɛst/, which appears in foregrounded end-focus. Based on the canonical conceptual oppositions INSECT/PEST and GUEST/ENEMY, the text controverts the destructive anthropocentric story that given animals and plants, here “Flies”, are thought to be a troublesome and annoying adversary seeking to harm humans and causing destruction by human standards; in a word, they are a “pest” and an “enemy”. In the

contrasting beneficial story, “Flies” are reframed as “guests” and “insects”, i.e. as living beings staying in human houses at humans’ invitation, keeping them company, and sharing houses and the entire earth with them.

- (17) *preserve the environment*
~~*don't harm the environment*~~
 (Website, 22 August 2015)

- (18) *We will only save the planet when transforming the economy.*
~~*We won't save the planet without transforming the economy.*~~
 (Facebook, 14 November 2021)

The structural trigger of negation in Example (17) contrasts the green predicator “preserve” with its conventional opposite, the red predicator “don’t harm”. The two predicators are constituents in the parallel structure *predicator + direct object*, whose second constituent is realized by the noun phrase “the environment” in both the green sentence and its red counterpart. Example (18) is composed of two sentences showing syntactic and lexical parallel structures, with only two variations prompted by negation (“won’t” and “without”). Indeed, negation contrasts the green predicator “will only save” with the red predicator “won’t save”; the red preposition “without (transforming)” can also be investigated as an instance of negation, unconventionally contrasting with the green conjunction “when (transforming)”.

As in Examples (3) and (8), the green and red sentences in Examples (17) and (18) have the same grammatical structure, propositional content, and communicative function. Nevertheless, three dissimilarities are of great importance: (1) The red sentences are negative, whilst the green sentences are positive; (2) The red sentences incorporate destructive terms suggesting destructive stories: the lexical verb “harm” in Example (17) and the negative preposition “without” in Example (18); (3) The green sentences include beneficial terms evoking beneficial stories: the lexical verb “preserve” in Example (17) and the non-negative conjunction “when” in Example (18), which becomes positive in combination with the non-finite clause “transforming the economy”. Deploying positive syntactic structures giving the addressee positive directions and information, and concentrating on green notions rather than red notions are two primary qualities of the ecological language utilized and advertised by the speakGreen project.

- (19) ~~*It's not Climate Change,*~~
It's Everything Change.
 – Margaret Atwood
 (Website, 5 June 2018)

- (20) *The savage is not the one who lives in the forest.*
~~*The savage is the one who destroys it.*~~
 (Facebook, 12 November 2021)

Examples (19) and (20) are based on the same parallel structure: the syntactic configuration *subject + predicator + subject complement*. The parallel structure co-occurs with negation: in Example (19) it can be found in the red sentence (“It’s not Climate Change”), while in Example (20) it is present in the green sentence (“The savage is not the one [...]”). In both examples, the constituent of the parallel structure varying from the green version to the red version is the subject complement, realized by a noun phrase.

More precisely, in Example (19), the red premodifier “Climate” is replaced by the green premodifier “Everything”. In addition, the two premodifiers are made unconventional opposites by the mechanism of negation, and their contrast is activated by the canonical conceptual opposition *WHOLE/PART*. By means of these stylistic strategies, the red sentence denies the destructive story that it is exclusively the climate on the planet that is changing; the green sentence beneficially glosses that it is all the necessary and relevant things in everyday reality that are inevitably changing with the climate (see Example (6) for similar stylistic devices based on the noun phrase “Climate Change” relaying an analogous beneficial message).

In Example (20), the green postmodifier “who lives in the forest” is substituted for the red postmodifier “who destroys it”. Apparently, the ideas of living in the forest and of destroying it are unconventional opposites; however, during a more careful reading, it comes to light that living in the forest entails preserving it from destruction; as a result, the two ideas of living and destroying can be scrutinized as conventional opposites in this context, underpinned by the canonical conceptual oppositions *CREATE/DESTROY*, *CONSERVE/WASTE*, *LIFE/DEATH* and *INSIDE/OUTSIDE*. The red sentence conveys the destructive story that humans from the Global North devastate the forests in the Global South to turn a profit on them; because of this unecological behavior, humans from the Global North are primitive and uncivilized. This message is reinforced by the beneficial story relayed in the green sentence. Indigenous peoples and nations living in the forest rescue it by maintaining an ecological way of life; consequently, they are anything but coarse and uncouth.

- (21) ~~*I don’t want to protect the environment.*~~
I want to create a world where the environment doesn’t need protection.
 (Website, 5 June 2016)

Example (21) consists of two sentences, the first of which is red and the second green. The structure of the two sentences is made parallel by several constituents: (1) Green subject + predicator “I want to” versus red subject + predicator “I don’t want to”

(conventional opposites via negation); (2) Green predicator “to create” versus red predicator “to protect” (unconventional opposites); (3) Repetition of the noun phrase “the environment”, which realizes a subject in the green sentence and a direct object in the red sentence; (4) Green predicator + direct object “doesn’t need protection” versus red predicator “to protect” (conventional opposites via negation). The combination of these constituents and contrasts results in the green direct object “to create a world where the environment doesn’t need protection”, which is an unconventional opposite of the red direct object “to protect the environment”; their contrast is prompted by the canonical conceptual opposition *ECOLOGICAL (CIVILIZATION)/UNECOLOGICAL (CIVILIZATION)*. Underpinned by these stylistic devices, the red sentence contradicts the destructive story that humans should merely conserve nature. As communicated by the green sentence, the corresponding beneficial story tells us that this is not sufficient: humans should build new types of social, economic, and cultural systems founded on ecological principles.

- (22) *Earth provides enough to satisfy every hu/man’s needs,
but not every hu/man greed.*
– Mahatma Gandhi
(Website, 6 November 2015)

As anticipated above, Example (22) is the most articulate in the sample, given that it features three structural triggers of opposition: negation, parallel structure, and coordination. The sentence in the example is constituted by a green finite clause (“Earth provides enough to satisfy every hu/man’s needs,”) and a red elliptical clause (“but not every hu/man greed”) connected by the disjunctive coordinating conjunction “but”. The conjunction implies an adversative relation between the two clauses; it can be labeled as a concessive opposition trigger, as it signals contrast between the two clauses, but also the unexpectedness of the second in relation to the information in the first. The adversative relation between the clauses is strengthened by the co-occurrence of the adverb “not”, expressing negation. These stylistic practices introduce the parallel structure in the noun phrase *every + hu/man[’s] + noun*. In the green clause the noun slot is filled by “needs”, and in the red clause by “greed”; the two nouns are further linked and given prominence by the phonological parallelism in their sounds /i:d/, which has foregrounded end-focus. Although green “needs” and red “greed” share the core meaning of longing for something, the two terms can be categorized as unconventional opposites elicited by the canonical conceptual oppositions *NECESSARY/UNNECESSARY*, *MODERATION/GREED*, and *ALTRUISTIC/SELFISH*. Actually, the green term is value-neutral and denotes necessity or demand for the presence or possession of something, whereas the red term is negatively value-laden and designates intense and inordinate longing, avarice and covetous desire. Hence, the red clause resists the destructive story that humans are allowed to exploit the

planet for unessential goods and commodities. At the same time, the green sentence signals the beneficial story that humans should only employ the planet's natural materials to supply their bare necessities, with a view to not depleting those materials and to not depriving other humans, animals, and plants of them.

3.6 Opposition in the speakGreen posts: Further remarks

The data analysis undertaken in Sections 3.2–3.5 demonstrated that a distinction is required with regard to the semantics of the posts in the sample and the meaning relations of their green and red parts. One of the aims of the speakGreen project and posts is to create more positive discursive formulations about protecting the environment, namely to rewrite formulations which still have the same intentions and argue the same points, but are more negative or have different emphases (to name just a few cases, see Examples (3) and (8)). Accordingly, although the formulations in a number of posts rely on conventional and unconventional opposites for their effectiveness, these formulations are broadly synonymic. This accords with the Hallidayan tradition, Whorf's view of language and linguistic constructionism as outlined in Section 2.2: discourse and the mental representations of the world, hence ideologies, are intricately linked; therefore, ways of thinking about the world are influenced by the discourses we consume.

On the contrary, several of the speakGreen posts are composed of green and red parts conveying opposite concepts, behaviors, and lifestyles, so that the addressee is being offered a beneficial choice over a destructive one, rather than just a choice of two discursively different formulations (see, among others, Examples (1) and (9)). Furthermore, in such syntactically complex cases as Examples (19), (20), and (22), the two green and red clauses are not synonymic propositions communicating the same idea via two different formulations, but the two clauses express two opposite ideas. In other words, these examples consist of a whole standalone formulation in which the green part negates the red part. As a result, the green clause cannot be cited alone, nor can the two clauses be used independently of each other, so that the green clause can be substituted for the red clause; it is only when cited in pairs that the two clauses become stylistically and rhetorically effective.

4 Discussion and conclusion

This article explored a sample of twenty-two ecological posts from the speakGreen project and its website and Facebook page from the disciplinary standpoint of ecostylistics. Underlying the analysis were the stylistic model of opposition, as

elaborated by Jeffries (2010; see also Davies 2014), and the two ecolinguistic concepts of beneficial story and destructive story, as evolved by Stibbe (2021: 22–24, 26–30). The article managed to achieve its main research purpose, viz. to pinpoint the opposition mechanisms utilized in the sample to propagate beneficial stories whilst countering destructive stories. In particular, this ecostylistic study confirmed what is maintained in Jeffries' (2010) stylistic model of opposition, namely that unconventional opposites and their use in discourse are more ideologically loaded, accordingly more stylistically noteworthy, than conventional opposites. That is to say, in an ecological discourse, it is always fruitful, but occasionally redundant, to assert that the green adjective "natural" relays a beneficial story, that the red adjective "artificial" communicates a destructive story, and that the two are conventional opposites (Example (1)). On the contrary, it is more productive to surprise the addressee by signaling stylistically creative, sometimes unexpected, messages through unconventional opposites, as most of the posts in the sample do.

To name just a few cases, the noun phrase "c/Climate c/Change" is a red term in Examples (6) and (19); in the former, it unconventionally contrasts with the green noun phrase "system change" in order to indicate the beneficial story that humans should alter their social, economic and cultural systems; in the latter example, "Climate Change" unconventionally contrasts with the green noun phrase "Everything Change", which suggests that the ecological crisis is modifying the entire human existence and experience. In Examples (11) and (21), the red part comprises the noun phrase "the environment"; this is an unconventional opposite of the noun phrase "life" in the former example, evoking that humans should safeguard all the human and more-than-human life on the earth; "(to protect) the environment" is also an unconventional opposite of the noun phrase "(to create) a world where the environment doesn't need protection" in the latter example, which conveys that ecological tenets should underpin the novel civilizations humans should form. Examples (14) and (22) discuss and criticize materialism and consumerism. In the former, the green noun "Nature" unconventionally contrasts with the red noun "money" so as to relay that underlying human reality should be natural principles, not economic principles; in the latter example, the green noun phrase "every human's needs" unconventionally contrasts with the red noun phrase "every human greed", communicating that the planet's natural materials should be deployed to supply the necessities of life only, not unnecessary goods and commodities.

As mentioned in the theoretical Section 2.1 and as demonstrated in the analytical Sections 3.2–3.5, unconventional opposites are activated by canonical conceptual oppositions; several of them underpin more than one post in the sample. For instance, *WHOLE/PART* prompts the unconventional opposites in Examples (4), (6), (11), and (19): the use of this canonical conceptual opposition in the speakGreen ecological discourse signals that humans only pay attention to certain parts of their world and

reality, and criticizes them for being unaware that, in nature, all parts are interconnected and form organized wholes which are more than the mere sum of their component parts. The positively value-laden terms in further canonical conceptual oppositions indicate the speakGreen environmental and social ideology and principles: see, among others, ALTRUISTIC/SELFISH (Examples (7), (15), and (22)), CONSERVE/WASTE and CREATE/DESTROY (Examples (2) and (20)), COLLECTIVE/INDIVIDUAL and PUBLIC/PRIVATE (Examples (5) and (15)).

As noted in the introductory Section 1, this article also had a broader research purpose, i.e. to evaluate whether Jeffries' (2010) stylistic model of opposition can successfully be employed to investigate a sample of very brief posts with ecological concerns. This ecostylistic examination revealed that, of the four structural triggers and two lexical triggers of opposition identified by this author (Jeffries 2010: 32–52), three structural triggers appear in the sample, viz. negation, parallel structure, and coordination. While coordination occurs in one post only, parallel structure is the most recurrent trigger: it underpins half of the twenty-two posts in the sample alone, and one-third of the posts in combination with negation. The reason for this high frequency can be that, owing to their syntactic and semantic patterns typified by the repetition of words and phrases and by relatively little variation, the posts and their messages are made cognitively conspicuous, easy to memorize and, as a result, easy to promote among the speakGreen website and Facebook users.

The remaining structural trigger (comparative structures) and lexical triggers (explicit mention, metalinguistic mention, and auto-evocation of oppositional relation) from the stylistic model of opposition were not found in the sample. It can be hypothesized that the only case of coordination and the lack of comparative structures are due to the text type of the speakGreen post: all the texts published on the website and on the Facebook page are normally short and syntactically essential, as shown by several posts constituted by single phrases and even single words. With regard to the explicit mention and the metalinguistic mention of oppositional relation, their absence from the sample may be attributable to the fact that their linguistic contrastive role is played in the posts by the visual contrastive strategy of green and red color-coding. Finally, not only is auto-evocation of oppositional relation not present in the sample, but it can also be presumed that it is not present in any posts. In fact, of the two terms realizing an opposite pair, this lexical trigger states one only and leaves the other unstated; instead, the posts specify both terms openly, in order to communicate their ecologically and socially beneficial messages as unambiguously as possible, as demonstrated in the analytical Sections 3.2–3.5.

This ecostylistic scrutiny also proved that the sample contains a number of stylistic devices which may compensate for the structural and lexical triggers of opposition missing from the posts. Firstly, the three linguistic structural triggers in the sample are complemented by the visual practice of green and red color-coding:

words evoking beneficial stories are colored in green, words conveying destructive stories are in red. Not only does this visual practice complement the linguistic triggers in all the posts, but it is also the only opposition trigger in two posts out of twenty-two. Therefore, with a view to exploring the sample and all its discursive techniques thoroughly, this visual trigger should be added to the stylistic model of opposition with the name of visual negation or visual mention of oppositional relation. Secondly, this ecostylistic analysis showed that, in certain posts, the messages expressed by these linguistic and visual mechanisms are underscored by the stylistic strategies of foregrounded end-focus and phonological parallelism, which is realized by alliteration and by the repetition of one or more sounds. As a result, although the speakGreen posts are succinct and seemingly unrefined texts, the co-occurrence and interaction of several stylistic devices at various linguistic and visual levels in comparatively few words testify to the fact that the posts consist of complex and multi-layered texts able to effectively express sophisticated ecological and social messages.

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PLACE IS TEXT: Representing the architecture of landscape, the human and non-human in Arundhati Roy's prose

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Abstract: In a recent interview, writer and activist Arundhati Roy has proposed the definition of ‘Delhi as a novel’ to pinpoint the cultural variety, ramification, and dynamism of the Indian capital city. Rather than being a mere literary embellishment, this type of conceptualization reveals the author’s attitude towards the environment, in its geographical, human, and non-human shapes, as important segments and participants of the wide biosphere. In Roy’s prose, in fact, the linguistic depiction of places as diverse as the teeming streets of Delhi, the flourishing fields of Kerala, and the impervious valleys of Kashmir not only supports the creation of meaning in the narrative, but also permits foreground-loaded questions of identity and belonging, particularly with regard to liminal subjects such as women, hijras (i.e. transgender persons) and migrants. Adopting the perspective of ecostylistics, an interdisciplinary domain that borrows and integrates ideas, frameworks, and methods from stylistics and ecocriticism, this article intends to investigate (1) some of the linguistic features of Roy’s postcolonial narratives, focusing on the strategic ‘architecture’ of the text-worlds that center around the environment, and (2) the power of the language to index social questions of precarity. The analysis considers extracts from Roy’s fictional and non-fictional texts, in particular her novels *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, and applies various critical tools. The main findings of the investigation exhibit the author’s ecological view and political beliefs that emerge in devices like point of view, figurative language, and defamiliarization, and that trigger a broader view of the environment, one in which the relation between the human and the non-human is complementary rather than competitive.

Keywords: architecture of text; Arundhati Roy; ecostylistics; PLACE IS TEXT spatial metaphor; precarity

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1 Introduction

This article intends to advance scholarly understanding of the ways in which place and by extension the environment, spanning both the human and non-human components, are linguistically rendered in the prose of Indian writer and activist Arundhati Roy, who thanks to her novels and her many collections of essays represents one of the most ground-breaking voices from the postcolonial literary scenario. Her fictional production has been extensively investigated, in particular focusing on the topicality of the questions she deals with (Ciocca 2020; Mustafa and Chaudhry 2019), or on the innovativeness of her ‘weird’, vernacular and multifarious language (Ch’ien 2005; Newman 2021; Saxena 2022), and revealing how her approach to nature and the environment is meaningful and strategic. However, in order to corroborate the appreciation of her texts, and in particular how the author crafts a complex relation to the landscape, the application of frames and tools deriving from ecostylistics, “in which the methodologies of stylistics intersect with the social and political agenda of ecocriticism” (Virdis et al. 2021: 4–5), can turn out to be particularly insightful since it refers to a network of fields and disciplines based on empirical models and practices. Therefore, the article is situated within the thematic scope and research paradigm of this Special Issue of the *Journal of World Languages* (see Virdis 2022), and aims to apply the analytical procedures of ecostylistics to studying some of the environmental aspects in Roy’s literary and non-literary prose.

The analysis of texts pertaining to environmental issues is theoretically inspired by a broad and new reflection on the approach to the landscape whereby the human presence in the world is viewed within a holistic gaze that recognizes other forms of life, animal and vegetable, and the intricate relations and dynamics that emerge from this arena, for example revising the notion that only human beings can assume and assert the role of actors over non-human beings, considered as affected participants (Garrard 2004; Harré et al. 1999; Oppermann and Iovino 2017). The rhetorical structure of such materials frames and spreads certain ideologies of nature and the biosphere, hence the need to scrutinize language as a representational tool for authors who not only describe places, but especially construct them as stories that can produce, index, or hide specific values and meanings (Adami 2020; Stibbe 2015).

In a recent interview with Shohini Ghosh,¹ Arundhati Roy proposed the definition of ‘Delhi as a novel’ to pinpoint the cultural variety, ramifications, and dynamism of the Indian capital city, which is not a mere literary embellishment. In her prose, in fact, the linguistic depiction of places as diverse as the “serpentine lanes

1 <https://aperture.org/editorial/arundhati-roy-sees-delhi-as-a-novel/> (accessed 12 April 2022).

and by-lanes of Delhi” (Talwar 2020: 261), the flourishing fields of Kerala and the impervious valleys of Kashmir not only supports the creation of meaning in the narrative, but also permits to foreground loaded questions of identity and belonging, particularly with regard to liminal subjects such as women, hijras (i.e. transgender persons) and migrants (Anand 2005; Ch’ien 2005; Mustafa and Chaudhry 2019). Informed by the interdisciplinary perspective of ecostylistics (Douthwaite et al. 2017; Garrard 2004; Virdis et al. 2021), this contribution intends to investigate some of the linguistic features of Arundhati Roy’s postcolonial narratives, in particular focusing on (1) the strategic ‘architecture’ of the text-worlds that center around the environment, and (2) the power of language to index social questions of precarity. The analysis mainly considers extracts from Arundhati Roy’s novels *The God of Small Things* (1997, henceforth *GST*) and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (Roy 2017, henceforth *MUH*), but also refers to some of her non-fictional materials. The critical tools here employed are taken from the broad field of contemporary stylistics, in particular cognitive narratology and Text World Theory (TWT), and examine linguistic devices and narrative strategies such as foregrounding, focalization, and metaphor.

Born to a Malayali Jacobite Syrian Christian women’s rights activist from Kerala and a Bengali Hindu tea plantation manager from Calcutta, the author has lived in various parts of India, such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu, and was educated at the Delhi-based School of Planning and Architecture. Roy represents a peculiar figure in the Indian literary domain, being not only a prolific writer of both fiction and non-fiction, but also a committed activist and radical thinker, whose incendiary words frequently generate heated debates. Her deep-seated criticism against the Narmada dam project, her support for the independence of Kashmir (a region that is part of the Indian Union, but mostly populated by Muslim communities that do not belong to Hindu mainstream culture), and her determined opposition to the nationalist policies adopted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi are only some of the issues that define Roy’s political mindset (see the pieces contained in Roy 2011, 2014, 2020).

It is worth noticing that Roy’s interest in the environment is twofold: on the one hand, it echoes postcolonial preoccupations about the destruction of the landscape, which is a salient issue in present-day India, for example, the Bhopal disaster and its pernicious gas leak (1984), or the ruthless exploitation of mineral resources in Bihar and other states; on the other hand, it opens up to span social questions too, thus demonstrating that the effects on the environment are not severed from the human domain, but rather they interweave various relations. Indeed, for Mukherjee (2010: 83), “Arundhati Roy’s literary style, form and subject [...] are deeply considered artistic responses to the historically specific condition of uneven development in India, a condition that cannot be understood as long as we understand environment as a separate category to those of history and culture”. In

a similar vein, Anand (2005: 95) suggests that Roy's engagement with ecocritical discourse coincides with "the need to reconfigure the ecological, political, social, and cultural matrix of the present world system" since casteism, discrimination and subjugation of marginal subjects like women, hijras, and Dalits (outcastes) participate in an all-embracing system of abuse as well.

Roy's prose illuminates a range of diverse places, from bustling megalopolises like Delhi, to pastoral landscapes in Kashmir, but more importantly, her style maps out the natural and cultural forces that pertain to human and non-human life because she affirms to be "incapable of looking at the world, or even thinking about it, with only humans at its center".² It is in this way that the ideas of text and place metaphorically and symbolically overlap, and Roy openly acknowledges such strategy when, speaking about her years in the Indian capital, she affirms "to me, the city was and is a fascinating, never-ending story. It's a novel with characters who appear and disappear, shaping the physical space around them".³ The author's words seem to stem from the cognitive metaphor PLACE IS TEXT (Janz 2017), by which the domain of PLACE (specifically the CITY) is mapped onto the notion of a narrative TEXT, blending spaces and words to trigger effects of dynamism, organization, and agency. This type of conceptualization applies to other places as well, for example, small villages, fields, and even buildings, and importantly defines the centrality of place in ontological terms: "the village I grew up in, the pickle factory, the landscape, the people, the green river, the coconut trees that bent into it, the broken yellow moon reflected in it, the flash of fish – I am made up of all that".⁴ In other words, the author's perspective feeds from the constitutive power of spatiality, which endorses a holistic approach to human and non-human entities and their environment, and here operates through the technique of lexical accumulation (listing), realized by noun phrases, some of which with pre- or post-modifications. The effect of such accretion is a sense of wholeness harmonizing living entities (humans, animals, and plants), objects, and places, which brings to the fore the interconnectedness of being in, and belonging to the environment.

2 Text-worlds and narratives in Arundhati Roy's architecture of places

As a means to tackle Roy's textual depiction of the environment, I propose to implement an ecostylistic perspective, whose methodologies aim to investigate

2 <https://aperture.org/editorial/arundhati-roy-sees-delhi-as-a-novel/> (accessed 12 April 2022).

3 <https://aperture.org/editorial/arundhati-roy-sees-delhi-as-a-novel/> (accessed 12 April 2022).

4 <https://aperture.org/editorial/arundhati-roy-sees-delhi-as-a-novel/> (accessed 12 April 2022).

how places are constructed as text-worlds and contribute to adding meaning to the narrative. The author appears to be concerned with the ‘architecture’ of both natural places and human-made structures, and, in a meta-reflexive way, the very term ‘architecture’ is paradigmatic: not only does it refer to the “the art or science of building or constructing edifices of any kind for human use” (Oxford English Dictionary [OED] 2022), but it also figuratively encodes the idea of a system, in this case, the organization of text and discourse, thus picking up the relations through which words, phrases, and sentences hang together and produce sense. The term easily lends itself to a critical perspective (Wilson 2015), when analytical techniques and frameworks such as narratology and TWT are utilized to delve into the architecture of a text, identifying characters, actions, and events, and the reader’s immersion into their fictional worlds. It also bespeaks of Roy’s education and ideology: her architectural studies and interests have deeply influenced her understanding of life and the surrounding world, particularly with the idea of cost-effective and energy-efficient building, under the influence of the British-born Indian architect Laurie Baker, and reverberate across her political projects. According to Tickell (2007: 14), “Roy has also used architectural metaphors in theorizing the politics of globalization, and, more literally an awareness of the environmental impact of industrial engineering has been central to her activism against large-scale dam schemes in India”. As a consequence, her prose first of all operates like a process of harmonious construction, suggesting how balanced compositions and proportions govern the environment. Significantly, this reference is taken up by scholars too, for example in Ch’ien’s (2005) investigation of “weird” English, i.e. a hybrid variety elaborated by postcolonial writers, the chapter dedicated to the linguistic features of *GST* is entitled “The politics of design” to problematize the idea of space.

In order to handle the way in which Arundhati Roy conceives of and talks about the environment, viewed in a holistic perspective, and in the light of her political vision and commitment, in what follows I adopt and adapt notions, intuitions and frameworks from various areas of cognitive stylistics, in particular narratology and TWT. This methodological choice is justified by two main considerations, namely: 1) narratives do not simply describe but actually construct and spread ideas, thus morally affecting readers, and 2) TWT can provide a precise account of the development of the conceptual layers inherent in linguistic selections, processed by readers.

The study of narrative voice has permitted to uncover notions such as point of view and focalization (Fludernik 2006; Simpson 1993), through which writers orchestrate their works to represent different forces and entities from the natural world, producing “the stories we live by” as Stibbe (2015: 3–6) holds, paraphrasing Lakoff and Johnson (1980). TWT too is equally important in tracking down the

ramifications of the text that the reader has to navigate to create meaning. This cognitive model distinguishes the idea of discourse-worlds from that of text-worlds. The former refers to the situation and the context around human beings as they communicate with one another, thus also considering their personal and cultural knowledge, whilst the latter indicates how the conceptual work of readers in envisaging meaning generates mental spaces starting from the language utilized by the author (Gavins 2007; Gavins and Lahey 2016). Structurally, text-worlds are characterized by the presence of (1) world-building elements, which translate aspects of time, location, character, and object description through items such as tense and aspect in verb phrases, locative adverbs, proper nouns and pronouns, and (2) function-advancing propositions, which develop and advance events in the text world, and are realized by verb phrases.

To appreciate the benefits of an ecostylistic approach that borrows from both cognitive narratology and TWT, let us see how Roy constantly emphasizes the spatial metaphor *PLACE IS TEXT*, for example in the following piece in which she speaks about the relation between fiction and territory:

The city as a novel – the novel as a city. Truly, I think like that. And I don't just mean the physical landscape of both cities and novels. I mean it more in the manner of how something is designed, and then that design is subverted, ambushed, enveloped, and turned into something else, and then all of that becomes a part of another design, and on it goes. Something like the way the shapes of cities inscribe themselves spatially on the surface of the earth as distinct from the amorphous countryside that surrounds them. They have a form, a logic that is not immediately obvious, except, of course, imperial cities that were created by fiat and decree. But those, too, are subverted. In the novel, too, this happens often to the narrative. And yet, it's only once you begin to live in the novel-city of Utmost Happiness that you understand that the apparent chaos is designed. It, too, has its underground, overground, and diagonal pathways that interconnect. It has its own complicated logic.⁵

Much of the lexis of the passage comes from the semantic fields of geography and geometry ('design', 'surface', 'diagonal pathways'), but there are also terms ('subverted', 'turned into something else', 'chaos') that seem to indicate the malleability of events and relations, with an implicit sense of transformation and dynamism. What emerges from this quotation is a new understanding of place, in which all its components, far from being irrationally scattered together, make up a composite canvas. The verbalization of such vision is reinforced by markers of modality. In particular, the epistemic modal adverb 'truly' and the lexical construction 'I think' express the writer's beliefs and confidence (Gavins 2007: 110), and cumulatively allow readers to access the text-producer's intention. Roy's metaphor *PLACE IS TEXT*, which in the excerpt above is realized through an attention-

5 <https://aperture.org/editorial/arundhati-roy-sees-delhi-as-a-novel/> (accessed 12 April 2022).

grabbing chiasmus, encapsulates and enlarges the very conceptualization of SPACE to accommodate that of WRITING (Janz 2017) by means of a set of mappings operating between locations and texts in terms of layout, shapes, and design. But in a parallel fashion texts too have the power to mentally trigger spaces, and consequently, in reality, we can hypothesize the presence of a dual metaphor, or “double vision” (Gavins 2007: 152) that blends two domains simultaneously resonating in the mind of the reader. Rhetorically, Roy employs places to portray her prose, but concurrently her texts evoke real places and bespeak of ecological and social contexts, entwining a twofold dynamic of meaning construction (PLACE IS TEXT ↔ TEXT IS PLACE). Mapping and unraveling the diegetic planes that authors arrange in their narratives can offer insights into the connections between discourse, language, and imagination. The following sections of this article implement ecostylistic tools to investigate extracts from Roy’s novels.

3 Wor(l)ds of a smaller god? Rivers, gardens, and factories

Awarded with the Man’s Booker Prize, *GST* is a complex novel mainly set in Aye-menem, a small town in Kerala, an Indian southern state known for its backwaters and luxuriant vegetation, as well as its multicultural context with Hindus, Christians, and Muslims, and pivots around a family’s relations, against the backdrop of tense social and political issues such as the rigidity of the caste system, the heritage of Keralite Syrian Christians and communist insurgents (the Naxalites of the 1960s). With its series of analepses (Fludernik 2006: 34) oscillating between 1969 and 1993, the story is populated by a rich stock of characters, and dedicates much space to Ammu Ipe, and her large multi-generational family, in particular her parents, Pappachi and Mammachi, her twin children, Rahel and Estappen (the latter often presented through the nickname Estha), and her aunt Navomi Ipe, known as Baby Kochamma. Constructed as a third person narration, in reality the text cleverly plays with focalization, with perceptual shifts in the story – from an omniscient voice to the interpolation of Rahel and Estha’s consciousness, initially in their childhood and then in their adulthood, by which the rendering of the landscape oscillates between objectivity and subjectivity. Such a strategy allows to juxtapose the perspective of a child and that of an adult, especially in the case of loaded questions such as inter-caste love, e.g. the relationship between Ammu and a Dalit called Velutha, viewed as a ‘scandalous’ affair. But the novel also handles other sensitive themes, for example, social discrimination since characters such as

Pappachi and Baby Kochamma frequently remark about their belonging to the upper class, or political anxieties with the circulation of communist ideas.

The writer is particularly concerned with the depiction of Kerala, spanning the environmental features, the man-made structures, and the cultural conditions of the region, in a clear attempt to record, or at least evoke a series of Roy's autobiographical references. In processing the text, readers will activate their knowledge of the world, in particular concerning the discourse-worlds of nature and civilization, which in the text might represent separate, or even oppositional references, endowed with a possible range of connotations. Such vision is mirrored in the narrative too: for Tickell (2007: 12), for instance, "the idyllic natural environment of South India is also tempered, in Roy's fiction and prose, by memories of vulnerability and social stigma". The beautiful fields and forests of Kerala become the palimpsest onto which human tensions and clashes are constantly staged, and affected by political, religious, and social conditions. But in the novel, natural sights acquire salience in relation not only to human subjects but to non-human entities such as plants, animals, and insects as well, thus demonstrating how the author appropriates and reverses the cognitive textual attractor of largeness, namely what is bigger is expected to draw more attention in the reader (Stockwell 2009: 25), to refer to small items. For Ch'ien (2005: 156), "Roy champions weird English as the antidote to the dominance of bigness", and in this way, she engages with the idea of natural wholeness, by which the human and non-human co-exist and interact within a broad system.

A typology of place that merits attention in the novel is the river, a natural element that in Hindu culture is central, being the representation of a female deity, for example, the Ganges (celebrated as Mother Ganga) or the Yamuna (venerated as the daughter of the sun god, Surya), although Roy's literary project realigns symbols and meanings in a new light. Let us consider the double vision of the river that runs in the town, here described through the eyes of the twins:

They dreamed of their river.

Of the coconut trees that bent into it and watched, with coconut eyes, the boats slide. Upstream in the mornings. Downstreaming in the evenings. And the dull, sullen sound of the boatmen's bamboo poles as they thudded against the dark, oiled boatwood.

It was warm, the water. Greengreen. Like rippled silk.

With fish and trees in it.

And at night, the broken yellow moon in it.

(Roy 1997: 122–123)

This is an example of how Roy's heterodiegetic narration at times overlaps the children's focalization (in particular Estha's), with the effect of revealing his perspective to the reader. From a TWT angle, the passage contains various world-

building items and expressions referring to time ('in the morning', 'at night') and location ('the river', 'the boats'), as well as enactors (Gavins and Lahey 2016: 4), namely characters ('the boatmen', 'fish and trees') and objects ('bamboo poles'). Interestingly, the effect generated by the enactors here is that of depicting a context in which the human and non-human are coterminous, and fittingly combined in the children's vision, which is foregrounded thanks to sensory language to create empathetic bonds. Since the body and the mind operate together in the production of sense and language, according to the cognitive principle of embodiment (Gavins 2007: 5), the narrative displays visual, auditory and tactile references via numerous literary and metaphorical combinations ('coconut trees', 'dull', 'sullen sound', 'thudded', 'warm', 'rippled silk'). As to function-advancing propositions, it is worth noticing that the extract includes verbless sentences, although there are some action verbs ('bent into', 'slide by'). The children's consciousness also emerges through other details, in particular the chromatic echoes ('dark', 'grey-green', 'yellow moon') that produce a general atmosphere of reverie, triggered from the very beginning via the phrase 'they dreamed', i.e. a verb denoting a mental process. This phrase and the use of the possessive pronoun 'their' mark the description and work as a departing point for the creation of a specific sub-world, that of the twin's fantasy and attachment to the river.

However, for the children the conceptualization of the river in the novel is not static given the diegetic anachronies put forward by the writer, and it abruptly changes when they reunite many years after the previous episode: "Some days he walked along the banks of the river that smelled of shit, and pesticides bought with World Bank loans. Most of the fish had died. The ones that survived suffered from fin-rot and had broken out in boils" (Roy 1997: 13). The excerpt is focalized through Estha and records his disillusionment and sadness for the devastation of the landscape. Symbolically and materially here, the balance between the natural and the human is turned upside down, and linguistically realized through homophone-based puns ('bank', 'Bank'), negatively-connoted nouns and verbs ('smelled of shit', 'pesticides', 'suffered', 'broken'), and tense-changes denoting a before and after outcome ('had died'). The image is highly emblematic and allegorical in representing the twins' adverse life experiences to the point that, as Anand (2005: 102) suggests, "the clinical violation of the river coincides with the desecration of their childhood innocence".

In Roy's prose, places are central and functional, and not a mere geographical description. Along with natural places, also places affected or cared for by humans are important, for example gardens, which encapsulate elements of the environment such as plants, flowers, and trees, and imply the human action. Baby Kochamma's garden is paradigmatic in this respect because, for Mukherjee (2010: 101), "her labour in the garden is an attempt to control space and other forms of life

just as she herself has been controlled”: not only does she take pride in gardening, but she even considers it as a tool of power, through which she can govern what is denied to her in life. The woman in fact had to suppress her love for an Irish Catholic priest, becoming deeply embittered with all the other characters. Her beautiful garden, thus, becomes a form of sublimation for a wish that can never come true for her, a sort of speculative replacement in which she can tame nature completely. Let us observe the following excerpt, which for the sake of analysis I have divided into three parts:

- (1) To keep her from brooding, her father gave Baby Kochamma charge of the front garden of the Ayemenem House, where she raised a fierce, bitter garden that people came all the way from Kottayam to see.
- (2) It was a circular, sloping patch of ground, with a steep gravel driveway looping around it. Baby Kochamma turned it into a lush maze of dwarf hedges, rocks and gargoyles. The flower she loved the most was the anthurium. *Anthurium andraeanum*. She had a collection of them, the ‘*Rubrum*’, the ‘*Honeymoon*’ and a host of Japanese varieties. Their single succulent spathes ranged from shades of mottled black to blood red and glistening orange. Their prominent, stippled spadices always yellow. In the center of Baby Kochamma’s garden, surrounded by beds of canna and phlox, a marble cherub peed an endless silver arc into a shadow pool in which a single blue lotus bloomed. At each corner of the pool lolled a pink plaster-of-Paris gnome with rosy cheeks and a peaked red cap.
- (3) Baby Kochamma spent her afternoons in her garden. In sari and gumboots. She wielded an enormous pair of hedge shears in her bright orange gardening gloves. Like a lion-tamer she tamed vines and nurtured bristling cacti. She limited bonsai plants and pampered rare orchids. She waged war on the weather. She tried to grow edelweiss and chinese guava [sic.]. (Roy 1997: 26–27)

Overall, the passage delineates a macro context, or text-world (devoted to Baby Kochamma and the garden), which develops its world-switches back and forth, and works via three main articulations, roughly corresponding to the three numbered paragraphs above. Specifically, section (1) operates as a sort of preamble to introduce the protagonist’s story-world, section (2) focuses on the description of the garden, and section (3) defines the active role of the woman, centralizing her gardening activity, which stands as a metaphor of control and subjugation. The text packages ideas and echoes into linguistic expressions by insisting on nominalization, as well as lexemes taken from the specialized discourse of botany, emphasized by evaluative terms (‘lush’) and several figurative constructions (‘fierce’, ‘bitter’, ‘pampered’), including zoological similes (‘like a lion-tamer’) and hyperboles (‘endless’). Unlike the depiction of the river through

the twins' eyes, in section (3) nature is materially rendered as a malleable object, manipulated by Baby Kochamma: linguistic evidence of this lies in action verbs like 'tamed', 'limited' and the figurative expression 'waged war', which cumulatively define the character's sense of self. Even the noun 'bonsai' is in line with such stance because it refers to a type of plant that is artificially grown and kept in micro-size, thus completely altering its natural development by means of human intervention. Incidentally, the word 'bonsai' may also be utilized with the figurative meaning of "something carefully shaped or controlled" (OED 2022), and in this sense it is sometimes attested in the domain of agile architecture, an umbrella term for the principles and practices sustaining the evolutionary design and architecture of a system, whose construction requires minimal actions, similar to the 'synthetic' cultivation of bonsai trees, which requires a reduced quantity of soil and water.

Baby Kochamma's proud, authoritative vision is somehow mitigated by eccentricities, for example with the attention-grabbing enactors that illustrate her bizarre and tacky garden decorations such as gargoyles, the marble Cherub and the pink plaster-of-Paris gnome. The narrator adopts an external focalization, but the second paragraph of the extract is revelatory of Baby Kochamma's ideology, one entrenched in authoritarianism, also thanks to the syntactic structure, being essentially composed of function-advancing propositions based on the repetitive pattern subject + verb (she + verb). This illuminates her power of action, thus creating a narrative frame in which the woman exercises her total command over nature, including her botanical experiments, i.e. the fact that she wants to grow rare plants such as edelweiss and chinese guava [sic.] in the Indian landscape, irrespective of the climate conditions. Furthermore, such a point conceptually rewrites the notion of domestic and exotic, encouraging the reader to recategorize the plants being described, and suggesting a sense of alterity in Baby Kochamma's imperious attitude.

Interestingly, in Roy's writing, places are often seen with their objects and items too, and such a 'material' consideration permeates the description of Paradise Pickles, the food factory owned by the Ipse family. The discourse-world of experienced readers approaching the novel will identify the factory as a sort of intertextual homage to the chutney metaphor in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), in which the tasty Indian relish serves as a figurative stratagem to preserve the past (Tickell 2007: 47). Moreover, according to Mukherjee (2010: 87), the pickle factory has the power to "make concrete the continuous histories of colonialism, globalization, class and caste conflicts" in a fictional context that attributes symbolic importance to the materiality of places. Obviously, this is not a natural site, but a human-made establishment, which nonetheless weaves in some

significant references, for instance in the following description perspectivized through Estha:

Past glass casks of vinegar with corks.
 Past shelves of pectin and preservatives.
 Past trays of bitter gourd, with knives and coloured finger-guards.
 Past gunny bags bulging with garlic and small onions.
 Past mounds of banana peels on the floor (preserved for the pigs' dinner).
 Past the label cupboard full of labels.
 Past the glue.
 Past the glue-brush.
 Past an iron tub of empty bottles floating in soapbubbled water.
 Past the lemon squash.
 The grape-brush.
 And back.

It was dark inside, lit by the light that filtered through the clotted gauze doors, and a beam of dusty sunlight (that Ousa didn't use) from the skylight. The smell of vinegar and asafoetida stung his nostrils, but Estha was used to it, loved it. The place that he found to Think [sic.] in was between the wall and the black iron cauldron in which a batch of freshly boiled (illegal) banana jam was slowly cooling. [...]

Having thought these thoughts, Estha Alone [sic.] was happy with his bit of wisdom. As the hot magenta jam went around, Estha became a Stirring Wizard with a spoiled puff and uneven teeth, and then the Witches of Macbeth. Fire burn, banana bubble.

(Roy 1997: 194–195)

The structure of the passage is threefold: the first part constitutes a main text-world dominated by a large number of enactors, particularly in the form of items pertaining to ingredients (e.g. fruits, vegetables and spices), but also featuring tools and other objects, whilst the second and third parts progressively display Estha's mind and feelings, branching off from the suggestive explanation of the place, which picks up some details to produce literary allusions such as the 'black iron cauldron', used for cooking the ingredients that conjures a Shakespearean echo of sorcery. Estha's fervid fantasy transmutes the environmental clues into playful objects as the paragraphs after the list also exhibit indicators of modality, in particular boulomaic, i.e. related to the expression of desire with the verb phrases 'loved' and 'was happy', and epistemic, i.e. related to knowledge and belief, thanks to Estha's focalization as expressed by 'having thought these thoughts', which seems to index the child's intrusive thoughts as well as his fantasies. As Gavins (2007: 94) affirms, "the use of a modal item has the effect of constructing a modal-world which is separate from its originating text-world". Therefore, the description of the factory gradually leaves way to an eccentric scenario in which the boy replaces the natural ingredients used for the preparation of the sauces and jams with literary allusions, a diegetic and psychological operation that also

includes graphological defamiliarization and that aims at reshaping the boy's reality, namely to reject dire issues and problems. As a whole, "with its non-standard spellings, reversed words, neologisms, repetitions and emphatic capitalizations, Roy's novel often tests the limits of prose" (Tickell 2007: 7), but apart from testifying to the writer's creative verve, such techniques are linguistic means to articulate meaning. With regard to forms of atypical capitalization, for instance, 'Think' and 'Alone' specifically sketch out the boy's mental and intimate dimension, allowing readers to share Estha's feelings.

4 Beyond the border: Cities, graves, and other places

In this part, I continue the exploration of Roy's fictional ecological and human spatialities by looking at *MUH* (2017), an intricate novel that draws from various dramatic moments of contemporary Indian history such as the 2002 Godhra train burning and the armed insurrection in Kashmir. Once again, the plot concatenates a range of characters, who often embody discourses of marginality, suppression, and resistance, as they traverse different kinds of borders, such as gender, religion, and society, for example with the hijra Anjum, who finds a shelter in a desolate Muslim graveyard, or Tilottama (sometimes nicknamed Tilo), a young semi-Dalit architect, estranged from her own Christian Syrian community and engaged with activism (Goh 2021). The space (and time) coordinates of the story are varied, and such a plethora of geographies acquire multiple meanings within a holistic (and committed) view, since "the key argument Roy makes here concerns not merely the various elusive apparatuses of capital but also its manipulation of space to create or expand pre-existing spaces of precarity" (Rajan 2021: 22).

As an illustration, the portrayal of Delhi can be observed, especially in its mishmash of ritzy areas close to dilapidated districts, two polarities of the territory that are the fruit of unwise human actions, in particular considering the processes of expropriation, expulsion, and exploitation of local communities that often take place in Indian cities, and that recently were worsened by Covid pandemic and lockdown policies. In the story, Roy sometimes compares the city to the mythological figure of Medusa to stress its tentacular menaces, and when Tilo and other characters reach the Indian capital, they witness its multiple shapes and forms of life:

They glided through dense forests of apartment buildings, past gigantic concrete amusement parks, bizarrely designed wedding halls and towering cement statues as high as skyscrapers, of Shiva in a cement leopard-skin loincloth with a cement cobra around his neck and a colossal Hanuman looming over a metro track. They drove over an impossible-to-pee-on

flyover as wide as a wheat field, with twenty lanes of cars whizzing over it and towers of steel and glass growing on either side of it. But when they took an exit road off it, they saw that the world underneath the flyover was an entirely different one – an unpaved, unlaned, unlit, unregulated, wild and dangerous one, in which buses, trucks, bullocks, rickshaws, cycles, handcarts and pedestrians jostled for survival. One kind of world flew over another kind of world without troubling to stop and ask the time of the day. (Roy 2017: 409)

Whereas in other parts of the novel, some districts of Delhi are seen as “the Garden City with lush, landscaped roundabouts” (Roy 2017: 303), here, the marked presence of adjectives and phrases operating as world-builders delineates a human context increasingly occupying the territory through its technological apparatuses (‘apartment buildings’, ‘metro track’, ‘flyover’) as signaled by the frequent repetition of the word ‘cement’. The cognitive design of such a world benefits from some items taken from the domain of nature (‘dense forest’, ‘wheat field’) but is also affected by the idea of negation, which is introduced by the adversative adverb ‘but’ to create contrastive images, and which underpins an alternative sub-world, for instance through morphologically negative elements such as ‘unpaved’, ‘unlaned’, and ‘unregulated’ as well as the atypical collocation ‘wild’ for a motorway. In order to fully access this type of scenario, readers draw on their schematic knowledge of pavement, lanes, and highways and then proceed to negate these very features, thus producing two binary mental spaces and a type of lacuna effect (Stockwell 2009: 31–35), i.e. a conceptual gap that the novelist utilizes to foreground the derelict conditions of Delhi’s periphery and its multiple inhabitants. Although the extract does not essentially present human characters, some enactors suggest human agency, for example with regard to movement (‘rickshaws’, ‘cycles’, ‘pedestrians’) as well as animal force (‘bullocks’). It is a maneuver that synthesizes the social and environmental contradictions of the Indian megalopolis and that ascribes a sense of marginality because “the people and the spaces that Roy includes in the literary and the narrative space of her novel are mostly those that the construct of a hegemonic nation state will often exclude” (Talwar 2020: 261). Rather than a glimpse of ‘shining’ India, Roy displays a counter-narrative of dissidence and suggests the coterminous existence of precarious worlds, which are populated by liminal subjects.

Put differently, spatial representation is not a mere panoramic act but is of paramount importance in problematizing and politicizing questions of identity, belonging, and being, and in order to unpack such a strategy, I investigate the depiction of a particular type of place, namely the graveyard. In her essays, Roy (2014, 2020) herself has pointed out the symbolic, social, and environmental role of graveyards: although in India death practices frequently turn around cremation (e.g. in Hinduist mourning rites), graveyards are used by some specific religious communities such as Muslims and Christians. Along with their natural

components (plants and animals), cemeteries also suggest social aspects of ghettoization since they serve as shelters for the destitute and the homeless, therefore standing out as heterotopian spaces, from a Foucauldian perspective (Essa 2021). In fact, graveyards are not simply sites of burial, but with their loaded meaning, in balance between locality and temporality, they become indicators of Otherness, a dimension typically stigmatized by mainstream society. Not only this: the author explicitly associates graveyards, which in cognitive terms function as schemas for SADNESS and DEATH, with the natural attractiveness of Kashmiri valleys and fields, through a disorientating and somehow even disturbing form of antithesis: “Kashmir, the land of the living dead and the talking graves – city graves, village graveyards, mass graves, unmarked graves, double-decker graves. Kashmir, whose truth can only be told in fiction – because only fiction can tell about air that is so thick with fear and loss, with pride and mad courage, and with unimaginable cruelty” (Roy 2020: 188). The quotation projects common images borrowed from fantasy and horror films onto the landscape (‘land of the living dead’), but also adds the unconventional expression ‘talking graves’ to map out the link between life and non-life, one in which agency is attributed to objects as a reminder of human violence. The connection between the human and the non-human is also rendered with the reference to ‘air’, which appears to be saturated with negative feelings, thus marking the pervasiveness of danger and anxiety.

The same type of characterization of the graveyard, and space in general, appears almost *verbatim* in the sections of the novel that follow the fighting between the Indian army and the insurgents in Kashmir: “graveyards became as common as the multi-storey parking lots that were springing up in the burgeoning cities in the plains. When they ran out of space, some graves became double-deckered, like the buses in Srinagar that once ferried tourists between Lal Chowk and the Boulevard” (Roy 2017: 319). The first text-world here at play sets the scene and highlights the results of war, namely the proliferation of dead bodies, as Kashmir’s beautiful nature (‘plains’) is replaced by urban references (‘parking lots’). However, the time adverb ‘when’ endorses a new text-world, in which the very idea of the environment is rewritten and gives way to a postmodern, almost apocalyptic devastation. Along with many other types of places, the graveyard acquires conceptual prominence for Roy, because it designates “an in-between space where the being undergoes a transition, a space that symbolizes the overlapping of two worlds” (Talwar 2020: 260). Engrained in the text, it essentially operates as a sort of extended metaphor (Gavins 2007: 149–152), which constantly brings to the fore the contrast between life and non-life, and also alludes to precarity and crisis. The role of focus of consciousness attributed to cemeteries is underlined even graphologically and semiotically since “the front cover of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* for Penguin Random House is a black and white

(perhaps marble) tombstone – setting the stage for the novel’s scenes in graveyards – on which lies a single, tiny red (perhaps slightly desiccated) flower” (Lau and Mendes 2022: 107).

Designed as thematizing tropes, in the narrative burial sites enact various figurative devices: “graveyards sprang up in parks and meadows, by streams and rivers, in fields and forest glades. Tombstones grew out of the ground like young children’s teeth” (Roy 2017: 314). From an ecostylistic angle, this passage is noteworthy because it relies on the vocabulary of nature through a number of nouns (e.g. ‘streams and rivers’), which drastically clash with the defamiliarizing simile (‘like children’s teeth’) employed to speak about the rising number of tombs. Prototypically, the mental schema of the graveyard activates images of sufferance and gloom, but in reality, it constitutes a pattern with multiple layers of meaning, referring to memory, identity, and belonging. On closer inspection, the very sense of the cemetery can also allude to a process of alteration of biological matter as life and death cohabit and interact in the same space: going beyond the general perception by which graveyards are associated with the end of existence, it can be argued that they can also be viewed as dynamic sites of interface with various forms of life, animals, and plants (Faizah 2021; Ferguson 2021). The author’s rhetorical treatment of such spaces is intended to favor the readers’ refresh of such schemas and evidence can be found at the very beginning of the novel:

She lived in the graveyard like a tree. At dawn she saw the crows off and welcomed the bats home. At dusk she did the opposite. Between shifts she conferred with the ghosts of vulture that loomed in her high branches. She felt the gentle grip of their talons like an ache in an amputated limb. She gathered they weren’t altogether unhappy at having excused themselves and existed from the story.

When she first moved in, she endured months of casual cruelty like a tree would – without flinching. She didn’t turn to see which small boy had thrown a stone at her, didn’t crane her neck to read the insults scratched into her bark. When people called her names – clown without a circus, queen without a palace – she let the hurt blow through her branches like a breeze and used the music of her rustling leaves as balm to ease the pain. (Roy 2017: 3)

For Roy, picturing the cemetery involves reflecting on the very idea of places, observed as sites and texts, and their inhabitants as well, therefore sanctioning a holistic view of the biosphere. In introducing one of the main characters of the fiction, the hijra Anjum, initially simply evoked thanks to the cataphoric pronoun ‘she’, thus with an *in medias res* narration, the writer provides an embodied metaphorical vision of the main text-world, which is clued by the key simile presented in the first sentence (‘like a tree’), and reinforced in the second paragraph. Superficially, such conceptualization seems to convey the inability to move that characterizes a plant, unlike other forms of life, but in reality, it endorses an extension of sub-worlds. To access the unfolding of these sub-levels, readers have

to process three main aspects. Firstly, there is a human entity endowed with agency ('she' + verb in all sentences) mapped onto a non-mobile biological entity ('tree'). Secondly, the passage is enriched by various natural references through nouns, mainly the animals ('crows', 'bats', 'the ghosts of vulture') that populate the cemetery area, but also the vegetal world and the parts of the tree ('high branches', 'bark'). Thirdly, the senses in their tangible and intangible dimensions are foregrounded via reference to bodies and parts of bodies ('an amputated limb', 'neck'), as well as other perception items such as visual ('saw'), tactile ('felt the gentle grip') and auditory ('the music of her rustling leaves').

The use of trees in figurative language is consolidated and rather productive since such conceptual domain is at the base of a vast range of metaphors, devices, and proverbs. To discuss this type of configuration, Kövecses (2010: 126) brings in the conceptual pattern COMPLEX ABSTRACT SYSTEMS ARE PLANTS, which underpins many mappings related to social "organizations (such as companies), scientific disciplines, people, economic and political systems, human relationships, sets of ideas, and others", and whose linguistic realizations draw on the lexical fields of nature (e.g. with nouns such as 'seeds' and 'fruit', or verbs like 'prune' and 'germinate'). However, this image can be extended to life as well in order to represent various sides of human existence, thus blending the material (and environmental) with the abstract (and human).

For Roy, the employment of trees is not a mere stylistic embellishment but a strategy to reverse the dominant perspective of binary division between nature and humanity by suggesting lines of connection that redraw human hierarchical verticality as environmental horizontal interconnectedness. Anjum's life is textually framed as a tree, an element that actually is endowed with sensory and corporeal power, as the function-advancers of the passage indicate perception ('saw', 'felt'), mental processes ('endured') and actions ('moved in', 'didn't crane'). With its self-supporting trunk, a tree is often viewed as a passive entity, but here it is metaphorically reimagined as a dynamic form of life, which is not only able to resist but also to act within a social landscape of intolerance and persecution, for example with the verb phrases in the last sentence ('let the hurt blow', 'used the music'). The tree simile in fact allows Roy to amplify the notion of diversity because, as an exponent of Otherness by virtue of her gendered identity, Anjum is marginalized and detested. The social discrimination against her is embodied in an environmental perspective since it takes the form of abusive writing carved by people on her 'bark' (her skin), and thus the violence against the tree materially and symbolically alludes to the violence inflicted to the human, in an unbalanced relation between the various segments of the biosphere. Remarkably, the poetics of trees is relevant for postcolonial authors (Concilio and Fargione 2021), in particular those from India, for example in the case of Sumana Roy's *How I Became a Tree*

(2017), a peculiar non-fictional text that speaks about women as trees, tree diagrams, tree installations and many other conceptual and linguistic realizations. Recently, Ghosh (2022) too, whose commitment to the environment emerges in his essays *The Great Derangement* (2016) and *The Nutmeg's Curse* (2021), has adopted the reference to trees to further the question of the relation between the human and the non-human, in particular with regard to the issue of communication and voice, and has encouraged a rethinking of ontological concepts and terminological labels.

5 Conclusion

It should be clear that in this article, given the thematic and stylistic complexity of Arundhati Roy's discourse on society and the environment, I have only scratched the surface of the linguistic resources that characterize the fabric of her prose. By incorporating into her works places as diverse as rivers, gardens, and graveyards, the writer manages to broaden the idea of the environment to situate all forms of life and their complex and constant dynamics of interaction. Accordingly, the very notion of anthropocentrism (Garrard 2004: 20–23) has to be reinterpreted and revised since humans are not the only, or primary, figures of moral standing and nature is not simply ancillary to human societies, and clearly this has repercussions on language as well, especially in its capacity to forge meaning, construct text-worlds and spread messages. As Saxena (2022: 147) affirms, for a writer like Roy, “English carries the sound of traumatized landscape and offers mediations of a counter-history”: the way in which she constructs the textual architecture of places, in fact, is a means to reclaiming a new configuration of the environment, in which all ecosystems are recognized, in particular considering their interrelatedness.

The various extracts from Roy's literary and non-literary prose that I have looked at in this contribution are revelatory of the author's ecological attitude, political beliefs, and committed activism, thanks to devices like point of view, figurative language, and defamiliarization. The sequences from *GST* flesh out various places and their identities, values, and meanings: they convey the perspective of young characters, such as Rahel and Estha, and their complex relationship with the environment as a benign site to exorcise fears and uncertainties, but they can also signpost an authoritative trait of the human upon the non-human, as in the case of Baby Kochamma and her patronizing behavior towards plants and flowers. Instead, *MUH* seems to offer a more complex depiction of the environment because Roy challenges the reader to review their vision of elements such as graveyards, which are natural sites of life and death, sometimes with an additional sociopolitical value, and trees, which in spite of their apparent immobility are living entities, exactly as the hijra Anjum, and as such bring to the

fore the question of identity. The findings of the investigation disclose a broader view of the environment, one in which the relation between the human and the non-human is complementary rather than competitive, in an articulated system of correspondences. In this light, human societies, spanning questions of precarity and marginality too, are only one possible segment of the conceptual shape of ecology, and therefore, it is imperative to advocate a fresh rethinking of life on the planet.

The ecostylistic investigation I have proposed here aids in delving into Roy's discourses and texts, and their power to exhibit "the contemporary sensitive and critical socio-political cosmos of India" (Mustafa and Chaudhry 2019: 505), which specifically allude to her concern for the environment and span both the human and the non-human. An important dual metaphor seems to emerge from the author's writing, condensing various meanings and references. The figurative pattern PLACE IS TEXT in fact is also indebted to the domains of architecture and narrative, provides a range of inputs that sustain the articulation of multiple text-worlds, and draws attention to the various forms of life, even in chaotic spaces, in which "whole other cities and city-stories will make themselves known" because it is possible to encounter "crow conferences, street-dogs conclaves, horse confabulations, monkey madness".⁶ In reality, the metaphor may lend itself to a reversed structure whereby not only places are mapped as palimpsests onto which one can write narratives and build discourses, but also texts can evoke and illustrate places and the environment. The final result pinpoints the complexity of the conceptual figuration of the environment and its many actors. For Stibbe (2015: 8), "language, culture, human cognition, stories and texts play a role in human ecology to the extent that they influence human behavior, and hence the ways that humans interact with each other and the larger natural world", and consequently it becomes vital to consider the narratives that deal with the various components of the environment. The places that emerge from Roy's prose, from the watery landscape of Kerala and Medusa-like Delhi to the funeral sites of Kashmir, cumulatively convey a conative force, in the hope of challenging readers to act for a better world, in which all ecosystems are fully considered and vertical hierarchies give way to rhizomatic relations of equivalence and respect.

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Growing the green city: A cognitive ecostylistic analysis of Third Isaiah's Jerusalem (Isaiah 55–66)

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Abstract: In the ancient world, cities served as physical and conceptual containers to separate a controlled, orderly area from the chaos outside. The depictions of cities in the Hebrew Bible largely underwrite this paradigm. Third Isaiah's vision of Jerusalem, however, imagines a space that challenges these engrained ideas of the urban. Conducting a cognitive ecostylistic analysis and drawing on insights from Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Text World Theory, this article examines the green city as imagined by Third Isaiah (Isaiah 56–66). Throughout the vision, the prophet creates a new (text-) world defined by urban and natural world-builders, a blend that unites seemingly paradoxical elements. The utopian character of future Jerusalem is downplayed by its grounding in the real world (both the discourse-world and its near-equivalent, the empty text-world in which the prophecy is uttered). Third Isaiah calls for a view of city space that draws on the known, dissolving existing dichotomies and categories. As such, it invites modern readers to rethink not only the biblical Jerusalem but also urban space and its relationship to nature more generally.

Keywords: city; conceptual metaphor; nature; Text World Theory; utopian space

1 Introduction

Whereas the modern urban dweller escapes the manic hustle of city life by secluding themselves in the mountains or at the seaside nearby, in the ancient world, turmoil was to be found outside the city walls. There, wild animals would roam, and safety was compromised. The city though, by its very nature, was a human effort to create order in and against chaos and its powers (Pearson and Richards 1994). Not surprisingly one of the most prominent conceptual metaphors for urban space drew upon the notion of the physical container walled cities used to be (Vermeulen 2020). Plentiful are the royal inscriptions in which kings claim to have filled their cities with

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people and precious goods. Similarly, Jerusalem in the Bible served as a reservoir of physical and metaphorical content and in the Prophets often became a person in a human body. In addition to the container metaphor, the Hebrew Bible relies on a handful of other conceptual images, of which the majority do not draw on nature (e.g. the city is depicted as a woman or presented as an object). There are two exceptions to this rule: a small group of passages which understand the city through animals and another, slightly bigger group, that sees the city as a mountain. The former typically appears in negative cityscapes, relating dehumanization and even deconstruction of urban space. The latter occurs to refer to the city of God, evoking cultic and cosmic contexts (Vermeulen 2020).

The lack of natural imagery for cities in combination with a reality in which the natural environment was considered a threat to human existence might suggest that the two spaces are incompatible, or even opposed. This idea is further strengthened by the fact that many scholars overtly as well as tacitly have underwritten this assumption by speaking of an anti-urban rhetoric in the Bible (Roddy 2008), the garden opposing the urban setting in the *Song of Songs* (e.g. Landy 1983: 121; Thöne 2012: 419; cf. James 2017; Meredith 2013), or the ultimate future of Jerusalem as a return to Eden (e.g. Childs 2000: 537; McKenzie 1969). What is more, scholars' view on nature in the Bible has retrospectively been influenced by their interest in the relationship between human beings and their (natural) environment, which lies at the heart of environmental science and ecocritical discourse. In the Hebrew Bible, however, concepts such as 'nature' and 'culture' did not take the form they do nowadays. The city was not a space resisting nature – it did harbor domesticated animals as Jonah 3 and 4 suggest (Shemesh 2010), and it did refer to nature in its decoration of the temple, for example (Noegel 2019). Historically speaking, it very much depended on the surrounding landscape and its resources to thrive and survive. Hence, the biblical city is to be inscribed in a discourse of control and order contrasting chaos rather than one about culture opposing nature (Grabbe 2001: 20; Tucker 1997: 14). For the biblical context, the problem was not so much that there were animals, or more broadly nature, in the city, but that every space had its order and every species its allocated habitat. It is the disturbance of that spatial order that is troublesome.

Because nature is mostly absent in city depictions in the Hebrew Bible, it is more striking that Third Isaiah's Jerusalem has a lot of natural features (understood by Mills [2012: 196] to evoke the idea of the city as a "site of life expectance"). As the third and last part of the biblical book of Isaiah, Chapters 56–66, with a total of 192 verses, is generally thought to be written after the return from the Babylonian exile in 538 B.C.E. by several anonymous prophets in Judah, referred to collectively as Third or Trito-Isaiah in scholarship (Joachimsen 2020). It has clear connections, verbal as well as thematic with the other, earlier parts of the book of Isaiah. Given that the text

consists of poetry, it is more useful to list some of its recurring themes than to try to summarize the content of the separate poems which are characterized by changes in temporal and perspectival frames intertwined with elements from wisdom literature. Key topics are creation, the fate of Jerusalem/Zion, and the role of justice, righteousness and salvation (Berges 2016; Poulsen 2020). Joachimsen (2020: 177) has summarized the main focus of the book of Isaiah as a whole as “addressing the centrality of Israel, Jerusalem and the people of Yahweh in the divine plan, including the role of the peoples”. Regarding Jerusalem, the city is a light and a fruitful mountain, when viewed positively in Third Isaiah, and the abode of dog-people more negatively speaking. How exactly should these images be read? Is the prophet envisioning a Jerusalem that is greener? Or is he precisely emphasizing its non-greenness, given the eschatological character of the chapters, themselves to be understood as a response to the uncertain times in which the original audience lived?

In this article, I reassess the space of Jerusalem in Isaiah 56–66 by means of a cognitive ecostylistic approach to determine the nature of the city (pun intended). Moving away from an eschatological and utopian point of view and turning to Text World Theory (TWT) (Gavins 2007; Werth 1999), I demonstrate how ecostylistics as a framework can enhance ecocritical research of environment as represented and evoked in text, an endeavor shared by all contributions in this Special Issue. In addition, I unearth the text’s world-building as a poetic and textual answer to address changed circumstances that require people, just like their counterparts in the prophecy, to blend existing paradigms with new ideas. What is presented at first sight as a utopian city of the mind projected into an undetermined future reveals itself, through its grounding in the real world, as a space much closer to the audience.

2 From eschatology to ecostylistics

Even though eschatology is not an ancient Jewish concept, the term frequently appears in scholarship on the Hebrew Bible. Derived from the Greek *eschatos* ‘last, final’, the word refers to “the study of the last things – death, judgment, afterlife and the end of the world” (Walls 2007: backmatter). It represents “a body of thoughts which based on the assumption of a final ending of all human history, speculates on the ‘last events’ that will only happen once and for all” (Van Noorden et al. 2021: 2). To overcome the divide between its meaning in systematic (Christian) theology and the corpus of the Hebrew Bible, eschatology is understood in two ways in Old Testament research: narrowly as found in so-called eschatological texts such as Daniel and more broadly as relating to a category of discourse “expressing future hope” (Sweeney 2020: 353).

The book of Isaiah often appears in discussions on eschatology in the Hebrew Bible. In these analyses, Jerusalem/Zion takes a prominent place. Sweeney (2020: 352) calls the city one of the “fixed points” in “the several dystopias and utopias in the eschatologically addressed discourses” in the book, while Schmidt identifies “the entire cluster of theological ideas and images centred around Zion-Jerusalem” as “a primary topic for eschatological texts in Isaiah” (Schmidt 2021: 66). Whereas Schmidt notes that biblical prophecy is typically more interested in “the world of the end and what it is going to be like – the world, not the end” (Schmidt 2021: 61), she argues that throughout the (canonical) book of Isaiah the focus of the text shifts from the turning point to the promised future (Schmidt 2021: 66–72). This change is prompted by the historical circumstances in which Third Isaiah, or at least some parts of it, came into being (Schmidt 2021: 64; Schüle 2020).

Given the “slippery” nature of the term ‘eschatology’ and its derivatives (Marshall 1978: 264), scholars nowadays often turn to ‘utopia’ as a possible alternative (e.g. Bail 2004; Ben Zvi 2006; Uhlenbruch 2015). Referring in its strict sense to an *ou-topos* ‘no place’ and in its later Morian sense also to a *eu-topos* ‘good place’, utopias are “imaginative depictions of places or states of being in which society is fundamentally different from the society in which the text is read” (Uhlenbruch 2015: 6). Collins distinguishes four types in the biblical tradition, arguing that they, in the end, are all locative in nature, “in the sense that they are this-worldly” and “emphasize place” (Collins 2020: 58, 52). “The yearning is not for the isles of the blessed somewhere beyond the ocean, nor, with few exceptions, for a return to the garden of Eden. Rather, it is the yearning for a very specific place, hallowed by ancestral associations that may be partly legendary but in part are all too well documented” (Collins 2020: 67). Schmidt (2021: 64) considers the idea of a model and the “oscillating between what is real or realistic, on the one hand, and fantastic or ideal on the other” major advantages of the term as well as the lack of the idea of the end of history but misses the notion of “the transcendence as a trait of God’s reality reaching beyond regular expectations”. In addition, scholars have adopted and adapted utopia as a reading strategy, most notably developed in the works of Uhlenbruch (2015, with Schweitzer 2016) and Ben Zvi (2006, 2013). Rather than analyzing utopia(s) in the Bible, they argue in favor of a reading of the text as utopia, “grant[ing] some insight into the societal circumstances to which the utopia was a response” (Uhlenbruch 2015: 20).

Regardless of the precise term chosen, the studies mentioned above read the city within a spatio-temporal frame that is highly, if not entirely, focused on the text-external world. This allows for reasoning away the natural depiction of Jerusalem or the urban features of nature in Third Isaiah. For example, Sweeney carefully distinguishes between the different time settings evoked in Isaiah, setting up, implicitly, a discussion of text-worlds. However, he does not follow the track that

is laid out by this world-building but reconstructs the chronology as it would have existed outside the text. In the end, he claims that the distant future described in Third Isaiah is distant for all readers of the book, as such underwriting the idea that the world, and consequentially, the city, is of a utopian/eschatological nature (Sweeney 2020: 356–357). Yet the study leaves unanswered whether the perceived distance is a result of the a priori categorizations of the text as eschatological, utopian or even apocalyptic, or whether it is indeed innate to the text and its world-building. It is unclear if the distance is the product of an a posteriori reconstruction of the chronology of the story or inherent to the discourse as followed during reading.

Furthermore, the current approaches leave unaddressed how city and nature work together in the text. Apart from the presumed text-external existence of the (utopian) world described in the text, a reader also creates an immediate world in their mind, a “text-world” (Gavins 2007: 2). Existing research does not address how readers construe this world nor what kind of Jerusalem they build: is it one combatting nature or embracing it, or both? Do readers look at a detached future or is the new Zion kept close?

All these concerns are at the heart of ecostylistics. As a subdiscipline of stylistics, it brings together stylistic methodologies with an interest in environments of different kinds. This interest can be textual, as in ‘how does a text produce its landscapes and what is their significance for readers?’, but also social and political, as in ecocriticism more generally (Virdis et al. 2021: 4–5). Both approaches underwrite Kern’s (2000: 11) definition of ecocriticism as “a kind of reading designed to expose and facilitate analysis of a text’s orientation both to the world it imagines and to the world in which it takes shape, along with the conditions and contexts that affect that”. Ecostylistics focuses on a variety of text types, including literary text, as showcased elsewhere in this issue and in previous research (e.g. Virdis 2021; Zurru 2021).¹ The field is indebted to ecolinguistics, described by Stibbe (2015: 223) as “the study of the role of language in the life-sustaining interactions of humans, other species and the physical environment”. Central to this definition is the idea of bidirectional influence, from ecology to language and vice versa (Fill 2018; Stibbe 2015). Ecostylistics distinguishes itself methodologically from ecolinguistics (Virdis 2022: 64–65). “It links the ecological concerns of ecolinguistics to the rigorous reading and interpretation of text and discourse characterizing stylistics” (Virdis 2022: 4).

Given the variety of methods within the latter, ecostylistics does not limit itself to a specific approach. Whereas the spatial concern may evidently lead to world-based

¹ This expansion can also be seen in the broader fields of ecocriticism and stylistics (e.g. Bell et al. 2021; Ingram 2014; McMurry 2014; Ringrow and Pihlaja 2020).

theories such as Text World Theory (Gavins 2007; Werth 1999) or Possible Worlds Theory (e.g. Ryan 1991; Semino 1997 applied to literature), scholars have also worked with systemic functional grammar (Virdis 2021; Zurru 2017) and metaphor theory (Vermeulen 2021), to name just a few. Compared to mainstream ecocriticism, as far as such a thing exists (Glotfelty 2014: ix–x), ecostylistics accesses the environment (textual as well as extra-textual) through an analysis of language or signs more generally. Ecocriticism proper addresses the topic through a variety of frameworks from different fields (e.g. sociology, psychology, biology, geography, etc.). Language is the means by which ecological concerns are discussed and theorized but not the subject of study *an sich*.

As far as research on the Hebrew Bible goes, Tucker (2009: 351) notes that “one must look long and hard to find examples of biblical scholarship addressed directly to environmental issues until late in the twentieth century”. Several reasons can be given, among others, the Bible’s theocentric focus and its lack of concepts such as ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ on which distinction environmental science is built (Tucker 2009: 358). The latter, however, should not be confused with a lack of concern. “Asking questions in terms of those categories does reveal some of the relationships between human beings and the world” (Tucker 2009: 358). The essay “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis” by White (1967) has had tremendous influence on the development of an ecological hermeneutic in biblical studies (Lamp 2017: 9). In response to the claim that the first creation narrative (Gen 1: 26–28) had given humankind the license to exploit the earth for their own benefit, biblical scholars either refuted the argument or countered it with research proving the opposite, mining the biblical text for eco-friendly passages, later called “green” texts by Habel (2009). Initially, works focused on the themes of creation, land and biblical ethics (e.g. Anderson 1994; Clifford and Collins 1992; Newsom 1994). Later, especially with the work done by Norman Habel on land and justice, biblical scholarship started to develop a discourse that is ecocritical in essence, while taking into account the Bible’s complex status as historical document but also as a religious and ideological manifest and a piece of world literature (e.g. Habel and Trudinger 2008; Habel and Wurst 2000, 2001a, 2001b). Frameworks of analysis include ecofeminist, postcolonial and posthumanism analyses (e.g. Mabie 2016; Tipton 2020) with a growing interest in urban environment and animals (e.g. McEntire 2019; Stone 2017). At the same time there is an expanding body of work that merges ecocritical concerns with theology, leading to subfields such as ecotheology and environmental ethics (e.g. Hiebert 1996; Lamp 2017, 2021; Person 2014; Rees 2015). Lamp (2017: ix) notes: “The ecological crisis should inform how the Bible is read, not the other way around”, as such positioning biblical ecocriticism as an “ecological analysis of discourse” rather than an “analysis of ecological discourse” (Penz and Fill 2022: 237).

3 The world(s) of prophecy

Ample research has been conducted on prophecy in the Hebrew Bible, “the intermediation of divine knowledge by non-technical means, constituting a process of communication” (Nissinen 2016: 5). These studies have drawn a picture of the world of biblical prophets as one closely affiliated to the temple (Grabbe 2016; Nissinen 2012). In addition to these socio-historical findings, scholars have looked at the literary world of prophecy, paying attention to its poetics and rhetoric (e.g. Couey 2015; Everson and Kim 2009; Landy 2020; Tiemeyer and Barstad 2014).

For a long time, scholars did not distinguish between the historical prophet and the prophetic persona in the text. Around the turn of the twentieth century this changed, although the historicity of the prophets themselves remained indisputable. Eventually, the latter was overruled by “a literary and theological quest for the prophetic persona, the character that serves as the first-person narrator or the implied author of the prophetic book” (Holt 2016: 300). This character, or more precisely the world of the prophet, however, takes on a peculiar form, which has been occasionally referred to in scholarship. For example, Brenner points out that one should be aware of the divide between the prophetic text-external world on the one hand and the prophetic story world on the other, and especially the way in which they are connected.

When we discuss “prophetic” writings we usually assume, tacitly if not overtly, that a prophet resides in them. The language employed in the text is actually perceived as a kind of meta-language, as if it for[e]grounds the prophet-in-the-text as an extratextual “person”: the prophet “hears”, he “says”, he “suffers”. (Brenner 1996: 177)

For Brenner, this obscuring of boundaries is the reason why readers attribute authority to the prophet’s words, and in extension God’s words. She then continues by redefining prophetic discourse as poetry to consequently develop feminist counterreadings of the texts. What is left unanswered though is how this collapse of text-internal and text-external worlds works precisely. Why is it that readers seem to forget that there is a fictional prophet standing in between them and the actual prophet(s)?

Stylisticians, especially those working with Text World Theory (Gavins 2007; Werth 1999), have developed a concept that can be of particular use here, that of an empty text-world (Lahey 2004). According to TWT, readers engaging with text build mental worlds in their head, known as text-worlds, based on information in the text and information brought from the discourse-world, i.e. the world in which the reader, as a discourse participant, reads the text (Gavins 2007: 9). Text-worlds are

construed relying on so-called “world-builders”: time, location, enactors, and objects. These form the setting against which a story develops. Temporal parameters include, for example, locatives, temporal adverbs (Gavins 2007: 36–37), and less prominently in the case of Biblical Hebrew, tense (Cook 2012). Enactors are the characters in the text-world (Gavins 2007: 41), human or non-human (along the lines of ecocritical thinking). The same enactor can exist in different text-worlds, for example, when a character relates a past event in which they took part. Objects are material things (Gavins 2007: 10) without agency, either because they lack the capacity to act or are imagined as such. In addition, actions in the world or descriptions of states further develop a text-world (Gavins 2007: 56–59). A typical story will have several text-worlds connected to each other. Reading text is maneuvering through spatial and temporal shifts, called “world-switches”, and through changes in attitude, labeled as “modal-worlds” (Gavins 2007: 48, 91–108). For the latter, Gavins (2007: 94, 99, 110) distinguishes three types: boulomaic modal-worlds expressing wish, hope and desire; epistemic ones for knowledge and beliefs; and deontic ones stating duty.

In the case of an empty text-world, a world is created that is “normally text-initial but ultimately immaterial” (Gavins 2007: 133). It is “minimally populated” and “the function advancing propositions must be inferred, since they are not made explicit” (Lahey 2004: 26). Norledge describes it as the world resulting from a “reader mak[ing] a conceptual leap from the discourse-world, beyond the text-world to the world of the act of narration” (Norledge 2020: 6). The text-world in between those two is seemingly skipped (Norledge 2020: 7). Gavins (2007: 133) speaks of it as a “relegation of the text-world level of the discourse”, pointing out that it is a common feature in literary fictional discourse. Even though the world is a nearly empty mental space, it remains a space and, therefore, has an influence on participant’s and enactor’s accessibility of text-worlds (Lahey 2004: 27–28). Accessibility is a term expressing the possibility of a text-world: can the reliability of the world be checked? (Gavins 2007: 12). If the answer is positive, one speaks of participant-accessible worlds in the case of text-worlds created by participants in the discourse-world. Those produced by text-world enactors with no counterpart in the discourse-world are labeled as enactor-accessible (Gavins 2007: 77–78).

Two elements play into the effect of an empty text-world: the use of second-person address and the notion of psychological projection. For the former, Fludernik (1995: 106) has argued that “You, even if it turns out to refer to a fictional protagonist, initially always seems to involve the actual reader”. Prophetic discourse generates the following possibilities: ‘you’ as an audience in (i) the original discourse-world (or any later discourse-world), (ii) the empty text-world of the prophetic performance, (iii) the world-switch of the character God speaking, (iv) the world-switch of future Jerusalem, (v) a combination of a text-internal and text-external ‘you’, called “double

deixis” by Herman (1994).² The referential ambiguity of ‘you’ partially explains prophecy’s appeal to contemporary readers. A second-person address can bridge the gap between discourse-world and matrix world. The concept of psychological projection further explains this conceptual leap. Whiteley (2011: 25) describes it as “an extension and development of the linguistic notion of deictic projection, which is the ability to shift one’s *origo* from its anchorage in the ‘I’, ‘here’ and ‘now’ to an alternative position in order to create or comprehend deictic expressions”. In text-world terms, this means “a process of cross-world metaphorical mapping between discourse-world participant and text-world enactor” (Whiteley 2011: 26).

Finally, the world in biblical prophecy is highly metaphorical. Scholars have explained the unusual imagery in light of the visionary character of the texts (e.g. Sweeney 2020). Text World Theory, however, offers a different view to these metaphors as generating “a kind of conceptual double-vision” (Gavins 2007: 152) with the initial text-world and the metaphorical blended world as separate but concurrent mental spaces. Gavins’ blended worlds are based on Conceptual Integration Theory (CIT), developed by Fauconnier and Turner (2002) to explain how metaphor works. Building upon previous approaches to the matter, they propose that in metaphor two input spaces merge together creating a blend with its own structure and characteristics. For example, the Hebrew Bible often blends the input spaces of CITY and WOMAN. Simply connecting comparable features from both spaces does not explain images such as the one in Nahum 3: 10 where a mother-city witnesses her children die on her very streets; however, the process of blending does. Just like in CIT, the blended worlds in TWT serve to understand the matrix world (Gavins 2007: 152–160). Thus, despite Nahum’s atrocious depiction, the primary focus of the text remains the city, not the woman (Vermeulen 2022). Whether or not the created worlds are participant or enactor accessible depends on who is producing the metaphor. For biblical prophecy, this is an inherently difficult matter. The text clearly is written by human hands (both in the discourse-world and in the empty text-world); however, the words and thus the metaphors are, at least in the world-switch with God as speaker, attributed to the deity. This character is presented as reliable and authoritative; from God’s perspective the prophecies are facts that are awaiting realization.³

2 The Hebrew original disambiguates some, using different grammatical forms for second person feminine singular, masculine singular and masculine plural and feminine plural.

3 Depending on the audience of the book, this assumption would also extend to them: “As we turn our attention to the world of the literati who as they read the prophetic books construed utopias, it is clear that from their own perspective, they know the future and know that it has already been decided by YHWH, independently of any human action [...]. To be sure, they do not know when utopia will become worldly ‘reality’ but, unlike many contemporary utopia explorers, they know that it will be” (Ben Zvi 2013: 467).

4 A cognitive ecostylistic analysis of Third Isaiah

Third Isaiah's prophecy is enveloped by a speech frame, opening and closing with "said the LORD" (Isaiah 56: 1, Isaiah 66: 24). In between the character God addresses a 'you' that changes throughout in gender and number, from a masculine plural אַתֶּם in Isaiah 57: 3 and a feminine singular in Isaiah 57: 7ff. to a masculine singular in Isaiah 58: 1, for example. The prophecy draws on a contrasting pattern of different time frames (Sweeney 2020), of which the past and present are typically evaluated negatively and the future possibly positively. All chapters include references to the city with a climax in Chapters 60 and 62 in which a personified Zion/Jerusalem is addressed.

4.1 Defining text-worlds

The reader of Third Isaiah creates a first obvious text-world based on the opening of Chapter 56: כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה ('thus said the LORD'). This text-world is defined by a *qatal*-form, indicating a past time in which God said something. The identifiable world-builders include time (past, through the verb) and enactor (God, through the proper noun). Indications of location and objects are not provided. Furthermore, an addressee is implied given that the character God is speaking to someone for whom the message was intended. As mentioned before, the addressee is, due to the nature of the text, open for interpretation.

Isaiah 66: 24 concludes the book with a variant of the speech formula (אָמַר יְהוָה, 'said the LORD'). Whereas scholars have called the verse a "dämonischen Missklang" ('fiendish discordancy') and verse 23 is repeated after it in liturgical practice (Blenkinsopp 2003: 318), verse 24 fits neatly in terms of world-building, enveloping the different world-switches that are made throughout the chapters. In addition, the speech frame highlights the nature of the text as divine speech.

Within that speech, several urban worlds are created. For example, in Isaiah 56: 4–5, the character God projects a future world for the eunuchs (a world-switch per Gavins 2007: 48), a place in his temple in the city. The location of this text-world is urban, evoked by 'in my house' (בְּבֵיתִי) and 'within my walls' (וּבְחֻמֹּתַי). In addition, the eunuchs themselves (סְרִיסִים) are associated with the temple and may, through readerly knowledge, further add to the building of an urban text-world. Finally, this world is evaluated positively: the eunuchs will be rewarded, the city is a good place to dwell.

⁴ For thus said the LORD:
As for the *eunuchs* who keep My sabbaths,
Who have chosen what I desire

And hold fast to my *covenant*,
⁵ I will give them, *in My house*,
 And *within my walls*,
 A *monument* and a name
 Better than sons or daughters.⁴

This world is contrasted with the city of the present, a space that is regarded negatively. In Isaiah 56: 9, God invites the wild beasts to invade the city (“All you wild beasts, come and devour/all you wild beasts of the forest”). The watchmen and shepherds, the latter a metaphor for the rulers, are portrayed as incapable. The text-world, still set in the city, has urban enactors, such as the watchmen (צפיו, v. 10) and leaders (רעים, v. 11). The beasts (כל חיה, v. 9) that enter the city come from outside the urban space (שדי, ‘of the field’; ביער, ‘of the forest’). Commentators frequently identify them as foreign nations (e.g. Oswalt 1998: 468). The time frame is determined by imperatives (אתי, ‘come’, v. 9), nominal phrases (והכלבים עזי גפשי, ‘the dogs are greedy’, v. 10) and *qatal*-forms representing general truth (לא יוכלו לנבוח, ‘they cannot bark’, v. 10). The imperatives in verse 9 create a deontic modal-world (Gavins 2007: 99) in which the instructed action of coming and consuming is taking place prematurely. Note that this event remains unrealized in the matrix world.

⁹ All you *wild beasts*, come and devour
 All you *beasts of the forest!*
¹⁰ The *watchmen* are blind, all of them,
 They perceive nothing.
 They are all dumb *dogs*
 That cannot bark;
 They lie sprawling,
 They love to drowse.
¹¹ Moreover, the *dogs* are greedy;
 They never know satiety.
 As for the *shepherds*, they know not
 What it is to give heed.

Note that in addition to urban world-builders, the text-world also draws on *natural* world-builders.⁵ The forest in verse 9 is used to evoke the conceptual metaphor THE CITY IS A CONTAINER. The invited wild beasts are imagined as the new citizens. In verses 10 and 11, the watchmen are compared to dogs, dumb and greedy. The rulers are introduced from the very beginning by a shepherd metaphor that turns to the world

4 English translations are from the translation of The Jewish Publication Society (1985), the emphasis (italics) is mine.

5 By *natural*, I mean deriving from the natural environment, including fauna and flora. I also include references that linger on the border between urban and natural environment, such as agricultural and vinicultural images.

outside the city walls for its input. This image is very common in the Hebrew Bible and the wider ancient Near East (Gan 2007; Van Hecke 2005) which might explain why it is not spelled out so explicitly as the comparison for the watchmen. Nevertheless, it can be considered a natural world-builder.

Isaiah 57: 7 and following portrays another text-world where personified Zion is the addressed 'you'. This world is set in the past (use of *qatal*-forms) with a long string of verbs drawing a vivid picture of a sinful city-woman, conceiving the urban space through unfaithfulness equating idolatry and political foreign alliances. World-builders are both natural and urban, with a high and lofty hill (הר גבה ונושא, v. 7) on the one hand and a couch (משכב, v. 7), door and doorpost (הדלת והמזוזה, v. 8) on the other.⁶

⁷ On a *high and lofty hill*

You have set your *couch*;

There, too, you have gone up

To perform sacrifices.

⁸ *Behind the door and doorpost*

You have directed your thoughts;

Abandoning me, you have gone up

On the *couch* you made so wide.

As with the previous passage, the world of the past city is negatively evaluated. The installation of the city's bed on a natural height, a space associated here with idolatry and other than the Israelite cults generates a double discourse: one against worshipping other gods with sacred spaces outside the city and one in remembrance of the lofty mountain on which Zion itself is ultimately seen as the abode of the biblical God. In this passage, the city is both location and enactor in the text-world. Personified Zion, represented by the second-person address, is depicted as performing actions in the physical place Zion.

These three examples illustrate the complexity of the space of Jerusalem and the role of the context in which the space is evaluated. They also reveal that its relationship with the natural environment is not fixed but depends upon the time frame of the envisioned city and its behavior at that moment.

⁶ The word 'couch' always appears in urban settings, for example, when David is getting up from his couch in the royal palace to go on the roof and sees Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11: 2 or when the frogs enter the houses and bedrooms of the Egyptians in Exodus 7: 28. Genesis 28: 11, where the root is used in a verbal form (וישכב, 'and he lay down'), seems to form an exception. Jacob's improvised bed is set in nature. Another atypical case is the 'bed' of Jonah (Jonah 1: 5) in the ship he boards to flee from God. In the passage above, the word can evoke both realms, given that references to both are made in the passage. In addition, the verses contrast the height and upward movement of the hill and sacrifices with the downward movement of going to bed.

4.2 From text-world to blended world and back

Whereas Isaiah 56 starts with known images of human failure as a withering tree (v. 3) and the city as a container and building (v. 5), keeping the world of the natural and the urban environment seemingly separated, the text soon enough invites the reader to create a world in which both come together. In verse 7, God says:

I will bring them to *My sacred mount*
 And let them rejoice in *My house of prayer*.
 Their *burnt offerings and sacrifices*
 Shall be welcome on *My altar*;
 For *My house* shall be called
 A *house of prayer* for all peoples.

Jerusalem is portrayed as a mountain (הר קדשי) and, through parallelism and metonymy, as a house of prayer (בית תפלה). The prophecy draws on two different conceptualizations of the city, of which one has a natural input space (MOUNTAIN, more generally HEIGHT, itself not necessarily natural in origin as in the case of towers) and the other an urban, or at least non-natural input space (BUILDING, or in extension CONTAINER). Following Gavins' (2007: 152–162) proposal to assess metaphors as double-vision, a reader will construct two metaphorical text-worlds, originating in the matrix world and resulting in a blended text-world which itself feeds back into the matrix (see Figure 1).

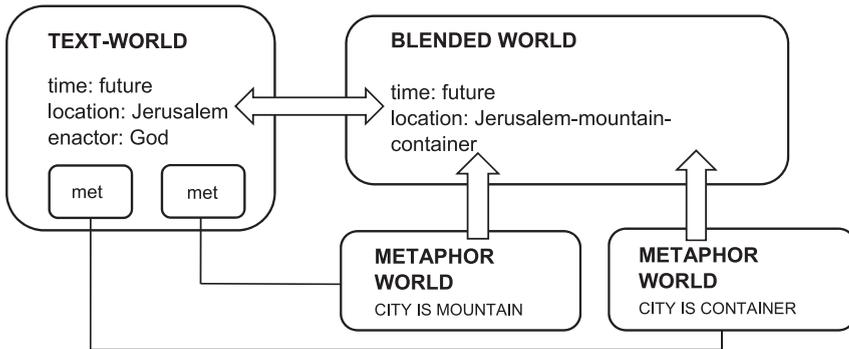


Figure 1: Text-worlds of Isaiah 56.

The sacredness of the blended space is both the result of its geographical elevation (coming from the input space HEIGHT) and its being filled with prayer (resulting from the input space CONTAINER). It combines the intimacy and safety of a

house and the openness and majesty of a mountain.⁷ The remainder of the verse plays with the same images, reversing their order, further elaborating the text-world with sacrifices and an altar (objects in text-world terms) and people (enactors). At no point is the urban space replaced by one or the other, but rather through reading (or listening) the audience enriches the main text-world of Jerusalem with elements from a blended world that exists next to the main world. Resultantly, there is no favoring of nature over city (because the first metaphorical subworld is a natural one) nor the other way around (because the main world is urban by definition). Rather, the world-building shows an understanding and conceptualization of Jerusalem as a blended world whose essence draws on, but at the same time supersedes, the traits that come from either of its input spaces.⁸ It is tempting to speak of a green city or an urban mountain to label the created cityscape but neither one adequately grasps the mixed character of the space in which there is no hierarchy (that is precisely the point!).

This cityscape is developed at large in Chapters 60 and 62, both of which start their world-building with a personified city.⁹ As argued elsewhere, Isaiah 60 envisions Jerusalem rather uniquely through a light metaphor (Vermeulen 2021: 100–101). Whereas the image is frequently used for other conceptualizations, of God, for example (e.g. Isaiah 9: 1–2, Psalm 27: 1), it only appears in Isaiah 60 in comparison to urban space. Throughout verses 1 to 3, light is passed back and forth between the city and God.

¹ Arise, shine (THE CITY IS LIGHT), for your light (THE CITY IS LIGHT) has dawned;

The Presence of the LORD has shone (GOD IS LIGHT) upon you!

² Behold! Darkness shall cover the earth.

And thick clouds the peoples;

But upon you the LORD will shine (GOD IS LIGHT),

⁷ Note the difference with Mills' reading of this passage, in which the mountain connects urban space, represented by the temple, with cosmic space. According to her, "the mountain's natural identity as a high place [...] provides a unifying symbol for the organization of civic life" (Mills 2012: 207).

⁸ In this respect, conceptual blends applied to space show a striking similarity with the concept of Thirdspace developed in critical spatiality. There as well, scholars emphasize that social space, or lived experience, labeled as Thirdspace, is not just the sum of physical (Firstspace) and conceptual (Secondspace) space, but an approach to space that draws upon as well as adds something to the other ways of addressing urban space (Soja 1996: 62).

⁹ The analysis follows the traditional division of biblical books into chapters and discusses the world-building starting from these junctions. Self-evidently, readers might read bigger or smaller parts of the text. However, ultimately this will not influence the world-building fundamentally because the blends appear at several locations and even when not all preceding or following text-worlds are considered, snapshots still reveal the blended nature of the text-worlds and Jerusalem's role in them.

And His presence be seen over you.

³ And nations shall walk by your light (CITY IS LIGHT),
Kings, by your shining radiance (CITY IS LIGHT).

An initial text-world is created with a personified city addressed by God (קומי, ‘arise’, v. 1), both of which function as enactors. The second person address also includes the city as a physical place, on which light can shine (בבוד יהוה עליך זרח, v. 1), in spatial opposition to the darkness that will cover the remainder of the earth (החשך יכסה ארץ, v. 2). The passage furthermore introduces the city metonymically as its inhabitants, connecting the city-woman on the one hand and the city-container (in which it resides) on the other hand. In addition, a less conventional metaphorical world is created with THE CITY IS LIGHT. This world is introduced in verse 1, immediately after the text proposes to understand Jerusalem as a person (אורי כי בא אורד, ‘arise, for your light has dawned’). Both text-worlds feed into a blended world in which the rising of a human body is combined with the dawn of light. Ultimately, this mixture helps the audience to understand the city as an upward space that enlightens what is beneath (see Figure 2).¹⁰

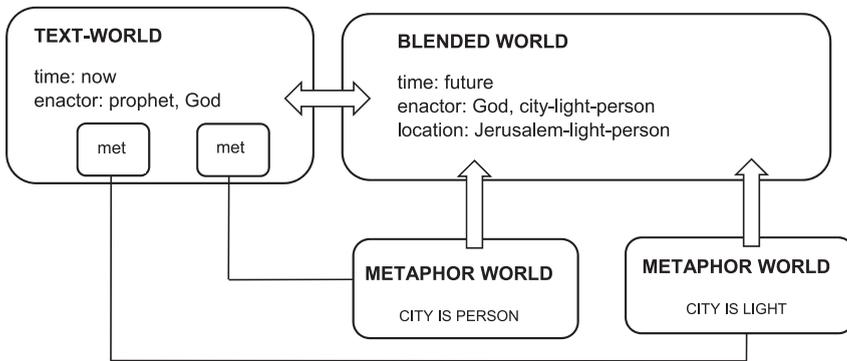


Figure 2: Text-worlds of Isaiah 60.

The play with directionality is essential to the blend, with a constant flow between up and down, emphasizing Jerusalem as being both the source and destination of the light. Whereas the choice of a natural feature to describe urban space might seem at odds with the city’s overall depiction in the Hebrew Bible, its assessment in terms of world-building reveals a coherent text-world whose essence is clarified by merging familiar and unfamiliar understandings of urban space, in this particular case resulting in mingling human and natural input spaces.

¹⁰ Others have read the light in its relation to darkness as uniting criticism and promise throughout Third Isaiah (Schüle 2020: 130) or a symbol of salvation (Niskanen 2014: xv).

Similarly, Isaiah 62 brings in the natural world as a metaphorical text-world that informs, through blending with other metaphorical worlds, the world of Jerusalem in the matrix. The image of the city-woman is combined with that of the empty container, leading to the phrase ‘your land shall be espoused’ (וְאֶרֶץ תְּבַעַל), a line that clearly points out that blends become their own worlds.

⁴ Nevermore shall you be called “Forsaken”,
Nor shall your land be called “Desolate;”
But you shall be called “I delight in her”,
And your land “Espoused”.
For the LORD takes delight in you,
And your land shall be espoused.

The forsaken wife (עֲזוּבָה) and the desolate container (שְׁמֵמָה) are transformed into a marriage that unites the different metaphors. Whereas one could argue that the inclusion of nature through the land could point to the historical hinterland on which urban sites were dependent for their survival or that by claiming both city and surrounding land God presents himself as the ruler of the world, explanations of the blend that are socio-historical and theological, a text-world perspective adds a discourse-based clarification. It demonstrates that the distinction between city and nature exists on a theoretical world level in the process of reading. However, as one moves through the text, references to urban environment and indications of nature serve to understand the same city, Jerusalem. What is more, soon enough, both features reside in a blended text-world which itself develops the matrix world of the prophecy. Hierarchy between the different metaphorical worlds is irrelevant. As far as the above passages go, one can conclude that both natural and human environment are valid sources for categorizing and speaking about Jerusalem. As such, the city of Third Isaiah differs from other cityscapes in the Hebrew Bible where nature is rarely used as a conceptual key to assess urban space. As a result, one could argue that the city therefore is greener than is typically the case in the Bible.¹¹

4.3 Re-assessing the utopian character of Jerusalem

Previous research has explained the natural outlook of Jerusalem in Third Isaiah (and also Isaiah 11) as eschatological and utopian (e.g. Maier 2008). The passages describe a city of the end, out of reach of the audience, a product of the imagination as a beacon of

¹¹ Note that this discussion is entirely focused on the text-world city, the one imagined by readers of the text as evoked by an interplay between text and context. However, many have read these passages as an ode to a more natural way of life and sustainable cities, transferring the textual blend to the text-external discourse-world (e.g. Gardner 2001; Oley 2001).

hope in a changed world. With the above observations in mind, the question is whether a text-world theoretical analysis would underwrite these conclusions or not.

As pointed out before, a utopian space has both notions of ideals and non-existence, whereas an eschatological label places this space in an inaccessible future. Furthermore, Stockwell points out the following features in his analysis of More's *Utopia*, the paradigm for utopias: a world-building with several enactors of More in different worlds and an impossible geography and topography of the place. He (Stockwell 2009: 161) states: "The reader of *Utopia* remains outside the embedded world structures in the novel; Utopia is inaccessible to them both narratologically and geographically". These elements combined suggest that in order for a text-world to be utopian, it needs to be inaccessible to participants, and possibly to some of the enactors. Following Werth (1999: 215), this means the world of the city needs to be more than two steps removed from the last accessible world. Worlds are accessible when participants/enactors can verify the events taking place in a particular text-world or consider the speaker to be a reliable source. For example, when Isaiah 66: 6 states: "Hark, tumult from the city", readers assume that both God and the inhabitants are witnesses to this as enactors in the text-world. Whether readers themselves (as discourse-world participants) also have access depends upon their interpretation of the second-person 'you' used throughout the chapter (and other parts of Third Isaiah). It might very well be that the original audience was with the prophet in the city and indeed heard a noise. For later addressees, who do not share the same spatiotemporal location of the text-world, the identification as 'you' requires a psychological projection. However, even if such a projection does not take place, readers might still consider the world to be accessible because they might consider God a truthful speaker. The latter touches upon an inherent difficulty with the biblical text and its status as a document of faith. Depending on a reader's position, all worlds might be accessible based on a claim of authority, either of the speaking voice (e.g. a prophet or king) or the implied speaker of the whole text, God. As argued previously, the empty text-world of prophecy plays a facilitating role in this.

The label 'utopian' occurs in research on Third Isaiah when the future city is imagined (e.g. Cataldo 2010: 53; Sweeney 2020; Wells 2009: 216). The cityscape is different from what urban space normally looks like and reminiscent of Edenic peaceful spaces. In Isaiah 65: 21–25, the world of future Jerusalem originates in the text-world in which God speaks, brought to mind in Isaiah 65: 13, "assuredly, thus said the LORD God", The future city is conceived as one step removed from this world, regardless of how far in the future this world is projected. Sweeney has argued that this always remains a distant future, regardless of the historical time frame of the reader (2020). He is right in the sense that readers will indeed construct a text-world of the future due to the verbal *yiqtol*-forms indicating unfinished events. However,

the chronological line which he deduces from the text is not the one the story develops. Immediately after the speech frame, the text-world of the future is constructed, which means that in text-world terms it is removed only one step from the speech world, regardless of the objective chronology that one can deduct from the text after having read it completely. The latter is a post hoc construction, whereas this article and stylistics more generally, are interested in the story's ad hoc creation of text-worlds and their relationship.

²¹ They shall build houses and dwell in them
They shall plant vineyards and enjoy their fruit

²² they shall not build for others to dwell in
Or plant for others to enjoy.

For the days of my people shall be

As long as the days of a tree,

My chosen ones shall outlive

The work of their hands

²³ they shall not toil to no purpose

They shall not bear children for terror/in vain

But they shall be a people blessed by the LORD

And their offspring shall remain with them.

²⁴ before they pray, I will answer

While they are still speaking, I will respond.

²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall graze together

And the lion shall eat straw like the ox,

And the serpent's food shall be earth

In all my sacred mount

Nothing evil or vile shall be done – said the LORD.

As mentioned at the very beginning of the discussion, the text-initial world is that in which the prophet speaks, a world that is introduced in the opening verses of Isaiah and backgrounded throughout the prophecy, including Isaiah 56–66. This text-world qualifies as an empty text-world (Lahey 2004). It is cognitively necessary because the words of God are presented as prophecy mediated through the human character Isaiah. However, apart from a short introduction in which readers are given an enactor, an object and a broad time frame (Isaiah 1: 1) and two scenes in Isaiah 6 and 8 featuring the prophet as discourse partner of the character God, the world is not further developed. What is more, after Chapter 8, the text does not return to this world. It is backgrounded and, especially, when reading parts of the book rather than the whole book, which is the case in liturgical settings but also in academic ones, the text-world of the prophet is not even constructed. At most, it is evoked through a reader's background knowledge. In that respect it functions differently from the empty text-world in the short poem discussed by Lahey (2004) where this world is necessarily constructed to make sense of the text and influences the overall structure of world-

building. Not so in the prophecy of Isaiah where the prophet as character disappears in a world between the discourse-world and the text-world of divine speech. Instead of adding a layer to the world-building (as suggested by Lahey 2004; Norledge 2020, contrary to Stockwell 2002: 146) and removing the audience from the future city, the empty text-world facilitates an approach between the world of the reader and that of Jerusalem at the end. This is exactly what prophecy is aimed at: the poetic persona of the prophet is not important. The text wants to address readers immediately and draw them in the text-world with God rather than stuck in the one with the prophet. This text-world of God is one where reliability is inherent (based on authority) and the text-world as such accessible. The empty text-world is also where previous scholars have assumed that a historical and poetic prophet are presented as the same (Holt 2016: 299). The text does make the distinction in its world-building but consequently makes readers forget about it. The poetic prophet disappears between the cracks of worlds, rather than that he is identified as the historical prophet in the discourse-world. In the text-world of God, he is possibly present in the ambiguous ‘you’ as addressee of the prophecy. Hence, Mills (2012: 199) observes that “the prophetic vision places the reader alongside the deity”. The bridging is further achieved through the use of an ambiguous ‘you’ throughout the text which invites readers to identify with this second person (e.g. Isaiah 65: 18: “Be glad, then, and rejoice forever in what I am creating”) and further blur the boundaries between discourse and text-worlds (see Figure 3).

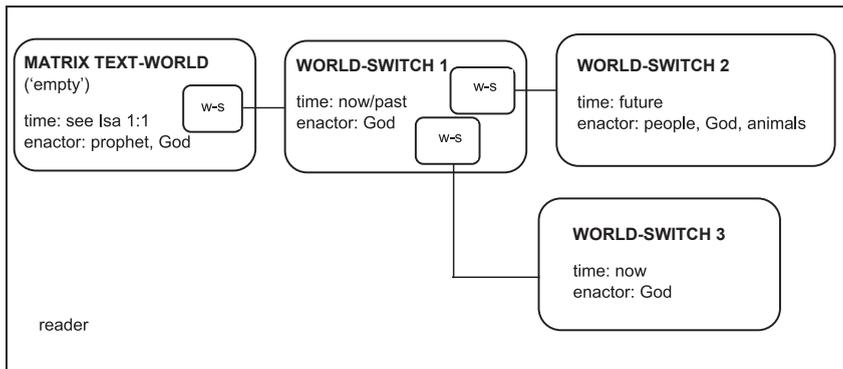


Figure 3: Text-worlds of Isaiah 65.

The world of future Jerusalem (W-S 2) is linked to the world of the divine speech (W-S 1). In verses 13–16, it is evoked in a world-switch with a different temporal signature (*yiqtol*-forms, e.g. יאכלו, ‘they will eat’ and תרעבו, ‘you will hunger’). The character God, his servants and the ambiguous ‘you’ are enactors, moving the discourse forward with a string of actions (eating or not, drinking or not, rejoicing or

not, etc.). This world is enactor-accessible, and through deictic projection also participant-accessible. Even though it might be describing a world better than the one the audience lives in, it still comes across as realistic and as such is not properly utopian.¹² The construction of this text-world is interrupted in verse 17 by a temporal world-switch to the present (W-S 3): God first has to create the future space before it can be inhabited (הַיּוֹם בּוֹרֵא שָׁמַיִם חֲדָשִׁים וָאָרֶץ חֲדָשָׁה, 'for behold, I am creating a new heaven and a new earth'). In verse 18, the audience is asked to be glad because of as well as during this act. On a micro-level, world-switch 3 is an initially empty text-world from verses 13 to 16, which is retroactively constructed in verses 17 and 18 (cf. Norledge 2020 on multiple empty text-worlds at different points in a narrative). Consequently, the text continues in the future world of Jerusalem, going back to world-switch 2 from verse 19 onward until the end of the chapter. The *weqatal*-form at the beginning of verse 19 (וּגִלְתִּי, 'and I will rejoice') connects to the last *yiqtol*-form of verse 16 (נִדְחָרוּ, 'they will be hidden'), indicating that the world of the now (vv. 17–18) is indeed nothing more than an interjection that does not rearrange the way in which future Jerusalem relates to the world of the divine speech. Biblical Hebrew uses consecutive forms, such as the *weqatal*-form, to continue a story (*wayyiqtol* for completed events, *weqatal* for uncompleted events) (Gesenius 2006 §49a1, §112). The rejoicing of verse 19 is projected in the future, just like the hiding in verse 16, and contrary to the creating in verse 18 which is conceived as an ongoing action in the present. In other words, world-switch 3 does not distance world-switch 1 from world-switch 2, exactly as the prophetic empty text-world does not seem to remove discourse-world from text-world.

The immediate result of this kind of world-building is that it downplays future Jerusalem's utopian character.¹³ Through a combination of ignored empty text-worlds, prophetic/divine authority and deictic projection, the text-world of the city seems enactor and even participant-accessible. This place is not out of reach but within reach, at least as far as world-building goes. This explains why readers, even though the prophecy's content with pre-flood lifespans and the absence of pain and violence (vv. 19–25) might raise a red flag in terms of probability of the text-world, will have a sense of nearness. This observation matches claims of previous research that argue for discourses of hope (Sweeney 2020) and emphasize the this-worldliness of the ideal Jerusalem (Collins 2020) in Isaiah. It also concurs with the above findings regarding the natural outlook of the Isaianic city as the product of a world-building that uses different features as world-builders and

¹² In scholarship this term is kept for verses 17 and following (McKenzie 1969: 200).

¹³ Various commentators have struggled with the term *utopian*, labeling it as "proto-apocalyptic" (Joachimsen 2020: 176), or "ideals, nevertheless realistic" (Watts 2005: 926) and "not an apocalyptic flight into an imaginative world of fantasy" (Childs 2000: 588).

several input spaces (natural and non-natural) as conceptual key. The resultant space supersedes existing categories, however without losing touch with the existing world(s). Biblical utopias have a strong connection with the past, as Ben Zvi (2013: 467) argues: “legitimacy is associated with a foundational past; moreover, the literati strive much to construe continuity with the past”. Similarly, Mills (2012: 194–195) points out the connection with what exists: “It [the landscape] appears to be future-oriented but in fact its woodlands and fields, brooks and streams draw on lived experience of spring/early summer growth and its promise of harvest to come”. The text of Third Isaiah invites its readers in, building an urban space accessible through the text and its world-switches. Therefore, the city in Isaiah 56–66 can and has functioned as a conceptual refuge in an unstable discourse-world for various audiences.¹⁴

5 Conclusion

A cognitive ecostylistic reading of Jerusalem reframes the debate about the city’s utopian character and shows that the text is much closer to the reader’s world. Approaching the city through its position as and in the text-worlds reveals it as accessible, blended and multifunctional. Rather than reading the introduction of natural features in Isaiah 56–66 as a radical rupture with urban existence, often defined as eschatological or utopian, this analysis shows that nature and non-nature work in tandem to create a blended text-world informing the matrix world in order for it to function as a safe haven for readers. In other words, the unusual imagery of a light-city does not aim to emphasize the unusual character of future Jerusalem, but, on the contrary, this metaphor world blends with familiar urban images, anchoring the new Jerusalem in the known text-world(s) and discourse-world(s). The empty text-world of the prophecy facilitates this process. Minimally constructed and backgrounded, even forgotten, throughout most of the book of Isaiah, it gives readers access to the future world of Jerusalem.

14 Maier’s (2008: 215) discussion of Mother Jerusalem in Third Isaiah shows similar traits: “It is no surprise to me that the predominant role of Zion in postexilic texts is the mother because the basic functions of a city, namely to provide food, shelter, and secure habitation, overlap most expansively with common assumptions of motherhood. Moreover, both the mother and the city may easily be associated with a vital body and a place of refuge”. Whereas Maier relies on the story of one metaphor, based on separate references in different texts, the above analysis offers a reading that considers the story of the text as constructed through its world-building, itself informed by the several conceptual metaphors for urban space. Hence, it is not just the mother metaphor that evokes a safe space, but the process of building text-worlds, of which *THE CITY IS A MOTHER* generates one world.

Whereas it is tempting to call this city that the text grows green or nature-minded, the study demonstrates that this distinction is dissolved in the text-world and that the mechanisms of previous text-worlds, in which nature tends to be associated with chaos and bad things and the city serves as a human antidote to that, are no longer at work. The world-building does not suggest a return to nature, as some have argued, nor an inclusion of nature in urban environment, as has been proposed in more recent ecocritical readings of the text, both options implying that one should be chosen over the other. Rather, readers construct a text-world that lacks hierarchy or oppositions, and that demonstrates how future Jerusalem is informed by a conceptual blend that draws on various aspects that make up both the discourse-world and different world-switches. If anything, Jerusalem becomes more, as its world is enriched by natural and non-natural images. It is this all-inclusive world, that transcends dichotomies and existing categories modern readers struggle with, that might offer an answer to this audience and its questions regarding the nature of urban space as well as the relation between natural and urban space.

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Ambience and nature in travel writing: An ecostylistic study of *The Old Patagonian Express* and *Eastward to Tartary*

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Abstract: The present paper explores descriptions of natural landscapes excerpted from two travel books, namely, *The Old Patagonian Express: By Train through the Americas*, by Paul Theroux, and *Eastward to Tartary: Travels in the Balkans, the Middle East and the Caucasus*, by Robert D. Kaplan. The paper aims at analyzing how certain linguistic choices in a given stretch of text conspire to construe the ambience of descriptive passages of natural landscapes in travel writing. This will be carried out by combining insights from Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Frame Semantics (FS). I will be focusing on the ambience of the natural depictions, that is, the sense of the natural world evoked in the reader's mind by the language of the text. This will be dealt with by examining the lexical choices made by both authors, paying special attention to the adjectives. The excerpts under investigation have been selected since the descriptive language in them evokes frames and conceptual domains, which, in turn, yield a series of metaphors. These metaphors summarize the tone of the travel books, that is, the authorial texture and, especially, the ideological stance of the authors. Paul Theroux displays a more empathetic approach to the surrounding nature and its people, whereas Robert D. Kaplan adopts a more distant, analytical stance.

Keywords: adjectives; ambience; domain; frames; metaphor; stance

1 Introduction

Travel writing has been intrinsically linked to ethnology and ethnography. The interest in describing other peoples, other cultures, and other lands has its origins in the Renaissance, and emerged as a combination of colonial expansion and the intellectual transformation of the modern human being (Rubiés 2002: 243). It also raised philosophical issues and informed debates about human nature and evolution

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theories, especially when travelers were confronted with totally different world-views and social organizations.

Contemporary travelers regard themselves almost as a separate species from the rest of human beings, especially tourists, since they are typically solitary explorers. They pride themselves on their open-mindedness and their ability to keep their senses alert and open to the new. The two authors dealt with in the present paper, Paul Theroux and Robert D. Kaplan, are fond of ethnography and culture, which makes them keen on and enthusiastic about describing the peoples in the places they visit, their customs, traditions, and even languages. They boast about their worldliness, their curiosity about the new, and their need for adventure. These solitary adventurers make a life (and a living) out of packing a rucksack, getting a bus or train ticket, and marching off in search of the unexpected, but the key merit of travelers in general is to put the world on paper as they make contact with different peoples, cultures, and societies (Sherman 2002: 19).

Moving from this background, the aim of this paper is to take a close look at two examples of travel writing, although of very different kinds, with significantly dissimilar writing styles and a distinct approach to the reality before them. Both authors are renowned storytellers and communicators with rich and vivid descriptive powers who provide detailed accounts of the natural landscapes they travel across.

The first author is Paul Theroux (born April 10, 1941, Medford, Massachusetts, U.S.), who is also a novelist and a university lecturer. His novelist side has a decisive influence on his travel writing. As the reader plunges into *The Old Patagonian Express: By Train through the Americas* (Theroux 1979), the nonfiction work feels like a fictional novel, and the travel book reads very much like a story, not a mere account of facts that occurred during his adventurous experience. Theroux likes mingling with local people, submerging himself in the local culture, tasting the local food, and, above all, establishing connections between what he sees around him and the way people behave in that particular environment. In this respect, he may be labeled as a humanistic traveler, and his literary background plays a decisive role in it. Theroux gives a rich and detailed account of his six-month, several thousand-mile journeys by train from Boston to the Argentinian city of Esquel, at the very heart of Patagonia.

The second American traveler and adventurer dealt with in the present paper is Robert D. Kaplan (born June 23, 1952, New York, U.S.). A journalist by trade, and former war correspondent, he has trodden the world extensively, working for several news media and even as a counselor of the United States Army. His background in History and Social Sciences makes him approach the landscapes he visits in a rather different light. His analytical vision of the territories and landscapes

that he explores is shaped by adopting a distant and critical stance for the sake of objectivity. He manages large amounts of quantitative data, such as statistics, population figures, and gross domestic product evolution, and relates them to political and social movements, as well as geographical features and cultural tenets. The book under scrutiny in this paper is *Eastward to Tartary: Travels in the Balkans, Middle East and the Caucasus* (Kaplan 2000). Kaplan traverses a vast area, starting at the Balkans, and crossing the Middle East as he deliberately blurs the borders of the countries in order to encompass the larger cultural and historical reality of the Caucasus and the legendary Tartary, the name given by Elizabethans to Central Asia (Kaplan 2000: 3).

The following sections will be as follows. Section 2 offers a brief literature review of some of the most significant work on ecostylistics published so far; it will also reveal the research gap that justifies and motivates the present article. Section 3 revolves around the theoretical foundations of the article, the two linguistic theories around which the research has been carried out (namely, Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Frame Semantics), and a concise definition of ambience, following Stockwell (2014, 2017); it also discusses how the authors' lexical choices affect the analysis of both travel books. Section 4 deals with the research questions put forward by the present article, the methodological approach, the description and justification for data selection, and the specific method employed in data analysis. Section 5 delves into the analysis of the data, unearthing the semantic frames, the metaphors, and the clusters of metaphors underlying particular stretches of descriptive passages dealing with natural landscapes. Section 6 discusses the findings of the analysis in light of the two linguistic theories involved, how they interact with each other to construe the ambience of the passages analyzed, and the way in which ambience construes the stance of the authors. Section 7 collects the results of the study, synthesizing them in a series of conceptual metaphors drawing upon multimodality, which emerges from the descriptive skills of both Paul Theroux and Robert D. Kaplan.

2 Literature review

In the last few years, an increasingly significant number of scholars have approached nature and environmental issues with a stylistic approach. This growing interest in ecostylistics may have been sparked by current global issues such as global warming, the greenhouse effect, or simply the value of the natural richness of our green spaces. As a scientific discipline, stylistics and linguistics in general have not focused on such serious issues.

The topic of nature is not new in literature. In fact, poetry has traditionally found a remarkable source of inspiration in natural spaces. This has led a number of linguists and stylisticians to show concern for natural spaces in the last decades. Thus, for example, Talmy's (1996: 211–276, 2000) account of fictive motion has served as a basis for a number of studies. To mention just a couple of them, Wordsworthian nature has been tackled from this angle by Wenjuan Yuan (2014: 177–193), and how metaphors underlie the rich descriptions of natural landscapes in John McGahern's *The Dark* has been explored by the present writer (Alarcón-Hermosilla 2017: 91–100).

The contributions to this field by Andrew Goatly are numerous and remarkable. Take, for instance, his account of the representation of nature on the BBC, where he discusses the anthropocentric nature of the news, and how nature itself is given consideration when it constitutes a threat to humans (Goatly 2002: 1–27); or how nature is represented as a powerful actor-communicator and as a vital experience (Goatly 2017); or how lexicogrammar represents the natural world not only through conventional lexis, but also through affective terms and both conventional and original metaphors (Goatly 2017, 2018). Goatly has also tackled global issues such as capitalism, biodiversity, and human control over nature (Goatly 2022).

The book *The Stylistics of Landscapes, the Landscapes of Stylistics*, edited by John Douthwaite, Daniela Francesca Viridis and Elisabetta Zurru (2017), includes contributions on the depiction of nature and space by, among others, Katie Wales, Mick Short, Catherine Emmott, Lars Bernaerts, Andrew Goatly, Judit Zerkowitz, and Maria Langleben. The volume *Language in Place: Stylistic Perspectives on Landscape, Place and Environment*, edited by Daniela Francesca Viridis, Elisabetta Zurru, and Ernestine Lahey (2021), demonstrates the importance of applying linguistic and stylistic methods for a deeper understanding of landscape, place and environment. Furthermore, Viridis has delved into sexualized nature and masculinity in Victorian scenery (Viridis 2019); offered an analysis of environmental issues in the Victorian era (Viridis 2022a); recently published the book *Ecological Stylistics: Ecostylistic Approaches to Discourses of Nature, the Environment and Sustainability* (Viridis 2022b), which also provides an account of the relationships between ecolinguistics, stylistics and ecostylistics (Viridis 2022b: 29–86). Finally, Zurru has investigated the scope of ecostylistics as well as its methodological underpinnings by combining it with Systemic Functional Grammar (Zurru 2017: 191), or with a concern about sustainability (Zurru 2021: 209).

However, contemporary travel writing has, to the best of my knowledge, never been given attention to from a linguistic viewpoint, let alone from an ecostylistic one. Travel writing is a solid and long-established literary genre, but it has somehow been overlooked by both linguists and stylisticians. The need for a study such as this one

arises from the diverse, and sometimes divergent, perceptions that an outsider (such as a traveler) has of the natural spaces they traverse. The conclusions highlight the critical and scrutinizing eye of a stranger who is, at the same time, unable to remain unaffected by what they see, feel and experience.

3 Theoretical foundation

3.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Frame Semantics

The present paper integrates insight from Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Frame Semantics (FS). The rationale for doing this is to unearth a considerable number of landscape-related metaphors by means of a close reading of the language employed by the authors, and to reveal how these metaphors shape the stance, the worldview, and the mood of the authors. Within the general field of Cognitive Linguistics, on which the present paper is framed, CMT and FS prove to be useful tools from which the study of both books explored here can be approached. Both CMT and FS deal with figurative language, thus blurring the traditional boundaries between linguistics and literature, by claiming that language is not modular and that language, cognition, and literature are on a continuum with each other (Stockwell 2012: 3).

The interaction between the linguistic choices made by the producers of a given stretch of discourse, when coding their conceptualization (in this case, the writers), and the receivers (here, the readers), who conceive and interpret meaning by taking these linguistic choices as a basis, establish a communication channel along which conceptual metaphors are encoded and need to be interpreted by the readers through cognitive operations. Following Sullivan (2013: 2–3), metaphoric language can involve metaphoric words, but words are not enough to convey metaphor. For a metaphor to be activated, a specific grammatical context is needed, and this entails particular relations between words. This is consistent with the study of stretches of text larger than a single metaphoric word or phrase, where multiple and varied lexical choices help shape a semantic frame which will act as the source domain of the arising metaphors.

The axis around which the present paper revolves is the notion of ambience. This is consistent with both CMT and FS if we consider that a large part of the literary experience lies in its ambient value. The ambience of a narrative text (and travel writing is, indeed, narrative) deals with the vaguer notions of tone and atmosphere. The reason for their vagueness lies in the fact that the reader cannot know what is in the writer's mind for certain. Tone can be described in text-linguistic terms at the level of the lexical choices and at the level of register choice (depending on formality

or sociocultural conventions). Atmosphere, on the other hand, requires a description that takes into account the readerly sense of the contextual world of the setting depicted (Stockwell 2014: 361). Generally speaking, atmosphere pertains mainly to the world, whereas tone pertains mainly to the utterer (Stockwell 2014: 364). But atmosphere and tone are not mutually exclusive, since a particular world is depicted by someone in their own characteristic voice, and narrations need to depict a tangible reality. It is the job of the stylistician to explore the language employed by the authors and to unearth the meanings underlying the figurative language embedded in the narrative text. These meanings should serve as evidence of the writers' real purposes, whether objectively descriptive, or subjectively loaded. Atmosphere and tone are closely related but vague concepts that depict the world through the observers' consciousness and draw the readers into the ambient feeling of the narrated world (Stockwell 2014: 360–374, 2017: 7–23).

CMT is intertwined with ambience in light of the study proposed in this paper. CMT mainly deals with conceptual domains. A conceptual domain has been defined as a coherent area of conceptualization against which semantic units may be characterized, and it is relevant when it comes to the dissection of a conceptual metaphor. A conceptual metaphor takes place when our cognitive mechanisms are used to express and understand a conceptual domain in terms of another. The semantic area from which we draw the metaphorical expressions and their linguistic realizations is known as the source domain, whereas the conceptual domain that is intended to be conveyed and understood is referred to as the target domain (Kövecses 2002: 17–32, 2017: 325; Lakoff 1987: 288; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Langacker 1987: 488). Take, for example, the following instance adapted from *Eastward to Tartary: Travels in the Balkans, Middle East and the Caucasus* (Kaplan 2000):

The hills became a tea-colored carpet unfurling steeply in bony creases.

The steep slopes of the hills are conceptualized as carpets being unrolled. This is conveyed by drawing upon some of the components of the CLOTH conceptual domain, namely, “carpet”, and its quality of “unfurling”, or “creases”, where the threads are intertwined to give consistency to an item of clothing or a carpet. These components of the CLOTH conceptual domain and their qualities and relations constitute the source domain of the metaphor THE SLOPES OF THE HILLS ARE UNFURLING CARPETS, the slopes of the hills being the target domain (see della Dora [2021] for further information about the metaphorical representation of the earth as a mantle in art, literature, geography, and cartography).

Along similar lines to CMT, FS puts forward the notion of frame (Fillmore 1982: 111–135), reformulated later on as semantic frame (Sullivan 2013: 17–34). Semantic

frames are composed of a series of elements, abstracted from our worldly experience, and the logical relations between them. They are somewhat similar to conceptual domains, to the extent of overlapping with each other. For the purposes of this paper, the term “conceptual domain” will be used when the metaphor under scrutiny emerges from a single phrase or a sentence. The above example could also be treated in light of semantic frames, since the principle is quite the same. However, the term “semantic frame” will be employed when the metaphor emerges from a larger stretch of language, such as a paragraph or a several-line passage, where the presence of a number of semantically-related lexical items evokes a particular semantic frame.

3.2 Ambience

The present study focuses on how ambience can be retrieved from the lexical choices made by the authors, with particular attention to the adjectives. Adjectives and adjectival constructions have proven to be useful and effective ambience enactors. An ambience enactor can be defined as a lexical choice that carries in itself the power to activate ambience, both in the text and in the mind of the readers, after their interpretation of it (Stockwell 2014: 361–364, 2017: 7–8). This can be done at two different levels, depending on the intention of the writer. On the one hand, ambience can be activated in the form of atmosphere, that is, at the levels of objective descriptions made by the writer that shape a particular setting or environment, common to any observer. On the other hand, ambience can be enacted in the form of tone, whereby the writer conveys emotions, feelings, or personal opinions, construing their stance, with the intention of impinging on the reader’s subjective mind.

Adjectives are good ambience enactors, not only in themselves as a lexical category but also in the way they interact with nominals. This noun-adjective relation entails that the nominals employed will also be relevant for the purposes of this paper. In both *The Old Patagonian Express: By Train through the Americas* (Theroux 1979) and *Eastward to Tartary: Travels in the Balkans, Middle East and the Caucasus* (Kaplan 2000), the situational contexts when natural landscapes are being described determine not only the choice of adjectival and nominal constructions, but they also determine the atmosphere of the passages and depict its tone, that is, the mood and the feelings of the authors. These are effectively construed by the deliberate choice of certain lexical items, as they activate semantic frames which serve the role of conceptual target enactors which will later on contribute to the emergence of conceptual metaphors and metonymies.

The adjectival constructions analyzed in the present paper are of two distinct types: domain constructions and predicating modifier constructions. Domain constructions are constructions in which the adjective is non-predicating, that is to say, it cannot occur in a predicating position. On the other hand, predicating modifier constructions, by definition, contain adjectives that can indeed be placed in predicating or post-copula position (Ernst 1984, 2001; Sweetser 1999). Take, for example, the phrases “leafy trees” and “knifing wind”, both from *The Old Patagonian Express: By Train through the Americas* (Theroux 1979). “Leafy trees” is an instance of predicating modifier construction, since the adjective “leafy” merely modifies the noun, expressing a quality of it, and may therefore be placed in post-copula position (“the trees are leafy”). However, “knifing wind” establishes a completely different relation between the adjective and the noun, since “knifing” denotes not a quality of the wind, but a subcategory of wind. The hyperbolic adjective “knifing” activates a conceptual metaphor, namely, COLD WIND IS A KNIFE, and post-copula position is not acceptable (*“the wind is knives”). It is an instance of domain adjectival construction, where the adjective is the source domain of the metaphor.

Following Sullivan (2013), domain constructions and predicating modifier constructions are treated as distinct constructions rather than as simply constructs involving different types of adjectives. The reason for this is the fact that there are differences in the relation between modifier and noun, and those differences cannot be associated with the adjective alone and must be thus considered part of the constructional meaning. Domain adjectives express a subcategory of the noun and, as will be shown in the following sections, evoke the target domain of the metaphor, whereas predicating modifier constructions express a quality of the noun, and it is the noun that evokes the target domain. Most of the adjectival phrases dealt with in this paper are predicating constructions, since they have a powerful descriptive force, and they are a strong resource for both authors. However, a few domain adjectival constructions will be approached closely, as they add a significant load of semantic import to the nouns that they modify. These notions will be applied to analyze the language employed in the selected excerpts from both books in the following sections.

4 Methodology

Leading on from the publications mentioned in Section 2, and following the line and the spirit of the present Special Issue of the *Journal of World Languages* on ecostylistics (Virdis 2022c), the three main objectives of this paper are the following: (i) to analyze the lexical choices made by the authors in the passages describing

nature landscapes; (ii) to unearth and dissect the conceptual metaphors that arise from those lexical choices; and (iii) to establish the authors' stance and worldview, retrievable from the words employed, the grammatical relations between them, and their underlying figurative meanings.

The ultimate aim of this paper is to explore which linguistic resources enable us to engage in such a complex task as producing metaphoric language. This is done by resorting to the notion of extended metaphor (Kövecses 2017: 321–347, 2020: 150–168), understood as a version of metaphor that extends over the course of multiple lines or paragraphs. This is where FS becomes particularly useful to dig out the conceptual metaphors from the stretches of text. Extended metaphor entails the consistency of the grammatical relations between lexical choices and how those relations between words can be mapped onto a common target domain.

However, since metaphoric language not only depends on the choice of words, but also on particular grammatical constructions (see, among many others, Brooke-Rose 1958; Turner 1987, 1991), these words and constructions need to occur in specific grammatical contexts for us to be able to interpret them metaphorically. The language employed in both travel books must serve as an appropriate resource not only to appreciate the pictorial quality of the descriptive skills of the two authors, but also to uncover the hidden meanings and the underlying metaphors which shape and expose their feelings, their attitude and, ultimately, their stance towards the nature scenes that they witness.

Metaphoric language has been explained by scholars as a type of coercion, whereby a semantic feature of a particular element in a particular grammatical construction is evoked by semantic information of another (Antonopoulou and Nikiforidou 2009; Michaelis 2005; Sullivan 2013). Most of the metaphors present in both books are activated by the intentional use of certain lexical choices, namely, verbs, nouns, and especially adjectives. Embodied metaphors arise from the belief that they are learned through habits of bodily experience (Casasanto and Gijssels 2015: 330; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Adjectives prove to be powerful metaphor enactors, since they hold the semantic capacity of expressing either a quality of the noun that they modify or a subtype of it. The following section presents the focus of this paper: an analysis of natural depictions falling within the aims and remit of ecostylistics.

The selection of data for the present study has been performed by carrying out three different but complementary tasks. The first one is to excerpt specific passages which vividly describe portrayals of the most significant natural landmarks that Theroux and Kaplan travel across, and to pay close attention to the lexical choices involved in the descriptions. The second task is to determine how and to what extent those lexical choices construe the atmosphere and the tone of the passages, by figuring out the degree of objectivity of the descriptions, or the degree of subjectivity

as the authors react to what they see and experience, by releasing their feelings or emotions. The third task explores the conceptual domains in which certain words or phrases are conceptualized (particularly adjectives), and the semantic frames shaped by a consistent choice of lexis, across a number of lines or paragraphs, compatible with multiple mappings within the same frame. This gives rise to metaphors and clusters of metaphors which can be disclosed and dissected in light of the CMT and Extended Metaphor Theory.

The reasons for choosing travel books by Paul Theroux and Robert D. Kaplan for this study are two. The first is their soundness as travelers and narrators. Both of them have published numerous travel books, and an ecostylistic analysis of two of them may constitute a good starting point to explore this literary genre from a stylistic standpoint. The second reason is the distinct perspectives from which they approach the landscape. Theroux, a novelist, displays a more literary spirit, whereas Kaplan, a geographer and military advisor, offers a more analytical viewpoint.

The rationale behind the choice of *The Old Patagonian Express: By Train through the Americas* (Theroux 1979) and *Eastward to Tartary: Travels in the Balkans, Middle East and the Caucasus* (Kaplan 2000) is the vast areas that they cover on such distant latitudes of the globe. However, any other two travel books by these authors could have been selected for the purposes of this study, which means that the methodology and the techniques employed can be replicated in other travel books by different authors.

5 Analysis

The present section is divided into two subsections which offer an ecostylistic approach to the passages devoted to the description of the natural settings in both books. The first one deals with Paul Theroux's account of the Americas, *The Old Patagonian Express: By Train through the Americas* (Theroux 1979). The second one focuses on Robert D. Kaplan's intense experience of the riotous and troublesome regions of Eastern Europe and the Near East in *Eastward to Tartary: Travels in the Balkans, Middle East and the Caucasus* (Kaplan 2000).

5.1 *The Old Patagonian Express: By Train through the Americas*

Paul Theroux is a talented language manipulator and a skillful selector of lexical items which enact certain semantic frames which end up yielding conceptual metaphors. These metaphors contribute to construing the tone and the atmosphere of the passages. Theroux engages himself in imaginative descriptions of the dramatic

landscapes of the Americas as he travels down the continent, from freezing Boston in the middle of the historical snowstorm of 1978 to the desolate lunar plains of Patagonia. His descriptions are an effective discursive resource whereby he lets his imagination flow while he contemplates the astounding and varied sights and allows them to mingle with his mood at the moment of writing. Theroux's wide range of intense experiences (from the latent racism of Panama Canal "zoners" to the nausea he feels when traveling over ten thousand feet in Peru or Bolivia, or the chickens jumping around the station master's office in Nicaragua) provides him with a fertile ground for displaying his descriptive skills. These skills serve as an ignition point to spark a number of imaginative metaphors.

The first selected passages have been excerpted from Chapter One, soon after he has left Boston, in the middle of a ferocious snowstorm:

- (1) [...] night was falling on the bare hills [...] the deep snow slipped towards black brooks [...] frozen lakes and ponds, half-frozen rivers or streams with conches of ice at their banks [...] by the twilight. [...] the dark slopes of woods on the far side, and the same knifing wind. It was not the opaque night, the uninterrupted dark of a foreign country's hinterland. (Theroux 1979: 16–17)
- (2) [...] a paper-white birch grove smothered by night and snow, a row of fence posts visible because of the drifts in which they lay half-buried [...]. (Theroux 1979: 18)

Theroux evokes death, bareness, and coldness by deliberately choosing adjectives which activate the semantic frames *DEATH* and *DESOLATION*. The predominant presence of predicating modifier constructions, expressing qualities of the nouns they modify, construe not only the lugubrious atmosphere of the passage, but also the somber tone of the author as he leaves Boston in the middle of a nasty snowstorm. Adjectives related to darkness and coldness interact to activate the semantic frame *DEATH*, with some frame enactors, such as "bare", "half-buried" and especially "knifing". As noted in Section 3, this is an instance of domain adjective, since it does not state a quality of the wind, but a subtype of wind, one that drives a knife into the body, and it realizes the source domain of a hyperbolic metaphorical construct, namely, *COLD WIND IS A KNIFE*.

The gloomy mood of the author and the tone of the chapter, as he leaves America for the sunnier South, is reinforced when he describes the cars of the train right after Buffalo:

- (3) [...] there were curtains of heavy vapor between cars [...] and frost on the windows [...]. I rubbed the frost away but could see very little except a blue-grey fog that blurred the landscape with a cloudy fluorescence. (Theroux 1979: 25)

The semantic frame *EMPTINESS*, closely related to *DEATH*, is construed by a series of predicating adjectival constructions modifying nominals (“heavy vapor”, “a blue-grey fog”, “a cloudy fluorescence”), together with certain deliberately selected vision-preventing nominals (“curtains”, “frost”), and a couple of verbs of senses expressing emptiness (“rubbed away”, “blurred”).

The deadly atmosphere of the passage, along with the gloomy tone of the author, is reinforced a few lines down the chapter when, during a train stop in the middle of the fog, dead nature is brought back to life by the sudden morning sunshine:

- (4) [...] a dim tree stump became apparent. It bled a streak of orange [...] staining the decayed bark like a wound leaking into a grey bandage. (Theroux 1979: 25)
- (5) Soon the rubious fire of dawn glittered in the fields [...] the landscape was lit [...]. (Theroux 1979: 25)
- (6) [...] there was a forest of frozen branches [...] like ghostly sails in a sea of snow [...] flat windswept snow [...] with broken grass buried to their tips. (Theroux 1979: 26)

The semantic frames *LIGHT* and *DARKNESS* are paralleled with *LIFE* and *DEATH*. This parallelism becomes apparent by the selection of verbal and nominal phrases such as “bled”, “decayed”, “wound”, “buried”. There is also a simile related to the afterlife, when the passing trees are compared to “ghostly sails”. The underlying metaphors here are *DARKNESS IS DEATH* and *LIGHT IS LIFE*. It is the darkness of the stormy North of the United States that the author tries to escape from, in the hope that a sunnier South will lift his spirits and boost his enthusiasm in his travel adventure to Patagonia.

At Ponca City, Oklahoma, the landscape is depicted metaphorically as a death scenario:

- (7) The land was flat and barren; but the traces of snow [...] like the scattered carcasses of ermine [...]. (Theroux 1979: 39)

The use of a series of adjectives in both predicative and attributive positions denotes emptiness, nothingness, destruction (“flat”, “barren”, “bare”), together with the nominal phrase “scattered carcasses”. The pervading presence of the color brown occurs at two different levels. On the one hand, it is employed literally by the author, when describing the land with patches of snow. On the other hand, the brown color is also metaphorically summoned by the remains of a dead animal whose colors are brown and white (the ermine): a dead land is thereby mapped onto a dead animal. Again, the harsh winter conditions are conceptualized as *DEATH*. This is reinforced further down the passage by “the white ovals of frozen ponds”,

“the narrow ice-paths”, “stony riverbeds”, “a few bare brown trees”, “brown cattle [...] nibbling at brown turves”.

But the ultimate DEATH-enaction resource in the passage is an oatmeal plantation:

- (8) At the topmost of the sky's dome, the mournful oatmeal dissolved [...] The sun was a crimson slit, a red squint in the mass of cereal [...]. (Theroux 1979: 39)

The plantation is conceptualized as mourners at a funeral, where the morning sky is the dome of a basilica and the rising sun is endowed with a crimson color, which stands for blood, and it is described as a “slit” (which is the result of the cut of a knife) and a “red squint” (which may give rise to the idea of pain and blood). The use of the noun “mass”, a homophone with the Catholic celebration, is deliberate and consistent with the mental image of a church during a funeral mass.

Already across Mexico, the writer seems to be affected by the high temperatures there:

- (9) The sun burned in a cloudless sky [...] the remains of an abandoned silver mine and a wild yellow desert [...] cactuses in grotesque configurations [...] that looked like swollen trees [...]. (Theroux 1979: 69)

The scorching heat makes the writer depict the landscape with a series of negatively loaded adjectives (“cloudless”, “abandoned”, “wild”, “grotesque”, “swollen”), as if he was contemplating a deformed panorama, while he endures the effect of intense heat in his body, the increasing blood pressure and the subsequent annoyance. His irritation is reflected in his description of the scenery.

Farther down in Central America, in Guatemala, the author is shocked by an impressive gorge that can be observed from the train window:

- (10) There were pinnacles of rock which had snagged scraps of fog [...] as thorns snag bunches of fleece; and through this streaming whiteness a pair of crows flew and steadied themselves. (Theroux 1979: 129)

His scare (“this topsy-turvy sight” [Theroux 1979: 129]) is reflected in the way he describes the geographical features of the view from the window. The presence of a pair of crows, scavenger birds, enacts the semantic subframe CARRION, subsidiary to the more general semantic frame DEATH. The pinnacles of rock cropping among the mass of clouds are depicted as thorns caught in the middle of fleece, like a knife cutting the flesh open. The whiteness contrasts with the blackness of the crows, in the same way as the semantic frame LIFE opposes DEATH. Paul Theroux's scare hence construes the tone of this passage by evoking the idea of knife-slitting, death, and carrion.

Farther ahead, in the middle of the Guatemalan barren landscape, there is hope for those who struggle in the middle of adversity:

- (11) [...] the cactus remains, its spines keeping animals away, its fine white hairs shading its tough hide [...] under the sky of clearest blue [...] sprouting in clusters, hairy brown tubes, prickly pear cactuses and sprawling nets of weed. (Theroux 1979: 137)

Cactuses are envisaged and richly described in colorful metaphors as tough survivors equipped with weapons and shields to fight the harsh conditions of their surroundings. This is carried out by a series of nominals attributively modified by adjectives (“fine white hairs”, “tough hide”, “hairy brown tubes”, “prickly pear cactuses”), plus a subsequent prepositional phrase introduced by “of” (“sprawling nets of weed”).

The author arrives in El Salvador, and soon the volcanic landscape inevitably catches his attention and wakes up his descriptive skills:

- (12) [...] the lake and the volcano grow huger and alter in color as the sun shifts behind them. [...] the lake swells and the volcano rises [...] to almost unbelievable loveliness. The waters are blue, then grey, then black as the train mounts its own volcanic range and travels along the spine [...]. There is an island in the lake [...] like a dismantled flagship in this darkly chromatic sea [...] low hills of green vegetation [...] banana and orange groves and tall clusters of yellow swaying bamboos. The foliage nearby [...] is emerald green [...]. (Theroux 1979: 162)

- (13) Now the lake is silver, with an enameling of blue discs; now black, with furrows of frothy whiteness; now it is suffused with pinkness and at its shores takes the color from the greenest trees. (Theroux 1979: 163)

The sight of the Chinchontepec volcano rising out of Lake Ilopango is represented as a sensorial feast, depicted as a blooming and colorful explosion of hues, shades, and tonalities which combine to shape a rich visual perception. The vividness of the description in this passage is intended to involve the reader at a multimodal level. The effect of reading this excerpt turns the reflective act of reading into a bursting pictorial experience. The reader feels that they are actually watching a colorful painting: this is achieved not only by using words denoting actual colors (particularly “darkly chromatic sea”, by which the writer describes the sea water shining in the moonlight), but also by employing a number of other adjectives and nominals which activate color perception in the mind of the reader (“emerald”, “enameling”, “frothy”).

A very similar pictorial experience is activated by the author a few chapters afterwards, when traveling across Colombia:

- (14) [...] we crossed a green plain [...] mountains of pale velvet, a nap of shrubbery which was yellow in the salmon-colored light that shone from the hinge of the sun [...] the pink sky made the swamps pink and the still pools mirrored the new stars. (Theroux 1979: 259)

It is interesting to focus on how Theroux foregrounds the colors and tonalities as he visually goes through the marsh. Colors shift from one to another within a wide variety of hues affected by the “salmon-colored light” coming “from the hinge of the sun”. This is a beautiful metaphor whereby the setting sun is figuratively conceptualized as a closing door. The nominal enactor of the metaphor is “hinge”, like the hinges of a door. The pervading pink light parallels the dusk sunlight flooding the place as the day dies away.

In Costa Rica, the author describes the passing along a gorge in the mountains as an overwhelming event:

- (15) [...] the landscape had opened and become simple and terrifying [...] so deep it made me anxious, a gorge. There were fountains of mist [...] It is a swift river and its strength has [...] made a canyon, filled with the rubble of its destruction [...] the fallen walls of boulders, the river heaving over rocks, the turbulent suds of rapids [...]. (Theroux 1979: 186)

The atmosphere of the passage is scary and reveals the fearful tone of the description, since the author depicts the rapids of Río Reventazón and the vertiginous gorge as a violent natural phenomenon. Again, the deliberate choice of lexical items, specifically the preference for noun + *of*-phrase construction, construes the ambience of the excerpt. The reason for this is the descriptive quality of the prepositional phrase modifying the noun, similar to the descriptive quality typically found in adjectives. The reader can, hence, construe a mental picture of destruction in progress. One can imagine the flowing mist, the falling rubble and boulders, the abruptness of the suds against the cropping rocks. The scenario evokes chaos and devastation.

On his way to Puntarenas, Costa Rica, the traveler witnesses tilled fields:

- (16) [...] dry broken cornstalks drooped in the fields, the trees were bare or [...] held a few boughs of fluttering brown leaves, the grass was burned, and even the fence posts [...] were losing their leaves to the dry air. (Theroux 1979: 210)

The autumnal scenery after harvest time, with the fields spangled with farming waste, is metaphorically conceptualized as a field of death. Lifeless nature is reflected

by a number of semantically close lexical items (“drooped”, “bare”, “fluttering”, “brown”, “burned”, “losing”, “dry”).

The fear of the force of nature is again evoked when the writer arrives at Panama City:

- (17) [...] the skies darkened and it began to rain. [...] The rain came down hard and swept across the fields; it blackened the canal and wrinkled it with wind; and it splashed the sides of the coach and ran down the windows. [...] the passengers had shut the windows and now we sat perspiring as if soaked by the downpour. (Theroux 1979: 246)

The violence of the sudden tropical rain overwhelms both people and landscape equally: the former, looking for shelter; the latter, drowning in darkness and shrinking as if for protection. The atmosphere is conveyed by a number of verbs denoting darkness and devastation: “darkened”, “swept”, “blackened”, “wrinkled”, “splashed”, “soaked”. An appealing paradoxical metaphor is activated here when the canal is mapped onto a burning coal. The rain and the wind bear an unexpected effect on it, by turning it black and making it wrinkle, as a piece of firewood being consumed by fire.

The deadly and lugubrious side of nature overcomes the author when, aboard the Panamericano, he is arriving at La Paz:

- (18) [...] there are coal-black peaks covered with snow [...] Bolivia’s bareness was the gritty undercrust of the earth, a topography of stony fossils [...] exposing the country to its old bones. (Theroux 1979: 342)

The geological features of the mountains are metaphorically described as the injuries of a battle against a fierce enemy. The activation of the semantic frame *WAR* is achieved by the use of certain adjectives and past participles (“brutal”, “exposed”, “pitted”, “clawed”, “collapsed”) and nominals (“authority”, “flanks”, “tents”, “blankets”) that fit normally into the description of soldiers in a battlefield. Particularly interesting is the domain participle “clawed”: it constitutes the source domain for the metaphor *EROSION IS A PREDATOR*.

The Patagonian landscape enacts a gloomy tone of despair in the writer, a feeling of hopelessness:

- (19) The landscape had a prehistoric look, [...] a dinosaur skeleton [...] thorn bushes and rocks; and everything smoothed by the wind [...] as if a great flood had denuded it [...]. Still the wind worked on it, kept the trees from growing, blew the soil west, uncovered more rock and even uprooted those ugly bushes. (Theroux 1979: 422)

Again, the semantic frames *BARENESS* and *DEATH* emerge when nature itself destroys any chance of life. New references to imaginary bones and the mighty power of the wind eroding the environment blow the soil off its land revealing the bare rocks, even uproot trees, together with the thorny features of the scarce vegetation.

In the last part of the book, a couple of multimodal, multi-sensorial passages stand out in the middle of this trip across the continent and reinforce the author's openness to new experiences. The first one appears when he is traveling past Jujuy and the Río Grande:

- (20) Along its banks were leafy trees and flowers, and the evening mist hung over the water. [...] The rain on the blossoms perfumed the dark air and a fresh breeze blew from the river. (Theroux 1979: 365)

The valley is richly depicted in a combination of colors and smells. The author feels invigorated by this interaction of senses, and this is reflected in the positive language employed, like a couple of predicating modifier adjectives ("leafy trees and flowers" and "a fresh breeze"), and the fact that the place is "perfumed" by "the rain on the blossoms".

The second excerpt merges shades, hues, and sounds when the author is overwhelmed by the beauty of the Patagonian valley:

- (21) [...] the Patagonian valley deepened to grey rock, [...] split by floods. [...] a succession of hills, whittled and fissured by the wind, which now sang in the bushes. The bushes shook with this song. [...] The sky was clear blue. A puff of cloud [...] carried a small shadow from [...] the South Pole [...] a brief chill [...] there were no voices here. (Theroux 1979: 429)

Theroux treats nature and natural phenomena as a dramatic succession of abrupt ups and downs. This is expressed by a series of verbs: "deepened", "split", "whittled", "fissured". He conceives nature as a living being in constant struggle with itself, and even endows it with the human ability of singing and dancing ("the wind sang in the bushes", "the bushes shook with this song") and even smoking ("A puff of cloud"). This bestowal of human abilities enacts the metaphors *THE WIND IS A SONG* and *WIND-INDUCED MOVEMENT IS DANCING*.

Paul Theroux gives a thorough account of the natural scenery that he witnesses as he travels southbound down the continent. He proves to be a particularly sensitive writer when he opens himself to the new experiences of the unknown territories and allows himself to be affected by the atmosphere of the most varied scenarios, thus reflecting his mood and stance, construing the tone of many of the passages depicted.

5.2 *Eastward to Tartary: Travels in the Balkans, Middle East and the Caucasus*

First conceived as a sequel to *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (Kaplan 1993), *Eastward to Tartary: Travels in the Balkans, Middle East and the Caucasus* (Kaplan 2000) constitutes an account of Robert D. Kaplan's travels across Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Asia Minor. It is essentially a political atlas, very much along the lines of Kaplan's work. The author focuses his attention on the historical and political issues of the countries he visits.

The historical turbulences of the Balkans and the Near East are referred to constantly and presented as a reflection of the ontology of the region. For Kaplan, there is a dramatic clash at several levels. There is a geological clash between Europe and Asia, with natural barriers such as the Carpathians or the Kopet Dag, which have decisively contributed to the dramatic shaping of the local communities. There is a historical clash, as the area was the borderland not only between East and West, but also between The Holy Roman Empire and Byzantium, between Habsburg Europe and the Ottoman Empire, and between Christianity and Islam, even between Catholicism and the Orthodox Church. There is also a cultural clash, a logical consequence of the chaotic history of the region and the troubled coexistence of different races and religions. Lastly, there is a political clash, since the area has been the stage of numerous contemporary wars, and many of the countries in it have endured decades of Communism.

Kaplan uses all these circumstances as a situational context for the descriptions of the landscapes he travels across, with unexpected metaphors emerging from those descriptions which contribute to construing the ambience and the author's stance in the middle of historically rebellious lands with the harsh living conditions of their peoples. In Eastern Europe, Kaplan's trip takes place soon after the fall of the numerous Communist regimes that those countries had endured for several decades. The Balkans are defined by the author as "the frontier between Europe and the Near East that [...] did not begin and end in a certain place but fell away in a series of gradients" (Kaplan 2000: 13).

One of his first stops is Debrecen, in Hungary. On his way there, Kaplan offers a vivid description of the Hungarian "Great Plain, the westernmost Asian steppe" (Kaplan 2000: 13–14):

- (22) From the train, I saw a flat and threadbare landscape of muddy roads, lonely corpses of poplars, houses with peeling walls, and rotting chicken coops. [...] the Tisza River and the flat landscape became emptier and more panoramic, with rich, coal-black soil and oceans of lemon-green grass shimmering in the late-winter sunlight of an unseasonably warm day. (Kaplan 2000: 14)

If we take a look at the use of a series of adjectives in both attributive and predicative positions in this passage, namely, “flat and threadbare”, “muddy”, “lonely”, “peeling”, “rotting”, “emptier”, it becomes apparent that they all share common semantic frames such as *DECAY* and *BARENES*. This is the atmosphere that the author means to construe as he crosses a country submerged in a serious economic crisis, with signs of neglect and dereliction all around. Nevertheless, Kaplan holds some room for hope, as he contrasts this hopeless scene with colorful “oceans of lemon-green grass” that shimmer on dark, rich soil. The fact that the scene occurs in the late winter and the fact that Kaplan makes this explicit through the domain adjective “late-winter” construe the subjective tone of the passage. There is hope for this land after years of authoritarian regimes, and this gives rise to the metaphors *DICTATORSHIP IS WINTER* and *FREEDOM IS SPRING*.

As the train approaches Transylvania, already in Romania, the author focuses his attention on another derelict piece of land:

- (23) [...] horse-drawn wooden carts; dome-shaped hayricks [...] rusted methane-gas tanks [...] chickens running [...] on the diesel-soaked ground; wildflowers booming beside piles of twisted and charred metal; abandoned railway cars [...] black with rust, [...] and chemical pollutants beside the grinding reality of subsistence agriculture: the residue of dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu’s Stalinist regime. (Kaplan 2000: 19)

Here, Kaplan makes an interesting observation: there is beautiful nature making its way through the debris and the junk left behind by Ceaușescu’s regime. This stands for a metaphor for hope, namely, this land has an opportunity after the long winter of tyranny. The scene depicts a farm where old-fashioned, rusty utensils and machinery contrast with colorful nature scattered around the junk. Even the peasants are, to some extent, dehumanized as “hordes of Gypsies”, “peasants in sheepskin”, or “women, draped in black” (Kaplan 2000: 19). Note the use of the domain adjectival construction “the grinding reality of subsistence agriculture”, which gives rise to the metaphor *HARD LIFE IS A SLOW MILL STONE*.

En route to Bucharest, the train climbs through a high pass in the Carpathians, and Kaplan is taken aback by the beauty of the mountain scenery:

- (24) The granite, snow-flecked peaks were girdled in towering fir, oak, and beech forests, casting dark shadows. Pearly torrents tumbled from the snowmelt of an abnormally warm late February. (Kaplan 2000: 29)

The solid mountain range is vividly depicted as a living being dressed up in its glad rags, composed of natural features. This is a female conceptualization of Nature, since domain adjectives “girdled” and “pearly” enact the semantic frame *DRESS-UP*,

thus giving rise to the metaphor *NATURE IS A BEAUTIFUL DRESS*. The deliberate choice of the adjectives “girdled” and “pearly” evokes garments and jewelry typically associated with women (girdles and pearls). This metaphorical conceptualization subsidiary to the *NATURE IS CLOTH* metaphor appears again a few pages later, across the Danube plain when the train passes “green and brown fields threaded by hauntingly beautiful rivers” (Kaplan 2000: 58).

Robert D. Kaplan is a Social Sciences man, and his background pervades both his vision of the world, and the way he accounts for it. After leaving Plovdiv, in Bulgaria, he establishes the splendor and magnificence of the plain of Thrace as the Stage of History:

- (25) As the train threaded through the Plain of Thrace, with the enchanting Sredna Gora Mountains to the north and the rugged Rila and Rhodope Ranges to the south, I could imagine the progression of medieval armies and caravans that had traveled this route to and from Constantinople: Hun, Bulgar, Slav, Byzantine Greek, medieval Bulgarian, Crusader and Turkish. (Kaplan 2000: 81)

This conception of the landscape as the stage of an imaginary theater where history was shaped and forged is recurrent throughout the book. It is interesting how Kaplan uses the *NATURE IS CLOTH* metaphor again, employing a sewing process, “threaded”, to describe the winding movement of the train, while offering detailed descriptions of the natural scene. This conception of the landscape as the Stage of History becomes even more acute as he crosses Anatolia, and he links the shape of its geology to the inherent insurgent nature of the different Balkan peoples:

- (26) Anatolia’s landscape was like the process of history itself. [...] The steppe was a geologic tapestry of upheaval and impermanence, a cake-swirl pattern of yellow and black hills created by water and wind over eons. [...] a continuous pattern of destruction as old forms imperceptibly give way to the new. Fields were literally on fire, burned by farmers to increase the fertility the following spring. (Kaplan 2000: 109)

Kaplan parallels the numerous wars that these lands have seen throughout history with the laboring farmers that he sees from his train, claiming an inherent spirit of turmoil in these people and the historically volatile stability of the region. The atmosphere of the passage is shaped by a number of nominals which share the import of the semantic frame *INSTABILITY* (“upheaval”, “impermanence”, “destruction”), together with a rapid succession of yellow and black colors, as if mentally depicting fire and smoke. A powerful descriptive resource employed is the noun + *of*-phrase construction. Note the use of the domain compound adjective “cake-swirl” to metaphorically display the general tonality of the scene and its historical turmoil.

A colorful view captivates the author as he leaves Ankara:

- (27) [...] soon we were traveling through the lonely vastness of baked, yellow hillsides that sloped and twisted gently mile after mile.[...] Later came a green, poplar-lined river valley with silvery blue water [...]. (Kaplan 2000: 116)

The ochre tonalities of the dry land contrast with the sudden appearance of a river lined with poplars. The “silvery blue water” and the “green poplars” are profiled against the yellowish “baked” hillsides. Kaplan combines the ochre tonalities and bread-related nominals to enact the *LAND IS OVEN* metaphor, a powerful descriptive tool that accounts not only for the color itself, but also for the temperature.

Farther along his trip, Kaplan illustrates the changing scenery:

- (28) [...] as we traveled east toward Aleppo [...] The mountains and dramatic vistas were gone, replaced by severe monotony of sandy, reddish soil and barren limestone hills. [...] This parched, rolling plateau [...] made Greater Syria easy to define [...]. (Kaplan 2000: 127)
- (29) As we [...] began our descent to the other side of Beirut, the mountains suddenly turned green and the shadows softened. Birches, evergreens and bougainvillea were abundant and lovely [...] the Mediterranean, which met the sky near the horizon. (Kaplan 2000: 148)

On his route from Syria to Lebanon, Kaplan opposes the empty, sandy desert to the abundant vegetation of the Lebanon Range. This contrast parallels the author’s mood, in high spirits as he reaches the Mediterranean, a much more welcoming setting.

En route from Jordan to Israel, the vast arid plains become predominant: the Jordan Valley is referred to as a “deep rift in the earth’s surface” (Kaplan 2000: 186), which conceptualizes the land as an injured animal, consistent with the historical instability of the region:

- (30) The descent to the Jordan river from the biscuit-brown tableland of Irbid was dramatic. The temperature rose steadily as we neared the hazy ribbon of green fields along the river [...]. (Kaplan 2000: 186)

The *LAND IS OVEN* metaphor is drawn upon to shape the scorching temperatures, and the *LAND IS CLOTH* metaphor is enacted when the only vegetation of the surroundings is described as a “hazy ribbon” along the river. The land is treated like a living being: it can be injured, it dresses up. This is construed via the domain adjectival constructions “biscuit-brown” and “hazy ribbon”.

Already leaving Trabzon, at the eastern end of the Black Sea, and heading uneasily for unknown Georgia, the author invokes the Greek mythology, referring to

that patch of land as Colchis, and “the destination of Jason and the Argonauts”, “Medea” and “the Golden Fleece” (Kaplan 2000: 218):

- (31) [...] the coastline became more lush and rugged as I crossed raging rivers and terraced fields of tea and hazelnut. Mountains rose into white-granite cathedrals, their tops girded in clouds. [...] I saw another range of vine-shrouded subtropical mountains: my first view of the Caucasus. (Kaplan 2000: 219)

The solid granite mountains are conceptualized as “cathedrals”, in the middle of a multicolored scene while, at the same time, activating the DEATH semantic frame. The lexical choices shape this: take, for example, the nominals “cathedral” and “clouds”, the compound “white-granite” and the domain adjectival construction “shrouded”. They belong to the DEATH semantic frame, specifically to the FUNERAL semantic subframe. They evoke the temple, the coldness of the rock, which parallels the coldness of death, the ascension to heaven, and the corpse’s attire, which envelops the mountains as a shroud envelops a dead body.

However, the traveler insists on giving this land an opportunity for the future:

- (32) Alongside the brutish ugliness of concrete tenements and filthy black freight cars, we passed a succession of sublime, thickly forested hills, orchards, and gentle tea bushes on the terraced red earth, marked with cedars and cypresses. (Kaplan 2000: 237)

The author opposes the old and rusty junk to the fresh booming nature as a way of foregrounding the chasm between the debris of Communism and the new hope for those former Soviet countries. The predicating adjectival constructions employed mark this dramatic contrast (“brutish” and “filthy” versus “sublime” and “gentle”).

Kaplan’s concern about environmental issues in the post-Soviet era becomes apparent in Azerbaijan, as he visits Sumgait, the center of Azerbaijan’s heavy industry in Soviet times:

- (33) The smell of chemicals was everywhere. Along the beach I saw rusted, abandoned ships, broken glass, and rotting elevated pipes pumping sewage into the sea. [...] a cemetery in the industrial zone, [...] an apocalyptic scene of devastation. My lungs ached and my eyes burned from the stench of chlorine filling the desert of brownish silt, littered with factory skeletons. In a field of bramble and broken bottles I saw a clutter of black stones identifying small dirt mounds – the graves of children who had died of birth defects from the industrial pollution. (Kaplan 2000: 280)

He develops an intersensorial account of his experience, mixing the senses of sight and smell while he breathes toxic air and feels deep sorrow for the deaths caused by pollution. The dereliction and shambles before him are profiled in a

succession of descriptive predicating adjectives. It is interesting to focus attention on how Kaplan construes not only the atmosphere, but also the tone of the passage by putting forward a series of nominal and adjectival lexical choices which evoke the semantic frames *DEATH* and *DECAY*. Particularly intense are those inherently linked to the decomposition of a body after death, namely, “rotting”, “stench”, “skeletons”, before he presents the tragic climax of the “apocalyptic” scenario: the graves of children.

Farther down his route, as he leaves the Caspian Sea behind, he focuses his attention back on the environmental disaster that Communism meant for this vast extension of Eurasia. The multicolored sight of a group of girls seems to cast a glimpse of hope for the future:

- (34) I smelled hot tar as we left the Caspian behind and entered an ashen wasteland of alkaline silt fringed by distant lunar cliffs. Small groups of Kazakh girls in colorful dresses were selling camel’s milk in old soda bottles by the roadside. (Kaplan 2000: 292)

Curiously enough, the nothingness of a desert landscape is depicted as a symbol of purity or, at least, untouched by the shambles of the Soviet era. In Turkmenistan,

- (35) the sand became finer still and the landscape utterly flat [...] like hardened cigarette ash, stained white with salt [...] and speckled with [...] sheep, statuesque camels and patches of vegetation [...] nothing man-made in sight [...] as if communism had never existed here [...]. (Kaplan 2000: 293)

The use of the domain adjective “lunar” adds a nuance of strangeness to the purity of the scene. The simile envisages the absence of industrial activity as an otherworldly feature, as if he were on the Moon.

The *NATURE IS CLOTH* metaphor is evoked once more, as he witnesses the Kopet-Dag, the mountainous border between Turkmenistan and Iran. The mountains are vividly visualized as “a fabulously intricate tea-colored carpet, unfurling steeply and majestically in delicate, bony creases” (Kaplan 2000: 293).

History returns to Kaplan’s narrative as he arrives in Nyssa, with its “baked-yellow mathematical purity” (Kaplan 2000: 303), where the armies of Alexander the Great were repelled:

- (36) Nyssa was a series of disintegrating sand castles at the foot of the bare rollercoaster updrifts of the Kopet-Dag. The smooth clay landscape could have been shaped by a potter. The naked fields, the honeycomb of ruins with lizard-filled pits, the dry heat and emptiness [...]. (Kaplan 2000: 303)

The *OVEN* semantic frame is enacted by the use of the nominals “clay” and “potter”, which activate the *CRAFT* semantic frame. The semantic imports of color (“smooth

clay landscape”), geometry (“the honeycomb of ruins”), and heat (“the dry heat and emptiness”) are consistent with the craft of pottery and provide the author with a skillful descriptive resource as he beholds the ancient city and its surroundings.

The supernatural imbues the descriptive passages when the author reaches Armenia. Frequent allusions to the Bible, religious ceremonies, and the afterlife are scattered along the last chapter of this travel adventure. The chapter begins at Mount Ararat, and Kaplan takes his time to explain the name from an etymological perspective, the Armenian root for “life” and “creation”:

- (37) The Armenian capital of Yerevan sits under the spell of Mount Ararat, [...] a giant smoky-blue pyramid capped by a craggy head of silvery-white snow. [...] the summit emerges from a platform of clouds halfway up the sky, like a new universe in formation. (Kaplan 2000: 311)

The multicolored scene is shaped by compound predicating adjectives (“smoky-blue” and “silvery-white”) semantically coherent within the semantic frame HEAVEN and the nouns “spell” and “sky”, as if magic or any other kind of otherworldly forces were at work on this particular place.

Death and the supernatural emerge in an especially dramatic form when Kaplan enters Karabah:

- (38) [...] as you enter Karabakh, the landscape softens beneath mountainsides bearded with dark evergreens. Shushi [...] seemed the archetypal landscape of ethnic cleansing: a semi deserted ruin of gutted streets, demolished buildings and mosques [...] and an eerie silence, in which I could hear the rattle of autumn leaves. (Kaplan 2000: 326)

Again, he employs the LAND IS LIVING BEING metaphor. The fact that the mountainsides are “bearded” and the streets are “gutted” (both domain adjectives) bestows the land with human features. Death is explicitly stated by the noun phrase “ethnic cleansing”, while the attributive domain adjective “eerie” evokes the supernatural. It is not a mere quality of silence, but a kind of silence, that of the spirit world: the spirits of the genocide victims, hence, seem to haunt the town.

Kaplan is deeply concerned with the stormy background of this historically lawless and riotous area of the world and its peoples, with constant uprisings and abrupt power switches. He not only presents the landscape as the Stage of History, but also envisages the land as a living being who bears the injuries and the scars of their turbulent past. Booming nature, however, stands for another new beginning for those peoples, their latest attempt to resurrect from their ashes.

6 Discussion

This ecostylistic investigation has explored the ambience of the nature-related passages in the two travel books. The rationale for employing CMT and FS in this scrutiny lies mainly in the fact that the conceptual metaphors in the texts are activated in two different, although related, ways. On the one hand, FS is drawn upon when the analysis deals with larger stretches of text, and the deliberate appearance of a number of semantically-related nominals and adjectives activates a given semantic frame in the mind of the reader. This is the case, for example, with “bare”, “black”, “twilight”, “dark”, “opaque”, all of them related to the semantic frame DARKNESS, and “snow”, “frozen”, “half-frozen”, “ice”, all of them within the same paragraph and contributing to activating the semantic frames COLDNESS and DARKNESS, both of which are subsidiary to the semantic frame DEATH (see Section 5.1), and could be explained as pertaining to the primary metaphor COLDNESS IS DEATH in Theroux’s book.

However, CMT has been favored when the metaphor arises from a single noun phrase including an adjective whose semantic relation with the noun invites a metaphoric mapping across domains. This is the case, for example, of “knifing wind”, whereby a cold wind is conceptualized as a sharp knife driven into the body. Similarly, the stony land envisaged as a skeleton or fossils when Theroux arrives in Bolivia and Patagonia is a clear example of individual mappings across domains and can be interpreted by drawing on CMT. Kaplan, for instance, conceptualizes the hard life of peasants who struggle to make a living out of subsistence agriculture. The difficulties of such an economy and lifestyle are metaphorically mapped onto the slow motion of a mill stone, grinding the cereal to make flour and then bread. This is a single mapping across domains and explained in terms of CMT.

Semantic frames are also favored when the analysis deals with cases of extended metaphors, that is, a number of epistemic mappings across domains that are complementary and consistent in both the source and the target domains. This is the case when a tree stump is conceptualized as a bleeding, amputated arm in “a dim tree stump [...] bled a streak of orange [...] staining the decayed bark like a wound leaking into a grey bandage” (Theroux 1979: 25). The “tree stump” is conceptualized as a limb stump by the deliberate use of the verb phrases “bled” and “staining”, onto which the oozing sap is mapped, and “the decayed bark”, mapped onto an infected wound staining its bandage. The mappings are consistent across domains and the relations between stump-sap-bark can be conceptualized in terms of amputated limb-blood-bandage. This series of metaphoric mappings within the same paragraph is what authors like Kövecses (2017: 321–347, 2020: 150–168) have termed extended metaphor, and they all stem from one common metaphor, namely, A TREE STUMP IS AN

AMPUTATED LIMB. The mappings could be individually explained by resorting to CMT, since they all involve epistemic mappings from a source domain onto a target domain. It is the combination of them all and the way in which they interact and cooperate with each other towards a common stem metaphor that makes the present analysis draw on FS. Further examples of extended metaphors are Theroux's description of the wind in Patagonia, conceptualized as a song; the shaking trees imagined as dancers; and an oatmeal plantation metaphorically represented as a funeral mass, where the "cereal" are mourners, the "sky's dome" is the cupola, and the semantic frame DEATH is mapped onto the end of the day, as the crimson light of the setting sun.

Kaplan also employs cooperative conceptual mappings giving rise to extended metaphors, such as the conceptualization of DICTATORSHIP AS WINTER, and FREEDOM AS SPRING. He associates the cold and hard weather conditions of winter with the hard living conditions of people under tyranny and, conversely, the mild climate of spring (and the blossom of the flowers, the melting of the ice, and so on, retrievable from the SPRING semantic frame) with the arrival of democracy (see Section 5.2). Both metaphors stem from the more general one THE HISTORY OF A COUNTRY IS THE SEASONS OF THE YEAR. Other examples by Kaplan are the land conceptualized as a woman by the use of a series of metaphors triggered by female garments and jewelry, or the land metaphorically mapped onto an oven baking bread, when the hues and tonalities of the soil are predominantly ochre or "biscuit-brown" while enduring scorching temperatures.

The analysis of ambience, in its two dimensions of tone and atmosphere, has been carried out with natural landscapes as the stage on which both authors display not only an environmentally-concerned atmosphere, but also their personal inner feelings and emotions, as they react to what they see and experience. This is done at several levels of metaphoric complexity, hence the need for the combination of CMT and FS.

7 Conclusion

The two authors analyzed in the present paper have shown powerful descriptive abilities, not only to offer accurate accounts of the landscapes they travel across, but also to involve the reader in the atmosphere of the contextual setting and to share their mood and their stance about what they are experiencing, that is, the subjective tone of some of the passages.

The pictorial quality of the descriptive skills of Paul Theroux and Robert D. Kaplan makes the nature scenes appear as landscape paintings. From an

ecostylistic perspective, their landscape painting is also, and to a great extent, a pictorial representation of the devastating effects that the actions of humans have on nature, especially in Kaplan's case. This is intended to impinge on the reader, since they are invited to interpret the nature excerpts in a different light, as a work of art through which the author establishes communication. In a similar way to painters and art lovers, a multimodal metaphor for this type of communication emerges, namely, *ART IS CONVERSATION* (Okonski et al. 2020: 23). This metaphor is consistent with the process of communication between the writers and their readers, since both of them entail producer-receiver interaction. For the purposes of the present paper, *ART IS CONVERSATION* can be divided into two subsidiary metaphors, i.e. *LANDSCAPE IS A STATEMENT* and *LANDSCAPE IS A STATE OF MIND*. These two resulting metaphorical mappings are coherent with the ambience-related notions of atmosphere (*LAND IS A STATEMENT*) and tone (*LAND IS A STATE OF MIND*), and they have proven to be the fertile ground out of which a considerable amount of landscape and nature-related metaphors emerge in both travel books.

Taking the *ART IS CONVERSATION* metaphor as a starting point, as it was pointed out in the introductory section, the primary merit of travelers is to put the world on paper. This means that they feel the need to express what they witness, and not only that: they feel the urge to involve their readers in their adventurous experience, making them take part both in their objective descriptions and their subjective moods triggered by the traveling experience. This has been the main reason for drawing on the notion of ambience and the related notions of tone and atmosphere.

Both authors combine the descriptions of the diverse scenery they travel across with their most inner feelings and sensations, activated by that scenery. Theroux gets his inspiration not only from the barren and desolate deserted wastelands in Arizona or Patagonia, but also from the dramatic geological features of the Andes or the exuberant rainforests in Central and South America. Along thousands of miles, he converses with the reader by deliberately choosing certain adjectives, nouns, and verbs in order to enact conceptual domains and semantic frames. Such frames are, for instance, *DEATH*, mapped onto *DARKNESS*, combined with *LIFE*, mapped onto *LIGHT*. Other remarkable examples of figurative language appear when Theroux treats violent natural phenomena as an *ENEMY*, such as the altitude sickness he endures in Peru and Bolivia, or the violent hailstone that falls on the tattered Panamericano, or when he conceptualizes dramatic geological features as the injuries caused by erosion, giving rise to another uncommon metaphor, *EROSION IS A PREDATOR*. Nature is also attributed human features, as in Patagonia, where the sound of the wind is described as a song, and the movement of the trees is conceived of as a dance. All

this figurative language is wrapped in an effective succession of colorful hues and shades.

Kaplan, on the other hand, places history and politics at the center of his account of his trip across the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East. The most outstanding statements made by the traveler are the foregrounding of the dereliction, the environmental disaster and the rusty junkyard that Communism has left behind in most of the area. The poor state of the land is mapped onto the seasons of the year, yielding the metaphors *DICTATORSHIP IS WINTER* and *FREEDOM IS SPRING*. Nature plays a remarkable role as it booms and flourishes, making its way through the rust, the rubble and the chemical waste of the Cold War era. Kaplan also directs his attention to the inhabitants of those countries, feeling sorry for most of them, even to the extent of dehumanizing them because of their harsh living conditions. This gives rise to the metaphor *HARD LIFE IS A SLOW MILL STONE*.

The land is also endowed with human-related features: the slopes of the grass-covered Kopet-Dag mountains are conceptualized as an unfurling carpet, and more than once the gorgeous blooming flowers are mapped onto a beautiful dress. Another remarkable metaphor activated by the lexical choices employed by Kaplan is *THE LAND IS AN OVEN*. This is carried out at two levels of experience. The first level combines vision and temperature through ochre tonalities and the verb “bake” to profile the intense heat. The second level incorporates the semantic subframe *CRAFT*, when some clay-colored ruins are envisaged in geometrical terms, and the figure of the potter is evoked.

The supernatural is also present in Kaplan’s travel writing. Frequent allusions to the Bible and the visit to Mount Ararat (where Noah’s Ark is said to sit) are profiled against a background of silvery-white tonalities, together with allusions to the sky and an otherworldly spell. The spirit world also haunts Kaplan’s imagination at Nagorno-Karabakh, where he uses the adjective “eerie” to describe the land which witnessed ethnic cleansing in the recent past.

This ecostylistic study has shown that the powerful descriptive abilities of both authors establish a deep, intense and stimulating conversation with the reader exciting a keen interest in them. The effect of the vivid depictions of nature is similar to that of an art lover watching a painting at an exhibition. The interaction between different senses and perceptions contribute to this multimodal interpretation of the passages analyzed. The reader is frequently invited to regard nature in different and varied lights, always between the lines, always being forced to unearth the hidden (but brilliant) conceptual metaphors that underlie the natural descriptions made by both of these talented writers.

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Paradise lost: Cognitive grammar, nature, and the self in Diane Seuss's ekphrastic poetry

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Abstract: Diane Seuss's ekphrastic poetry collection *Still Life with Two Dead Peacocks and a Girl* is a celebration of life and death, imagination and reality, stillness and movement. This paper focuses on the first poem of the collection to investigate the relationship between the poetic persona and the landscape surrounding her. I employ central principles of cognitive linguistics as applied in the field of stylistics to discuss the manifestation of her mind style and examine how she constructs and situates herself in the environment. Drawing on Langacker's notion of *construal*, I analyze the *perspective* and the degree of *specificity* of the descriptions. I also trace the extensive use of the CONTAINER image schema that underlies the semantics of the poem. The paper demonstrates that despite her assumed idyllic existence, the poetic voice's ornate descriptions of nature conceal a sense of uneasiness and confinement and the highly granular lexical choices and figurative expressions reveal her anthropocentric view of the environment. This gives rise to her feelings of alienation while the presence of the CONTAINER image schema reinforces her sense of confinement. From an ecostylistic perspective, the analysis demonstrates how an anthropocentric view may manifest itself linguistically, highlighting textual features of anthropocentric narratives.

Keywords: anthropocentric view; *construal*; CONTAINER image schema; ekphrasis; perspective; specificity

1 Introduction: Ekphrasis

Ekphrasis has attracted a lot of critical attention since its reinvention during the second half of the twentieth century. Originally a term encountered in ancient rhetorical handbooks known as *Progymnasmata* ('preliminary exercises'), ekphrasis was understood as "a descriptive (*periēgēmatikos*) speech which brings

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(literally ‘leads’) the thing shown vividly (*enargōs*) before the eyes” (Webb 2009: 51) during antiquity. These handbooks were aimed at young students of rhetoric with the purpose of teaching them concepts central to their future careers. Ekphrasis was one of the most advanced rhetorical exercises, and its subjects were many and varied, including descriptions of persons, events, and places as well as works of art. Our modern understanding of ekphrasis as the literary description of works of art is a result of “a double process of expansion and restriction” (Webb 2009: 28) whereby the subjects of ekphrasis were restricted to paintings, sculptures, and monuments while its frame of reference was expanded to include ancient and modern texts referring to the arts. This reframing was partly a result of Spitzer’s (1955) influential discussion of Keats’s “Ode to a Grecian Urn” in which he situated the poem within the ekphrastic tradition:

[it] belongs to the genre, known to Occidental literature from Homer and Theocritus to the Parnassians and Rilke, of the *ekphrasis*, the poetic description of a pictorial or sculptural work of art, which description implies, in the words of Théophile Gautier, “une transposition d’art,” a reproduction through the medium of words of sensuously perceptible *objets d’art* (*ut pictura poesis*). (Spitzer 1955: 206–207, emphasis in original).

Not only was Spitzer the first critic to define ekphrasis as a poetic genre, but also his paper allowed literary critics to find “fertile ground, already prepared by the New Critics’ interest in the poem as artifact, an idea in search of a name” (Webb 1999: 17). Therefore, the poetic practice of writing about art that proliferated during the nineteenth and twentieth century acquired a name, and scholars started formulating theoretical approaches to tackle the relationship between word and image. For example, Murray Krieger identified a tension between stillness and movement as represented by the art object and the poem, respectively. The art object “freezes the temporal work” (Krieger 2019 [1992]: 265) while language has the ability to free temporality. Another prominent scholar, James Heffernan, approached the interplay between the visual and the verbal in terms of the notion of the *paragone*, – the rivalry and struggle for dominance between the two mediums: “ekphrasis, then, is a literary mode that turns on the antagonism [...] between verbal and visual representation” (Heffernan 1993: 7). Painting and poetry are seen as having opposing characteristics and associations: the latter is linked with sublimity, the mind, and the masculine while the former is linked with beauty, the body, and the feminine (see also Mitchell 1986). More recently, scholars (e.g. Clüver 2017a, 2017b; Kennedy 2012) have advocated for new ways of looking at the relationship between the verbal and the visual within the context of ekphrasis that do not emphasize this antagonism, allowing us to consider the correspondences and compatibilities between mediums.

Additionally, theorists have proposed different ways of classifying the types and functions of ekphrasis. Hollander (1988, 1995) has drawn the distinction between *actual* and *notional* ekphrasis. Notional ekphrasis refers to descriptions of fictional works of art that are a result of the poet's imagination. Some famous examples include Homer's ornate description of Achilles's shield in the *Iliad* and Keats's *Grecian Urn*; neither correspond to an actual object but were imagined and verbally crafted by the writers. On the other hand, actual ekphrastic poems are based on identifiable works of art and make up the vast majority of the poetic mode. It should not come as a surprise that the proliferation in actual ekphrasis coincides with the emergence of the museum age (Loizeaux 2008). According to Heffernan (1993: 138), "[t]wentieth century ekphrasis springs from the museum, the shrine where all poets worship in a secular age", and the museum itself becomes "a place of transcendental aesthetic experience" (Loizeaux 2008: 22). In terms of their possible functions, these are also multifaceted; Hollander (1995: 4) notes that they may be "addressing the image, making it speak, speaking of it interpretively, [and] mediating upon the moment of viewing it". The second function, i.e. making it speak, is particularly relevant to the ekphrastic poem I will be discussing in this paper, Diane Seuss's "I Have Lived My Whole Life in a Painting Called *Paradise*". Loizeaux (2008) has connected this function to the ability of ekphrasis for prosopopoeia. Ekphrastic poems may give voice to the silent image and also offer an opportunity for the speaking voice to express themselves. This is the case with Seuss's poem, and the rest of this paper will investigate how the poetic persona expresses herself.

2 Diane Seuss's *Still Life with Two Dead Peacocks and a Girl*

Still Life with Two Dead Peacocks and a Girl (2018a) is Diane Seuss's fourth poetry collection and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. It takes its title from a still-life painting by Rembrandt (*Still Life with Peacock*), immediately signaling the ekphrastic nature of the poems contained within. Rembrandt's canvas depicts two dead peacocks, one hanging upside down from an open window shutter while another lies lifeless on a bench, blood dripping down its side. A young girl leans on the window frame to look curiously at the birds. Seuss's work touches upon numerous themes, including life, death, stillness, class, gender, and the nature of art, and ekphrasis becomes a vehicle that allows the poet to engage with topics that are simultaneously universal and personal. In

an interview, Seuss (2018b) noted that she chose the genre of still-life painting because of its association with low subject matters. According to the French Academy, it was ranked at the bottom of the hierarchy of genres, with history painting and portraiture occupying the top positions as they conveyed the actions and virtues of great men while still life required no human subjects. This allowed Seuss to explore dichotomies like “rural and urban, high subject matter and low, important people and everyday people, ideas and things” (Seuss 2018b: n.p.). For instance, the poem “Walmart Parking Lot” consists of five sections, each one named after a painter (Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Georgia O’Keefe, Andy Warhol, and Alice Neel), blending together the landscape of working-class America with the “high-brow” culture of contemporary art museums.

The book is divided into 13 sections, each one introduced by a black and white reproduction of a fragment of Rembrandt’s painting, enlarging and isolating parts of the canvas: the girl’s folded hands, the peacocks’ feathers, close-ups of the girl’s face, the lifeless body of the birds, etc. This fragmentation mirrors the poetic voice’s journey as she revisits important events and people in her life and contemplates the meaning and function of art but also engages with other questions, including women’s subjection to the male gaze. The speaker is on a quest of discovery and rediscovery; she revisits the lives and deaths of loved ones multiple times and links her own experiences to those of others in an attempt to interpret and give meaning to her life. In one of the final sections of the book, a series of poems directly recalls ekphrasis with their titles, each one beginning with the phrase “self-portrait with”. Though the subject is different every time, the speaker crosses time and space to connect with famous singers and poets. The connection goes beyond the level of art and reaches the personal, embodied space. In the poem titled “Self-Portrait with Freddie M (Invention of Thunder)”, the poetic voice exclaims: “I was Freddie Mercury’s body [...]” (l. 1). As she navigates the fragmented and attempts to reconstruct the self, the speaker looks for meaning in familiar faces and pop cultural references. This quest is successful at the end: in the final section, readers encounter Rembrandt’s complete painting, all fragments unified into a coherent whole; the last poem titled “I Climbed Out of the Painting Called *Paradise*” follows, and the speaker’s journey comes to end with her returning home, having reconciled with the past and come to terms with her deepest desire, i.e. to reconnect with her family and experience life with them.

In this paper, I will focus on the first poem of the collection “I Have Lived My Whole Life in a Painting Called *Paradise*” to uncover the first linguistic indications of the speaker’s sense of uneasiness and confinement that may urge her to embark on her journey. Despite her assumed idyllic existence, feelings of uneasiness and

discontent are palpable in the poem. Readers may sense a discomfort as she describes the landscape that surrounds her even though she supposedly resides in paradise. The speaker gradually adopts “an anthropocentric account of the human/non-human relationship” (Zurru 2017: 194) to account for the physical entities in her environment. Using principles of stylistics as a guide, I will look into how the environment is presented in the poem, and by extension, place this representation along the “anthropocentric-ecocentric continuum” (Zurru 2017: 195). The paper investigates the conceptualization of space and descriptions of animals and other living entities that reside in this world. The analysis reveals a fragmented representation of landscapes and nature which in turn mirrors the speaker’s discomfort. At the same time, the flora and fauna are given human characteristics, thus deviating from an unadulterated understanding of paradise where humans and nature co-exist in harmony. The ecostylistic analysis adopted here will allow us to understand how this lack of harmony manifests itself in the poem. I will rely on frameworks from cognitive linguistics that will be presented in the following section in order to capture the speaker’s particular view of her paradise and its inhabitants.

3 Cognitive approaches to meaning

Cognitive linguistics is the field of linguistics that investigates the relationship between language and the mind, language and thought. As Evans and Green (2006: 5) have pointed out, cognitive linguists study language with the assumption that it “reflects patterns of thought”. While multiple frameworks have been developed since its emergence in the 1970s, we may identify two principal areas of inquiry, namely cognitive semantics and cognitive approaches to grammar. Cognitive semantics operates under the principle that conceptual structure is embodied; in other words, the nature and organization of mental representations is inherently tied to our embodied presence in the world. This is known as “the embodied cognition thesis”. Cognitive approaches to grammar contain various theories, the most detailed and influential being Ronald Langacker’s *Cognitive Grammar* (CG henceforth). CG postulates that grammar is embodied and inherently meaningful in two respects. On the one hand, the elements of grammar, such as vocabulary items, have their own meanings while on the other, “grammar allows us to construct and symbolize the more elaborate meanings of complex expressions (like phrases, clauses, and sentences)” (Langacker 2008: 3–4). This means that grammar is an essential part of our conceptual system and the way that we perceive and engage with the world around us. Using frameworks and ideas from

these two areas of inquiry, we can look at meaning creation as an embodied experience, and within the context of literary analyses they can help us acquire a better understanding of the psychological realities related to reading and understanding literary texts. Cognitive poetics is the subfield of stylistics that has incorporated concepts from cognitive linguistics and cognitive psychology to enhance our literary investigations. Reuven Tsur was a pioneer in the field that was later expanded by the seminal work of Peter Stockwell (e.g. 2009, 2020) and other stylisticians, including Gavins (e.g. 2007) and Giovanelli and Harrison (2018). In the following sections, I will discuss in more detail specific cognitive linguistic frameworks that will be employed in the analysis of Seuss's poem.

3.1 Image schemas

We saw above that, according to cognitive semantics, our conceptual structure is embodied, and that this is also evident in semantic structure, i.e., the meaning of words and other linguistic elements. The term “image schema” first appeared in the works of Lakoff (1987) and Johnson (1987) and was a key part in their exploration of the notion of embodiment. “[O]ur bodily movements through space, our manipulation of objects, and our perceptual interactions” (Johnson 1987: 29) may give rise to recurring preconceptual patterns that we may in turn use to make sense of such experiences. In other words, our bodies' physiology and the way we move about and interact with our environment give rise to meaning. Image schemas are schematic structures, or, as Beate Hampe has noted, they are “highly *schematic* *gestalts* [...] [that] integrat[e] information from multiple modalities” and “[a]s *gestalts*, image schemas are both *internally structured*, i.e. made up of very few related parts, and highly *flexible*” (Hampe 2005: 1–2, emphasis in original). They do not refer to specific sensory events but act as “‘distillers’ of spatial and temporal experiences” (Oakley 2007: 215). This means that image schemas are not mental images, such as imaginings of one's favorite vacation destination because mental images are a result of conscious effort of recalling visual memory while we cannot just conjure up an image schema.

Scholars, including Lakoff (1987) and Johnson (1987), have compiled extensive lists of image schemas; some of the most common ones include PATH/SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, CENTER-PERIPHERY, BALANCE, CONTAINER/CONTAINMENT, UP-DOWN, CONTACT, SCALE and OBJECT. For the purpose of our discussion, I will focus on the CONTAINER schema, presenting some of its characteristics in more detail before employing it in my analysis. This image-schema is one of the key structures identified by both Lakoff and Johnson in their seminal works. In this extract, Johnson illustrates our ubiquitous experiences with containers:

You wake *out* of a deep sleep and peer *out* from beneath the covers into your room. You gradually emerge *out* of your stupor, pull yourself *out* from under the covers, climb *into* your robe, stretch *out* your limbs, and walk *in* a daze *out* of the bedroom and *into* the bathroom. You look *in* the mirror and see your face staring *out* at you. You reach *into* the medicine cabinet, take *out* the toothpaste, squeeze *out* some toothpaste, put the toothbrush *into* your mouth, brush your teeth *in* a hurry, and rinse *out* your mouth. (Johnson 1987: 31)

The omnipresent nature of containers may have significant effects on meaning construction in language: psycholinguistic research has suggested that infants can conceptualize containment as early as two-and-a-half months (Mandler and Pagán Cánovas 2014), suggesting that it may serve as one of the first conceptual building blocks upon which language is constructed. As we saw in Johnson's excerpt, prepositions like *in* and *on* are often used in spatial scenes to convey containment. For instance:

- a) The eggs are *in* the fridge.

These prepositions may also be used in non-spatial contexts to convey embodied experiences:

- b) Ann is *in* love.
c) They are *in* trouble.

In both (b) and (c), we understand these sentences through the process of conceptual projection whereby the abstract concepts of “love” and “trouble” are conceptualized using the source domain CONTAINER. Other types of expressions can also be conceptualized using the same image schema, such as “to be closed-lipped” and “to bite one's lips” based on an understanding of our mouths as closed containers (Gibbs 2005).

3.2 Langacker's *construal*

Turning our attention to CG, the concept of *construal* can be understood as the ways a speaker or writer chooses to present a conceptual representation using language, which in turn may affect the reader/hearer's own conceptualization of an event or a scene. It is closely tied to Langacker's concept of *attention* which “is intrinsically associated with the intensity or energy level of cognitive processes, which translates experientially into greater prominence or salience” (1987: 115). Some of these processes have augmented intensity and may become the focus of attention whereas others remain in the background. Langacker (2008) has

identified four broad classes of construal phenomena: *specificity*, *focusing*, *prominence*, and *perspective*.

Specificity refers to how detailed and precise a scene is. Highly detailed descriptions are characterized by fine-grained details while schematized descriptions are characterized by coarse-grained ones. Langacker (2008: 56) offers the following example to illustrate the way expressions can be arranged in elaborative hierarchies:

d) rodent → rat → large brown rat → large brown rat with halitosis

In this hierarchy, each expression is schematic with respect to the one that follows it. While theoretically we could make as specific as we liked, in practical terms, expressions have finite limits and exhibit a mixture of schematic and detailed descriptions as can be seen in:

e) Somebody saw a ferocious porcupine with sharp quills. (Langacker 2008: 56)

Focusing is also a matter of degree, designating the selection of conceptual content. After the content has been selected, it is arranged into foreground and background in terms of likelihood of activation. Elements that are focused on in various linguistic ways are likely to be foregrounded. When it comes to selecting conceptual content, Langacker notes that an expression affords access to a range of cognitive domains and within each domain, an expression has a scope of coverage. An expression's *maximal scope* refers to the whole extent of its coverage while its *immediate scope* corresponds to a certain portion that is foregrounded in a particular situation. Consider, for example, the word *elbow*. One cognitive domain that may be accessed through its use is that of the human body. The human body, however, consists of multiple parts that are not necessarily foregrounded by the occurrence of this lexical item. Therefore, it can be suggested that the concept of BODY functions as maximal scope while its immediate scope corresponds to the part that is directly relevant to an elbow, namely the arm. Similarly to the hierarchy we observed in the case of *specificity*, distinctions between maximal and immediate scope may also produce hierarchies consisting of successive whole-part relations:

f) body > arm > hand > finger > knuckle

Prominence is the third broad type of construal phenomena and refers to the focusing of attention with regard to profiling (or “conceptually highlighting”) some aspect of a domain. An expression selects a certain body of conceptual content called its *conceptual base* which may correspond either to its maximal scope or its immediate scope depending on context. When specific attention is

directed to a particular aspect of a domain, this is called *profiling*. Continuing with the example of *elbow*, its conceptual base may be either *arm* or *body* and its profile is the specific focus of attention, i.e. the elbow itself.

Finally, *perspective* refers to how a scene is perceived, or, as Langacker mentions, its “viewing arrangement” that captures the relationship between the “viewers” (i.e. the speakers and hearers) and the scene that is being viewed (2008: 73). An important concept is that of a *vantage point* which describes the speaker’s and the hearer’s actual location in a default arrangement. Nevertheless, a vantage point can also be fictive, meaning that we can adopt an imaginary, nonactual position to present a situation from a distinct perspective. Another central concept is that of *grounding* which refers to “the process whereby a speaker and hearer (or writer and reader) are situated within a particular viewing arrangement” (Harrison 2017a: 16). There are two types of grounding, *clausal* and *nominal*. The former is marked by the use of modality or tense, while the latter is achieved through definite and indefinite determiners. Linguistic expressions that may function as grounding elements include “the, this, that, some, a, each, every, no, any” (Langacker 2008: 259).

4 Nature and the self in the poem: A cognitive approach

The first poem of Seuss’s collection “I Have Lived My Whole Life in a Painting Called Paradise” sets the tone for the rest of the book. It consists of eight stanzas, each with five lines, and is written in free verse; the long lines contain striking descriptions of a painting titled *Paradise* through the point of view of a female first-person narrator who inhabits the world.¹ Interestingly, no such work of art exists nor are the names of the artist or composition date provided, making this poem an example of notional ekphrasis. The title, however, is significant because of the background knowledge it may evoke. In addition to theological uses primarily associated with Judeo-Christian religious traditions, the OED (Oxford English Dictionary) online defines “paradise” as “[a] place or region of surpassing beauty or delight, or of supreme bliss; a peaceful unspoiled place” (“paradise”, n., sense 3a),² explicitly identifying associations with a place of exceptional happiness, contentment, and beauty. Paradise depictions in poetry (e.g. Milton’s *Paradise Lost*) and in visual art abound with pastoral imagery and beautiful portrayals of

1 <https://poets.org/poem/i-have-lived-my-whole-life-painting-called-paradise> (accessed 8 June, 2022).

2 <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/137340> (accessed 8 June, 2022).

natural landscapes where animals, plants, and humans coexist in harmony. Paradise is also thought of as a pure, unadulterated space removed from the influences of human presence and civilization where one can live in a state of supreme bliss.

The depiction of paradise, however, seems to be different in Seuss's poem. From the very first lines of the poem, we see indications that the poetic voice's conceptualization of the world that surrounds her is far from serene or peaceful. In the first stanza, readers encounter some images and lexical choices that are indicative of her "mind style" (Fowler 1977, 1986; Nuttall 2018; Semino 2007). The concept of "mind style" was defined by Roger Fowler as "any distinctive linguistic representation of an individual mental self" (1977: 103). Semino (2007) notes that the term helps us explore the cognitive habits of characters and what may be specific or peculiar in their conceptualization of reality. Tracing distinct linguistic patterns such as underlexicalization (e.g. Fowler 1977) in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (Leech and Short 2007 [1981]) or metaphors in *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Semino and Swindlehurst 1996) points to ways characters experience reality. Recently, Louise Nuttall (e.g. 2018, 2021) has approached mind style using frameworks from CG, directing attention to the mind of readers and their involvement in the interpretation of mind styles of characters and narrators. More specifically, Nuttall has looked into how lexis and syntax contribute to the readers' conceptualization of fictional words. In the following section, I will also investigate the lexical and grammatical choices that indicate the poetic voice's discontent with her presence in this seemingly idyllic place and reveal her feelings of confinement and even entrapment.

4.1 Feelings of containment: Image schemas and negative lexis

The image schema of CONTAINER introduced in Section 3.1 is invoked multiple times in the poem, beginning with the use of the preposition "in" in the title "I Have Lived My Whole Life in a Painting Called *Paradise*" where the poetic persona identifies her enclosure within the boundaries of the painting. This phrase is repeated three more times in the course of the poem with small variations, reinforcing the poetic persona's sense of containment. The first line acts as a continuation of the title and along with the first stanza contains similar imagery: "with the milkweeds splitting at the seams emancipating their seeds/that were once packed in their pods like the wings and hollow bones/of a damp bird held too tightly in a green hand [...]" (ll. 1–3). References to "splitting at the seams", "packed in their pods", "hollow", "held" and "hand" allude to the three essential

components of the CONTAINER schema: the interior, exterior, and its boundary. For instance, “splitting at the seams” highlights the boundary of the container about to burst open, while “hollow” highlights the interior. Pagán Cánovas (2016: 123–124) has proposed a set of rules that stem from this interior-boundary-exterior schema that may be in operation here:

1. An object cannot be inside and outside of a container at the same time. Also, whether an object is inside or outside a container is relevant, and it is usually known, or can usually be known
2. The boundary of a container cannot be suppressed, or else it will cease to be a container [...]
3. If the object is larger than the container, it cannot be contained [...] No container is limitless, because all containers must have boundaries. The size relation between container and thing to be contained is important and is usually known.

(Pagán Cánovas 2016: 123–124)

All three rules are observed in this passage with an explicit mention to the possibility of escaping the boundaries of containment in the case of the flowers. The fifth line of the first stanza continues with more references to containment via structures or boundaries (“stone silos” and “fugitive cows known for escaping their borders”). Once attention has been directed to the significant role of enclosure, we can also note the juxtaposition that is being established between confinement and escape. The previously packed seeds are now flying free, and the fugitive cows flee their pastures. More juxtapositions will appear as the poem unfolds.

Further references to the CONTAINER image schema follow in the next stanzas. In the third stanza, meadows are “filled with the fluttering skirts of opium poppies”, tombstones “are hobnailed or prised like cut-glass bowls” and birds “build their nests in the crooks” of granite-limbed trees. In the first line of stanza 4, we encounter another reference to an everyday object that denotes containment (“tea cups”) while in stanza 5, there is yet another reference to escaping enclosure as “the dead rise from their graves” (l. 22) to interact with a series of manufactured objects, among them a container, namely a bowl. In the last line of the fifth stanza, the poetic voice shifts her attention to the sky, conceptualizing the air as a container: “There are bees in the air flying off”. The preposition phrase is repeated twice in stanza 6 to introduce the presence of other flying creatures, including “birds of every ilk” in line 27 and “little gods and devils” in line 30. Air is what Pagán Cánovas (2016: 128) has called a “boundless container”, contradicting rule 3 of the interior-boundary-exterior schema. Pagán Cánovas (2016: 129) goes on to note that “[s]ince air as a container lacks boundaries and is linked to pretty much

everything, the thing contained is, paradoxically, everywhere". In the lines mentioned previously, this may create the impression that the presence of bees, birds, and gods and devils is saturating the sky and is overwhelming the poetic voice.

A final reference to containment is made in stanza 7 where the poetic voice refers explicitly to the painting as a container with boundaries as well as an exterior: "[...] I have lived in a painting called *Paradise*/with its frame of black varnish and gold leaf, and I am told some girls/slide their fingers over the frame and feel the air outside of it" (ll. 32–34). The frame of the painting acts as a barrier, withholding the poetic voice from accessing what lies beyond. She is aware that another world is available beyond the bounds of her paradise but is unsure of what it may entail; in the last stanza, a number of possibilities are briefly sketched out, including hell or another bolder paradise or even a museum – the latter reinforcing the ekphrastic nature of the poem. The final possibility mentioned by the poetic voice is freedom, explicitly revealing her true feelings about her current condition. As the analysis in this section demonstrates, while she had not overtly referred to herself as being held captive, the prevalence of the CONTAINER image schema throughout the poem had indicated her feelings of discontentedness. The use of the word "freedom" in the final line, however, reveals her own perception of her condition and hints at her desire to escape.

Another interesting aspect of the word choices and the antithetical imagery that is prevalent in the poem is that they are indicative of the poetic voice's mind style. The presence of the CONTAINER image schema does not necessarily imply feelings of entrapment, but if we take a closer look at the lexical choices of the poetic persona, it becomes clear that for her, containment has negative qualities. A prominent example of this can be found in the first stanza where the seeds of the milkweeds are said to be packed "like the wings and hollow bones/of a damp bird held too tightly in a green hand" (ll. 2–3). The simile elaborates on a previously established noun ("seeds"), bringing in additional descriptive value to the text (Israel et al. 2004). In this excerpt, the presence of the adverbial phase "too tightly" may give rise to negative connotations of restriction, suffocation, or even death of a fragile living thing due to violent containment. The hand appears to be nearly crushing the bird, which is already depicted in a vulnerable state, wet and with only part of its body visible. Its fragility is also highlighted with the adjective "hollow", implying how easily someone can destroy its body. The poetic voice gains prominence through the use of this particular analogical device, making clear that the way she perceives the world around her is tainted by negative associations; for her, there is something sinister lurking beneath the seemingly beautiful landscape.

The striking way of conceptualizing the world around her is also evident in other choices that she makes, depicting the world using negative lexis and negative evaluative language and revealing “a particularly striking, idiosyncratic [...] understanding of the world” (Semino and Swindlehurst 1996: 145). In addition to the simile used in the first stanza, the second stanza introduces a metaphorical mapping between two distinct domains of experience, namely the NEEDLE domain and the FLOWER domain. In lines 7–8, the poetic voice states that in the painting, there are “fields of needles arranged into flowers, their sharp ends meeting at the center”, conceptualizing needles as flowers. The negative connotations of needles are foregrounded as the poetic voice comments on their sharpness, hinting at their potential to cause harm. However, in the following line, the target and source domains of the mapping are switched, and the poetic voice now describes the fields as “full of needle flowers”; this altered conceptualization prioritizes the new target domain, flowers, and “needle” acts as an adjectival modifier, casting doubt on the previous statement of the poetic voice. It becomes unclear whether she offers a reliable account of the world due to these opposing conceptualizations. Interestingly, in the remaining lines, the domain of “flowers” is prioritized again as in line 10, the flowers are said to look like “white lilies if the day is overcast” while in line 11, “opium poppies” make their appearance. The poetic voice offers contradictory information regarding her surroundings, calling readers to question her reliability as a narrator. Readers cannot be sure if she describes the world objectively, or if her discontentedness affects her judgment. Nevertheless, the presence of negative lexis continues to indicate her feelings of uneasiness. The choice of the adjectival modifier “opium” to determine “poppies” is another example of negative lexis which may bring to mind associations with addiction, reinforcing the dark mood of the poem.

The poetic voice’s ambivalence about her version of paradise demonstrated above with the antithetical images of containment and acts of breaking free, the changing conceptualization, and the use of negative lexis to pre-modify words with positive associations, is further highlighted in the rest of the poem through a series of contradictory pairings based on the juxtaposition between negative and positive images. Stanza 3 introduces a juxtaposition between death and life and beauty when the poetic persona refers to tombstones found in the painting – a symbol of death – but then specifies that they have been beautifully crafted (“hobnailed or prised/like cut-glass bowls”, ll. 12–13) or shaped like tree trunks that are so lifelike that birds build their nests there. The image of life, though, is also accompanied by dark undercurrents: the trees appear bare, and their limbs are crooked. This is followed by a dissonant image of graves shaped like child-sized tables complete with tablecloths and teacups. The juxtaposition between life and death through dissonant imagery continues in stanza 5; explicit horror

elements make their appearance with the resurrection of the dead, who rise “to once more pick up the plow or the pen or the axe or the spoon/or the brush or the bow” (ll. 23–24); however, the poetic voice points out the ordinariness of this occurrence as it is a daily event. The dead appear to perform everyday activities, contradicting the very idea of death and are also described as “as glittering as they were in life” (l. 22), negating the associations of darkness and decay one may have about dead bodies. Life and death, creation and destruction make their appearance in the two following stanzas as well. Negative and positive imagery co-occur, and we may observe both the processes of creation and destruction. Bees are portrayed building their hives whereas birds are depicted as screaming or feeding on other animals. Negative lexis remains prominent. For example, the verb phrase “scream to announce themselves” reveals the negative way the poetic voice perceives the cries of the birds. One more antithetical pair appears in the last line of the stanza: little gods and devils are shown trying to fly. The opposition is extended to the next stanza as some of them manage to fly and others fail (another word with negative meaning), thus plunging into the sea.

The significant presence of juxtapositions, negative lexis, and the CONTAINER image schema give us access to the mind of a poetic voice who questions the serenity and beauty of her paradise and her willingness to remain there. In the next section, I will look at different construal processes to shed further light on how the uneasiness of the poetic voice manifests itself.

4.2 Vantage point, specificity, and perspective

In Section 3.2, perspective and specificity were identified as two of the four broad classes of construal phenomena. Perspective was connected to the concepts of vantage point and grounding. Vantage point refers to the position from which a scene is viewed and can be seen as the CG equivalent to point of view (Tabakowska 2014). Scenes can be construed more objectively or more subjectively, depending on the way conceptualizers position themselves. If they are involved in the scene to some extent as in the sentence “Tom may have opened the present”, then the scene is construed subjectively (subjective construal) as indicated by the modal “may” which corresponds to the conceptualizer’s perspective. On the other hand, in the sentence “Tom opened the present”, the conceptualizer is absent; the scene is objectively construed (objective construal), and the subject of conception is placed offstage, and the object of conception (“Tom”) is emphasized instead. The distinction between subjective and objective construal should be considered a matter of degree and not in absolute terms since most expressions in our language contain both some aspect of the subject and object of conception. In the case of the

first-and second-person pronouns (“I”, “you”, and “we” and their variants), there is additional complexity. In the sentence “I opened the presents”, the conceptualized context (“the presents”) is construed more subjectively because it is rendered through a particular perspective. At the same time, the subject of conception (“I”) is placed onstage, and the conceptualizer is construed objectively as a result. Scholars, including Tabakowska (2014) and Harrison (2017a), have examined the interplay between objective and subjective construal to shed light on the relationship between the scene that is being described and the conceptualizer. In Seuss’s poem, an examination of the poetic voice’s vantage point can uncover additional information about how she perceives herself in relation to her surroundings.

The poetic voice’s vantage point oscillates between more subjective and more objective construals. Parts of the description are more objectively construed with the poetic voice remaining completely offstage. These primarily include descriptions introduced with the existential *there*, namely “There are fields of needles arranged into flowers” (l. 7), “There are rabbits” (l. 20), “There are bees” (l. 25). This also includes two examples where the existential *there* has been omitted after a locative adverb: “in the air, birds of every ilk” (l. 27) and “in the air also are little gods and devils” (l. 30). In other cases, though, the poetic voice places herself onstage, leading to construing the conceptualized context more subjectively; readers become aware that the descriptions explicitly come from her point of view. This is particularly evident in the first stanza which is a continuation of the poem title. The poetic voice figures prominently in the title as the conceptualizer “I”, so noun phrases like “the milkweeds”, “the giant jade moths stuck to the screen door as if glued there”, “the gold fields and stone silos and the fugitive cows” are construed subjectively because they are filtered through the poetic voice’s consciousness. The definite article reveals that the nominal referents are part of the speaker’s immediate environment. Similarly, in stanza 4, after the recurrence of the pronoun “I”, the same pattern can be observed; definite reference mediates the point of view of the girl: “The hollyhocks loom like grandfathers with red pocket watches” (l. 22), “the water is ink and the ships are white paper” (l. 23). The use of definite reference is a central strategy of nominal grounding, which firmly specifies that the poetic voice has very particular referents in mind when identifying these elements and contrasts with the generic references to fields, rabbits, bees, etc., established by the existential *there*. This shift between a more objective and a more subjective representation of the surroundings brings to mind Tabakowska’s observation regarding Alice’s point of view in Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. Tabakowska (2014: 106) comments on Alice’s ambivalence regarding her presence in Wonderland: “[s]he does not belong to the crazy Wonderland and watches its bizarre reality from a (conceptual) distance, but whenever she feels

forced to look at herself as part of it, for instance when considering the possibility of having changed so as to fit in”, the construal changes. A similar observation can be made about the poetic voice who feels a disconnect with her version of paradise. Sometimes the descriptions are rendered with her (i.e. the conceptualizer) offstage and as a result give the impression of a more detached narration, while at other times, she inserts herself in the scene using the personal pronoun “I” and grounding. Consequently, the description of the scene appears to be more subjective and involved from the part of the poetic persona.

In addition to the concepts of vantage point, perspective, and point of view, the speaker’s sense of disconnect can be explored in relation to the poem’s deictic center, the conceptual point from which the speaker perceives the world. Prototypical deictic expressions used to ground the deictic center include “I”, which encodes person deixis, “here”, which encodes spatial deixis, and “now”, which encodes temporal deixis. Deictic expressions can also be proximal or distal, depending on whether they indicate proximity to (e.g. “this dog”) or distance (e.g. “that dog”) from the conceptualizer. Seuss’s poem contains very few expressions that point to the deictic center of the speaker. Although the personal pronoun “I” is used in four separate occasions, the lack of proximal deictic expressions such as demonstratives (e.g. “this”) and locative adverbs (e.g. “here”) complicates the identification of the poetic voice’s conceptual position. The girl’s location with respect to her surroundings remains largely unspecified, contributing to the sense of detachment. While grounding through the use of the definite article and the proper noun “Moon Cemetery” (repeated twice) suggests proximity to the speaker, the lack of proximal deictic expressions combined with the presence of distal deictic expressions reinforces this sense of detachment. The distal locative adverb “there” is used in line 10 together with another distal locative expression “in a distance”; in line 22, a similar expression is employed in “off in the distance”, while in line 11 the locative adverbial phrase “on the hillside” designates a place not in the proximity of the speaker. The same can be suggested by the adverbial phrase “in the air” found in lines 25, 27, and 30. The poetic voice’s position is determined using absence – where she is not – rather than a concrete spatial location. Her immediate environment remains unspecified.

The poetic voice’s perspective is also related to the construal phenomenon of specificity. In the previous paragraphs, we saw how perspective can be achieved through nominal grounding. Langacker (2008: 226) notes that grounding may also be possible via what he calls “descriptive strategy”: “[t]hrough the lexical and grammatical resources of a language, we are able to construct an endless supply of expressions capable of describing any sort of thing imaginable”. Specificity is a matter of degree and depends on the expression’s structural complexity and semantic specification. In the context of a character’s point of view, under-

specification and over-specification (e.g. Sanford and Emmott 2012: 40–41) can be situated at two ends of the spectrum of specificity. Under-specification may refer to descriptions that are very schematic and, similarly to Fowler's underlexicalization (see Section 4), may reveal "the perspective of a character who does not fully comprehend the situation which they see in front of them" (Sanford and Emmott 2012: 40). On the other hand, over-specification describes scenarios where the text provides more information than normally required. Over-specification is also indicative of a character's particular conceptualization of the world or mental abilities, that is their mind style. For instance, in her analysis of the cognitive habits of Maud, the protagonist of *Elizabeth is Missing* and a dementia patient, Harrison (2017b) argues that over-specification is characteristic of Maud's state of mind and her ability to recall her past in greater detail.

The speaker in Seuss's poem uses over-specification when providing descriptive details throughout the text. Most entities identified by the speaker are described in detail in terms of their appearance and behavior. Expressions with high structural and semantic complexity like the one about the milkweeds abound in the text (see beginning of Section 4.1 for the lines). While a description would minimally consist of a lexical noun that specifies a basic type of flower (e.g. the milkweeds), the poetic voice has offered an overly complex (syntactically and semantically) account of the milkweeds that consists of 33 words. Other examples of over-specified descriptions include the account of the tombstones (see Section 4.1) and ships ("off in the distance [...] the ships are white paper/with scribblings of poems and musical notations on their sides", ll. 18–19). Both accounts are characterized by a perceptual "zoom-in" (Langacker 2008: 390), offering first a more global picture of the described objects before zooming in to more specific details. For instance, the ships are initially profiled in their entirety, and then attention is directed to their sides where we are asked to attend to scribblings of poems and musical notes. This pattern is observed in various parts of the poem and reveals significant information about the speaker's mental state. The highly granular descriptions of the contents and inhabitants of paradise may signal a conceptualizer overwhelmed by the incredible richness and activity of their world. The girl seems to experience something akin to sensory overload due to the amount of sensory information she is exposed to and tries to process. This may manifest as feelings of discomfort and loss of focus, an effect mirrored in the syntax of the lines. More specifically, the use of polysyndetic list constructions (see also Short 2017) throughout the poem has a disorienting effect because of their constant presence and considerable length. Coordination is employed multiple times in each stanza while polysyndetic lists such as the one found in the last stanza of the poem are also prevalent:

[...] Some say it is hell, and some say just another, bolder paradise, and some say a dark wilderness, and some say just an unswept museum or library floor, and some say a long-lost love waits there wearing bloody riding clothes, returned from war, and some say freedom, which is a word that tastes strange, like a green plum. (ll. 40–45)

The use of coordination and polysyndetic constructions creates the impression that the painting does not consist of a unified whole but instead is a collection of various disconnected vignettes. It becomes a “collage” (Nuttall 2014: 98) of fragmented spatial coordinates – the gold fields, the field of needle flowers, the meadows, the Moon Cemetery, etc. – that are not considered in relation to each other but in quick, disjointed succession, mirroring the poetic voice’s difficulty to maintain her focus. She faces significant challenges in positioning herself in her universe, and this may be the cause of her discontentedness.

4.3 Anthropocentric view and discontent

The analysis has provided a series of textual evidence that reveals the poetic voice’s mental state and lack of connection with her environment. In this section, I will focus on another potential source of discomfort, stemming from an anthropocentric view of nature that the poetic voice has apparently adopted. According to Coley et al. (2017: 2), anthropocentrism “can involve the tendency to attribute human characteristics to non-human or inanimate objects [and] to use humans as a default analogical base for reasoning about biological species or processes”. The poetic voice’s anthropocentric view is highlighted at various points. Firstly, throughout the poem, she makes numerous references to humanmade objects that populate the landscape of paradise: “the green screen door” (l. 4); “stone silos” (l. 5); “tombstones” that have been exquisitely crafted to look “like cut-glass bowls”, tree trunks, or “child-sized tables with stone tablecloths and tea cups” (ll. 12–16); and “the plow or the pen or the axe or the spoon or the brush or the bowl” (ll. 23–24) picked up by the dead. The presence and impact of humans are evident in the environment and go against our background knowledge about the paradisiacal state of unadulterated and unspoiled beauty. Moreover, her anthropocentric view affects her perception of non-human and inanimate entities to which she attributes human characteristics. Semino (2007; Semino and Swindlehurst 1996) has demonstrated how the systematic use of conceptual metaphors (e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1980) may reflect a particular mind style due to idiosyncratic or creative mappings from a source domain of experience to a target domain. In Seuss’s text, several of the poetic voice’s expressions describing the flora and the fauna reflect two conceptual metaphors: NATURE IS A HUMANMADE OBJECT and NATURE IS A PERSON. For example, the milkweeds are depicted as “emancipating

their seeds”; a uniquely human action is attributed to a nonhuman object through personification and the application of the conceptual metaphor *NATURE IS A PERSON*. The same conceptual metaphor underlies the description of hollyhocks, which “loom like grandfathers with red pocket watches” (l. 17), as well as that of rabbits who are said to be “mystics” (l. 20). Additionally, nature is perceived as a product of human craftsmanship, invoking once more the anthropocentric view of the poetic voice. The girl conceptualizes poppy petals as skirts in line 11 and water as ink in line 18. In her conceptualization of her surroundings, humans have a strong grasp on the environment, with nature losing its agency and becoming “a damp bird held too tightly in a green hand”.

5 Conclusions

This paper has employed frameworks from the broad field of stylistics to examine the mind style of the poetic voice and the representation of nature in Seuss’s poem “I Have Lived My Whole Life in a Painting Called *Paradise*”. The poem provided us with a case study for examining how frameworks from cognitive linguistics applied within the context of stylistics can be used to elucidate a character’s particular conceptualization of their reality. Previous studies have focused on mind styles of characters who suffer from mental illness or are cognitively impaired. In this poem, however, we encounter an “uneasy narrator” who displays none of the previous characteristics; her own sense of discomfort and feelings of detachment and disconnectedness along with an anthropocentric view affect her conceptualization of the natural environment. Consequently, paradise is no longer a place of idyllic existence but a prison, and the only solution is to escape. Within the context of ekphrasis, the poem demonstrates how ekphrastic writing may become a powerful vehicle of self-expression. The artful descriptions of the notional painting reveal the poetic voice’s inner struggles and her attempts to make sense of her surroundings. Ekphrasis is not associated with the static and unchanging but spurs her into action, allows her to escape the confines of the painting, and embark on a journey of self-discovery.

Additionally, from an ecostylistic perspective, the analysis demonstrates how an anthropocentric view may manifest itself linguistically. The conceptual metaphors *NATURE IS A HUMANMADE OBJECT* and *NATURE IS A PERSON* are a key feature of this phenomenon since the physical environment is not perceived as an autonomous entity but is viewed through the lens of human experience and becomes an artifact and cultural product. Moreover, in spite of the proliferation of animals, plants, insects and the beauty of the natural world, no harmony is achieved between the poetic persona and her surroundings. Her lack of communion with

nature is evident in the use of negative lexis to describe the physical world; for instance, birds appear to scream, and flowers are linked to harm (e.g. “needle flowers” and “opium poppies”). Not only is nature construed negatively but also these linguistic choices provide further support to anthropocentrism with nature being subjugated to human agency and activity. Finally, the poetic persona’s disconnection with her surroundings may be observed in her physical absence from the landscape. Although she has lived her whole life in this paradise, the loosely defined deictic center and lack of proximal deictic expressions together with the use of distal deixis indicate a physical and by extension psychological distance from the space and its inhabitants. The poetic persona has detached herself from her world as she prepares to flee. Overall, the analysis points to several textual features characteristic of anthropocentric narratives which may explain the dark atmosphere of the poem and also help us better understand texts with a more ecological representation of the human-animal and human-environment relationships.

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Book Review

Daniela Francesca Viridis. 2022. *Ecological stylistics: Ecostylistic approaches to discourses of nature, the environment and sustainability*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, xi+242 pp. ISBN: 978-3-031-10657-6 (hbk).

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Discourses of nature and the environment represent a growing area of interest emerging in ecostylistics, a discipline at the crossroads of ecolinguistics and stylistics. *Ecological Stylistics: Ecostylistic Approaches to Discourses of Nature, the Environment and Sustainability* is the first book-length study that examines a selection of relevant terms in ecology from the point of view of ecostylistics (for key articles on this topic, see Goatly 2017; Viridis 2019, 2021, 2022a, 2022b; Zurru 2017, 2021). More specifically, it adopts a transdisciplinary methodology that connects linguistics, ecology, and environmental studies in order to provide a close stylistic analysis of the “marker words” or “environment words” (Myerson and Rydin 1996: 6, 37) – “nature”, “environment”, “ecosystem”, “ecology”, and “sustainability”. These are keywords in the fields of ecostylistics and ecolinguistics, as well as terms that carry the discursive complexity of the present ongoing ecological debate. The ecostylistics analyses are carried out with reference to a carefully chosen corpus of non-literary contemporary texts that can be classified as belonging to beneficial ecological discourses (Stibbe 2015, 2021). In line with its transdisciplinary perspective, the main research aim of this study is to raise awareness of the importance of communicating effectively a positive ecological agenda, and to shape worldviews that promote the need to respect, protect, and conserve nature and the environment in order to foster urgent changes.

Structurally, this book is divided into two parts. The first one (Chapters 1–2) illustrates its theoretical background, providing the organizational and methodological backbone that sustains and shapes the second analytical part (Chapters 3–8), which offers rigorous, replicable, and systematic close stylistic analyses, supported by a checklist placed in the appendix (Chapter 9) at the end of the book.

The first part comprises two chapters (Chapters 1–2). Chapter 1 provides the methodology underlying the selection of texts analyzed in the second part and the presentation of the ecosophy of this work that plays a role of primary importance for the theoretical and the analytical aspects of this research. The criteria for choosing the texts are clearly explained and shaped by the author’s focus on beneficial ecological discourse, as well as the need to compare findings. Hence, all the texts

selected belong to the website text-type and are authored by organizations and agencies active in the ecological and environmental movement; these include Forestry England (<https://www.forestryengland.uk/>), Greenpeace International (<https://www.greenpeace.org/international/>), National Park Service (<https://nps.gov/index.htm>), Navdanya International (<https://navdanyainternational.org/>), and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) (<https://wwf.panda.org/>). In order to make close linguistic analyses possible, a further selection from these websites has been carried out, which targets each of the five keywords mentioned above through a quantitative and qualitative methodology, leading to five final sequences between 174 and 273 words long.

The second part of the introductory chapter defines the notion of *ecosophy*. Originally coined by philosopher Arne Naess (1995), this term has later been developed by ecolinguist Arran Stibbe (2015, 2021). From his perspective, *ecosophy* is represented by a set of statements of ecological values and assumptions with descriptive and prescriptive functions. These run against and provide an alternative to pervasive, hegemonic, implied – but nonetheless legitimized – cognitive structures, texts and discourses that shape common worldviews and lifestyles in industrial Western societies, presently leading to ecological devastation and social inequality. Against stories that promote and legitimize anthropocentrism, individualism, unrelenting economic growth, and materiality, the *ecosophy* proposed by ecolinguists and adopted in this study places the life and wellbeing of all species – including human, animal, and vegetable – as a supreme normative principle and moral imperative. In this kind of *ecosophy*, the protection of the environment is made possible by the enactment of policies aimed at contrasting overusing goods, materials, and energy and generating waste. Furthermore, protection of the environment runs parallel, and is indeed inextricably linked, to the reduction of inequality, a fairer distribution of global wealth realized through the replacement of individualism and economic competition with global cooperation and policies based on mutual understanding and the elimination of affluence, luxury, and waste. Stibbe's (2021: 14–15) *ecosophy* “Living!” comprises the following seven interconnected norms: “Value Living”, “Wellbeing”, “Now and the Future”, “Care”, “Environmental Limits”, “Social Justice”, and “Deep Adaptation”. This *ecosophy* is part of the branch of ecolinguistics adopted in this study, and at the same time contributes to the close readings included in the second part of the book. In respect to the latter, this *ecosophy* provides the analyst with a set of moral and aesthetic criteria against which to dispute or unmask occurrences of ambivalent or destructive ecological discourse (which in this study are rare) and to illustrate, compare, and judge beneficial discourses.

Chapter 2 focuses on theoretical aspects underlying the analyses; these include elements of both ecolinguistics and stylistics. As concerns the first, after a brief

diachronic narrative outlining how debates on the role played by language in representing the interactions among humans, animals and plants have progressed from the 1970s to the present day, the author offers a description of beneficial, ambivalent, and destructive ecological discourses against the above-mentioned ecosophy principles. According to Stibbe (2015, 2021), these three discourses convey different ideologies based on stories. Beneficial discourse advocates such values as care for the planet, the wellbeing of all human and non-human species, and social justice. At the present moment, this discourse is not fully developed and does not have a hegemonic role. An ambivalent discourse appears to be beneficial on the surface but in actual fact maintains the status quo. Ambivalent discourses are frequent and ever-pervasive. Finally, a destructive discourse contributes to ecological exploitation and social inequality. The ideologies this kind of discourse conveys are widespread and widely accepted. The reasons why the author, like other contemporary ecolinguists, opts to focus her analysis on beneficial discourse is connected to the need to challenge the present discursive status quo and support knowledge and dissemination of beneficial discourses and beneficial ecostylistic devices. To complete this theoretical background, the author describes the stylistic approach employed. The structure of this chapter moves from the general to the specific; the illustration of the stylistic levels adopted by the analyses that include syntax, lexis, and semantics is followed by a description of the choice of the methodology adopted. This is defined as practical, or steam, stylistics (Carter 2010). This approach entails the analyst having a pivotal role in a close qualitative interpretation of the linguistic texture of the work under investigation. After careful and close observation of the texts and their stylistic devices, the author opts for three areas of inquiry: foregrounding, point of view, and metaphor. As a whole, these provide a heterogenous approach firmly grounded in stylistic theory and practice that generally speaking focuses on language and texts as meaning-making practices connected with authors, readers, and contexts.

More specific information on the above-mentioned stylistic mechanisms leads to a description of the content of the second part (Chapters 3–8) of the volume. As a whole, this includes five chapters (Chapters 3–7) followed by a conclusion (Chapter 8). Each of the five chapters focuses on a website and a marker word (Myerson and Rydin 1996). These chapters replicate the same structure and are connected by a network of internal references on the topic investigated and the functions of the style of the texts. Chapter 3 investigates the word “nature” in the WWF’s text; Chapter 4 is focused on “environment” in Greenpeace International, Chapter 5 on “ecosystem” in Forestry England; Chapter 6 on “ecology” in National Park Service and Chapter 7 on “sustainability” in Navdanya International. The first section of these chapters provides relevant lexical definitions of the marker word; these are taken from general dictionaries (e.g. *Oxford English Dictionary*) and the latest

editions of a range of specialized popular ecology and environmental dictionaries including the *Bloomsbury Dictionary of Environment & Ecology* (Collin 2011), *The Environment Dictionary* (Kemp 2002), and *A Dictionary of Ecology* (Allaby 2015). Denotative meanings are critically appraised against the rules and norms of the ecosophy adopted in this study in order to provide a commentary on their implied beneficial, ambivalent or destructive values. The second section is made up of two subsections. The first presents the selected text and investigates the roles of the marker word first with reference to the meanings illustrated in the previous section and then in their co-text in relation to mechanisms of foregrounding, point of view, and metaphor. The analysis of foregrounding focuses on occurrences of deviation and repetition (Leech and Short 2007; Mukařovský 1977) at all levels, from the discursive level to the semantic, lexical, and grammatical ones. Foregrounding functions as a meaningful device that draws readers' attention to a part of the message making it memorable. The analysis of point of view is extensive and provides a selection of stylistic strategies that are most commonly used in non-literary texts. These range from deixis, locative expressions, the use of *verba sentiendi* ('verbs of thinking'), and all forms of modality (Simpson 2010). These stylistic choices provide clues regarding addressers' standpoint and their level of commitment to the truth claim of propositions, as well as signaling the level of engagement elicited by the addressee. Finally, conceptual metaphors found in the texts are mapped out using Gerard Steen's (2016) three-dimensional model. This investigates: the way metaphors are lexically and syntactically realized; the interpretation of the cross-domain between the target (an unfamiliar and abstract concept) and the source (a familiar, concrete, or simple concept) with reference to the effects produced by this process of re-conceptualization; metaphors' conventional or creative character with reference to their presence or absence in three databases, namely Master Metaphor List (Lakoff and Cognitive Linguistics Group 1991), Metalude (Goatly and LLE Project 2002–2005), and MetaNet Metaphor Wiki (David et al. 2016–2018). In the second sub-section, findings of the stylistic analyses are recollected to draw a comparison with the ecosophy of this study in order to comment on the way the text and its techniques are beneficial and hence instrumental in creating a new mindset and a new ecological agenda. Whenever present the author also points to ambivalent and destructive discourses and provides suggestions on how to rephrase them in order to neutralize their effect. The final chapter summarizes the beneficial ecostylistic strategies analyzed and highlights instances in which they combine, interact and strengthen each other to produce a beneficial effect.

Overall, this study provides a valuable and current contribution to ecolinguistics, as well as an original and illuminating work in the ecostylistics of environment-oriented contemporary texts. The content of the book, its cover image and paratextual initial sections show that this study is the product of years of

assiduous research, interactions, dialogues, and collaborative work with colleagues working in the fields of ecolinguistics and stylistics, as well as of personal commitment to the ecological agenda and the message it promotes. In a way that is not dissimilar to other scholars, journalists, and environmental activists, such as *The Guardian* columnist George Monbiot, author of *Feral: Rewilding the Land, Sea and Human Life* (2014), to name but one, Daniela Francesca Viridis believes that ecolinguists and stylisticians have the potential to play a central role in forging positive, effective and current communication on environmental issues, promoting and disseminating life-sustaining ecosophies, contributing to the advancement of the environmental agenda, and offering an alternative to ambivalent and destructive discourses on the environment.

The several strengths and negligible limitations of this study are going to be described with reference to its potential audience. Given its transdisciplinary content, this book appeals to a varied reading public, including specialists and non-specialists. The clear and linear structure of the book that separates theory from practice, the thorough and informative introduction and the repetitive pattern that characterizes chapters three to seven provide easy and straightforward orientation for readers, who are thus able to concentrate on the book content. This book provides an invaluable resource for students and scholars of ecostylistics with different levels of knowledge and expertise in this field. For undergraduate and postgraduate students, the first part of this book offers precious background knowledge through a detailed narrative of the development of the discipline of ecostylistics, a thorough illustration of scholarly material available on this subject that delineates the present state of the art of this subject, and a section providing a presentation of the selected stylistic strategies used, which include foregrounding, point of view and metaphor. Though this section is relatively short, the author still manages to provide a well-structured, coherent and clear informational discussion. The wealth of references found here directs students to key classical and cutting-edge contemporary studies in stylistics, through which readers are able to get further and more detailed information on the theory and practice of steam stylistics. The checklist in the appendix provides a complete template to guide students that are not familiar with close stylistic readings and enables them to replicate the author's analysis. For experts and scholars of ecostylistics, the second part of this book offers flawless, extremely detailed, rigorous, and original ecostylistic analyses of a selection of contemporary texts that connect with ecolinguistics theories and in particular with ecosophy.

This study is also targeted to an audience of non-specialists that have an interest in the communication and dissemination of the ecological agenda to the wider public. This includes people working for ecological non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations, those interested in or actively organizing environmental activities and campaigns, users of websites and social media discussing

ecological issues, school teachers educating their students in environmentalism, journalists popularizing ecological subjects, as well as members of the general public. For this audience, the less technical parts of this book offer descriptions and examples of beneficial environmental discourse to be emulated, extended, and adapted to specific needs, as well as practical examples of ways in which ambivalent and destructive expressions or discursive patterns can be brought to the fore, addressed and refashioned in more positive and inspiring messages. In this respect, the book is slightly unbalanced, offering more material for experts and less for non-experts. An easy way to address this imbalance without changing the book's very effective overall structure could have been achieved by including more examples pertinent to various types of ecological discourse in the sub-section that explains the stylistic devices used in the book, which, at moment, mostly makes reference to different kinds of text-types, mainly literature. While this choice is functional for, and indeed expected by students of stylistics, it is less useful for an audience of non-linguistic experts operating in the field of ecology. It should be pointed out in this respect that at times the author does include examples of this kind. One case is found in the sub-section "Point of View", where the author illustrates the notion of disnarration – or counterfactuality – and its effects with reference to *Silent Spring* (Carson 1962), an environmental science book focusing on the negative effects of chemical pesticides and nowadays credited with starting the global grassroots environmental movement. In this specific instance, the author provides yet another example of her excellent analytical skills that she applies to a text-type that is pertinent to the ecological issue in this way making the analysis more easily accessible for non-linguist experts with some knowledge of ecology. Despite this minor flaw, this book is exemplary of a type of research that crosses disciplinary boundaries and makes a tangible attempt to reach an audience outside of academia. As such, it has the potential to pave the way for further future collaborations between ecostylisticians on the one hand and ecologists, activists, policy-makers, and scientists interested in the ecological issue on the other.

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