

# FOSTERING POSITIVE WORLDVIEWS: AN ECOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF THE DISCURSIVE REPRESENTATIONS OF INSECTS AND ARACHNIDS IN ONLINE MEDIA

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## Research Aims

To reveal the worldviews embedded in discursive representations of insects and arachnids (hereinafter "invertebrates").

## Existing Literature

Moore et al. (1982) analyzed American magazines and discovered that insects were represented negatively.

Lidskog and Olausson (2013) analyzed Swedish newspapers and found that war metaphors were used in depictions of mosquitos.

Lockwood (2013) addressed culture and how humans learn "insects invade, evade, overwhelm, attack, perturb, and defy" (p. 37).

## Data ← See QR code below!

Three online news articles, two institutional news articles, and two Instagram accounts, all chosen for the richness of their content

## Methodology

**Ecolinguistics** (Stibbe, 2021), which is grounded in critical discourse analysis, has a high potential for identifying the semiotic resources (linguistic and visual) used to construct and promote worldviews related to the natural world.

All linguistic and visual representations were evaluated against my ecological philosophy—my "**ecosophy**" (Naess, 1972)—that makes explicit my values regarding invertebrates. Negative evaluations are considered **destructive** to the human-invertebrate relationship while positive evaluations are considered **beneficial**.

## Ecosophy: Five values regarding invertebrates ← Feel free to use this invertebrate ecosophy!

**Agency:** Ignoring invertebrates as agents of significant action (childcare, ecological maintenance) also ignores their individual self-worth and the vital roles that they play in the ecosystems they inhabit.

**Characteristics:** Invertebrates are not inherently frightening or malevolent and should be treated with respect.

**Victimhood:** Invertebrates can and do cause eco-systemic harm, but often as victims of human avarice and overconsumption. This fact, in the very least, should be acknowledged in any discussion of them in this context.

**Consumption:** Invertebrates are not for human consumption and should be allowed to conduct their lives in the best way that they see fit, most likely in the interest of their communities and the ecosystems they inhabit.

**Shared Existence:** Invertebrates share their existence with the rest of the natural world, including humans, and any implication of an "alien world" of invertebrates only serves to marginalize them in our collective conscience.

## Results

### Destructive Representations

AVOID THESE

INSECTS ARE WARTIME ADVERSARIES → "a laser turret in my kitchen that snipes roaches"

INSECTS ARE MACHINES → insects are "intricate", "mechanical", "functional" and "diverse in design"

INSECTS ARE BAD → insects "exacerbate food insecurity by spoiling up to 25% of crops"

### Beneficial Representations

PROMOTE THESE

INVERTEBRATES ARE INDIVIDUALS → "I just love when Honey stands on her tippy toes to look around"

INVERTEBRATES ARE SENTIENT → "Weevil (*phyllobius pomaceus*)—loves munching nettles"

INVERTEBRATES HAVE AGENCY → (flower, pollen, ecological maintenance)



References



@macrobymarit