The search for new stories to live by: a positive discourse analysis of Christian Environmentalism & Druidry

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A thesis submitted to the University of Gloucestershire in accordance with the requirements of the degree of MA by Research in English in the School of Liberal and Performing Arts

August 2019   Word count: 26,595

Abstract

In the current ecological crisis, there is overwhelming consensus that human activity is damaging the ecosystems that support life. It is therefore important that we not only look at what drastic changes we should make to our daily activities in western society, but challenge the stories told in our world that encourage these activities through speech and text. Critical discourse analysts have applied their work to this endeavour at great length through the lens of Ecolinguistics, but there is still much to be done in finding alternative stories about our relationship with the natural world, that can help to reshape our collective view of the planet and our cohabitants. This thesis then is seeking positive styles of language within the world of Religion, and looks to the discourse of an environmentalist denomination of Christianity, *Green Christian*, and the discourse of an order of Druids. Collecting text from their blogs, articles, magazines, and ethos pages found online, this thesis uses various tools influenced by previous Ecolinguistic research and the wider field of Critical Discourse Studies. The analysis draws out recurrent themes in language that frames the natural world as interconnected with humans, entitled to the respect and reverence that we afford to ourselves. Deciding what constitutes a 'positive' type of story is done by using an Ecosophy. The topics of the text researched include animals, the entirety of the natural world, and human activity on the Earth. The focus is on how the religious perspective of these two groups influence the style of language used and the affect this has on the message the groups convey regarding the human-nature relationship. To conclude, I reflect on some of the limitations in my analysis and offer recommendations for further research that applies positive discourse analysis to a wider body of text.

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas. Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed   Date 15/08/2019

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the University of Gloucestershire for their support during the last two years. The lecturers of the research modules, librarians, and the help zone staff have all given valuable advice which has steered my research journey from start to finish. Most importantly, I am grateful to my supervisors, Arran Stibbe and Nicola Rivers, who have been vital to the completion of this work. Their honest advice and expertise have been paramount to my academic development and they have always been available for help when needed, so I am most grateful for their support.

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1 Introduction

The critical study of discourse has often focused on finding negative, oppressive, and harmful messages hidden within political and everyday language. From racism, to sexism, to environmental ignorance, scholars have given considerable attention to the rhetoric that encourages ideals that are detrimental to a fair and sustainable society. This thesis adopts a relatively new way of looking at discourse by seeking out language that conveys positive outlooks on the world. *Positive Discourse Analysis* aims to discover new discourses to live by that 'work better in the conditions of the world we face' (Stibbe, 2019: 165), particularly in the non-hegemonic discourses of sub-groups. From an ecological perspective, this means discourses that encourage us to consider what affect our current lifestyles have on the ecosystem we depend on for survival. It may also mean discourses that offer different ways of being in the world and co-existing with other species, respecting their value and their lives as well as our own. It could even mean discourses that make us realise that we are more alike other living beings than we think, and that we rely on each other to ensure that our Earth remains healthy and sustainable to ensure the wellbeing and prosperity of all life.

For the purpose of this research, I have looked for these types of discourses within religious communities and organisations with a focus on environmentalism and/or nature spirituality. In Ecolinguistics and Critical Discourse Studies, the relationship between religion and ecology is a relatively unresearched topic, though there is some documentation of this topic in other fields. Levasseur has recently discussed *Religion, Language, and Ecology* (2017), arguing that 'ecolinguistics can help generate a more nuanced understanding of religion-nature interactions' (p.420). He goes on to say that 'exploring how religious practitioners have and continue to conceive of nature, both past and present, is still a relatively young program within religious studies' which can benefit from 'entering a dialogue…' with language studies (ibid: 430). The importance of studying the religion-nature relationship is based on the 'moral authority that is granted to religious discourse' (ibid), so it is vital for discourse analysts to determine whether religious discourse encourages a healthy human relationship with the natural world.

1.1   Christian Environmentalism

Solving the ecological crisis that our Earth currently faces is no easy task, and the entirety of our western civilisation is in debate about what is true and how best to act. This difference in viewpoints is not restricted to the general public but also within the Christian population. Christian views on environmentalism vary between individuals and denominations, with some social scientific literature claiming that Christians typically aren't concerned with environmental problems (Sherkat and Ellison, 2007; Peterson and Liu, 2008). The relationship between Christianity and the natural world has been heavily criticised by Lynn White (1967), one of the most well-known commentators on the Christian concept of 'dominion' over nature.

There is, however, more recently a turn towards a reinterpretation of Christian values that reconceptualise biblical writings on the natural world, placing the responsibility of 'stewardship' on Christians to encourage a more caring attitude to the environment. This 'Green Christianity' looks to encourage environmental activism within the Christian community through theological reflections on nature, and emphasise the biblical importance of humanity's role as 'stewards' and 'protectors' of the natural world.

One group who follows these ideals are *Green Christian*, an organisation which 'exists to share Green insights with Christians and to offer Christian insights to the wider Green movement' (greenchristian.org, 2019). Formed in 1981, they encourage members to 'live gently on the earth', involving themselves in activities such as daily prayer, a simpler lifestyle, peaceful campaigning, and the provision of resources (ibid). They currently have eight active local groups, including one in my own local town of Cheltenham. I have met with them prior to the writing of this thesis to discuss the interpretation of *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis' 2017 encyclical on today's ecological crisis. More relevant to this study, the group has published a magazine for over four years. I have decided to use these magazines as a source for data collection, and my analysis consists mostly of the published content found within their works.

1.2   Druidry

My exploration into Druid discourse focuses on three sources; the published online content of the *OBD* - Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids; *Discover Druidry* – an online blog who share information among other Druids; and the *Henge of Keltria* – a non-profit corporation who provide information, training, and networking opportunities to practicing Druids with a focus on the Celtic roots of the religion. Druidry is termed interchangeably as a spiritual or religious movement that promotes harmony, connection, and reverence for the natural world. It has also been described as a 'nature religion' (Gieser, 2016: 55), and in the wider spectrum of Pagan spirituality as a 'form of contemporary Paganism (Cooper, 2009: 59).

The attitude of the Druid movement is one that is critical of the lifestyle and habits of mainstream society, which they believe to be 'governed by consumerism, environmental exploitation and the supremacy of technology' (Geiser, ibid: 62). They counter this by encouraging fellow Druids to live a more 'natural' lifestyle in connection with the natural world (ibid).

There are many denominations of Pagan and Druid religion, so my thesis focuses on the three groups previously mentioned. I will be collecting data from blog posts, discussions, poems, and various other written content found on their webpages.

1.3   Research Aims

The aims of this thesis are:

- To reveal cognitive stories about human relationships with the more-than-human world encoded by the discourses of Christian Environmentalism and Druidry.
- To judge those stories as harmful or beneficial according to an ecosophy.
- To discover linguistic features that encode beneficial new stories to live by.

I use the phrase 'more-than-human world' frequently in my aims and in the rest of this thesis to reconnect humanity with what we often refer to in Western society as 'nature', 'the environment', or 'the wild'. These phrases separate humanity from what Abram calls

'nonhuman nature' (1996: 11), creating a socially constructed divide between *culture* (humans) and *nature* (nonhuman species).

The more-than-human world includes humans and all non-human species and the physical environment such as insects, animals, plants, trees, forests, lakes, rivers, seas and so on. Abram uses this phrase interchangeably with the 'sensuous world' (ibid), however I have chosen the term that includes the word *human* to remind the reader that I am referring to the holistic world of living beings we are part of as opposed to an alienated world away from human attention. I often use this term interchangeably with 'the natural world' throughout, which again is intended to be a phrase which includes other life forms as well as humans.

1.4   The stories in this study

Stories 'are cognitive structures in the minds of individuals which influence how they perceive the world' (Stibbe, 2015: 6). When a story is built up 'in the minds of multiple individuals across a culture' (ibid: 6), Stibbe refers to this as one of the *stories-we-live*-by, a perception of the world accepted and followed across a larger group of society. I have used the phrase 'cognitive story' or 'stories' in my research aims and in some instances in the rest of this thesis to assert the concept that stories are mental phenomena that create ideas about the world in our minds, rather that just being stories in the fictional sense.

My analysis reveals stories which construct the identity of these groups, and how their language makes the natural world salient in our minds. An *identity* in Ecolinguistics is 'a story in people's minds about what it means to be a particular kind of person, including…character, behaviour and values' (Stibbe, 2015: 107). Through patterns in lexical choices made by the groups in the discourse, they create a story about their reverence for the natural world and how this is entwined with their religious identities.

Through animal symbolism, both groups create salience patterns which contain grammatical processes that place various non-human entities as free, autonomous beings. The discourses in the analysis create positive stories to live by through the representation of

the natural world as 'actors' in various processes. This is uncovered through transitivity analysis to reveal underlying stories which are evaluated according to my ecosophy.

I also uncover some *evaluations* made within the discourse of Christian environmentalism. *Evaluations* are 'stories in people's mind about whether something is good or bad' (ibid: 84). Evaluations manifest themselves in texts as *appraisal patterns*, which are, 'clusters of linguistic features that represent an area of life as good or bad' (ibid). The appraisal patterns found in the discourse help us to interpret the ecological priorities within Green Christian's value statements.

2 Literature Review

This thesis draws on a variety of different fields of linguistics, as well as from a wide array of other disciplines. To outline the most relevant literature to this thesis, this chapter is broken up into separate overviews of literature that link religious studies with ecology, and the areas of critical discourse studies that will influence my research. Within these discussions, I include work from Ecolinguistics, and show where my thesis fits in with the current body of knowledge. *Religion and Ecology* will cover literature that discusses how Christianity and Druidry have portrayed their relationship with the natural world. *Ecolinguistics and Religion* identifies what literature is present that directly applies linguistic analysis to religious texts, or the texts of religious communities. The following two sections on *Positive Discourse Analysis* present the progress of this relatively new approach, and its uses in eco-critical discourse studies. Finally, I explain the various theoretical bases that are applied in this thesis, as well as define the theoretical concepts of ecosophy and deep ecology which will underpin my analysis.

2.1 Religion and Ecology

One of the earliest and most well-known scientific papers on Judeo-Christianity and the environment was written by the Historian, Lynn White. His 1967 paper, *the historical roots of our ecological crisis*, is widely regarded as the catalyst for the study of religious values and their influence on our relationship with the natural world. White had argued that it is not only technological advancements that have caused western society to alter the environment, but rather the prescribed notion that we are dominant over nature. Genesis 1, he claims, legitimized the exploitation of nature in its demand for man to have "dominion" over the earth and its contents. He further stated Christianity to be 'the most anthropocentric religion the world has ever seen' (ibid: 1205). This article influenced further studies which deliberately followed the lines of White's hypothesis, to further support the claim that Judeo-Christian doctrine encouraged the destruction of the natural world.

Although White's work was the most widely circulated, a few lesser known scholars had already commented on this supposed anthropocentrism within Christian values. Several of

them identified strong anti-nature impulses in religion, particularly in North American Christianity (Miller, 1956; Nash, 1967; Glacken, 1967; in Taylor, 2016). A hundred years prior, Feuerbach (1854: 282) had argued that 'Nature, the world, has no value, no interest for Christians. The Christian thinks only of himself, and the salvation of his soul' (in Taylor: ibid).

Nonetheless, White's article started a larger inquiry into the relationship with Christianity and the natural world. One study which shares my focus in Christian environmentalism was produced to better appreciate the orientations of Christian environmentalists. Shaiko (1987) came to the following conclusion:

> Judeo-Christian environmentalists are found to be opposed to mastery-over-nature orientations, although not as strongly as non-Judeo-Christians. While these findings neither confirm nor reject White's thesis, they do suggest that a more comprehensive thesis incorporating a middle ground position (stewardship) might better explain the differences in the values and attitudes of Judeo-Christians of all denominations (ibid: 259)

Shaiko's paper revealed that environmentally concerned Christians interpreted their relationship with the natural world as a 'stewardship' rather than a 'dominion'. He concluded that 'while mastery-over-nature value orientations may still dominate in some religious denominations…' the 'renewed perspective of stewardship of nature is manifested in the attitudes of Judeo-Christians active in the environmental movement' (ibid: 259-260). However, Uckberg and Blocker (1989) pointed out that the results of Shaiko's study were severely restricted, as his sample focused solely 'on the ranks of environmentalists' among Christian denominations (p.510). Their own study screened groups of Judeo-Christians, Non-Judeo Christians, and Conservative Protestants. Their findings aligned with White's thesis when investigating the levels of environmental concern from participants who believed in the bible. The data led them to the claim that this group of participants were part of a society who had 'long-since disenchanted nature and set about the process of rationally employing it [the environment] for practical needs' (ibid: 516).

Many others argued that White's interpretation of 'dominion' in Genesis was incorrect. Hiers (1984) for example considered White's conclusions to be 'grossly oversimplified' (Shaiko, ibid: 245). Engel (1970) asserted that White's analysis of Genesis fell at his misunderstanding of the terminology within it, which most likely fuelled his argument. He referred to terms within the holy texts such as "subdue" and "dominion", identifying that the connotations of the original Hebraic words *kabas* (dominion) and *rada* (subdue) were totally different to the connotations we associate with their English translations (ibid). It could be argued from a linguistic perspective however, that this is unimportant in terms of how the texts influence readers as texts are always interpreted by their audience in the language that they are written. An English audience reading texts in English is unlikely to be aware of the original meanings of the terms used.

While these scholars have explored the question of whether Christian texts encourage people to act in ecologically destructive ways, my research asks a very different question: Are there positive forms of language used by Christian environmentalists which can encourage western society to care for the ecological systems that we depend on? This does not involve denying negative aspects of general Christian discourse, but acknowledging that these have been explored elsewhere, and this study contributes a new perspective by seeking out the ecologically positive language.

Moving over to Druidry, the current literature focuses more on the wider community of nature spirituality, which includes Druidry but more so other forms of paganism and earth-based religions. Bron Taylor (2010) discusses the various facets of nature spirituality in his book, from 'Dark Green Religion' in North America to Terrapolitan Earth Religion. Before exploring these communities, he makes an important distinction between 'religion' and 'spirituality', which is an important consideration also when discussing the two different groups in this thesis:

> In common parlance, religion is often used to refer to organized and institutional religious belief and practice, while spirituality is held to involve one's deepest moral values and most profound religious experiences…Spirituality is often thought to be about personal growth and gaining a proper understanding of one's place in the

cosmos, and to be intertwined with environmentalist concern and action. (Taylor, 2010: 3)

Taylor's definitions are supported by Roof (1993), who explains a common perception that 'to be religious conveys an institutional connotation [while] to be spiritual . . . is more personal and empowering and has to do with the deepest motivations in life' (pp. 76–77). Building on Roof's findings, Zinnbaur (1997) also said that 'religiousness is increasingly characterized as ''narrow and institutional,'' and spirituality . . . as ''personal and subjective'' (pp. 563).

These differences entail a likelihood that the two groups in my study will create different stories about our relationship with the natural world. Whereas Christian environmentalism takes influence from its institution and faith in God, and therefore encourages ways of respecting the natural world that coincide with text from the bible, Druid spirituality may encourage members of the community to find their own individual ways to connect with the earth. Another interesting distinction from Taylor is that between 'Green Religion' and 'Dark Green Religion':

…green religion…posits that environmentally friendly behaviour is a religious obligation…and dark green religion… [believes that] nature is sacred, has intrinsic value, and is therefore due reverent care.

(ibid: 10)

If Christian environmentalism interprets holy text to encourage environmentally friendly behaviour, we could define it as a green religion. Deciding whether Druidry is a spirituality or a green religion (or dark green religion) under these terms however is more nuanced. The order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, the British Druid Order, and the Druid Network have all defined their communities as earth-based or nature 'spiritualities'. By the definition Taylor gives on religion as institutional and organized, you could argue that these groups are in fact religions.

Understanding the nature of these two groups and how previous scholars have perceived them is important because the structure of a group may influence their discursive

practice. A religion like Christianity takes holy texts to be instructions on how to be a good Christian. This affects the way that the text is constructed and interpreted by its audience. If Druidry is a spirituality, its guidance within its text might instead offer more autonomy for its members to express their care for the more-than-human world in their own way. How these groups are structured is a significant influence on how they tell their stories.

Taylor coined the term 'dark green religion' to encompass spiritualities that held the intrinsic value of the natural world and the need to revere and care for it as their main beliefs. Doctrines within this term include those different from conventional western religions and traditions, but maintain some sort of organisation (2010). He identified a fictional form of a dark green religion in the movie *Avatar* by James Cameron, where humans discover a planet and humanoid species, who are interconnected with their natural surroundings, considering them to be sacred and agentive (2013). In a not so dramatic sense, Druidry could be considered 'dark green' under Taylor's definition.

Religious Agrarianism is another area that has been explored under the umbrella of religion and nature studies by Todd Levasseur. His books (2011, 2017) on the growing trend of sustainable agriculture throughout the US highlights the 'greening' of religion across North America, particularly in Judeo-Christian factions. The two groups in his studies share an environmental concern about the modern industrial food economy, and a religiously grounded commitment to the values of locality, health, and environmental justice. He explored the ways in which Koinonia Farm, an ecumenical Christian monastic community, and Hazon, a progressive Jewish environmental group, created new models for sustainable agrarian lifeways and practices. Levasseur and Taylor's work both highlight a need for further scholarly exploration into the environmental evolution of conventional and non-conventional religions, which they both refer to as the 'greening of religion' (ibid; ibid). More recently, Levasseur has shared a consideration for the need of linguistic applications to the study of religion and nature, to 'generate a more nuanced understanding of religion-nature interactions' (2017: 420). He states that 'texts are representations, and often they reflect dominant motifs of a culture, thus helping to shape that cultures understanding of reality' (ibid: 424). A critical linguistic analysis of the discourse of religious communities then can

provide a detailed insight into their reality, and their relationship with the more-than-human world.

2.2   Analysing positive discourses

The primary aim of this thesis is to reveal linguistic features that encode beneficial 'new stories to live by'. As previously mentioned, historically, critical discourse analysis (CDA) has worked to expose the dominant, negative types of discourse that construct power relations between the oppressed groups of western society and their oppressors. This 'is essential, but…just the first step' in solving such issues (Stibbe, 2018: 165). Kress calls for discourse analysts to begin exploring alternative forms of discourse, in order to identify and promote 'productive' discursive practices that benefit oppressed groups, rather than just expose the negative discourse that exploits them (1996: 15-16):

> Critical language projects have remained just that: critiques of texts and of the social practices implied by or realised in those texts, uncovering, revealing, inequitable, dehumanising and deleterious states of affairs [...] if critical language projects were to develop apt, plausible theories of this domain, they would be able to move from critical reading, from analysis, from deconstructive activity, to productive activity [...] CL or CDA have not offered (productive) accounts of alternative forms of social organisation, nor of social subjects, other than by implication.

Kress' argument led Martin (2004) to suggest a new branch of CDA, Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA hereafter), which would critique texts that the analyst agrees with through the same systematic analysis that critiques destructive language in critical discourse studies. Destructive, hegemonic discourses must still be exposed by critical discourse analysts, but Martin argues that 'we need a complementary focus on community, taking into account how people get together and make room for themselves in the world – in ways that redistribute power without necessarily struggling against it' (Martin & Rose, 2003: 315; Martin, 2004: 6). In other words, alongside critique of negative discourse, we should have a balance of positive discourse to learn from as well (ibid). Positive discourse can be defined as that which 'inspires, encourages, heartens; discourse we like, that cheers us along' (Martin, 1999: 51–52).

Macghilchrist (2007) offers approaches to analysing positive discourse within areas like the media. Her perspective focused on what she referred to as 'counter-discourse', which battles for the dominant position that 'hegemonic' discourse occupies on throughout wider society. Some theories within critical discourse studies (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985), for instance, claim that all discourses try to take on a dominant ('hegemonic') position, yet complete dominance is never fully possible. 'There is always a gap, through which marginal discourses can break in and take over a more central position' (Macghilchrist, ibid: 75). Macghilchrist uses feminist discourse to illustrate this, a narrative which 'broke into the mainstream view that only men were fully competent to vote' (ibid: 75). She claims that 'the presence of this gap means there is a constant struggle for hegemony' (ibid: 75).

Her example above suggests how dominant discourse and ideologies can shift as counter discourses develop and grow within the cognitive ideals of western society. Macghilchrist's optimistic perspective on positive discourse reinforces how important it is to identify discourses that offer an alternative worldview to the dominant narratives which encourage the exploitation of oppressed groups. She offers strategies for analysing counter discourse through frame analysis, combined with a need to adopt inter-disciplinary approaches for positive discourse analysis to be successful.

2.3   Ecolinguistics and counter discourse – Finding new stories to live by

Once the need for PDA within critical discourse studies is understood, an analyst then must decide which social issues they wish to apply their enquiry. In choosing to apply PDA to an ecological topic, I applied the rationale of Andrew Goatly (2016: 244):

> In the context of this ecological crisis a single-minded emphasis on sexist and capitalist-imperialist critical discourse analysis (CDA) is rather like considering the problem of who is going to fetch the deckchairs on the *Titanic*, and who has the right to sit in them. So CDA must address the basic problem of the ecological health of the planet – where we are steering the earth.

Thus, my work is grounded in the field of Ecolinguistics, which has drawn attention to a wide array of harmful discourses that encode stories which encourage the destruction of our

ecosystem (*See articles in the Journal of 'Language and Ecology', Stibbe, 2015, Fill & Penz, 2017*). Indeed, scholars of this field have also taken aboard the advice of Kress and Martin by adopting PDA within the discipline. An early example of this approach was laid out by Goatly (ibid: 254- 277), who compared descriptions of nature between poems from William Wordsworth and Edward Thomas with an environmental report from 2012. His findings draw from an analysis of the linguistic features between the two types of literature to expose how the two styles differed. The poets addressed nature as *agentive* and *experienced*, blurring the divide between humans and nature through personification (2000: 271-272). In contrast, the environmental report treated the environment as a passive actor, affected by the world it around rather than affecting it.

Whilst Goatly looked to the poetry of English Romanticism, Stibbe (2012) found alternative forms of ecological discourse in Japanese Haiku. His analysis discovered constructive linguistic features such as basic level categories and agentive grammar, which allowed other forms of life such as animals and plants to have a salient role within the text. The recurring positive feature discovered throughout Stibbe's analysis was the way animals and plants were afforded salience by being given their actual names (e.g. frog, deer, mouse) rather than abstracts like animal or fauna. Also, the Haiku collected portrayed everyday situations taking place in the natural world, rather than describing abstract, fictional plots where nature was present. He attributed this representation of the natural world to the Japanese concept of *'Sonomama'*, which differs immensely from mainstream western depictions in the media:

> Sonomama is just the way that things are, unsullied by conceptualizations or abstractions that attempt to make them something they are not. If the discourses of the meat industry, environmentalism, and animal rights in the West represent animals and plants in ways that erase their true nature, then haiku is an attempt to erase that nature as little as possible. (2012: 154)

Using concepts from embodied cognitive theory (Lakoff & Johnson 1999, Lakoff and Wehling, 2012), Stibbe pointed out specific linguistic features which help to identify alternative discourses. Basic level categories and the plain descriptive writing style of *sonomama* are

features that when consistently used in text, 'build up the salience of the natural world in the minds of readers' (Stibbe, 2015: 175). His later work identified a new source of counter discourse in *New Nature Writing* (ibid). His analyses identified grammatical choices of the author that represented non-human beings as salient actors. Frequent pronoun usage such as 'he or 'she' as opposed to 'it' when referring to animals was one pattern. In the descriptions of animal activity in nature writing, often the animals were involved in mental processes by being described as 'staring', 'watching', 'thinking', 'looking' (ibid: 176). Along with this was their agency in material processes, where the author describes the animals performing purposeful actions.

These linguistic features used to describe animals increase their agency within the discourse and encourage the reader to regard the beings in the Haiku as having mental lives through performing actions. These actions are described when the text makes the beings the actors of a process. Conversely, discourses that have been exposed as destructive through ecological discourse analysis can omit the use of these linguistic features and replace them with lexical items which distort our perceptions of the natural world. Abstractions (such as fauna, animal, environment) and failure to use personal pronouns (using 'it' when mentioning an animal and so on) are examples of language that erase the natural world from the minds of the readers.

2.4 Ecolinguistics and Religion

These example studies which reveal beneficial linguistic features in ecological discourse have been successful, but are still uncommon within this discipline. There are certainly more alternative forms of discourse that need to be discovered if we are to present a truly comprehensive collection of ecologically constructive forms of language. Stibbe refers to the type of discourse identified in such studies as 'clusters of features [that] draw from the standard grammar and lexicon [of the language], but arrange the words and grammatical features in ways that tell a different story about the world' (2017). They offer templates for using the tools of ecological critical discourse analysis which will be invaluable for my study. Stibbe's study draws linguistic features that encode new stories to live by from a non-hegemonic discourse (Haiku discourse). I will apply similar techniques to Green Christian and

Druid discourses in an attempt to reveal positive stories and describe the linguistic features that convey them.

2.4.1   Defining positive forms of discourse

One issue with positive discourse analysis is how we decide what is to be considered 'positive'. In critical discourse studies of sexism and racism, value frameworks are often left implicit because it is assumed that the reader obviously agrees with the analyst that they are unacceptable behaviours. If the framework was made explicit then we could define positive discourse as discourse which contains lexical and grammatical patterns that encode stories of unity, togetherness, and kinship among different groups of society. This is not to say that wider studies on racism and sexism are not explicit in their values, but that western society has mostly come to an agreement that forms of racism and sexism are intolerable, and with this solidarity against such views, an analyst's values on racist or sexist language are clearer. In ecologically minded studies however, there are many different value systems that believe in various solutions to our ecological crisis, which allows for many interpretations of how we should construct the human-nature relationship in discourse. The next section explores how an 'ecological philosophy' can help to make the values framework of the analyst explicit.

2.4.2   Ecological Philosophy

Whenever critical discourse analysts focus on texts, they do so with their own ethical framework in mind to decide whether the text is constructive or harmful. Although, the analyst's framework is rarely made explicit (Stibbe, 2015: 11). Stibbe provides one example in cultural critical discourse analysis from Gavriely-Nuri, who calls for her analysis to be based on 'values, attitudes, and behaviours based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance, and solidarity (ibid: 11; Gavriely-Nuri, 2012: 83). As rare as it is to do this in CDA, Teun Van Dijk (1993: 252) believes that 'critical discourse analysts (should) take an explicit socio-political stance…' to 'spell out their point of view, perspective, principles and aims, both within their discipline and within society at large'.

My chosen format to articulate my perspective, principles and aims is an **Ecosophy**. An Ecosophy (Naess, 1995: 3-10; Stibbe, 2015: 202) is 'an ecological philosophy i.e. a normative

set of principles and assumptions about relationships among humans, other forms of life and the physical environment'. 'Analysts use their own Ecosophy to judge the stories that they reveal through linguistic analysis' (Stibbe, ibid). However, this is an Ecosophy defined within the field of ecological linguistics, when in fact its origin is from earlier ecological studies of philosophy. The creator of the term, Arne Naess, defined it as a 'philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium', containing 'both norms, rules, postulates, value priority announcements and hypotheses concerning the state of affairs in our universe' (Naess, ibid: 8).

In developing a strong Ecosophy, it is important to consider the various viewpoints that can be taken, and how these viewpoints develop theoretical underpinnings of the relationship humans have with the natural world. In this section I discuss the various works and theories that influenced my Ecosophy. Firstly, the place an ecosophy has in articulating someone's ecological views is important to consider. Naess considered the 'ecosophy' to only represent the personal outlook of an individual. It becomes 'a philosophical world-view or system inspired by the conditions of life in the ecosphere…', serving as 'an individual's philosophical grounding…' (1990: 37-38). This means that the Ecosophy is a very personal and subjective set of values which can differ hugely among the scholars of one field. Considerations must be taken in developing an Ecosophy to ensure it is used consistently in a linguistic analysis, and presented coherently within my research. Stibbe adapted Naess's 'Ecosophy T' format (2015: 10-13) to make his own ecological values explicit. He also presented his ecosophy to allow readers to understand how he came to interpret discourse as beneficial or harmful stories to live by. This made Van Dijk's assertion - that discourse analysts should state their points of view - a reality in ecological CDA, and I have chosen to adopt the same approach to this study.

2.4.3   Ecosophy in Ecolinguistics

In recent publications, I have rarely seen articles in Ecolinguistics that explicitly state the ecosophy of the analyst. Although we can see an ethical framework is present in the paper, making 'the ecosophy' explicit allows the reader to see precisely what values the analyst is critiquing his/her data against. One example might be Forte's recent publication on animal legislation and speciesist discourse (2015). The paper is clearly influenced by an ethical

agenda that views speciesism as equally oppressive as racism and misogyny – an ecological philosophy that drives Forte's analysis even though it is not explicit.

By producing a readable framework within the paper to cross-examine his data with, this would have allowed for a transparent presentation of the basis of his conclusions. In my view, the opportunity to use an ecosophy to highlight ecological values provides the study with an authentic element that underpins the entire critique. I would suggest all of us, as critical discourse analysts, be clearer of our values when analysing language; and in doing so follow the instruction of Naess (1995: 8), to express our ecosophies verbally 'as a set of sentences with a variety of functions, prescriptive and descriptive'.

Even when our values are stated however, they may not set out a full criterion on how they choose to be critical of discursive practices. Stibbe found that Jorgen Bang believed the discipline should be based on:

Contributing to a local and global culture in which (i) co-operation, (ii) sharing, (iii) democratic dialogue, (iv) peace and non-violence, (v) equality in every sphere of daily life, and (vi) ecological sustainability are the fundamental features and primary values (Stibbe, 2015: 11).

Another short form 'ecosophy' from Larson (2011: 17) consists of his description of an ideal ecological relationship:

'We want a sustainable relationship between humans and the natural world rather than a sustained ecological system without humans which, to many of us, would be a sign of failure'

In Stibbe's 2015 textbook, an entire page is dedicated to stating the ecosophy of the book (p13), which is used to interpret the data he presents. This in my opinion should be a vital element of effective critical analysis of discourse, and my analysis strongly adheres to the values I present in my own ecosophy.

In the next section, I discuss the chosen format for my ecosophy and its influence from other scholars who developed the idea of ecological value statements.

2.4.4   My Ecosophy

N: 'Life is an interconnected web, not a hierarchy' (1989: 18)

Values:

V1 - Intrinsic worth: All species have equal intrinsic worth and should be allowed to live healthily without unnecessarily being exploited for human benefit.

V2 - Inclusion: Everyone should be included in the task of contributing to the wellbeing of life on the planet.

V3 - Sustainability: In using resources for the wellbeing of humans it is essential to consider the impact on ecosystems and future availability of resources. In practice this means a drastic reduction in consumption.

V4 - Pragmatism: While the ecosophy respects the wellbeing and value of all species, goals must be achievable and even if compromises are required.

V5 - Self-realisation: Beings of all species have their unique senses, purposes, goals, needs and desires. It is necessary to have empathy with other beings to allow them to achieve self-realisation according to their nature.

My chosen format begins with one central 'norm' which encompasses the principle of my values:

Ecosophy: 'Life is an interconnected web, not a hierarchy'

This statement is a direct quote from Judith Plant's *the Promise of* Ecofeminism (1989: 18). Ecofeminist theory recognises much of the oppression that the natural world has been subjected to relates to the patriarchal oppression and domination over subordinate groups in western society. Critical discourse analysis often has a feminist agenda, as it tackles texts

which encourage the oppression of dominated groups within society. Ecofeminism recognises that these oppressed groups share the same exploitation from the patriarch (Warren, 2000) as the natural world has done over many, many years.

Ecofeminism has various schools of thought and the views and philosophies of its members vary across a considerable scale. For this study, I have only taken the belief from ecofeminist philosophy that the relationship between living beings does not ascribe to a natural social hierarchy. Rather, I believe that our relationship with the more-than-human world is 'interconnected'. This study focuses primarily on the relationship that religious communities build with the natural world. My Ecosophy reflects the ecofeminist view that regards hierarchy among beings of the human and more-than-human world as a social construction, and that life is intrinsically valuable in all biological forms.

After establishing this norm, I have chosen five value statements that encompass my ecological beliefs and ideals; *intrinsic worth*, *inclusion*, *sustainability*, *pragmatism*, and *self-realisation*. These values make up my own personal philosophy, and I use them as guides to judge the stories that are encoded in Green Christian and Druid discourse.

The statements have been created based on my own ecological perspectives and ideals, which were shaped by studying a range of ecosophies and ecological movements and examining evidence. Two of my statements for example, link closely with ideals from the deep ecology movement developed by Arne Naess. Intrinsic worth, my first statement, can be inferred in the first principle of the deep ecology movement:

1. The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman Life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.

(Devall & Sessions, 1985: 70)

Intrinsic worth of all life in the more-than-human world is also present within the second principle.

2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realizations of these values & are also values in themselves. (ibid)

These principles are part of the *'eight principles of deep ecology'*, laid out by Devall and Sessions (1985). They include another statement which also reflects my own values:

3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy **vital** human needs.

To echo this, I include the value statement *pragmatism* in to my ecosophy, to highlight the importance of ecological goals and actions expressed in discourse to be realistic, and not idealistic beyond achievement. Considerable action must be taken to repair the damage that human action has caused, however the sustenance of human life still requires some manageable consumption of natural resources. So, the stories will be judges from a pragmatic perspective in terms of how radical or achievable they are. The goals must be realistic for all forms of life to be sustained.

I have also chosen to have 'self-realisation' as a part of my ecosophy. This is presented in my full ecosophy as so:

> **Self-realisation:** Beings of all species have their unique senses, purposes, goals, needs and desires. It is necessary to have empathy with other beings to allow them to achieve self-realisation according to their nature.

Again, this statement is inspired by deep ecology philosophy, from Naess' own ecosophy T. I see my own statement as a simplified form of what Naess referred to as the 'norm'. In constructing his ecosophy, Naess' norm was the main point of his beliefs which developed a number of hypotheses:

Formulation of the most basic norms [N] and hypotheses [H]

N1: Self-realization!

H1: The higher the Self-realization attained by anyone, the broader and deeper the identification with others.

H2: The higher the level of Self-realization attained by anyone, the more its further increase depends upon the Self-realization of others.

H3: Complete Self-realization of anyone depends on that of all.

(Naess, 1990: 97)

His ecosophy was largely influenced by the teachings of Gandhi and Spinoza, in that they possessed a non-hierarchical worldview of all beings (Drengson, 2005: 34). Once again, this is another idea I have adopted into my ecosophy, presented through my own main norm from ecofeminism.

3 <u>Methodology</u>

3.1 **Data**

In order to achieve these aims, I gathered online texts from one well established group in the UK's Christian environmentalist community, and three separate smaller groups of the UK druid community.

3.1.1 Green Christian

Green Christian have 11 local groups across the UK, all who involve themselves in various environmental projects in conjunction with their local community. Members of these groups help to run the organisation and its website, which also publishes a seasonal magazine. I have analysed the vision statement of the organisation which is posted on their website to try to reveal how they describe the ecological crisis and how they perceive the human-nature relationship in the context of their religion. I have also collected the last four years of the magazine's publications, taking extracts of the most relevance to this thesis for analysis. These magazines are available for download online without any need for membership, so Christians and non-Christians can view these and gain an insight to how this organisation expresses its views on the more-than-human world and their role in it. Some extra data has also been taken from the group's old organisation name, the 'Christian Ecology Link'. Their old website under this name contains some older information about the group, as well as resources and leaflets aimed at Christians on environmental topics such as biodiversity, prayer guides, and information about 'eco-living'.

The texts analysed from Green Christian thesis are excerpts from whole articles in their magazine. The reason I have selected these specific extracts is because they convey an underlying message about their perceived relationships with the natural world. This is done through various formats, such as using biblical language to relate their beliefs to the ecological crisis or non-human beings, or using animistic discourse to portray all living beings as part of a shared existence on earth. The texts I have chosen also include the organisation's vision statement, as this demonstrates their philosophy regarding the ecological crisis, we face

today in relation with their role in it as Christians. These texts in Christian environmentalism are important to analyse because they may help shape the ideas of wider Christian communities of the natural world, and how they should treat it in accordance with their Christian values. If their choice of language demonstrates a portrayal of the human-nature relationship that is beneficial or destructive, the way this discourse is constructed should be examined.

3.1.2 Druidry

The druid community has a wide array of different factions across the country, with their online presences ranging from independent WordPress blogs to organisational websites filled with information. The first piece of data analysed in this thesis is the hallmarks of the *Henge of Keltria*. This group's hallmarks, found in one of their online blog posts, shares a similar structure to the vision statement of Green Christian. I intend to compare these two texts to gain an understanding of the core values of both communities, highlighting the linguistic devices they use to convey their perspectives.

I also look at another independent blog called *Discover Druidry*. The creators have published a great number of articles on various Druid topics such as their relationship with animals, the land, and the various seasons and traditions within Druid culture. These publications offer a true insight to the expressions of Druid authors on the more-than-human world, thanks to the fact that WordPress blogs are not run by overbearing supporting organisations. This means we can read independent expressions made by the authors and reveal how members of the Druid community tell stories about their relationship with nature. The Discover Druidry blog posts on various nature-spiritual topics such as *Samhain* and *Imbolc*, which have the authors describe and discuss various activities of the natural world within their spiritual beliefs. They also detail the role of animals in Druidic worship at great length, explaining each animal's 'role' as a representative of various spiritual resources. I have chosen the extracts from these texts that discuss the more-than-human world in terms like these to see whether they discursive style creates a story that encourages us to care for the natural world, or use it a resource for our own spiritual gain.

Finally, I have chosen to take texts from the Order of Ovates, Bards, and Druids. A more established webpage and organisation than the previous two, this group has been and therefore contains a lot of writings by the popular Druid Author, *Philip Carr-Gomm*. The organisation's website contains a 'teaching and practice' section, where various pages explain the Druid traditions of animal lore and spiritual guidance. These texts discuss the Druid relationship with non-human beings in great lengths, contributing to a good body of data alongside the two other blogs. The small excerpts chosen from these publications are specifically chosen for their use of animism, which like Green Christian, use it to place animals, plants, rivers, weather, and so on in agentive roles in our shared world, and relating them to the religious practice of the author's group. It will be interesting to see how communities use animism and note the linguistic similarities or differences that emerge from the analysis.

As there are a great amount of different factions of the Druid community, I intend to collect some prototypical samples of text from three different groups for a good range of data. As Green Christian consist of 11 local groups already, I considered their website and magazine editions a worthy resource for prototypical data alone.

3.2 Method

I use linguistic analysis to reveal the various linguistic patterns we see across the three sets of data (one data set per group) and then make a critical judgment on whether we should promote or resist the stories in the data using my ecosophy. The features that encode beneficial new stories to live by are revealed through a positive discourse analysis of all the collected and chosen texts. Once the linguistic patterns and underlying ideologies in the data are revealed, these revelations are be judged according to my ecosophy to conclude whether this type of language should be encouraged or challenged (Stibbe, 2015: 33-35). I suggest that the linguistic features found within the texts that encode these positive stories should become more prevalent in the language of these communities. Recommendations from this analysis can be made to other groups in wider western society to help them portray their own beneficial stories through similar styles of language. If, however a feature of the texts is discovered that does not align with my ecosophy or is interesting for how vastly different it is from the rest of the text, it will be analysed to the same standard as the whole data set.

3.3 Revealing Stories

In order to reveal these stories that are hidden within text, a large range of tools and techniques from Critical Discourse Studies can be used. The goal is to reveal the stories that are encoded in the choices of language made by the author or group, at various levels from the grammatical to the discursive. For example, analysing transitivity in text reveals the 'conceptual aspects of ideology' at work in the grammar of a clause (Goatly, 2016: 54). To draw out the stories from grammatical choices, transitivity analysis assesses the processes given to various participants in a clause. Van Leeuwen (2008: 33) has described how grammatical choices create descriptions in texts that foreground people in language by activation or passivation. Activation, or 'salience' (Stibbe, 2015) takes place within 'transitivity structures in which activated social actors are coded as actors in material processes, behaver in behavioural processes, senser in mental processes…' (Van Leeuwen, ibid). In Ecolinguistics, we can reveal a story about whether animals or the natural world is important in discourse from where the author places them in grammatical processes.

Another example we could use is through appraisal items, often noticed in text at the lexical level. An author or group's word choice when discussing or describing the natural world offers an insight into their evaluation of the natural world, and therefore tells their own story about nature. Stibbe has identified common evaluations in mainstream media and economic textbooks that 'growth is good', 'progress is good' and that 'fast is good', through the appraisal patterns identified from lexical choices. These stories are negative because they promote a dangerous desire for profit and convenience at the expense of the wellbeing of the planet.

When we get to a discursive level, and wish to discover whether a larger body of text portrays the same story, we look for patterns of these kinds of linguistic features to be frequent throughout. These patterns suggest that these stories are encoded in that type of discourse and that they influence their readers to believe or pass on the same stories. The influence and dissemination of stories, ideas and beliefs is a well-known linguistic event which Bahktin and Kristeva referred to as *Heteroglossia*, the projection of ideas and points of view that are shared among a style of language in a group (Martin and Rose, 2007: 49).

These tools are used in this thesis to draw out stories from the linguistic patterns of discourse. We can discover hidden narratives in discourse whether they are harmful or encourage positive ways of looking at the world. I will base my interpretation of these stories in the discourse by consistently referring to the values of my ecosophy.

3.4 Stories in this thesis

The analysis will identify and explain various kind of stories demonstrated through various linguistic techniques that the authors employ to create them, some of which have already been discussed in the literature review. Firstly, I use appraisal theory (Martin & Rose, 2003, 2007) to reveal the ideals that are demonstrated in the philosophies of Green Christian and the Druid group *Henge of Keltria*. I then build upon their philosophies by laying out the different frames that they use to discuss their roles in the ecological crisis and the natural world. Finally, I look at how the ethos of both groups demonstrate some negative linguistic qualities by framing nature as a possession of humanity through the theocentric language that they use.

Next, I move my focus towards the blog posts and magazine articles of both groups. I examine Green Christian's construction of identity through the term 'creation', a concept which places them intermittently with the natural world and separate from it. This term is important for how it construes the group's ecological identity in relation to their religious beliefs. This is then contrasted with grammatical choices made by both the Christian and Druid communities in this study to build up salience of the natural world. Through the result of his analysis, I argue the possibility that some of the uses of animals in spiritual discourse and practice may create an inference that these animals are resources for the spiritual uses of humans, and that the real animals are being omitted from the text. This goes on to into a more detailed assessment of animistic discourse, and the various ways in which both groups construct the roles of animals and non-living entities in relationship with humans. Finally, I compare of how both one Green Christian author and a Druid author use satire and parody of western civilisation to critique current lifestyle trends that are detrimental to our connection with, and wellbeing of, the natural world.

4 <u>Analysis</u>

4.1 The Values of Christians and Druids

A good place to start the analysis is by comparing the vision statements of each group in this study. Both Green Christian and various Druid groups have produced a webpage which outlines the values of their community. These statements outline what these groups consider to be their most important principles and goals, much like the ecosophy of this thesis. We can discover much about the group's values from how these statements were written through their lexical choices, grammatical structures, and the agency given to the more-than-human world.

Starting with an example from Druid discourse, the group known as 'Henge of Keltria' have produced what they call 'The Nine Keltrian Hallmarks'. Before analysing the text, it should be noted that these are the value statements for just one druid community. What is ecologically valued may differ variably between different factions of Druid spirituality, and therefore the analysis of the stories revealed through the text does not then claim that these values are prevalent throughout Druid discourse entirely. The Henge of Keltria begin their hallmarks by saying 'they are [the hallmarks] what define us as members of Keltria, as opposed to other spiritual paths.' I would say the same for the data I have selected from Green Christian, which reflects solely their values, not the entire Christian community nor all Christians who care for the natural world.

4.1.1 The Keltrian Hallmarks

The following passages that are selected from the Nine Keltrian Hallmarks share similarities with my own ecosophy. So, my analysis begins with a direct comparison between their value statements and my own:

3. We honor our Ancestors.

As with our Gods, Goddesses and Nature Spirits, our Ancestors provide us with guidance and encouragement. *You **do not** have to be of any specific ancestry or*

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heritage to practice Keltrian Druidry. We welcome people of all backgrounds.
[italicized in original text] (DR1)

The Henge of Keltria welcome people of all backgrounds into their practice, which is a vital step in building a wider community which appreciates the worth and wellbeing of the natural world. This mirrors my own ecosophy, which states in Value #2 that 'Everyone should be included in the task of contributing to the wellbeing of life on the planet.'

The author lists 'Gods, Goddesses, and Nature Spirits', which implies that these three subjects are of the same semantic category by including them all in the same list. This is important as the author qualifies 'Nature Spirits' in the same regards as their Gods and Goddesses, which is a direct evaluation of Nature as being sacred. By putting these subjects together, the author frames nature as god-like, and intrinsically important, providing the same 'guidance and encouragement' as the Gods, Goddesses, and Ancestors.

2. **We respect all life and do no harm without deliberation or regard.**

It is wrong to kill or maim without reason, regard and necessity. We place the responsibility of choice firmly in the hands of the individual. (DR1)

The value statement here clearly identifies respect for **all** life. The positive aspect of this lexical choice is that it is non-hierarchical, the quantifier 'all' includes humans and other species, placing them in the same semantic category and framing them as equally deserving of our respect. What it also considers through its lexical choices is that groups may do harm to other beings with or without deliberation, in other words, on purpose. This fits with the first value of my Ecosophy of intrinsic worth. This is also a pragmatic approach to what value means to this group, as it is in some cases impossible for life forms to maintain their own wellbeing without doing some harm to others. In humanity's case, even low-meat diets and vegan diets

can cause harm to other living beings directly, or indirectly, through the destruction of habitats caused to grow food. Pragmatism is also a part of my ecosophy:

> Pragmatism: While the ecosophy respects the wellbeing and value of all species, goals must be achievable and even if compromises are required.

The story that underlies Hallmark number two clearly the criteria of pragmatism in my ecosophy due to the hedging 'without reason, regard or necessity'. In the context of food production for example, even doing harm **with** deliberation or regard is an improvement on many current practices of western society. Doing so can encourage us to reduce the amount of production that we do that harms other beings, and potentially limit the effects of these actions by encouraging activity may repair the damage that food production has caused.

4.1.2   Green Christian's Vision Statement

The Green Christian vision statement is as follows:

How we work

In order to achieve these aims we work in the following ways:

Challenge: we invite people to examine their lives and so to confront, resist and transform destructive personal and structural powers by a lifestyle of continual conversion.

Creativity: we develop innovative and inspiring campaigns and materials which offer new ways of being in the world to help people participate in the coming transformation of creation.

Community: we support and nurture each other in Christian discipleship, providing new opportunities for hope-giving community as a witness for our times, seeking to work with others who share our values. (GR1)

How Green Christian have expressed their work in this section reveals a great deal about their beliefs on the current environmental issues in the world and how best to overcome them. An interpretation of these beliefs can be given by applying the appraisal system for analysing discourse (Martin & Rose, 2007), also known as 'appraisal theory'.

> we invite people to <u>examine</u> their lives and so to <u>confront</u>, <u>resist</u> and <u>transform</u> <u>destructive</u> personal and structural powers…

The underlined lexis portrays Green Christian's attitude towards the way people currently live their lives and the current personal and structural powers of society. The appraising items 'transform' which is positive, and 'destructive', which a negative appraising item, develop an evaluation that that these harmful 'structural powers' are destructive to the environment and must be changed. There is also a clear frame triggered by calling people to <u>examine</u> their lives, which immediately brings how they are living in the world to question. <u>Confront</u>ing, <u>resist</u>ing, and <u>transform</u>ing are all steps in making changes to a current problem. This lexical set conveys direct, negative emotions of the attitude of the author (ibid: 32) towards the current way in which people live their lives and therefore incite a need for change.

> we develop <u>innovative</u> and <u>inspiring</u> campaigns

Martin and Rose use **appreciation** as a tool for understanding the author's attitudes towards something other than people or behaviours (2007: 37). These attitudes can either be positive or negative. Though the example doesn't show a direct attitude towards Green Christian's views on the natural world, it does consider its campaigns in caring for the natural world as <u>innovative</u> and <u>inspiring</u>. These descriptions make a positive evaluation of actions which benefit the natural world by using positive adjectives to describe them.

> materials which <u>offer new ways of being in the world</u>

From a perspective which analyses attitude, something that is <u>offer</u>ed could be appreciated as a positive thing, something that has benefit. The materials that Green Christian offer give

people <u>new ways of being in the world</u>, which link with their description <u>inspiring</u>, and offers an alternative lifestyle to the <u>destructive…powers</u> that were mentioned earlier. What is being built up in this text is the idea of a new, positive lifestyle that benefits the more-than-human world.

we support and <u>nurture</u> each other in Christian discipleship

The attitude created from lexical choices such as <u>transform</u>, <u>inspire</u>, <u>offer</u>, <u>examine,</u> and <u>nurture</u> builds a picture of Green Christian's appreciation for improving people's actions towards (and their relationship between) the more-than-human world. In general, this language signals for an improvement in how people live their lives. Again, this text doesn't construct a positive narrative of the relationship between humans and other forms of life directly, but instead tells a story of the need to examine and improve the destructive behaviors that do ecological harm to the planet. Positive appreciation for the change of destructive behavior through the chosen lexical items in these texts conveys a positive story that relates to my values of intrinsic worth. Intrinsic appreciation for the wellbeing of the planet is expressed through the desire to transform our behaviours towards it for the livelihoods of all creation.

seeking to work with <u>others</u> who share our values. (GR1)

Relating this back to my ecosophy, working with <u>others</u> (presumably, non-Christians) who share their values is an alignment with my value statement on inclusion. My ecosophy invites everyone to contribute to the well-being of the planet, and it is therefore important that groups like Green Christian encourage such contributions to other groups including the members of their community.

The next part of the vision statement is laid out in a 'we believe X, therefore Y' format. This structure is clear and straightforward in outlining the group's beliefs:

We believe: The Earth's resources are limited. <u>We are using the fruits of creation faster than they can be regenerated</u> and <u>are enslaved to destructive behaviors</u>. But God sets us free in Christ and the fruits of the Spirit enable us to flourish within the abundant gifts of God's creation.

Therefore: As we acknowledge the <u>deepest depression</u> to which the environmental crisis exposes us, we encounter the transforming power of Jesus. This power releases hope and imagination for all to live in new ways of love, which we are passionate to share, <u>for the sake of all life on earth</u>. (GR1)

The first paragraph identifies a problem, whereas the second offers a hopeful statement intent on finding solutions to the problem. This problem-solution frame evokes a strong imagery of humans as 'slaves' to the behaviors that cause great harm to our planet. The entailment this leads to is that we as humans are enslaved by our actions and must change in order to be free from them. This in turn creates an urgency in the matter and a need for humanity to 'free' itself from such destructive actions.

We are using the fruits of creation faster than can be regenerated

This clause is a direct moral judgement (ibid: 2007: 34) of western society's current action. This metaphor is an entailment that we need to use fewer resources, which aligns with the sustainability value of my ecosophy:

'In using resources for the wellbeing of humans it is essential to consider the impact on ecosystems and future availability of resources. In practice this means a drastic reduction in consumption.'

It is followed by a second clause of negative appreciation (ibid: 37) of these actions in saying that they are <u>destructive behaviors</u>, which we are <u>enslaved</u> to. This evaluation identifies the problems within human activity and condemns them. They also show a negative appreciation of the environmental crisis by acknowledging it as the <u>deepest depression</u>. Under appraisal theory, the expression of attitude is amplified by the highly graded adjective 'deepest', a type of amplification referred to by Martin and Rose as the **focus** of the clause (ibid: 42). This amplification strengthens Green Christian's attitude negatively towards the actions which contribute to ecological damage.

> This power releases hope and imagination for all to live in new ways of love, which we are passionate to share, for the sake of all life on earth.

The 'therefore' section of this statement is finalized by a more wholesome attitude towards the crisis. The 'power' from Jesus provides them with hope for **all** life on earth. The importance in this lexical choice is that the concern for wellbeing is extended to all life, which like the Druid discourse, uses the quantifier 'all' to include humans and other lifeforms in the semantic category, and therefore affords them equal intrinsic worth. This aligns with the norm of my ecosophy which states that 'life is an interconnected web' and rejects the hierarchical and anthropocentric perspective in mainstream western society that human life is more important.

> **We believe:** God's kingdom is characterised by justice, peace, and integrity with diversity. A spiritual response is needed in the ecological crisis: encountering Jesus will give us power to change. Through this crisis God is bringing us back to himself in Christ.

> **Therefore:** We take a prophetic stance, challenging individual lifestyle and society's norms, and demonstrating compelling alternatives. We long to see the church become a formidable advocate for the reconciliation of all creation in Christ.

In the passage above, Green Christian portray their perspective from a religious lens by relating the ecological crisis to their duty as Christians. In claiming that <u>a spiritual response is needed</u>, it calls upon other Christians to relate their beliefs to the wellbeing of the more-than-human world. This is a positive message in the sense that it attempts to draw the entire Christian community towards an awareness of our current ecological problems.

> We <u>long</u> to see the church become a formidable advocate for the reconciliation of <u>all creation</u> in Christ

This clause further supports the message that Green Christian are reaching out to other members of their faith to recognize the impact that our actions are currently having on the Earth. By <u>long</u>ing to see the church advocate change for the good, it implies that the Church currently isn't doing enough about ecological issues or encouraging its members to do so. Another pattern in their attitude towards all life in this text is that they wish for the Church

to advocate the reconciliation of <u>all creation</u>, which once again shows consideration for life beyond humans or Christians.

> **We believe:** Everyone has an equal entitlement to the fruits of creation. By using more than our fair share, we <u>defy</u> God's intentions for humanity. Only when <u>reconciled</u> with God can we be fully <u>reconciled</u> with each other and with creation.

Above is another part of the appraisal pattern which signifies a negative appreciation of human activity. The first appraising item 'defy', is a negative term which identifies unsustainable practice as an action against the wishes of God. Framing unsustainable practice as defiance of God is an entailment, that to be environmentally destructive is *un-Christian*, which in this context is a positive frame as a deterrent. From a Christian perspective, to take 'more than a fair share', in other words to use too much of the earth's resources, is an act of defiance in the eyes of God. The second, positive, appraisal item 'reconcile' is an encouragement for Christians to consider not just other humans but the entire more-than-human world, which aligns with my Ecosophy. This type of discourse appeals mainly to a Christian readership and is another area of the text that leads us to infer that Green Christian wishes to reach out to other Christians to acknowledge the worth of 'all creation'.

One issue with this passage is the anthropocentric linguistic features that do not align with the rest of the discourse. Firstly, the metaphor of natural resources as 'fruits' triggers a frame that these resources are for us to use, and our 'entitlement' to them entails that we can take these resources at will. This is of course a destructive attitude as we should consider these 'fruits' as worthy of respect rather than exploitation of human consumption. Secondly, the author ends the clause by calling of us to be reconciled with 'each other and creation'. Contrary to the use of the quantifier 'all' to include all of life on earth, this places us as humans and other life forms as creation in semantic categories and therefore not to be considered equal. In areas of the discourse where certain language choices do not fit with the rest of underlying stories that are told throughout much of the text, it is important to identify stories that do not harmonize with the rest of the group's discourse.

4.2 Contrasting Frames

I have broken the text into segments and analyzed them separately to point out individual linguistic devices in use. By looking at the whole of a text, we can begin to see contrasting descriptions built up through a problem-solution frame. In the table below, each row represents a section of the text (GR1). Within these rows, you will see two contrasting columns of positive and negative appraisal items that build up throughout the vision statement:

A – Negative evaluation	B – Positive description
'destructive culture'	'life-giving alternatives'
'destructive personal and structural powers'	'lifestyle of continual conversion' 'new ways of being in the world'
'destructive behaviours'	'new forms of life'
'challenging…society's norms'	'…demonstrating compelling alternatives'
'prevailing notions of progress'	'…offer alternatives'

Green Christian have built up a contrast throughout their vision statement to build a problem-solution frame of the ecological crisis. The problem is identified through the constant evaluation of our society as destructive, whereas they describe their own role in the crisis and their goals in a more positive manner. This frame produces an entailment that western society's current actions are destructive and must be challenged, and that the solution to the ecological crisis is the alternative lifestyles that Green Christian offer and encourage. The entailment of this linguistic device fits with my ecosophy, because it promotes my values on inclusion and sustainability. It challenges the behaviours of all of 'society's norms', not just Christians, and therefore implies that we all have a responsibility as a community to maintain

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the planet's wellbeing. The author's indifference towards 'personal and structural powers' and 'notions of progress' aligns with my value of sustainability, which calls for an understanding of the need to reduce human consumption.

A similar contrast is developed in Druid discourse too:

A – Negative evaluation	B – Positive description
'…rather than a detachment from it'	'Druidry…seeks an involvement with life' (DR8)
'western consumerism has cut us off from much of life'	'Druidry…offer[s] a way out' 'encourage us to enter the natural world with an open heart' (DR8)
'…disconnected and self-absorbed modern age'	'…relationship with the land' (DR5)
'we need to make an existential choice between <u>exploitation</u>…'	'we need to make an existential choice between exploitation and <u>equilibrium</u>' (DR8)
'we release the dross of our lives…'	'…and protect the seeds of new ideas' (DR2)

The druid problem-solution frame is present in three separate samples of data in this study. It builds the same perception of the current activity of western society and counters it with a solution that their religion offers. Its solutions entail a way of escaping ('a way out') western consumerism, and creating an 'involvement' and a 'relationship' with the natural world. This frame also aligns with my sustainability value, as it rejects the western consumerist attitude and its exploitation of the Earth, and instead calls for a relationship with 'life' and the 'natural

world', placing intrinsic value on other forms of life and therefore aligning with my value of intrinsic worth too.

4.3 Nature as a possession

In the Green Christian text (GR1), there is a pattern of devices which build up a more negative frame which should be considered. To give a fully unbiased analysis of the discourse in this thesis, it is important that I should apply the same critical evaluation of language within this text that goes against my ecosophy and identify linguistic devices that must be resisted. Earlier, I mentioned some issues with the metaphorical use of 'fruits' in the Christian context, which I will explore in more detail along with other problematic linguistic devices here.

Examples of theocentric discourse within this text which focus on God's invention of the world covertly express an anthropocentric view of the human-nature relationship, erasing the animals and plants that are affected by human consumptions from the situation:

We affirm our belief in God as creator of all <u>things</u>…

The Earth's <u>resources</u> are limited

We are using the <u>fruits</u> of creation…

To flourish within the <u>abundant gifts</u> of God's creation

Everyone has an <u>equal entitlement</u> to the <u>fruits</u> of creation (GR1)

These lexical choices within the single text create several negative frames. Firstly, that nature is a possession. Resources and things are examples of metonyms, and their use erases the image of actual living things with intrinsic value. Erasing nature's image removes its agency and instead frames it as the property of humans gifted to us by God. Stibbe (2015) refers to example nouns like 'resources' as a type of discursive erasure known as *the mask*, which erases animals and plants and replaces them with a distorted version of themselves (p152). In the context of this discourse, this objectification of the natural world as 'things' is accepted by God as the creator. This goes against my value of appreciating the intrinsic worth of all

living beings on Earth, erasing all the complexity of the more-than-human world and thus reducing them to a singular semantic group as 'resources'.

The metaphors of the natural world as 'fruits' and 'gifts' which everyone has an 'equal entitlement' to, places humans and the natural world in different levels of a hierarchy in the world. If humans are entitled to the natural world because it is a gift, then this puts other forms of life in a lower semantic category to humanity. The framing of nature as a gift creates a story that the natural world is a gift from God to humanity, which implies once again that God accepts humans as the dominating species of other lifeforms on the earth. These frames erase the natural world from the forefront of our minds, displace them on a hierarchy below humans, and objectifies them as a resource that humans are entitled to. Their theocentric focus in these examples is based on the belief that God has created the natural world for humans, and therefore allows humanity to use it for their own benefit. This belief is implied in this story and prevalent in the descriptions of nature as an 'abundant gift of God's creation'. This of course is rejected by my ecosophy, as my norm states that life is not a hierarchy, but rather an interconnected web between the various living beings on the planet.

Another issue drawn from this text is the contrast between how the author describes the natural world in subtle ways. Towards the beginning, the 'resources' of the natural world are described as follows:

The Earth's resources are <u>limited</u>.

We are <u>using</u> the fruits of creation <u>faster than they can be regenerated</u>

Although it makes use of the problematic description, 'fruits of creation', these examples make the point with high modality that humanity is consuming too much from the Earth. Using 'are' rather than 'we might be' or 'we are possibly' is a lexical choice that affirms the author's standpoint on the issue, constructing their depiction as a factual account (Potter 1996: 112). However, the facticity of these statements is then contradicted by the depiction of creation as an 'abundant gift'.

The goal of this research is to discover new types of stories to live by. Yet it is important in my position as the analyst to identify the use of language in communities that is detrimental to the kind of ecological awareness they wish to encourage. In expressing the Judeo-Christian belief within the depiction of the human-nature relationship, the Green Christian vision statement discreetly creates a story that nature is a possession of, or gift to, humanity, rather than an equal member of God's creation. As well as conflicting with my ecosophy, this story conflicts with the other stories that the same discourse has produced which is much more consistent with the notion that humans and other forms of life are equal co-habitants of the Earth.

4.4   Theocentric 'ecosophies'

Though not defined as such, these statements from both groups present themselves as the ecological philosophies that underpin their values. A definition from Guattari supports this. Guattarian philosophy instructs us to build an ecosophy that considers the 'material, social, and ideological registers of life' (Greenhalgh-Spencer, 2014: 160). Both texts lay out social and ideological registers through stating their ways, their values and the ecological perspectives of their beliefs. From another angle, Naess defines an ecosophy as 'as a set of sentences with a variety of functions, prescriptive and descriptive' (1995: 8). Prescriptively, these statements clearly set out values which maintain an ethical consideration for the more-than-human world. Descriptively, the lexical choices and style of both texts appeal to the members of their communities in the style of language which is common within spiritual or religious discourse. For example, in the Druid text, the lexical choices reflect their spiritual practice:

> As with our <u>Gods</u>, <u>Goddesses</u> and <u>Nature Spirits</u>, our <u>Ancestors</u> provide us with guidance and encouragement

> …we encourage people to follow their own <u>paths</u>

> We <u>revere</u> the <u>Spirits of Nature</u>…

In the Green Christian text on the other hand, religious terminology is more common:

we support and nurture each other in C̲h̲r̲i̲s̲t̲i̲a̲n̲ ̲d̲i̲s̲c̲i̲p̲l̲e̲s̲h̲i̲p̲

the fruits of c̲r̲e̲a̲t̲i̲o̲n̲

G̲o̲d̲'̲s̲ ̲k̲i̲n̲g̲d̲o̲m̲ is characterised by justice, peace, and integrity

Through this crisis G̲o̲d̲ is bringing us b̲a̲c̲k̲ ̲t̲o̲ ̲h̲i̲m̲s̲e̲l̲f̲ ̲i̲n̲ ̲C̲h̲r̲i̲s̲t̲.

These two discursive styles show the descriptive nature of each community's text. The link between them is that they share the same common value for the wellbeing of nature and all life. Particularly, when they use certain phrases which are unique to their group, the deeper inferences beneath certain terms help to connect their members to the natural world. The Druids refer to the natural world collectively as the 'spirits of nature', which offer them [druids] guidance and encouragement. This reference to the natural world provides it with agency by affecting the druids, by giving them guidance or encouragement. Green Christian express this in the term 'creation', which puts humans into the same group as all life under the belief that all life is created by God. It could be suggested that the mental structure of creation as one entity brings humans and other forms of life together through a common creator. However, one of the examples noted earlier showed the author using 'each other' and 'creation' separately, placing them in different semantic categories and therefore opposing the story in this discourse which places all life into God's 'creation'. To refer to humans as creatures of this creation within this story is interesting also, as we usually refer to non-human life forms as 'creatures' in language.

4.5   Theo-centrism in Druidry

Earlier, I examined a less favourable style of discourse in Green Christian that framed Nature as a possession. This frame is developed through the Christian concept that god had created all things including humans, but also created other entities of the earth for humanity's consumption, framing nature as a gift. In a power structure, this places God at the top of the hierarchy, humanity second, and the natural world below them. An essence of this

theocentric mode of representing our world through language is similar in the Keltrian Hallmarks too, by viewing their values as whole:

1. We celebrate the <u>Gods and Goddesses</u> of ancient Ireland.

   This is accomplished through our rituals and sensing their inspiration in our lives.

2. We revere the <u>Spirits of Nature</u>.

   This is also achieved through ritual and awareness of their messages received as we move through our daily routines.

3. We honor our <u>Ancestors</u>.

   As with our Gods, Goddesses and Nature Spirits, our Ancestors provide us with guidance and encouragement. *You do not have to be of any specific ancestry or heritage to practice Keltrian Druidry. We welcome people of all backgrounds.* (DR1)

This list establishes an underlying hierarchy which creates a scale of separate semantic categories, each with their own position of importance based on their positioning on this scale. The first category is of the Gods and Goddesses, second is the Spirits of nature, and then the third is the Ancestors. Focusing on the first two, like the example of Green Christian, the Gods are placed above all else and above the natural world. Though a theocentric perspective in a religious community may not present a negative connotation alone, when judged against my ecosophy this conflicts the idea that life is interconnected, and instead makes a subtle assertion of a natural hierarchy. If we adhere to social categorisation that places Gods above the wellbeing of all life on Earth, this does not encourage us to act in order to preserve the livelihood of the natural world but to only act in order to please Gods, which can distract us from the actions that must be taken in the midst of an ecological crisis.

4.6 Ecological identity in 'Creation'

As I have mentioned in the literature review, previous academic remarks on Christianity's influence on the earth have rebuked it as a human-centric religion. White (1967) claimed that throughout the middle ages, carried through until recent times, the beliefs influenced by Judeo-Christian teachings was that 'man and nature are two things, and man is master' (ibid: 1204).

In Green Christians' seasonal magazines however, there is a story that is prevalent throughout the discourse that connects humans and nature through their shared creation by God. This story is told from a perspective that reframes the human-nature relationship through the frequent and ubiquitous use of 'creation' as a term that links all forms of life to each other.

> …desire to develop a broader understanding of God and **Creation** and the relationship between the two… (GR2: 4)

Previously in Druid discourse, we saw the author place Gods and Nature Spirits in the same semantic categories by including them in the same list, therefore affording them equal value. Here however, God and Creation are separated into different categories. In this example, it is unclear where the author places humanity in this relationship between God and Creation. We can infer that humans are part of Creation and then infer that humanity and other life forms have been placed in the same semantic category, therefore giving them equal intrinsic value. However, humans arguably sit at the boundary of this relationship, as man is made in God's image in Christian belief. This concept could explain why the word Creation is often used to refer to the natural world exclusively from humanity.

The following two passages convey a more neutral use of the term Creation, as humans in this context could be included with the same semantic category.

> I wanted to think about how my wife, and I could motivate both ourselves, and hopefully others, to grow in both our awareness and care for **Creation** and in our love for **Creation** and Creator. (GR2: 5)

I've discovered that learning to care for God's **Creation** means learning to look at it in new ways. It means learning to look at the God-createdness and Godsustainedness of **Creation** and wonder at the beauty in things that previously I would have missed (GR2: 5)

The next passage clearly is inclusive of both humanity and non-human life, as it urges the reader to 'grow' by being compassionate for our 'neighbour', and places all species within the semantic category of the neighbour.

Growing in compassion for our neighbour, which includes other species, is a way we grow. Learning to love Creation involves empathy and compassion... (GR3: 9)

We also see the same term used in the Green Christian vision statement. These examples use the term in a more exclusive sense.

We are using the fruits of **creation** faster than they can be regenerated and are enslaved to destructive behaviors.

Only when reconciled with God can we be fully reconciled with each other and with **creation**. (GR1)

The metaphor 'fruits of creation' creates an entailment that creation is a resource for human consumption, which places humans and other species in separate semantic categories and works against my ecosophy's value for acknowledging intrinsic worth in all species.

It seems that Green Christian authors have substituted the noun phrases 'nature', 'natural world', 'environment', 'animals', 'plants' and so on with the noun 'creation'. The author creates a story that could potentially align with my ecosophy through its creation of ecological identities. There are a few examples where humans and other species are included within the same use of Creation, and this puts them in the same semantic category and therefore equally intrinsically valuable. However, the exclusive form of using Creation to separate humans and Creation is potentially dangerous, as it forces both groups into separate positions on the social hierarchy. As the 'fruits' for our consumption, this expression places

Creation in this context in the subordinate position to humanity and makes them appear less intrinsically valuable than us.

The overlexicalization of 'creation' implies two ideological assertions. Firstly, by evading the typical terms such as 'nature' or 'the natural world' which immediately differentiate humans from other living organisms, the reference to the natural world as 'creation' evokes a metaphor that portrays all living organisms on the earth that are not human as part of God's creation, thus equally as important as humans. Chilton and Schäffner tell us metaphors 'work by applying one taken-for-granted field of knowledge and applying it to another' (2011: 320). Green Christian have overlexicalised the religious term 'creation' to reinforce a concept that links all life through their shared creation by one God. Like my justifications for using the 'more-than-human world' in this thesis, rather than the normal terms we see in the everyday English language, Christian environmentalists' employ this metaphor to connect humans and other living organisms as co-habitants of the earth. From the Christian perspective, what this kind of language tells Christians is that all of creation is as important to God as they are. This linguistic device uses the 'taken-for-granted field of knowledge' (Stibbe, 2015) within the Christian community's understanding of creation and applies it to the more-than-human world.

The distinctive lexical choice of 'creation' which can potentially encompass all living beings, conveys the ideology of empathy for all life. What it means to be a particular kind of person (ibid: 107), in this case a Christian, is demonstrated through the Christian concept of creation in this text, which creates a story that 'Christians view all creation as equal'. This value reflects the principle of self-realization stated in my ecosophy, through the empathy that is given to the natural world in the story encoded within this discourse.

4.7 Identity in Green Christian magazine

The following passages from Green Christian magazine reinforce the notion of humans being connected to the natural world through being equally created by God:

> Pope Francis wrote in Laudato Si' – "to live life to the full is to be Creation centred: we are creatures of God, in **fellowship** with all other creatures of God." Being is about being **togethe**r: we are a **group of pilgrims** journeying **together**. (GR4: 11)

> Most profoundly, for Christians and others, nature is not there merely for **human benefit**. We know we have a **duty** to cherish the Creation that God has placed us among, as one of **God's creatures** (GR4: 11)

These two passages tell a few stories about the relationship between humans and the natural world which are dominant through Christian environmentalist discourse. Firstly, that all life is connected as "God's creatures". The metaphor of "pilgrims journeying together" highlights a theme of connectedness between all life in Christianity. Stibbe (2019) discusses the expression of kinship and friendship with the more-than-human world in positive discourses. He identifies certain trigger words such as 'brotherhood', 'friend', or 'bonds' which refer to the relationship between humans and other species.

In this text, the trigger words 'fellowship', 'together', and the metaphor of a 'group of pilgrims…' evokes a frame that humans and other lifeforms are connected with each other through their shared existence as a creation of God. The author refers to humans as 'one of God's creatures', which places humanity and the more-than-human world within the same semantic category. Using these frames create a story that humanity is equal to other forms of life on the planet, and that their shared connection as the Creation of God means they have the same intrinsic worth, and therefore are equally worthy of reverence and respect. This aligns with my value of intrinsic worth. Included in this is the regular use of the pronoun 'we', to include all species. This not only reinforces the common semantic category that the author places all species in, but places the 'duty' of protecting the planet on all living beings, not just humans. It also reinforces the 'togetherness' that is discussed in the text.

The second passage does not directly tell a story through the term 'creation' but in fact shares a principle with my ecosophy, making it an example of language we should promote. The layer of analysis which Fairclough (2015) refers to as the 'level of discursive practice', or the interpretation of the 'meso-level' of discourse, is concerned with which institution

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produces a given text and to whom that text is directed at. What is significant about this passage at the level of discursive practice is that the author addresses *Christians and others*, which identifies the difference in belief between 'them' and other humans, but acknowledges that we all have a *duty* to cherish the natural world as something *not there merely for human benefit*. This view is fitting with my principle of intrinsic worth, but is also extremely important in creating a larger impact on human ideals towards other forms of life. Groups that support not only their members in being environmentally aware and compassionate for the natural world but other groups of humanity, share my ecosophy's principle of inclusion, which states that everyone should contribute to the wellbeing of the planet.

The address of *others* in the text indirectly welcomes the collaborations of other communities regardless of their religious position or beliefs. This is done in the name of ecological welfare and to stress the importance of humanity being more concerned for the more-than-human world. All these linguistic features build a story of togetherness in the world, and aligns again with my value of intrinsic worth and also my value of inclusion.

Returning briefly to 'creation', I consider this term a positive framing in Christian environmentalist discourse if it is framed in a way where humans are explicitly recognized as part of creation in the same way that other beings are. It is ecologically beneficial for a community to perceive the more-than-human world as part of God's creation in the same way as they themselves are his creation, as it influences them to be caring, respectful and mindful of how it can be exploited. Its use is akin to my reasons for preferring the term 'more-than-human world', as it doesn't paint the natural world as peripheral around humans, like Goatly argues the term 'environment' does (2016: 245). This sort of language embraces a common value and equality between all species.

Other than the use of Creation as a social category, Green Christian create additional categorisations that offer alternative perspectives to the hierarchical relationship of the more-than-human world. In a leaflet on biodiversity found on their older website when the organisation was known as 'Christian Ecology Link', the author affords salience to the natural world by using a list:

But according to the Bible all creatures are good in themselves. They are not just for our use. All creation from <u>wild animals</u> and <u>cattle</u> to <u>fruit trees</u> and <u>people</u> praise God by living their natural lives. (GR6)

The author refers to all creation and then begins to list examples of members of that group. Beginning with animals, to cattle, to fruit trees, and then to people, implies a certain hierarchy of importance when creating an ordered list. By having people at the bottom of the list, and non-human life, such as trees, cattle, and wild animals above them, the author inverts the social hierarchy and priorities other beings over humans in the group of Creation. As the author is Christian, this form of salience constructs a narrative about their perception of their ecological identity, that within God's creation, humanity is not the most important species. This aligns with my ecosophy on the principle of intrinsic worth, by including all these groups into the same social category ('all creation') and then also inverting the hierarchy to place other life forms above humanity. One example in the Druid texts uses the same linguistic device:

The story of the land and its peoples still exists…(DR8)

Again, we see the natural world take precedence over humans in the clause, inverting the usual hierarchy in western discourse that places human life above all other forms.

So far, we have uncovered a story that expresses the identity of a Christian person as part of creation, and in turn as equal an element of God's creation as animals, plants, trees, rivers and oceans. This story is a constructive ideal about humanity's place in the world and its coexistence with non-human life. We can discover more ideals about Christian ecological identity further within the text:

Christians **must not** be carnivores (GR3: 8)

Making animal welfare a primary concern is part of fulfilling our calling to be human, flourishing in self-giving love" (GR3: 9)

Some people dismiss Christian environmentalism as trendy left wing thinking which distorts the gospel. To them I would only say that it was already there in the Bronze Age – in the prophetic wisdom of the Bible (GR5: 14)

These three passages all connect the Christian identity in a pattern that implies that it is important to care for the environment if you are a Christian. The first clause commands the reader with a negative modal auxiliary verb - '**must not**' - to reinforce an ideal that it is wrong for Christians to eat the meat of other beings. The second refers to animal welfare as part of a *calling* for humans. Also, the pronoun, 'our', establishes a shared identity between the writer and the reader. The final passage thwarts an identity that has been placed on Christian Environmentalism as 'trendy left wing thinking'. It rebukes this with a claim that the care for creation has existed in the religion for thousands of years.

The impression from these texts is that Green Christian wish to reinforce an identity of Christians which makes caring for the environment an integral trait of the members of their religion. The focus is particularly towards their view on animals and other living beings. Crompton and Kasser (2009: 7) argue the importance of identity in changing the values we currently hold towards the natural world, and that we should promote the alternative aspects of our identity that are environmentally beneficial. In providing a discourse that offers an alternative perspective on religious identity (particularly Christian identity), Green Christian magazine is reshaping the narrative of Christianity to highlight the need to care for creation. More passages from the same article within Green Christian mirror this:

it's hard to deny a dog's delight in play, or yelp of pain when hurt… (GR3: 8)

to recognise the feelings of other sentient creatures, and be moved by their suffering, leading to acts of loving mercy to ease their burdens (GR3: 9)

God's purpose and mission, is one in which God creates and loves, attends to the cry of the needy and liberates the oppressed, and brings the light of hope into the dark places of despair. (GR3: 9)

This narrative portrays God's intention not only for human welfare but for the flourishing of the whole of Creation: plants and trees, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea and all living creatures. Indeed, they are related, and should be understood holistically (GR3: 9)

Growing in compassion for our neighbour, which includes other species, is a way we grow. Learning to love Creation involves empathy and compassion (GR3: 9)

These excerpts convey empathetic values for nature, building a story which connects the Christian identity with a loving concern for non-human life. Stibbe tells us that the perception of identity may 'encourage people to behave in ways which help to protect the systems that life depends on' (2015: 107). Altering that perception through discourse is a valuable tool in changing stories in western society to create more environmentally beneficial worldviews.

4.8   Salience through Grammar

Ecolinguistics often examines how particular forms of language erase the natural world from our minds. Actors in a discourse can be backgrounded, excluded, and erased from text (Stibbe, 2015: 145). Fairclough describes how actors can be backgrounded from text using abstract language as opposed to concrete and forthright details of the actors involved (2003: 139). In destructive discourses where animals are portrayed, an author can erase the agency of an entire species by the choice of language. Even concrete details, which instead categorise all members of a species with the same attributes, leads to homogenisation. Stibbe identifies this in an excerpt from the British Pig Association:

The Gloucestershire Old Spot is a large meaty animal with a broad and deep body and large hams. Its white coat has large clearly defined black spots (2015: 167)

The process of homogenisation is important as it decreases the salience of an animal as a 'unique being, and instead represents them as one of a set of equivalents' (ibid). The clause above shows basic use of definite and indefinite articles to create a simple descriptive use of grammar, which in grammatical transitivity we refer to as an **existential process** (Goatly, 2016: 54). This is destructive as this language doesn't encourage us to look at the pig as unique

or as an individual, but just simply *existing* with characteristics that are shared with the rest of its species.

In contrast, the Discover Druidry blog is filled with strong salience patterns through its depictions of nature. The main pattern is within what Goatly calls the text's **transitivity** (2016: 54). That is, the use of the grammar within a clause which conceptualises a representation of the world. The druid authors conceptualise the natural world through various grammatical choices that makes nature the active agents in a process.

> As I sit here, writing this, the **rain** taps at the **window**, the **wind** howling down **the street**, carrying with it the scent of winter and the first of the autumn leaves. **The sky** is fast moving and furious – low dark grey clouds set amidst a backdrop of pure white/grey. (DR2)

Just in this short excerpt, two consecutive clauses make nature highly salient. Firstly, it can be noted that rather than simply existing, the writer is representing the natural world as carrying out independent actions. *The rain (Actor) taps at the window (Affected)*, where the rain is the actor, and the window is the affected entity. This gives salience to the rain as the actor of a material process. Immediately after, *the wind (S) howling (V) down the street (R)* shows the wind as the speaker (S) in a verbal process, to which it is assigned the verbiage 'to howl' (V) which is then performed down the street (R). Finally, the sky is the actor of both a material process of being *fast-moving* as an Actor, and a mental process as the Experiencer of the emotion *furious*.

This continues further into the text:

> …altogether too quickly, it is over, at least the Fall is, when the **leaves change** and **drop** to the ground. After that, it seems Winter is here – only allowing Autumn a brief time of grace to **shine** in **her beauty** before all is blanketed under the dreamy cold slumber of Winter (DR2)

Leaves are also acting in material processes by *changing* and *dropping.* Autumn is assigned a relational process in the clause in its state of *shining*, but the author's use of '*her*' rather than

'it' highlights Autumn's salience with a personal pronoun and an assigned gender. This individualisation combats the usual depiction of Autumn as simply a season, and a metaphorical image of a shining, beautiful female is portrayed. Whether this imagery is immediately clear to the readership is unimportant here, what is significant is that an everyday occurrence like the end of a season is poetically conveyed in the text to create a more vivid portrayal to the norm, giving *her* much more prominence. In the following example the same agency is given to the natural world:

> I placed my hands upon the soft earth, grounding and feeling the earth's energies stirring as the growing <u>heat of the sun</u> **shone** <u>on my head and shoulders</u>. An image of a large, coiled white serpent or a dragon beneath the dark earth sprang into my mind. The serpent was **slowly stirring, rising up** through the ground, slowly uncoiling towards the warmth and light from its dark and comfortable winter slumber (DR3)

Again, the author's depiction of nature allows non-human entities to be actors in the text. They are agentive and independent through various material processes (*shone, stirring, rising, uncoiling*). The following example shows how these druid writers bring salience to plants:

> Here in my garden in the UK, the crocuses are starting to come out, and a lone daffodil ***stands courageously*** amidst the dried, chopped stalks of last year's growth. (DR3)

The daffodil is personified with the property of *courage* whilst it *stands* (a material process) among 'last year's growth'.

Druid writers also commonly identify themselves engaging in processes with nature. These **relational processes** can be used to 'explicitly categorise the participants in the text' (Goatly, 2016: 60), and helps us achieve an understanding of the Druid's aspiring connection with the more-than-human world. Goatly urges us to ask, 'what kinds of qualities or categories are assigned to them?' (ibid). The following are passages from three separate sources:

> As someone who has worked with the land, like others who have experienced the same thing – **I** <u>have felt</u> the <u>pain</u> and <u>sadness</u> **of the land**, which has <u>suffered</u> under much bloodshed and also <u>been abused</u> greatly **by humanity**. (DR4)

They encourage us…to commune with **the trees** and **the stones**, **the animals**, **the earth** and **the sky** (DR4)

Druidry also tells us that **we** can develop relationships with **animals**… (DR5)

An essential way of working with animals from a druid perspective is simply to include animals in our lives – spending time with **them**, caring for **them**… (DR8)

This year I was so busy identifying plants, that I could hardly keep up with the new ones that presented themselves to me. Next year I hope to spend more time connecting with **them**, learning from **them**, and gathering more herbs in a sacred way… (DR5)

The verbs consistently used in these texts highlights the 'personhood' of the more-than-human world. To be considered a person is related to one's personhood, which is given not only through law (such as those in US Government or New Zealand; see Stibbe in Milstein, T., & Castro-Sotomayor, J, 2019), but also through the linguistic choices of a given text. In druid discourse, we humans _have felt_ the **land's** _pain_ and _sadness_, its _suffering_ and _abuse_. By giving the land its own feelings and emotion, the text creates a metaphorical story that _the land is a person_, the land is afforded personhood.

Although nature is the affected participant with humans as the actor in various processes; what assigns nature's salience is the depiction of feeling. The druids assign them with attributes that Eisenstein would say highlights the 'sacredness' of the more than human world (2011: xv), where the text considers each land, plant or animal as 'special, unique, one of a kind. These druid writers go against our cultural tendency of homogenising the wide scope of the natural world by focusing on their relationship with individuals within it by _spending time_ with them, and _caring for them_, so that they can better _connect with them_. These material processes bring both humans and nature to prominence in the text, because they are both sharing different roles in the same action:

Encourage **us** [TOKEN] to commune with **the trees** [VALUE]

…learning from **them** [humans]… [VALUE]

> **I** have felt [humans] **(CARRIER)** the pain and sadness **of the land** [AFFECTED], which has suffered [AFFECTED, CARRIER] under much bloodshed.

By both participants (humans and nature) being assigned a range of different categories and qualities in a single text, it balances their relationship and issues no authority over either group. A category of mutual relationship and feeling between humanity and the more-than-human world is prevalent throughout these texts. Referring to personhood, linguistic signifiers which place the natural world in positions of agency, or acting according to will are further indications of giving non-human life the position of personhood. In the text, a shared experience between humans and animals is also given by one of the more popular druid authors, Philip Carr-Gomm:

> When we need the qualities or abilities that these animals represent, we can call upon them to help us – seeing and relating to them in our inner world, dancing or singing with them, and connecting with them in the outer world too. (DR8)

The shared experience of the actions in the above text (seeing, relating, dancing, singing) are given to the non-human beings through the connective 'with'. Although humans are the primary agents of these processes, the connecting 'with them' in the text gives the animals a shared semantic position with humans through their role as the accompaniment in this clause. (Larson, 1984: 199-203).

The spiritual perspective of Druid discourse brings animals into prominence with humans, by involving them in the same material processes and thus giving them personhood. Depicting the natural world as an experiencer of the same emotions and actions as humans not only dissolves the usual absence, exclusion, or backgrounding that the discourse of erasure commits, but shows humans and nature sharing equal agency in the world.

4.9 Animal Symbolism in Druidry

A distinguishing feature of Druid belief is a spiritual connection with the animal kingdom. To a druid, each animal represents a certain quality or attribute that we humans require for our everyday lives. Philip Carr-Gomm tells us that "sometimes, the animals that become

meaningful for us are, in fact, symbolisations as parts of ourselves…" (2002). The following are examples of this:

> *"The wren symbolized **efficiency**, **activity**, **cunningness** and **alertness**. The wren was thought to be the bird most revered by the Druids. This bird often gives off the energy of **being tiny** and **humble** but also **resourceful** and **proud**." (DR6)*

> *"The boar symbolized masculine power and ferocity as well as being associated with war and conflict. This animal wielded great power and "darkness" that needed to be channelled when the occasion was appropriate." (DR6)*

> *"Goats and sheep symbolized peace, purification and compassion. Sheep in particular could make affectionate and gentle companion pets" (DR6)*

> *"Dogs symbolized protection, loyalty and selflessness. Dogs were invaluable as hunters and companions. They were herders as well as guard dogs against predators and intruders and made favoured pets and loving family members." (DR6)*

These clauses are only snippets of a full, much more detailed mythical description and history of each animal, and these examples do not cover the full list of animals the author romanticises. Druid literature discusses the symbolic importance of animals at great length, so its writings are worthy of some critical analysis.

Firstly, by observing the text above holistically, we see the **basic level category** of each animal is identified. Each clause names the animal. Not the bird, but the *wren*. Not the fish, but the *salmon*. This salience pattern refers to 'specific and concrete lexical sets' from nature (Stibbe, 2015: 163) which allow us to visualise the animals, and bring them into prominence in our minds. In the text there isn't just 'animals' or 'species' but specific names; *wrens, horses, dogs,* and *salmons.* Embedded cognitive theory suggests that our usual lexicon for referring to the more-than-human world - with words like *environment*, *ecosystem* or

organism - are abstractions. "Basic-level words activate motor programs in our brain as part of our speech comprehension; the word *cat* evokes motor programs that have to do with prototypical interactions such as petting them" (Lakoff and Wehling, 2012: 41). Abstractions such as *animal, fauna,* or *species* don't have the same cognitive effect. We don't imagine any particular living being through these terms. Lakoff and Wehling deem basic-level concepts as the 'most powerful and effective in communication' (ibid), and they are most effective for bringing salience to the more-than-human world at the lexical layer of language. The issue with using abstractions for nouns of the various life forms other than humans is that our cognitive interpretations of these various beings becomes abstract themselves. When we use the word 'species' in the context of extinction, we may not imagine a real animal ceasing to exist, but just an unknown species separated from our conscience through the absence of the basic level usage of nouns - which activate our cognitive relationship with that species. By adopting basic level categories, we allow ourselves to think of the animal itself, and have a real emotional response to the possibility of their extinction, thus creating a closer connection with us and the natural world.

Looking further in at the lexical choice and grammar, we can use transitivity analysis again to draw out more patterns of salience. The clauses used will be introduced as example 1 to 4 in reference to the table above.

> *This bird [CARRIER] often gives off the energy of being __tiny__ and __humble__ but also __resourceful__ and __proud__ [ATTRIBUTE X4].*

Example 1 involves the wren in the process of 'giving off an energy', which is attributive, as its attributes are described. It is given characteristics of its existence, such as being tiny, humble, resourceful, and proud. The wren's salience is brought to the reader's attention by these attributes, as it develops a character of the wren beyond its physical characteristics.

Whereas most nature writing exudes positive narratives filled with delightful and kind imagery of the natural world, druid symbolism of the boar as powerful and ferocious figure in *Example 2* conveys a different narrative. Not what we would consider positive characteristics, those of 'ferocity' and 'darkness', but in the same way the author does with the wren, we are

given a unique sense of the personality of a boar. The boar **'<u>wielded</u>** great **power'** and is thus given an agentive role in the clause as agent of the material process of wielding.

Example 3 and 4 slightly conflict with my ecosophy, which has intrinsic worth of the more-than-human world at its core. Although there is a relational attribute of '***companion'****ship* given to goats and sheep, making good pets does not seem to be a good alternative to portraying an animal. Neither does identifying a dog as '*invaluable'* as a hunter for human purpose. This yields their place in the world to be purely for human benefit. The concept of domestication and the keeping of pets does help us to maintain a relationship with certain animals, but only the few that human society can domesticate. And even so, this enforces a power relation between us and our pets, and strengthens our dominion over them.

Example 4 portrays the human-animal relationship in a more amicable manner through lexical choice, with dogs as symbols for 'protection, loyalty, and selflessness'. The concept of the dog being a form of protection, and a companion for hunting is averse to my ecosophical standpoint, as they are then used for human activities which affect the welfare and livelihood of other species. However, in this same clause they are also referred to as pets, but then as 'loving family members', which encourages a familial relationship between human families and the dog.

Something to consider is whether the concept of animals as symbols is a human creation made for the druids to connect with nature in a spiritual, yet unrealistic sense. The question is; 'does the assignment of symbolic features to animals make us consider them as more important or less? In extension to this you could ask; 'would this encourage us to treat animals better or worse?'

Here is where my ecosophy aligns with the concept of symbolism. Identifying the personality traits of different species of animals not only resists homogenisation, but also allows us to realise all the various emotions, traits, and senses that the animal kingdom shares with us. The more that humanity recognises this, the more likely we are to empathise with them.

Beyond the symbolic sense, the traits which Druids apply to each animal helps us to perceive them as characters, with individual traits and niches, not just products of their species. Unlike the earlier example of the Gloucester Old Spot from Stibbe (2015), this rhetoric challenges the homogenisation of species. Although, the author's characterisation of each animal is in fact a homogenisation of their attributes, as he describes each type of animal like the bird having these distinctive traits throughout its entire species, rather than giving those traits to just one particular bird. This does partly align with my ecosophy however, because it encourages the consideration of a species' traits and behaviours as opposed to its physical attributes. This implies they have some form of intrinsic value.

In basic terms, if we can see the personalities of different species and their individualism, as we do with all humans, we will begin to consider their intrinsic worth beyond our own benefits. Thus, the discourse of Druidry aligns with my ecosophy.

The more problematic areas of language which were picked up in this analysis are relatively scarce in comparison to the large pattern of salience that I have uncovered. The term 'pet' (in examples 3 and 4) isn't necessarily the type of language that creates negative stories about animals alone, and also does not counteract the salient language considered in this chapter. As pets, they are still given considerable agency within the discourse, and aren't erased in any way from the use of the term. A pattern of erasure is defined by Stibbe as a 'systematic absence, backgrounding or distortion' within text through use of language (2015: 146). The dog as a living being is not pushed to the background or distorted by the word 'pet', but rather portrayed through the lens of druid symbolism. From a linguistic perspective and a consideration of my Ecosophy's values, the term pet places the animal in a separate semantic category within a social hierarchy, where the owner is in a position of power over the animal. This term can therefore be deemed negative in this regard as it reduces the intrinsic value of the animal and follows a hierarchical perspective of the human-nature relationship. Whereas the term companion, which can be used to refer to a pet, can also be used to refer a human friend, maintaining both species within the linguistic domain of 'companion' in the same semantic group and affording equal intrinsic worth to both parties. Overall, the discourse of druid symbolism seems to create a salient, poetic, and honest

representation of various animals and describes their relationship with - and importance to - humans.

Druid Symbolism and Druid practice is much about the spiritual connection between humans and between the land, animals, and other forms the natural world takes. The Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids (OBD) develops spiritual guides for their community to engage with, and take lessons from creatures of the more-than-human world to help with their own lives. The following passage identifies the grammatical and lexical choices that place the spider as the actor in the text:

- Spiders and their webs **draw attention** [ACTOR] to our life choices
- **Spiders** [ACTOR] **make us** [AFFECTED] **aware** of the amazing construction of their webs.
- The **Spider** [ACTOR] **teaches us** [AFFECTED] to maintain a balance
- Spiders [CARRIER] are <u>very delicate</u> [ATTRIBUTE] creatures
- Spider [IDENTIFIED] is <u>Grandmother</u> [IDENTIFIER]
- **Spider knows** the past affects the future and vice versa (DR7)

The two clauses with the underlined lexis are **relational clauses** (Goatly, 2016: 55). The first clause is the attributive relational clause (the spider is the carrier, 'very delicate' is the attribute. The second is the identifying relational clause (the Spider is the identified, and Grandmother is the Identifier). Identifying the relational processes of a spider in this text helps us to identify what 'categories or qualities are assigned to them' (ibid: 60). We can see this salience pattern throughout druid symbolism which assigns qualities of all kinds to lots of different animals, and brings them to the centre of the discourse.

The bolded lexis all describes events where the spider is the actor (draws attention, makes aware, teaches, knows). These all ascribe power to the actor as a participant in the text. More importantly, these clauses register 'us', the humans, as the affected participants. This gives power in the material process to the spider and in doing so strengthens their power in the event.

The next passage is an extract for the druid community to visualise their relationship with a spider:

> In your mind, <u>you see</u> an open place with one exit. From that exit<u>, you see</u> a small garden Spider approaching. <u>You follow</u> the Spider and <u>you see</u> that she walks to a tree. In that tree she starts to weave a web blocking the exit. The spider weaves her web so steadily that is *fascinates you* and soon <u>you realise</u> that the weaving itself is a meditation. With that weaving <u>you imagine her as a creator</u> weaving the whole universe and <u>you also imagine her as a dream catcher</u> weaving the net to manifest our deepest desires. When the Spider is finished weaving, she sits in the middle of the web and she starts her *teaching to you*. *She ends her teachings by telling you* that she weaves a new web every day. *She tells you* that she takes down the web when it is ruined and begins again every day and she never has to think about it, she just spins her web with great care. *After giving her lessons to you*, she takes down her web blocking the exit and leaves. By doing so *she is signalling that it is time to end your meditation* or visualisation. (DR7)

The following extracts from the text point out the clauses which place you (the human, the audience) as the senser of mental processes:

> <u>You see x3</u>

> <u>You realise</u>

> <u>You imagine her as…</u>

Now, the following extracts point out the clauses which make the spider the activated participant:

> *Fascinates you [you are the Senser, spider is Phenomenon]*

> *Teaching to you [verbal process – spider is Sayer, you are Receiver]*

> *Telling you/tells you x2 [verbal process – spider is Sayer, you are Receiver]*

Giving her lessons to you [material process – spider is Agent, you are Beneficiary]

Signalling (to you) [verbal process – spider is Sayer, you are Receiver]

As well as material actions, the verbs *to tell*, and *to signal* are anthropomorphic verbal processes which tell us the 'main concerns of the sayer' (Goatly, ibid: 66). The spider is the sayer, concerned with telling 'you' about her web, *giving you lessons* and *ending* your meditation. Her concern in this text is being in control of your actions in this extract, the spider is clearly the prime actor and most powerful participant.

The spider is also the actor in other background processes within the text that do not directly affect the human:

Walks to a tree

Starts to weave a web

Weaves her web so steadily

Weaving the whole universe

A dream catcher weaving the net

She sits in the middle of the web

She takes down the web

She never has to think about it [mental process – others are material]

She just spins her web

She takes down her web…and leaves

Animal symbolism is clearly concerned with the natural world being a powerful actor in the text - teaching humans, being in control of their actions, helping them, being their

companions, playing the key part of a story. The underlying ideology of druid spirituality provides a great alternative discourse that balances power relations between us and nature.

We can now begin to see a strong salience pattern throughout animal symbolism from various druid texts that tell positive stories about lots of different beings. Through careful analysis of transitivity structures, we can expose the social activation of the more-than-human world and how this can foreground animals in language (Van Leeuwen, 2008). An important part of this analysis to reflect on is whether these actions given to the non-human beings are to be considered 'anthropomorphic'. Earlier, I referred to the spider in the extract being involved in *anthropomorphic* verbal processes. Actions such as signaling, walking, sitting etc. do not have anthropomorphic properties because they are not exclusively human activities. Arguably however, particular actions of the spider within the Druid extract, are exclusively human. *Signaling*, *thinking*, or *sitting* may be a possible action for an everyday spider to make, but *teaching* perhaps not. Particularly in the context of the passage, teaching to a human, or telling them that they make a new web when their current one is ruined, can be considered uniquely anthropomorphic.

4.9.1   Animals as spiritual resources

On the other side of the coin, the symbolic representation of animals can conceal a narrative of animals as resources for humans at a spiritual level. For animals to be conveyed as salient beings in discourse, the analysis has far shown that agency through grammar must be present:

> …animals in the spirit-world as well as the physical world can guide and counsel, heal and protect us. (DR8)

In this passage, animals are the active participants by guiding, counselling, healing, and protecting. 'Us', or humans, are the affected participants. The inversion of hierarchy where animals are agentive, and the humans are affected by the animal's actions has already been shown to convey the intrinsic worth of other species and is consistent with my Ecosophy.

However, some examples of the discourse that discusses animals in the context of 'spiritual' connections is less compatible with this type of story:

For example: the bear, boar, cat, dog, goose, otter and raven are all associated with the quality of protection; the adder, boar, dog, frog, ram and raven <u>are connected with healing</u>; the owl and raven with initiation, and so on.

When <u>we need</u> the <u>qualities</u> or <u>abilities</u> that these <u>animals represent</u>, we can call upon them to <u>help us</u>

The fish as a <u>central symbol</u> within a spiritual tradition is…ubiquitous

The salmon <u>represents</u> the <u>goal</u> of <u>every Druid</u>…the Salmon of <u>wisdom</u>. (DR8)

At first view, these extracts have similar linguistic attributes as previous examples. Most notably, the use of basic level categories is consistent and therefore construes salience by keeping the identity of the animal at the forefront of our minds. However, the underlined sections of the text are examples of animals being used by the Druid tradition to represent something for them, rather than to be individuals of their own right. The animals are categorised as 'representations' of various spiritual aspects. This separates them from us by placing them in a separate semantic group to humans. As 'symbols' and representations, this language in facts disconnects the animals from us, and takes away their intrinsic value.

The 'Salmon of Wisdom' erases the agency of the animal altogether. Instead, its 'wisdom' is a metaphor created by Druidry, and the animal's main function is to be an artificial symbol for the 'goal of every druid':

When the Druid today seeks the Salmon of Wisdom they are connecting not only to a tradition of the ancient Druids, but also to an understanding that is rooted deep in the collective awareness of all humanity. (DR8)

Here, the Salmon is totally erased except for its name which stands for the metaphor of wisdom in Druid spirituality. By metaphorically 'seeking' the Salmon, the individual gains no understand of the natural world either. Instead, the author separates Druids from the natural world, as the Salmon helps to understand something within 'humanity'.

These representations of animals as symbols rather than their true identities are known as *conceptual blends* (Fauconnier and Turner, 2003), which distort the concept of these animals as living beings. Take for example, the term used in the example 'Salmon of Wisdom'. The two named elements are the *Salmon* and *wisdom*. In the case of nominal compounds, the formal unit names two elements in two different spaces, and directs the 'understander' to find the rest (ibid). In the context of the discourse, *wisdom* is what the Salmon provides in Druid spirituality for Druids, not a quality given uniquely to the Salmon. The conceptual blend is created with the use of the animal as a symbol for attaining wisdom, rather than the animal being given the quality of being wise. So, we have the Salmon as one element, and wisdom placed separately as another element to create the symbolic nature of the phrase. This takes intrinsic worth from the species semantically by representing the Salmon not as an equal living being but as a metaphor for achieving wisdom, erasing its true identity and therefore conflicting with my Ecosophy.

Although we can see that portraying animals as symbols is a harmful way of constructing our relationship with the more-than-human world, the use of functional grammar in the spiritual texts of Druidry make the narrative more difficult to assess:

> We discover the special qualities and gifts which these animals offer through experience – through exploring the world of animals and relating <u>to them</u> out in nature, and through interacting <u>with them</u> in the Otherworld too.

> We can call upon them to help us – seeing and relating <u>to them</u> in our inner world (DR8)

There are two linguistic devices that create a narrative of the human-nature relationship in these examples. The first is that the mental processes make humans the actor and the animals the affected participants. 'We' are the sensers of the mental processes, 'seeing' and 'relating' (x2), and the animals are the phenomenon (Bloor et al, 2004: 117). Placing the participants this way grammatically makes humans more agentive over animals, as animals aren't sharing in the mental process with humans directly. However, the accompaniment 'with them', brings animals back into salience by affording them an indirect involvement in the process with the

senser (Larson, 1984). These two linguistic devices in the same clauses create an ambivalent discourse (Stibbe, 2015) in accordance with my ecosophy. Though the placement of animals as the affected participants over humans neglects their intrinsic worth, they are then given an accompanying role through the connective 'with'. As an ambivalent discourse, these examples 'only partially accord' with my ecosophy, as they contain 'a mixture of benefits and drawbacks' (Stibbe, ibid: 200) in building a sense of intrinsic value in the lives of non-human beings.

4.10 The Language of Connectedness

This next section of the Green Christian analysis explores the themes of connectedness within the texts and the lexical and grammatical choices made by the authors that uncover these themes. These texts discuss the role of 'animism' in Christian belief. Once we employ transitivity analysis to uncover these choices, we can liken them to what was previously explored in Druidry, and make links between two very different religions which happen to share a similar relationship with the natural world.

> …animism believes that everything that exists is both alive and sacred, **with all things being interconnected and related**: that the Earth, **along with each animal, plant, seemingly inert object and natural phenomena are persons** (or potentially so); a community of Creation requiring harmonious relationships between humans, their ancestors and wild nature, nurtured by respectful and sustainable lifeways… (GR3: 11)

The author directly includes all living beings as having personhood (to be a person). This is expressed with a high modality with the appraisal item 'are', a plural indicative which includes all these beings to be 'persons' with a high level of facticity. This high level of certainty converses that this is a fact to the reader, which is positive because it places all beings in the same semantic category.

The text is describing animism in the context of religion, and echoes prime details of what my ecosophy states. My statement of 'life is an interconnected web', and my statements of self-realization and empathy align with the sections highlighted above, particularly 'natural phenomena **are** persons (or potentially so)'. The 'potentially so' declaration can be

interpreted as an understanding of how western society might consider the metaphor 'natural phenomena are persons' as unusual. However, the metaphor itself acknowledges a need for us to view the natural world in the same way we view humans for us to treat them differently. My ecosophy calls for a realisation that we share more with other living beings than what makes us different, and that empathy and realisation of this is an important step in changing our attitudes towards them. The passage above shares the same ethos.

> …It calls us to **nurture our connection with nature**. We begin by opening our senses to the natural world. Then we begin to observe and **learn from** nature: "**Ask** the animals and **they will teach you**; the birds of the air, and they **will tell you**; **ask** the plants of the earth and they will **teach** you; and the fish of the sea **will declare to you**" (Job 12:7-8). (GR3: 12)

The first clause in this passage does not seem aligned with my ecosophy. Although it calls for us to nurture our connection with the natural world is a directly positive instruction, linguistically it separates us from nature, as it places nature in a category to semantically cover all living beings that are not human. The more positive linguistic features in this extract share similarities with examples of animal symbolism in Druidry. The following passage draws out the sections of the text where applying a transitivity analysis of grammatical structures and processes reveals connections with this text and the texts this thesis has analysed in Druid discourse:

Green Christian text examples	Druid Discourse text examples
<u>Learn</u> from nature...	<u>Fascinates</u> you
<u>Ask</u> the animals	<u>Teaching</u> to you
They will <u>teach</u> you	<u>Telling</u> you/<u>tells</u> you x2
Birds of the air...they will <u>tell</u> you	<u>Giving her lessons</u> to you

<u>Ask</u> the plants... They will <u>teach</u> you Fish of the sea...will <u>declare</u> to you (GR3: 12)	<u>Signalling</u> (to you) (DR7)

Similarities between the processes within each text are clear. Agency is given to the natural world and 'you' are affected by their processes in both. Although 'you', the human, is given the verbal process of **ask**ing on two occasions in the Green Christian text, these are reliant on who the receiver is of the process (the animals and plants), which makes them agentive. The same relational process (to teach) are present in both texts, equally making the human the affected participant, being taught by the animals and plants.

The druid text on the right refers to the spider from the Druid extract, which is almost poetic in how it discusses animal symbolism. Green Christian are clearly also engaged with this poetic animal symbolism which puts non-human life at the most salient position in the story. This is a form of discourse which both groups share, and the linguistic devices used within both communities are similar.

4.11 Animism in Christian Discourse

Looking at the wider context, animism could be considered a displaced phenomenon in Christian discourse. Bron Taylor notes the 'wider monotheistic antipathy' towards pagan animism (2016: 3) during the time of Lynn White's essay on Christianity (1967). White discusses animism in the same essay:

> animism involves communication, and/or communion with such intelligences or lifeforces, or beliefs that nature's intelligences and forces are divine and should be worshiped and/or beseeched for healing or other favours. (1967: 1205)

White refers to Christianity's prevalence throughout the ages that discarded concepts such as animism, which in turn disrupted humanity's relationship with nature:

> By destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects…(ibid)

The author in Green Christian magazine reintroduces pagan animism to a Christian readership, even linking animism with text from biblical scripture in the second passage '(Job 12:7-8)'. The positive narrative within this is that we can liken the views and scripture from one community and make inferences to other narratives which encourage a caring relationship between humanity and the more-than-human world. The linguistic features of animism in the second passage give semantic roles to animals which make them agentive in the grammatical processes. According to White's definition of animism (ibid: 1205), it involves a belief that nature's forces should 'worshipped or beseeched…' for its '…favours'. The processes of 'teaching', 'telling', and 'declaring' are linguistic examples of the author giving agency to animals, and examples of realising their role in the animistic relationship between humans and other species. In the same passage, humans are given the agentive role of 'learning', and 'asking', and the animals are the affected participants of verbal processes, or receivers. Though usually it is considered that the affected participants are the oppressed party within discourse, these processes require an active semantic role from animals. If the humans are 'learning' from animals, the animals must be given the role as teacher. If humans 'ask' something of animals, the animals are agentive in the role of being asked something and giving an answer. These semantic roles in animism give non-human species intrinsic worth by placing them in a position where humanity relies on them to teach or answer them. This aligns with my ecosophy and is therefore a positive story.

4.12 Relationships with the Earth and Land

Both groups refer to our planet through the names 'Earth' or 'Land' in numerous examples. In doing so, they construct a relationship between themselves and the entire natural world, assuming that these names are used to describe all the ecosphere that includes us, animals, plants, rivers, forests, and trees.

Green Christian	Druidry
We use the phrase 'Storm of Hope' to describe a form of discipleship that enables us to respond to the cry of the wounded Earth. (GR7)	Pain and sadness of the land (DR5)
...the sorrow we feel in our hearts at the signs of the Earth's demise (GR7)	Healing of the land (DR5)

Both communities use 'Earth' or 'land' to refer to the same entity, but the lexis used around these terms are the important features. Both use personification of the natural world to evoke a metaphor of the effects that human activity is having upon our planet. The cry of the 'wounded Earth' makes the Earth a Sayer, an agentive participant of a grammatical process. Referring to the Earth's demise evokes a metaphor of the Earth as a patient, a person who is ill or dying. The druid text affords the 'land' an active semantic role, personifying it by identifying its pain and its healing, but also its emotional state of sadness.

The following extracts refer directly to a relationship between us and the Earth/land.

Connection and relationship with the land is central

The land and its peoples

Deep connection to the land

Start communing with the land

Worked with the land

The land does not need us (DR5)

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He lived for the Earth (GR5: Editorial)

These examples place the Earth in a positive semantic category in several ways. The most common linguistic device is the use of the connective 'with' to place the Earth or land in accompaniment with humanity. Working with, communing with, or being in a relationship with the Earth are positive narratives that place the natural world and humans in the same semantic domain. The second example has already been addressed earlier in the analysis, and places the land above humans in order of importance through the author's construction of a list. Furthermore, it makes the peoples the possession of the land rather than the land the possession of people. The two last extracts also place the natural world above humans. If the land does not need us, it is construed as an independent actor, but also as the actor in the grammatical structure of the sentence. Us is the affected participant, discarded as not being needed for the land's wellbeing. The final example places the individual as the grammatical actor in he lived, but awards the Earth salience in the context as the individual lived for it. All these examples build up a narrative that provides the natural world with intrinsic worth and therefore aligns with my ecosophical principles. The examples of accompaniment and independence of the Earth/land also deconstruct hierarchy by connecting humans and the natural world through shared actions.

The following passages exemplify more problematic linguistic features that are used by the two communities to describe the human-nature relationship with a focus on Earth and land. How we describe our physical state with nature through grammar is an important way of shaping a narrative that can separate us from the Earth, or bring us closer together.

The Earth on which we live (GR5: Editorial)

The land on which they live

Love respect and understanding of the land they lived on

A time to…decide whether we are of the Earth or simply just on it…(DR5)

All these passages allow readers to infer where the author positions humans (us, we, they) in relationship to the Earth or land. The final value of my ecosophy relates directly to the human-nature relationship, and is focused on realising the shared kinship we have with other beings:

> **V5 - Self-realisation:** Beings of all species have their unique senses, purposes, goals, needs and desires. It is necessary to have empathy with other beings to allow them to achieve self-realisation according to their nature.

If like these examples, we refer to ourselves as being 'on' the Earth or the land, we immediately separate ourselves from it. From a grammatical perspective, humans are attributed with the process 'to live', and here the Earth or land is the affected by being 'lived on'. This is one way that the discursive style separates us from nature. Also, if we live on the land rather than with it, we separate our livelihoods further by placing us in different locational circumstances to the land. This contradicts the value of my ecosophy given above, as it doesn't acknowledge empathy with other beings, in failing to recognise that we share our livelihoods with natural entities on the same planet and rely on the same ecosystem for our wellbeing.

This also goes against how both Green Christian and Discover Druidry authors construct their own ecological identity in the earlier examples of this analysis. Being on the Earth or land, rather than being with it or being of it, separates humans and nature into different semantic groups. Their religious and spiritual agendas have focused on developing relationships with nature and caring for it, yet separating us from the rest of the world spatially conveys that we are in fact a separate entity to nature. The final extract is an important question to challenge this type of story, we must 'decide whether we are of the Earth or simply on it'.

4.13 Satire and the Framing of Modern Society

I only wish to commit a small section of my analysis to this area, as the data does not discuss the more-than-human world directly, but rather the entities of western human lifestyle. What makes it an important type of discourse to address is that tells a critical story about our current way of living and our disconnectedness from nature.

This chapter has thus far been rather critical of erasure. The norm in Ecolinguistics is that texts which erase certain elements of the world are negative and should therefore be resisted. Interestingly though, language that talks about products of our everyday lives as abstractions can have a positive effect, helping us to see the obsolete areas of life which distract us from the more-than-human world. Philip Carr-Gomm demonstrates such language in the following passage:

> Western consumerism has tended to cut us off from much of life, enclosing us in boxes of metal as we shuttle from our brick boxes to our concrete and glass workboxes. For many of us we work gazing into the screen of a small box all day, to return home to an evening spent gazing at another box before falling asleep. Earth spiritualties such as Druidry offer a way out of these boxes built around us by our modern lifestyle. (DR8)

The target domain of daily human life is addressed using Carr-Gomm's source frame of *boxes*. Here he has created an abstraction for all the things we use in our daily lives which disconnect us from the real world e.g. *boxes of metal* for cars, *brick boxes* for houses, *concrete and glass work-boxes* for buildings, offices, desks, cubicles etc., and then the *small box* for our phones and then the final box we *gaze* at before falling asleep (our televisions). The overlexicalization of this term triggers what Lakoff refers to as a 'mental structure' (2006: 25) to help frame these objects we rely on every day as nothing other than distractions. Also, avoiding their basic level categories to homogenise these items can help us to see how artificial they are. Secondly, these frames create a negative semantic prosody of being 'boxed in' from the rest of the world, which entails that we are trapped within our modern technologies and unable to truly connect with the natural world.

Another way of looking at these frames is to take Macgilchrist's considerations for counter-discursive strategies (2007). *Parody*, the mocking questioning of presupposed knowledge (ibid: 78; Bartlett, 2018: 138), is a linguistic device which the author employs in the above text to create the mockery of what we consider to be complex and meaningful artefacts of the western world. Macgilchrist refers to this as a 'logical inversion', a 'straight counter to the stated facts (Bartlett, ibid). However, her conclusion of this type of framing based on analytical consensus is that:

"…simply countering a dominant frame with logical arguments does not work…The arguments are simply ignored or disbelieved" (2007: 77)

The author's language in the text is not quite as forceful as a 'logical argument', but rather it is a frame which creates a parody of the artefacts of our everyday lives. Though it could easily be disregarded or ignored as Macgilchrist's says this discourse often is, the message within this frame is important if we wish to critique the ideals of western consumerism which hinder our relationships with nature.

Carr-Gomm's criticism of Western Consumerism is shown through his metaphorical description of our relationship with it. It has *cut us off from life*. And he depicts urgency in our need to find *a way out of these boxes built around us by our modern lifestyle*. 'Cutting something off', 'finding a way out', and having 'something built around us' activates a prosodic mood of how the speaker views this particular area of life (Martin and Rose, 2007: 59; Stibbe, 2015: 84). The lexis in this passage are the 'appraising items' which communicate the author's 'stance' (Martin and White, 2005; ibid). His stance is that we are disconnected from the more-than-human world and distracted by these *boxes* that we attend to in their various forms. *Boxes built around us by our modern lifestyle* implies a metaphor to suggest that we are closed off from the more-than-human world by them.

These themes of disconnectedness and the mocking of our daily items through framing tell us a positive story about what current western society does to our relationship with nature. This warning to the current threats of our lifestyles aligns with my ecosophy's statement from Judith Plant, that 'life is an interconnected web…" (1989, 18), and urges us to rekindle the connection between humans and other forms of life.

4.13.1 Satire in Green Christian Magazine

A discursive comparison we can make between Green Christian and druid discourse is their attitudes to areas of life which are environmentally destructive. The previous section on Druidry gave an example from Carr-Gomm which framed the everyday objects we use as *boxes*. Using parody or satire is a linguistic means of 'writing back against the authority of dominant texts or expression of ideology' (Goatly, 2016: 290). Green Christian magazine

authors take a similar authorial stance on modern western consumerism. The following passages show examples of satire expressed through linguistic choices:

> Unfortunately, front gardens are now prime targets of ambitious young males armed with trucks and paving. (GR2: 11)

There are several linguistic devices in this passage which express the author's viewpoint. Firstly, 'prime targets' and 'young males armed with…' triggers a war frame, which evokes a dangerous and destructive image of the scenario being described in the text. Also, the garden is the prime target. The implication is that the garden is the affected participant of the action, and therefore the victim of an attack. The armed participants are the 'ambitious young males', who cause destruction of the natural world with trucks and paving. The clause represents an attacker-victim scenario through a war frame which puts the young males in a position that represents humanity and their actions towards nature, nature being at the receiving end of the attack as the garden. The satirical element of this text is the framing of 'ambitious young males' as the attackers of nature rather than salesman or builders. The adjective 'ambitious', implies their greed for success and financial gain through destroying the natural elements of our homes and replacing them with man made products. Simpson (2003: 86) created a framework for the interpersonal relationships between the participants of satire in linguistic events. The satirist (the author) and satiree (the readers) are at one end of the relationship, with the satirised (the ambitious young males) at the other end. The author's goal through a satirical representation of the target creates distance between the 'young males' and the reader. In this context, the satire encourages the reader to view the 'ambitious young males' with more suspicion, and builds an idea in their minds that they want to do harm to nature. This is a positive reinforcement of ridiculing actions that create ecological harm, but does not align directly my ecosophy. My value of inclusion promotes language that encourages everybody to be responsible for the planet's wellbeing. The use of satire in this passage develops a distancing between the author/reader and the satirised target, the 'ambitious young males'. The satirised target is therefore excluded from the group that cares for the environment, rather than being held equally responsible for the environment's safeguarding. The passage continues further on the subject:

In words of a shiny card recently pushed through my letter box, they "make your home better", with slabs, block pavement, "Indian sundance patios", decking and concrete. (GR2: 11)

What we really need is together to "roll back the asphalt", remove that ground cover, letting rain infiltrate and life live again. (GR2: 11)

The ridicule of the objects present in the text is similar to Carr-Gomm's 'box' frame, which takes an everyday object in an area of life and ascribes it a different noun to create mockery. The author ridicules the advertisement by referring to it as simply 'a shiny card'. Like turning our everyday objects into boxes, this frame strips away any meaning or importance to the advertisement by referring to its basic property, just a card. In Carr-Gomm's box frame, 'screens' and 'boxes' are negatively placed in the text, the same way that 'concrete, 'slabs', and 'paving' are here. This helps the reader to view these objects negatively. This contrasts with the final sentence from the author, which positively encourages the reader to remove these items and 'let life live again'. They tell us to let 'rain infiltrate', a trigger word which reintroduces the war frame but in a positive way, because this way allows the natural world to resume its ways without man-made structures interfering. Letting life live again is an inclusive phrase that encompasses all the natural elements like rain within the semantic category of 'life'. This is an example of affording intrinsic worth to a larger range of the more-than-human world.

All the linguistic features discussed here develop an evaluation of these garden modifications, on whether they are good or bad (Stibbe, 2015). Clearly, the use of satire tells us that these are bad actions, with negative impacts on the environment. This style of discourse is of course positive, not necessarily by aligning with my ecosophy, but by using rhetorical devices to construct a position on areas of life which are ecologically damaging, and reducing them to objects worthy of ridicule.

5 <u>Conclusion</u>

My analysis has revealed some recurrent cognitive stories that are encoded through the language in both communities. Most have been unique to the discourse of that group, such as Green Christian's depiction of humans and nature both as an equal part of God's creation, or the construction of identity in Green Christian discourse that places Christians as the dutiful stewards of the natural world. The same can be said for the Druid discourse in this thesis, which creates salience for the more-than-human world through grammatical processes in the language that puts the natural world at the forefront of our minds, rather than an entity or object affected by human actions. There was also some discovery of similar stories and linguistic features in both Green Christian and Druid discourse. Druid writer's use of animal symbolism share features of salient language with passages in Green Christian magazine, e.g., the quotation of Job's message that calls for us to 'nurture our connection with nature'. Both group's texts share grammatical choices that place the natural world as the actors and humans as the affected, putting non-human beings in the positions of autonomy and salience in the human-nature relationship.

This study also discovered small examples of the use of satire to critique the current state of western society. Philip Carr-Gomm's article in the OBD blog erases the significance of buildings and technologies of modern life by referring to them as just *boxes*. I argued this was a form of erasure that Ecolinguistics usually describes as a story that erases the natural world from our minds. Instead, the use of erasure in this story was positive because it encourages us to see the futility of the devices we depend on everyday, and how they distract us from the ecological issues we face. More centrally to the Druid belief, these devices keep us from maintaining our relationship with the natural world, keeping us confined within human concerns and not taking time to connect with all forms of life. This also aligned with my ecosophy's central value that 'life is an interconnected web', so any story that urged us to better our relationship with the more-than-human world was to be encouraged.

A similar type of satire in Green Christian discourse was much more subtle. A passage from the Green Christian magazine made an evaluation of an advert that encourages people

to destroy the natural features of their gardens and replace them with man-made artefacts. The appraisal patterns in this text show a ridicule of such advertisement, and the author also evokes frames that places the natural world as the victim of attacks by 'ambitious, young males' to build things like slabs and pavements over the natural entities of the homeowner's gardens. Although these examples of satire and positive erasure are interesting ways of telling stories, I did not find a significant pattern of this kind of story throughout either discourses. Therefore, it cannot be said that these kind of linguistic features nor stories are prevalent or unique to either Christian environmentalist or Druid discourse. To make this claim, more studies into Green religion must be done to see how the current activities of western society are interpreted within these groups.

My second aim was to judge the stories that were found in the discourse according to my own Ecosophy, which was stated in the Methodology chapter. In the analysis, I explained which part of my ecosophy supported each story or linguistic device that was found. This aim helped me to be consistent in judging the messages that were revealed throughout my analysis.

My third aim was to discover linguistic features that encoded new stories to live by. The most frequent of them all were the grammatical processes from both discourses that were revealed through analysing transitivity. I have created a table of the linguistic devices revealed and the stories they tell:

Linguistic Device	Examples
Semantic Categorisation	- Quantifiers e.g. <u>all</u> life, <u>all</u> creation - Lexical choices e.g. Creation, Nature Spirits, discipleship, God's kingdom
Frames/Metaphor	- Problem-Solution Frame e.g. Problem: Humanity is <u>enslaved</u> to <u>destructive behaviours</u>; Solution: to live in new ways of live…for the sake of <u>all life on earth</u> - Counter discursive strategies e.g. satire, parody of everyday objects which distract us from the rest of

	the natural world (<u>boxes</u> to replace TVs, phones, cars, buildings etc.)
Appraisal	'<u>destructive</u> behaviours' '<u>deepest depression</u>…of environmental crisis' '<u>revere</u> the spirits of nature'
Agentive processes	- Basic level categories - Salience patterns through Transitivity (grammatical processes giving agency to the more than human world)
Construction of Identity	- Quantifiers and semantic roles in discourses e.g. 'fellowship', 'discipleship', '<u>all</u> creation', 'God's creatures' - Lexical choices e.g. 'duty', 'fulfilling our calling', Christians **must not** be carnivores' - pronoun use e.g. 'we', 'our'
Personification	'pain' and 'sadness' of the land 'healing' of the land
Basic Level Categories	- Lexical choices that give the specific term for the animal e.g. 'wren' rather than 'bird' or 'salmon' rather than fish - Creates salience of animals through lexical choice

The largest sample of data that was analysed focused on grammatical processes in language, particularly within animistic discourse from both Green Christian and Druidry. The examples showed that individual non-humans were afforded agentive semantic roles through the grammatical choices of the author. This suggests that an effective way of representing the natural world through language in a more encouraging manner is to consider where we place nature in its relationship with humans in the way we conduct our use of language. Giving non-human beings agency in the relational processes with humans at the grammatical level of

discourse is an effective mode of providing an equal salience to beings of the natural world other than humans, and encourages us to view them as intrinsically important.

Another common feature was the importance of lexical choices made particularly in Green Christian discourse. The frequent use of 'creation' to refer to the more-than-human world, including both humans and nature in the same bracket of God's creation, creates another story of salience that encourages us to view the entirety of creation as intrinsically important, not just humanity or Christians alone.

5.1 Limitations

The primary limitation of this thesis is that the communities I have focused on are sub-groups of a wider religious network. Green Christian are one organisation of Christian Environmentalism, which is a denomination of the entire Christian community with a focus on ecological awareness. The OBD, the Discover Druidry blog, and the Henge of Keltria are all organisations of the wider Druid community. What this means is that the discourse taken from them is prototypical of their wider communities, and this study cannot then claim that all discourses of these wider communities share the same linguistic patterns. Moreover, I cannot claim that the wider communities tell the same stories or hold identical beliefs about the relationship among the more-than-human world. The text collected for this research was such a small sample, that further study of Druid discourse and Christian environmentalist discourse must be undertook to achieve a better understanding of their perspectives on the natural world. Only through further insight can we discover more positive ecological narratives in these communities, or reveal whether their religious convictions truly contain a better ecological outlook of the more-than-human world.

Other drawbacks of this type of research are the common issues found with Critical discourse studies. For example, when discussing Lakoff and Johnson's approach to metaphor partnered with the use of CDA, O'Halloran accepted that this method can show 'how texts can imply certain values or ideologies', although the meanings that a critical discourse analyst can generate from text 'might not be replicated by the more casual reader who may be merely interested in the gist of the story' (2007: 159-160). This is a valid criticism that such a

meticulous and personal thesis such as mine can be given. Particularly with such an individual system for judging language like an Ecosophy, the same texts could be interpreted entirely differently by another analyst with a different set of values.

Away from the ecological focus of this type of research, Ruth Breeze (2013) shares similar criticisms of CDA in how the data can be interpreted or misinterpreted. She has issues with the 'particular political purpose' the researcher may hold when looking at the data, and therefore argues that their choice of how they interpret text may be influenced (2013: 501). Stibbe accepts that the developing point from this criticism is not so much about how the data is interpreted, but the plethora of options a linguist must choose from and then justify for their analysis. The danger of 'a lack of coherence, indiscriminate mixing of incompatible concepts, unsystematic application methods and so on' makes it ever more vital for discourse analysts to showcase a coherent and practically useful framework in our field (Breeze, 2013: 502) (Stibbe, 2015: 189). In response to Breeze's reservations on the 'political purpose' of the analyst, which in this research is to discover new stories to live by, I have identified and analysed where necessary the more harmful linguistic devices that have arisen in my data. This shows that I have applied my analysis to all sections of the data, and not fallen into a trap of biased ignorance in my analytical approach.

What I hope can be taken from this study is a foundation for approaching religious discourse analysis with an ecological focus. I have chosen two types of communities who were yet to be subject to Ecolinguistic research, and shown different ways that positive stories can manifest in discourse using the same formula that Ecolinguists often apply in the current body of research. Also, as previously mentioned, my thesis illustrates that a positive discourse study should not ignore areas of their data that conflict with their values, but bring them to light alongside the rest of the discourse that is being analysed.

5.2 Other methods

At first, I had considered a more ethnographic approach, particularly doing 'fieldwork' to engage with the communities I am researching. Those who argue the broadness of CDA's findings may contest that ethnographic research methods like focus group interviews are

more insightful. Atkinson explains that 'only through watching, listening, asking questions, formulating hypotheses and making blunders…can an ethnographer acquire a good sense of the social setting and begin to understand the culture(s) of participants' (2007: 79). Alternatively, I could apply CDA to textual data transcribed from focus group interviews, conducted by myself, with members of the two communities in this study. However, an issue that is frequently problematic in this research process is collecting data from each community in similar, and therefore comparable, discursive formats. To build good representative samples of data that are comparable across the three communities in my analysis, I am committed to finding styles of discourse that relate to each other in some way. This may be through discussing the same topics in all data sets such as the community's expression of animals, wildlife habitats or climate change. In this case I have chosen segments of discourse which are stylistically similar, as blog posts, organisation 'ethos statements' on their websites or as published magazine articles.

Admittedly, opting for structured interviews to collect data could provide the symmetry I would like in each data set, however collecting readily available textual data from what these groups have already published is a much more accessible strategy. A benefit to collecting textual data in this fashion also allows for a larger, arguably more representative sample to be collected. Although a purely ethnographic encounter with these communities would provide an interesting new insight for cross-examining the accounts of the two communities, the time needed to build rapport and conduct these interviews in a well-organised and orderly manner would be extensive.

There is, however, conflicting disregard for focus group interviews as a data collection process in linguistic research. Edley and Litosseliti's contemplation of interviews as research methods conjured varying opinions that interview data was not 'naturalistic' and thus not the most real representation of a focus group (2010: 161). Silverman has argued that this kind of data should be used only as a 'last resort', as interview data is 'manufactured'. This concept of interview data as unnatural and manufactured is developed by Potter (1996), as the participants are influenced by how the researcher sets up the whole interview process. The kind of questions they ask, the type of participants selected, are all influenced by the

researcher's agenda, and therefore the naturally occurring and real 'raw' representation is immediately compromised. One exception that Potter makes for interviewing, is when the focus groups themselves are the topic of the analysis (Litosseliti, 2010: 161).

This makes an interesting case for applying focus group interviews to my research. Having contacted local Christian Environmentalist groups in Gloucestershire, meeting some members for a discussion on a publication, *Laudato Sí,* written by Pope Francis; I have built rapport and the potential to meet with the group further to make interviews a possibility. Also, by adhering to Potter's exception to interviews, whereby the focus group are the interview participants themselves, it could be instrumental to provide some natural and direct data to analyse. One option could be to analyse the language chosen by the interviews at multiple discursive levels, reveal cognitive stories within their language, and compare these stories with the ideals of my ecosophy.

My choices for opting against this method however is that it is more accessible to obtain similar texts from both groups to analyse equally and fairly. Considering that I would have to establish the same rapport and trust with a number of members of the other focus group in this research, the time frame I have in which to arrange interviews, collect and collate data, and then perform an apt analysis, are all important factors in choosing the right approach. To collect a representative sample of both communities via interviews would be much harder than gathering online resources. Another benefit from my chosen method is that the text gathered from online sources are more widely disseminated and therefore arguably more influential. Their influence may even construct the views and identity of that community, making them discourses that need to be critiqued more urgently if we are to continue to accept this kind of language to be used in these communities to construct their other member's ideologies and beliefs.

5.3 Wider implications

Overall, I feel this study offers a starting point for discovering more positive forms of language within religious or spiritual discourses, that can be offered as alternative ways of interpreting the human-nature relationship. My focus on Christian environmentalism gives a more recent

evaluation on this sub-group's perspective on our relationship with the natural world, which was last given a primary focus in Shaiko's study in 1984. In extension to Shaiko, my study gives a linguistic perspective on the issue as opposed to a more general interpretation of the group's standpoint of environmental issues. By analysing this group alongside Druid discourse, I feel I have established some links in the way that both communities interpret how humanity should live among the natural world through their language.

To build on this, future studies may wish to focus solely on one of these groups, to be able to create a more stable analysis of the discourse and therefore the ecological perspectives of that community. There are plenty of other factions of Christian environmentalism throughout the world, just as there are a variety of Druid organisations and other forms of paganism that revere the natural world in similar ways. It is important that we continue to reveal new stories to live by through positive discourse analysis, so that we have a significant body of studies in Ecolinguistics that offer alternative ways of talking about the natural world just as we have a significant amount of studies that critique the harmful stories in mainstream discourse.

Also, I hope that some of the linguistic devices can help future authors, those of religious groups and beyond, to identify ways to create a more ecologically balanced story in their own writings. Particularly those who wish to write about the natural world from a spiritual perspective, I hope this thesis provides a small insight into the beneficial linguistic methods employed in styles like animism and animal symbolism, but also some of the ways that this form of discourse can in fact be counter-intuitive, and inadvertently separate humanity and the natural world through grammatical constructions. Only through understanding what constitutes positive discourse through research, and then presenting our findings within various modes of discourse, will we be able to contribute to the creation of new stories to live by.

6 <u>Appendices</u>

6.1 Green Christian Data

GR1 - Green Christian Vision Statement, https://greenchristian.org.uk/gc-vision-statement/

GR2 – Green Christian Magazine December 2015, https://greenchristian.org.uk/green-christian-magazine-winter-2015-issue-80/

GR3 – Green Christian Magazine May 2016, http://greenchristian.org.uk/green-christian-magazine-summer-2016-issue-81/

GR4 - Green Christian Magazine May 2017, http://greenchristian.org.uk/green-christian-magazine-summer-2017-issue-83/

GR5 - Green Christian Magazine October 2017, http://greenchristian.org.uk/green-christian-magazine-autumn-2017-issue-84/

GR6 – Christian Ecology Link 2012, http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk/bio.htm

GR7 – Green Christian 'Storm of Hope' 2019, https://greenchristian.org.uk/resources/storm-of-hope/

6.2 Druidry Data

DR1 – Henge of Keltria blog, *The Nine Keltrian Hallmarks*, Publication date unknown, http://www.keltria.org/Blog1/about/

DR2 – Discovery Druidry article, *Samhain Approaching*. October 2018, https://discoverdruidry.wordpress.com/2018/10/16/samhain-approaching/

DR3 – Discover Druidry article, *The Blessing of Imbolc*. January 2018, https://discoverdruidry.wordpress.com/?s=imbolc

DR4 – Discovery Druidry article, *Walking the circuit of the land*. July 2018, https://discoverdruidry.wordpress.com/2018/07/20/walking-the-circuit-of-the-land-plant-allies-and-cycles-of-healing/

DR5 – Discovery Druidry article, *Meaningful connection to the land*. June 2018, https://discoverdruidry.wordpress.com/2018/06/10/meaningful-connection-to-the-land/

DR6 – Discovery Druidry article, *Animal Allies*. July 2017, https://discoverdruidry.wordpress.com/2017/07/10/animal-allies/

DR7 – The Order of Ovates, Bards, and Druids article, *Spiders as Spiritual Guides*. Publication date unknown. https://www.druidry.org/library/animals/spiders-spiritual-guides

DR8 – The Order of Ovates, Bards, and Druids article, *Ways of working with animals*, adapted from *Druid Mysteries* by Philp Carr-Gomm (2002) , https://www.druidry.org//druid-way/teaching-and-practice/druid-animal-lore

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