'Those who make no effort deserve no consideration': Ecofascism in David Ireland's *The World Repair Video Game*

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Abstract
Ecofascism is an ideology that attempts to ground the fascist political project on a strongly 'natural' basis. Whilst still inchoate and not yet a mainstream political movement, it is an increasingly influential ideology in far-right circles, motivating a number of acts of political violence. This article uses Australian author David Ireland's last novel *The World Repair Video Game* to explore the structure and constituent elements of ecofascist ideology, and how this is manifested spatially in the literary world of the novel. Using a structural Marxist understanding of literature as a fashioning of ideology, the article argues that, through aesthetic means, Ireland is able to project an ecofascist future that runs ahead of its material reality. In so doing, Ireland plots how a future ecofascism might synergise an essentialist link between the natural and social worlds, hatred towards those who resist the neoliberal link between labour and human worth, extreme violence and a deep, genuine nature worship.

Like many people, the day of the horrific Christchurch mosque shootings is burned in my memory. I wondered at the nature of the hatred that could motivate such appalling violence. In the days that followed, we learned more about that hatred through the tedious but revealing manifesto of the killer. Parts of this were straight out of the extreme right-wing playbook – the belief in a taken-for-granted European culture threatened with extinction by non-white migration, or 'replacement'; the need for violence to protect the future of white children; and the ethnopluralist stress on the link between land and race (Harwood, 2021). Within this roll-call of right-wing tropes, however, there was embedded a stranger idea that stood out to me – 'ecofascism', an ideology

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the murderer explicitly identified with. For several years, I grappled with what ecofascism actually was: what is its logic, its particular ideological potency that has spurred more than one right-wing terrorist (the 2019 El Paso massacre was also framed in ecofascist language – Guidi, 2022)? The key that unlocked it all for me came from a seemingly unlikely source – recently departed Australian author David Ireland's last novel, *The World Repair Video Game* (2015).

This article is the first scholarly engagement with the book and represents an explicit extension of a growing body of scholarship around economy and space in literature to *nature and space* in literature (see, e.g., Heino, 2021a, 2021b; Morton, 2015, 2018, 2021). It commences with an exploration of the literature around ecofascism, allowing us to define it as a subform of fascism that intensively attempts to affirm its basis in nature. This will be followed by an account of the value of literature in studying ideologies such as ecofascism, a value which is derived from the fact that, by aesthetically putting ideologies to work, texts can reveal their structure, modes of coherence, omissions and contradictions. Armed with this understanding, a brief description of the text will be put in hand, before analysing some of the key planks of ecofascist ideology that take form within it. These include: the union between understandings of the natural world and social, political and economic objectives; the identification of a radically different 'Other' that must be physically liquidated; the creation of a radical and sinister system of spatial 'insides' and 'outsides'; and the role of nature in mediating between environmental repair and genocide. It will be concluded that ecofascism, given its anti-rationalism and its inchoate political form, must be analysed on the aesthetic level Ireland operates at, as it is precisely on this level that we can understand its deep affective power and the trajectories its material manifestations might take. *The World Repair Video Game* thus reads as a potent literary exploration of ecofascism, perhaps the most powerful we have in Australian (and world?) literature.

Ecofascism

What is ecofascism? At the outset, it is important to note that I agree with Moore and Roberts (2022) that ecofascism is best seen as a still-inchoate ideology existing within a broader constellation of far-right forces and ideas (which they, echoing Lubarda (2020, 2024), dub 'far-right ecologism'), as opposed to a viable mainstream political movement. It is also necessary to foreground that, following Lubarda (2024), ecofascism is not meant here as a catch-all for any-and-all forms of synthesis between right-wing and environmental thought.

With these caveats in mind, we can nevertheless pin down the essence of ecofascism at the ideological level. Moore and Roberts (2022: 11) correctly identify the irreducible character of fascism: '[f]ascism is a political form that seeks to revolutionize and reharmonize the nation state through expelling a radically separate "Other" by paramilitary means. Because it seeks to legitimise itself through a self-declared intimate connection with a homogenous "people", it also requires a dense mass-associational society'. It is, as Poulantzas (1974) notes, an exceptional form of state that ensures the continued reproduction of capitalist social relations in the face of perceived existential threats (such as a militant working class). In so doing, it evinces a particularly rigorous and sinister intensification of the tendency of the capitalist state to fix 'insides and outsides' (Poulantzas, 2014: 104) with its external and internal borders guarded by a range of material and ideological sieves, realised most fully in the couplet of the concentration camp/genocide.[1] The canonical examples are Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy, but the term is broad enough to encompass regimes such as Francoist Spain, Romania's National Legionary State, and Pinochet's Chile.

Under this aegis, ecofascism should not be understood as an equal admixture of fascism and ecologism (despite the efforts of right-wing opponents of environmentalism to establish a one-to-one link between the two – Moore and Roberts, 2022; Staudenmaier, 2021). Rather, as Campion (2021) notes, it is a subform of fascism, a subform that 'most emphatically tries to affirm its natural basis'

(Moore and Roberts, 2022: 12). Campion (2021: 2) defines ecofascism as 'a reactionary and revolutionary ideology that champions the regeneration of an imagined community through a return to a romanticised, ethnopluralist vision of the natural order'. This understanding dovetails with that of Lubarda (2024), who further adds that ecofascism has at its core 'Blood and Soil' myths that bind together a racialised *volk* and a landscape into a national spirit, or *Volksgeist* (see also Rueda, 2020). Within this worldview, ecological concerns are intrinsically tied to the question of the Other, reflected in an intense fixation on the supposed deleterious environmental effects of immigration (often conceived in terms of contamination and parasitism) and vaguely defined 'globalism'. These ecological questions are also almost invariably pitched between the strictly local and national scales, a function of a posited *Volksgeist* link between a homogenous 'people' and the landscape which creates it (a story particularly well-known in the Australian context) (Campion, 2021; Forchtner, 2020a).

The exact content of this link, that is to say, the exact meaning of 'Nature' in the ecofascist worldview, depends upon the national setting. For example, Nature in the context of the Third Reich was tightly associated with the forest, a dark and mystical place which was a natural wellspring of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, or 'people's community' (Lee and Wilke, 2005). In the Australian context, by contrast, Nature has usually been constructed as a vital and essential 'Bush', a dangerous and demanding environment (replete with unique flora and fauna) that supposedly shapes the rugged Australian. Within the context of the *Volksgeist* articulation, therefore, Nature functions as a very pliable signifier. If the content of the signifier is malleable, however, the means through which it is apprehended has an archetypal ecofascist form. This apprehension is typically through essentialist, anti-rational and mystical forms of nature worship, derived in no small part from the debt fascism owes to Romantic notions of introspection, emotion, nostalgia for a lost community and rootedness (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011; Eco, 1995; Hughes et al., 2022; Moore and Roberts, 2022; Rueda, 2020). In particular, the mysticism of this nature worship is geared towards stripping back the artificiality of modernism, with its rationality and calculation, and establishing a closeness with nature; only those 'closest to nature could grasp through their souls the inner, cosmic life-force which constituted the eternal' (Mosse, 1961: 84) and recognise the unity of the national people. This mysticism invests ecofascism root-and-branch; being geared towards a preservation of capitalist social relations, the origins of environmental degradation in those social relations are categorically occluded, meaning that even legitimate concerns about the state of the environment assume a mystical form.[2]

Extreme violence against a radically different Other; a locally-based and exclusivist nature ethics (often manifested as nature worship and mysticism); 'Blood and Soil' metaphysics; and a mass associational society that revolves around a distinct people – these are thus the essential planks of ecofascist ideology, what we might regard (paraphrasing Griffin (1993)) as the ecofascist 'minimum'. This should be seen as a set of core ideological components which are vital if we are to use ecofascism as an abstract concept capable of bearing wide-ranging explanatory power. It is this minimum that will guide my reading of *The World Repair Video Game*, a minimum that will moreover exhibit some distinct antipodean twists which are intimately related to the aforementioned status of Nature in the Australian imagination, the exclusionary politics built into a settler-colonial state, and, perhaps most significantly, a specific constellation of class forces (see also Richards et al., 2024).

With this understanding of ecofascism in hand, it is necessary to outline the value of a literary text like *The World Repair Video Game* in interrogating it. This article proceeds on the understanding of structural Marxist literary analysis, that the 'ore' of literature is *ideology* (see, e.g., Eagleton, 2006; Heino, 2021a, 2021b; Macherey, 2006). Faced by the infinite complexity of the Real (Jameson, 2002), societies produce ideologies (of which ecofascism is but one example): 'a system (with its own logic and rigour) of representations (images, myths, ideas or concepts,

depending on the case) endowed with a historical existence and role within a given society' (Althusser, 2005: 231). Given Jameson's (2002) argument that the Real, although non-narrative, can only be grasped by narrative means, it is precisely through the medium of ideology that the knowledge-value of literature manifests itself. This ideology is worked into a textual product by specifically literary devices, such as narrative paradigms, genre, and conventions. These constructs are themselves ideological, allowing Eagleton (2006: 85) to describe literature as an 'ideological production to the second power'.

By working with ideology through aesthetic means, literary texts open up a fertile, albeit complex, pathway to understand both the modes of operation and spatialities of certain ideologies, as well as their lacunae and silences. In this process, the intention of the author is significant, but in important respects, it occurs behind their backs. That is, we can often identify the structure and contradictions of particular ideologies even if the author does not intend that to be the purpose of the text (indeed, even if their explicit purpose is to naturalise and celebrate a particular ideological tradition – Eagleton, 2006). It is in this particular unpacking of ideology that the primary knowledge-value of literature resides. This is especially the case regarding ideologies like ecofascism which, in the words of Raymond Williams (1977), might be regarded as an 'emergent' mode of thinking that has yet to achieve widespread economic and political materialisation. Indeed, Anson and Banerjee (2023: 157) make the claim that 'ecofascism remains a speculative literary project. It is best understood through the lens of the literary because of its claims to narrate the near future…. Indeed, ecofascism is a *literary* project'. Whilst this statement requires the qualification that ecofascism is not *only* a literary project (particularly given the material acts of violence which have already been committed in its name), it nevertheless demonstrates unequivocally the value of literary analysis to understanding the contours of ecofascist ideology. On this score, the reason to analyse a text like *The World Repair Video Game* is not because it is a best-seller or has generated waves in the scholarly world (as will be picked up below, it has achieved neither at the present point); rather, it is because we can actually generate knowledge of ecofascism through its study.

With this understanding, we have the two ends of the chain in hand; through a particular literary working, *The World Repair Video Game* serves as an aesthetic unfolding of the ideology of ecofascism, an aesthetic unfolding that produces knowledge that is particularly valuable given the inchoate state of that movement. Before we can interrogate this further, however, we must move to a brief recount of the novel and its author.

The World Repair Video Game: Ireland's last novel

There was a period in the 1970s and 1980s when David Ireland was one of Australia's most celebrated authors. He won the Miles Franklin Prize no fewer than three times (in 1971 for *The Unknown Industrial Prisoner* (Ireland, 2013); in 1976 for *The Glass Canoe* (Ireland, 2012a); and in 1979 for *A Woman of the Future* (Ireland, 2012b)). He was in many ways seen as the voice of the industrial working class. Gelder (1993: 31–32), speaking of *The Unknown Industrial Prisoner*, made an observation that applies more broadly to Ireland's earlier work: 'No other Australian novel has attempted to textualise Australia as a totality in this way; nor has any contemporary Australian novel represented industry and the working class in such rigorous detail' (see also Daniel, 1982).

However, Ireland's literary fortunes trended down from his heyday in the 1970s and 1980s. The reasons for this fall from favour are not entirely clear, although Williamson is correct in suggesting that the violence and misogyny characterising Ireland's depiction of the white working class fell afoul of changing literary values that valued 'the recuperation or celebration of once-marginal literary voices belonging to women, migrants and indigenous Australians' (Williamson, 2015). The 1990s saw the publication of just one novel (*The Chosen*: Ireland, 1997), and by the end of that

decade, Peter Craven had observed that 'Ireland's vision 'may well have been displaced in the public consciousness by the novels of Peter Carey and Tim Winton, both of them big canvas men'' (quoted in Ikin, 2022). Knox (2016) adds, '[i]n a full rotation of fate and fashion, during the 19 years since publication of *The Chosen*, Ireland the giant of letters became Ireland the unpublished struggler, writer of phantom novels, unseen, unreceived, unknown, and yet – the main thing – undeterred'. One of the fruits of this effort was his last novel, *The World Repair Video Game*, released in 2015.

The World Repair Video Game is written as a diary of the protagonist/narrator Kennard Stirling, a scion of a large capitalist family that owns 'Stirling Solutions'. Turning his back on the family business (although not its money), Kennard lives on 'Big Hill', a large, forested property close to the seaside village and tourist destination of Pacific Heights. There, he systematically rehabilitates and regenerates the bushland, creating something of an antipodean Arcadia regulated by the rhythms of flora, fauna and landscape. The jewel in this crown is his effort to construct a concrete path to the top of Big Hill, a natural lookout offering panoramic visions that stretch to the ocean. A laudable endeavour! The catch? The concrete is constituted in part out of the milled bones of Kennard's murder victims. Kennard is in fact a serial killer who slays a motley collection of individuals who he identifies as unemployed welfare-cheats and drifters. Far from being justified in terms of individual sociopathy, Kennard defines these acts as part of his 'project' of 'repairing' the world: 'My modest aim, while keeping mostly to myself, is to repair the world around me in small ways. Make it better. Adjust it, so it's better to live in. Not perfection, but more tidy around the edges' (Ireland, 2015: 15). This project exists alongside a seemingly genuine social conscience, with Kennard helping elderly members of the community with their shopping, yard work and doctor's appointments.

To date, *The World Repair Video Game* has received fulsome, albeit extremely limited, critical praise. In the Afterword to the book, Williamson (2015: 271) describes Kennard's project as 'one with spiritual impulses … ecological aspects (the regeneration of the bush block) and social implications (a utilitarian subtraction of those individuals who lean rather than lift)'. He reads Kennard as an unlikely serial killer, unusually intellectual in his pursuits and committing his deeds not out of hatred, but with reverence and regret. Interestingly, he describes Kennard as 'a deep ecologist in the sense that he does not place humans (or, at least, all humans) at the heart of calculations about the proper use and value of nature' (Williamson, 2015: 271). At root, he sees the novel as 'one shriven entirely of the social' (Williamson, 2015: 273), demonstrating the illogic underlining economic rationalism. Seen against this light, he opines that Ireland 'has drawn our coming world in a clear and terrible light' (Williamson, 2015: 273). Williamson's observations are well-made, but he stops short at actually plumbing the content of Kennard's project, and thus does not indicate precisely the 'coming world' to which this project gestures.

Knox (2016), acknowledging the decline in Ireland's literary fortunes, opines of the book that, despite the demands of some readers for currency, 'there will be a reading public in the future who will be pinned to the spot by the truth and uncanny wisdom of this intimate literary monument'. Like Williamson, he notes the complex and contradictory nature of Kennard's project; '[t]he serial killer as nihilist philosopher – but also as committed environmentalist and tender carer for the weak. Purest evil and purest good, but also beyond both…. Economic rationalism, environmentalism, altruism and misanthropy converge' (Knox, 2016). Like Williamson, Knox stops short of truly interrogating the content of Kennard's project and whether or not it evinces an ideological consistency that might not be immediately apparent. Neither Williamson nor Knox, in other words, detect the ecofascist moment in the text.

It is important to remember that Williamson and Knox's pieces are review commentaries intended for a popular audience, and thus cannot be expected to delve too deeply into any one aspect of the novel. So far as I have been able to glean, there has been no scholarly work analysing *The World Repair Video Game*. This article thus serves a dual purpose. Broadly, it represents the

first scholarly investigation into the text, an intervention that will hopefully draw further attention to this important work. More specifically, however, it will reveal through analysing Kennard Stirling's project a sophisticated and prescient handling of ecofascism, a handling through which Ireland elucidates several key planks of what might be a future ecofascism, both generally and in Australia specifically. This is particularly relevant given the fact that, with a few exceptions (see, e.g., McFadden, 2023; Richards et al., 2024), work on far-right extremism in the Australian context has been more concerned with concrete forms of victimisation, as opposed to plotting the overall architecture of ecofascist ideology (Richards et al., 2024).

Planks of ecofascism

Synthesis – the state of nature and society

The first plank of ecofascism which Ireland explores in the text is the union between understandings of the natural world and social, political and economic objectives. This is a fusion which a host of scholars have identified as key to the ecofascist project, and far-right ecologism more broadly (see, e.g., Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011; Moore and Roberts, 2022; Olsen, 1999). Two thinkers influential in ecofascist circles, Rudolf Bahro and Herbert Gruhl, provide instructive statements as to this articulation. Bahro, in debate with anarchist and environmentalist Murray Bookchin, took the latter to task for a supposedly overly optimistic take on human nature: '[m]ost often the institutions that the human species have created have had hierarchy and domination. The fact that they did so must have a foundation in human nature…' (Bahro, quoted in Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 77). A similar understanding informs Gruhl's social Darwinism:

> 'All laws that apply to living nature generally apply to people as well, since people themselves are part of living nature,' he maintains. These 'natural laws' dictate that people should accept the present social order as it is. Domination, hierarchy, and exploitation should be accepted…. People should adapt to existing conditions instead of making futile attempts to change them, since 'every life-form accommodates itself to that which it cannot change'. (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 83)

Kennard Stirling proceeds on exactly this assumption that the objectives of human society can be derived from the tenets of nature, a derivation which, echoing Bahro, is cast almost wholly in negative terms. What does Kennard see as the state of nature? A war of each against all, of innate inequality, of primordial violence and murder: 'The world is a primal battlefield, the first murder is in all of us. From birth to death, it's killing all the way…. A vast slaughterhouse and all of us killers from birth, an unending line globally of living sacrifices' (Ireland, 2015: 55). In this conception, nature features as much more than a surrounding environment; rather, it is the source of eternal and inviolable lessons which we ignore and/or challenge (through measures to reduce inequality, for example) at our peril. The ecofascist moment of this understanding of nature comes when these natural laws are seen as the structuring condition of human laws. Kennard's musings are replete with examples of this conceptual leap, covering a gamut of issues such as economic structures, the state and moral codes. Given the centrality of combatting class struggle which lies at the heart of all fascist ideology (Poulantzas, 1974), Kennard's positing of the class system as a universal and transcendental natural reality is telling. After reflecting on the status of his family's employees are natural-born slaves, he observes, 'I know ants and bees are born into social classes too, and they can never get out, though I've heard of riots and political uprisings in beehives. Other life, other beings, are sorted into their social classes by physical size, large teeth, potent venom, readiness to attack, or timidity' (Ireland, 2015: 13). The chain of reasoning is clear – classes are intrinsic to nature, humans are part of nature, *ipso facto* classes are part-and-parcel of human society (a logic

that very clearly evinces the eco-naturalist discourse Olsen, 1999 identifies as being one of the links between ecologism and the far-right).

This same articulation between the eternal dictates of nature and human society manifests itself in Kennard's observations on the ethicality of murder. If, as Kennard believes, Earth is '[a] vast slaughterhouse and all of us killers from birth, an unending line globally of living sacrifices' (Ireland, 2015: 55), then our current ethical quandary over killing is misplaced, to be resolved by reworking the fabric of our morality: 'Our values must change. If children suffer, if cattle and sheep, fish and birds, trees and herbs must perish for our sake, what life is exempt when mankind's survival is at stake, and why?' (Ireland, 2015: 262). Kennard later makes an even more stark statement of this moral conception: 'We must kill to live, to kill is evil, therefore since our values don't fit the lives we have, they must surely change. Who will tell the world? And what change will that be? We can't stop killing, so we should lose our mealy-mouthed dogmas against killing…' (Ireland, 2015: 249). These arguments gesture towards the ecofascist understanding that nature is the sole source of ethical theory, and that 'regardless of how thought out it is, no functional, ethical, or sustainable system can be based on unnatural precepts' (Green Brigade, quoted in Smith, 2021: 106). That murder can be morally justified as a requirement of the natural law is a foundational element of ecofascism, a reality we saw all too dreadfully expressed in the manifestos of the Christchurch and El Paso terrorists (Guidi, 2022; Smith, 2021).

There is another sense in which this construction of the link between the natural and the social betrays an ecofascist colour. Lubarda (2024) has usefully contrasted far-right ecologies that are 'ecocentric' versus those that are 'anthropocentric'. Whereas the former conceive of humanity as contained and structured within an overarching nature, the latter privileges humanity, often through notions of environmental stewardship. Importantly for my purposes, he locates ecofascism firmly within the ecocentric camp (Lubarda, 2024). Such ecocentrism, which is sometimes posited as sharing similar premises to deep ecology, is characterised by anti-humanism, a fixation on animal rights, and conservation for its own sake. Of particular note here is the record of the Nazi regime regarding animal protection and nature conservation. This record is subject to much debate, but Biehl and Staudenmaier (2011) and Staudenmaier (2021) have convincingly argued that Nazi preoccupations with vegetarianism, animal welfare, anti-vivisection and landscape conservation were real, genuine commitments from a regime obsessed with 'purity'.

One passage from *The World Repair Video Game* gets to the heart of the ecocentrism of Kennard's vision. It is worth quoting at length:

> In Pacific Plaza there's a butcher's shop with a large and award-winning window…. It seems as if the lady pig I'd once seen at a country show and into whose eyes I looked for long seconds is looking up at me from a head without a body. I have to turn away from these pieces of the bodies of animals I could have been friends with. Then I realise that my lady pig would have been chopped in pieces like the animals in the window and bits of her body long ago distributed all over the state. I feel a nausea in my stomach and turn away from this sample of worldwide slaughter, sickened that murder is a valued and essential industry…

> What had my lady pig felt when she had been in that slaughter line, pushed by the queue behind, hearing the fear up ahead and smelling blood?

> There was no way I could eat pieces of dead bodies again. If it ever came to a vote, I'd be all for cropping, to eliminate grazing. (Ireland, 2015: 195–196)

Kennard here dissolves the distinction between people and animals through the invocation of 'murdered individuals who have thoughts and feelings', and expresses in moving language the repulsion

he feels for the fundamentally human system of the industrialised killing of animals. On the basis of this revulsion, he would go so far as to prevent the killing of such animals.

On the face of it, this perspective would seem to cut against the grain of his earlier observation of the primordial provenance and necessity of murder, but it is precisely in this contradiction that the ecofascist moment can be discerned. There is nothing intrinsically fascist about vegetarianism or opposition to factory farming, but when it walks hand-in-hand with the murder of people one can see the deeply anti-humanist core of ecofascism. This is precisely the kind of unity-through-contradiction which was expressed in the Nazi regime's capacity to simultaneously be leaders in environmental and animal rights issues and organisers of the Holocaust. It pays to remember the terms of Kennard's attachment to his 'lady pig', as we shall recall them when we investigate his rather contrasting attitude to a different type of victim – his fellow humans.

The targets of Kennard's ecofascism

The natural, and thus moral, predisposition to inequality, violence and murder grounds Kennard's project, but doesn't supply the entirety of its content. Rather, this demands that we look at the way in which Kennard identifies his victims and justifies their selection. As mentioned, he views his targets as unemployed welfare cheats. The pattern of selection of his victims is instructive, particularly regarding its spatial terms. Pacific Heights is portrayed as a fairly insular community, with a network of locals constituting the constant fabric of what is, at least in part, a tourist town. Kennard's targets are invariably outsiders to this community, often seen alighting from a bus or loitering around. In animalistic terms that are themselves meaningful, Kennard opines of one that he had 'been seagulling in the town for scraps, *living on the ecology* of towns in the coastal corridors' (Ireland, 2015: 171, my emphasis). Allied with their exotic names, such as Sliv Wisniewski, Ray Guzek and Mo Turpie, they are very clearly marked out by their difference. Kennard is able to readily identify the objects of his project of 'repair' by the presence of a distinct native bird on their shoulder (a motif we shall return to below).

Kennard's description of these drifters is largely the same, focusing on what he perceives as their refusal to contribute to the collective labour that powers society, and their parasitism on those who do. For example, he opines of Mo Turpie, '[t]his fellow is alive because other life supports him, he gives nothing. I remember gran and her 'no work no eat'. Discipline and its harshness he has never known, hard work he has never experienced. There is no strong parent in this wrongster's life' (Ireland, 2015: 111). In an understanding shared with the paganistic elements of the contemporary far right (Gardell, 2003), Kennard notes the moral bankruptcy of Christianity and its notions of forgiveness and love in comparing Turpie to a 'mendicant Jesus, without the doctrines…. Like Jesus he had no property or possessions and no dwelling place. Is this social justice?… He's coddled for doing nothing, he takes, never gives' (Ireland, 2015: 112). To every victim, Kennard poses a question about some idea for a meaningful social project from which they might gain employment, only to be universally met with scorn. In the world Ireland creates, the indolence and lack of responsibility to the group make these victims self-interested, atomised and without any vital drive or impulse.

These observations are not in themselves new or even fascist. They would certainly be familiar to anyone with any sensitivity to the representation of welfare-recipients in Australia (see, e.g., Schofield and Butterworth, 2015). Indeed, they essentially represent the ideological core of neoliberalism, which has always posited competition, individualism and self-responsibility as the natural inheritance of humankind. What transforms this neoliberal vision into a fascist one is Kennard's identification of his victims as radically different Others, Others posing a mortal threat to society that can only be remedied by physical liquidation. Kennard continually stresses how his victims, refusing the moral imperative of work, are rendered less than human as a

result. As against his refrain that '[a] working life is a moral life. I say: Power to all who work and make an effort' (Ireland, 2015: 12), he contrasts Ray Guzek: 'He's part of that minority who refuse the human burden, laugh at the division of labour. It's so much better for the whole if all contribute. Dodging the common effort is immoral. Those who do, have no meaning as humans' (Ireland, 2015: 143). Another victim, Sliv Wisniewski, is seen as Kennard 'not as a real person but a structure of attitudes, words, excuses, evasions: a struggle with no outcome…' (Ireland, 2015: 80), a structure that radiates nothingness. Broadly, he reflects that '[t]he sight of vagabonds, vagrant, drifters and nomads nearly makes tears come in my eyes and disgust in my mouth. I see them as a drag on communities, on society and the world in general; not socialised to be industrious, self-reliant, aspiring' (Ireland, 2015: 54).

This ability of Kennard to dehumanise, to 'Other' this section of the population, leads in his mind to the logical next step – their liquidation. In a truly sinister observation, Kennard opines of Wisniewski: 'I see beyond him where the anti-human waits, the one who will destroy humane society. Sliv Wisniewski is a mask covering a destroyer. All must look beyond this specimen and see the horror advancing behind him of more drones than workers and try to eliminate one concrete evil' (Ireland, 2015: 87). He seemingly characterises all of his victims not simply as layabouts, but as mortal threats to civilisation as such. This is a deeply revealing aesthetic handling of one of the irreducible features of fascism; given the moral precondition of violence as natural, and the rendering of the Other (in this case the unemployed) as less than human, murder becomes a cleansing, palingenetic moral imperative.

There is a somewhat speculative, but highly fertile, spatial extension to the argument here. With the help of Poulantzas (2014), we can read Kennard as not simply murdering existentially-threatening outsiders, but as actively engaged in a process of proto-fascist spatial reconstruction. Poulantzas (2014: 104) observed that key to the spatial matrices of the capitalist type of state is 'the appearance of *frontiers in the modern sense of the term*; that is to say, limits capable of being shifted along a serial and discontinuous loom which everywhere fixes *insides* and *outsides*' (emphasis in original). At the same time that capital strives to universalise itself across space, it must do so through a process of crossing frontiers constituted, at least in part, by the atomisation of capitalist units of production and reproduction (Poulantzas, 2014). This process of fixing insides and outsides assumes a particularly malevolent form in the fascist state, crystallised best in the couplet concentration camp/genocide. The former 'internalizes the frontiers of the national space at the heart of that space itself, thus making possible the modern notion of 'internal enemy' (Poulantzas, 2014: 105), whilst the latter is 'a form of extermination specific to the establishment or cleaning up of the national territory by means of homogenizing enclosure' (Poulantzas, 2014: 107). Thus, the camp, and the genocide that occurs there, internalises and reflects the logic of national space at the level of a discrete location – subnational space, therefore, exists both as a microcosm and constituent of the space of the nation.

Seen against this light, Kennard's project could be seen to create a spatial logic that fixes precisely upon an 'internal enemy' and seeks to eradicate it within the borders of Pacific Heights. His violence is not simply a matter of destroying those he feels unworthy of life: rather, it seeks simultaneously to protect the lawful, productive citizens of Pacific Heights and the environment in which they live. In this sense, his very substantial charitable endeavours, which revolve primarily around aiding elderly residents who have worked their whole lives, features as a flip-side to his campaign of murder. Despite the modesty with which he sometimes regards his project of repair, it is no less than a desire to fix Pacific Heights with a new, proto-fascist spatial logic, worked through a kind of violence which, in the language of Benjamin (1996), we might quite rightly regard as 'lawmaking'. That is, it is a logic which seeks to annihilate the law of the state and substitute a new, 'higher' form of law (Benjamin, 1996). Moreover, this is a spatial logic that, in the world of the text, *runs ahead* of the national space. If, echoing Poulantzas (2014),

the local reproduces at the micro-scale the spatial matrices of national space, we might say that, through the aesthetic freedom afforded by the literary fashioning of ideology (Eagleton, 2006; Heino, 2021a, 2021b; Macherey, 2006), Ireland gives us a hint of an ecofascist future through reversing the chain – Pacific Heights serving as a spatial blue print of inclusion and exclusion, insides and outsides, for a broader fascist national space. This is a point we shall return to below when we come to consider the future of ecofascism prophesied in the text.

Before moving on, it is necessary to note quickly an additional consideration regarding the victims. As mentioned previously, Ireland makes it clear that they are outsiders to the Pacific Heights community through a variety of devices, including their exotic names, their mode of transportation, and their own stories as drifters. On the whole, however, it does not seem to be the case that Ireland has posed them as members of a distinct ethnicity. Given that fascism is almost invariably cast in racial terms, it might be objected that one of the central elements of fascism is missing. There are two points to note here. Firstly, although the ethnicities of the outsiders are not directly indicated, the language of parasitism and contamination Ireland employs in their description could be read as a form of racist dog whistling. Within fascist thought, such language has a long lineage and almost always has racial overtones. The archetypical example is the anti-Semitism of the Nazi regime, with Hitler (1941: 420) characterising Jews as 'spongers', 'harmful bacillus' and 'a parasite in the body of other nations and States'. The fact, therefore, that direct reference is not made to particular ethnicities does not mean that the status of these outsiders as racially distinct can't be hinted at by Ireland.

Secondly, and more importantly, for my purposes, it is crucial to remember that fascism has other enemies than a parasitic and alien race. As previously discussed, Poulantzas (2014: 105) notes that fascism features a particularly vicious notion of the 'internal enemy'. When identifying core features of his 'Ur', or eternal, fascism, Eco (1995) observed that fascism requires both internal and external enemies to give it a particular national identity. If there is a shortcoming in the literature around ecofascism, it is that these internal enemies seem to get short shrift, particularly insofar as they might actually be part of the ethnic group championed by specific fascist movements. This is particularly the case regarding class, which is especially unfortunate given that the stress on race in fascism is, at least in part, an attempt to substitute nationalist ideology for a revolutionary, anti-capitalist one. As Poulantzas (1974) amply demonstrated, historic fascism was first and foremost a class project, designed to neuter powerful working-class movements that threatened the reproduction of capitalism. There are a few suggestive links in the book whereby Ireland gestures towards this process. In particular, one observation around the aforementioned Wisniewski is telling:

> I'm not a machine, he said. Why work if you can live without? Avoid all unpleasantness, life is for pleasure and comfort. In his world money is infinitely renewable, it's just there, to be handed out. *Reminds me of the old socialist conviction* that the money was somehow always magically there and the business of government was simply a matter of dividing it up fairly…. (Ireland, 2015: 80, my emphasis)

Whilst Ireland's work always evinced an attitude of deep suspicion towards 'isms', the later texts of Ireland see a very pronounced anti-Marxism/anti-socialism, which he sees as naïve in the face of human inequality and destructive of creativity and freedom (an ironic point given the argument of this article). It is in *The World Repair Video Game*, however, that we get the clearest hints that the socialist ideal is linked to unemployed layabouts whose destruction liquidates that ideology.

Is there a reason why this particular type of enemy is the one cast in *The World Repair Video Game*? What Ireland's actual intentions here are beyond reach, but there is a suggestive reading that this form of internal adversary is particularly significant in the Australian context. Despite a

reputation as a prototype of the welfare state that would become widespread post-World War II, Australia delivered welfare policy in a highly unique way. Castles (1994: 124) argues that:

> [t]he simplest way of locating the essential difference between Australia and most other nations is to say that, in Australia, wages policy, in large part, substituted for social policy, with the functional identity between the two being denoted by the peculiar (in terms of capitalistic criteria) importation into Antipodean wage-setting mechanisms of such concepts as the 'fair wage'.

In other words, the kinds of rights provided by the welfare systems of other states were in Australia largely guaranteed through the industrial relations system, with access thereto dependent upon industrial citizenship, a system described by Castles (1994) as a 'wage-earners' welfare state'. It is true that this system has more-or-less fallen apart, but it held strong throughout the formative years and literary peak of David Ireland, and the celebration of labour in *The World Repair Video Game* is very much consonant with its terms. To such a system, the 'welfare cheat', who attempts to derive the benefits which by right belong only to those who labour, is an especially menacing character. It is thus perhaps not surprising that, in Ireland's antipodean ecofascism, this figure assumes the mantle of an internal Other that must be destroyed.

The 'eco' of it all

How does the 'eco' of ecofascism feature in all this, besides the intensity of Kennard's efforts to root his project in the laws of nature? It is in the explicit link between murder and ecology crystallised in the project of 'repair'. Kennard's (successful) efforts at bush regeneration literally feed on the industrially-broken down constituents of the murdered: 'I go to the shed and prepare sand, cement, gravel, oxide, *milled bone* and water in my mixer, making concrete for my path to the top, then I barrow it up the slope and shape a few more metres of path. Another memorial to a lost sheep *gathered into the flesh of the planet*, recycled as all of us are eventually' (Ireland, 2015: 99, my emphasis). The banality and matter-of-factness of this description forms a telling contrast to the deeply emotive and sympathetic language used to tell the story of his aforementioned 'lady pig'. The remains of the human victims enter the regeneration project simply as an input, the result of a process Kennard has seriously considered scaling for efficiency (and so replacing individual murders with mass killing, a reality we know brutally crystallised in the extermination camps of Nazi-occupied Europe).[3]

In the same way that the stark material reality of historical fascism was occluded by intensely ideological layers of myth and mission, so too does this brute banality of Kennard's process of repair blossom under a developed ideological superstructure. Rather than viewing his murderous acts as outbursts of anger or cruelty, he posits instead that, in death, he has given his victims a new, higher purpose as part of a restored environment. Baptised in the fascist language of rebirth through elimination, Kennard's project takes form in his own mind as an act of charity and benevolence. After killing Mo Turpie, he deploys exactly this language: 'There's no more need for fear, for thieving, it's all over now, time to sleep eternally after the stroke of kindness. No more loneliness, desolation, distress. No more uselessness and fooling others. He is dormant, subdued, switched off, all his settings recalibrated. His self is now a share in God, whatever God is…' (Ireland, 2015: 114–115).

And what is this God/deity in which Mo finds rest? None other than Nature itself. One of the key structural features of *The World Repair Video Game* is the juxtaposition between Kennard's fascistic political and social observations/acts with deep, rich and introspective acts of nature worship. This nature, in common with far-right ecology more broadly, is conceived largely (although, in Ireland's hands, not wholly) in local terms (Forchtner, 2020a), and is seen through the

aforementioned prism of a mysticism that privileges closeness to, and realisation of, eternal, cosmic-life forces. The text is replete with moving observations of the spirit and language of trees (indeed, Kennard names and is in communion with two, Big Manna and Stirling Oak), the intelligence and activity of birds, and the history of landscape. Nature is direct, unmediated, experienced as part of one's inner essence and the source of ultimate reality, yet does not truly extend beyond the horizon (Hughes et al., 2022). As I remarked to a fellow surfer-colleague of mine, it is language that reminds me very much of surfing localism – a deep, intrinsic yet ineffable connection to an immediately sensible place, existing alongside the understanding that this place is always-already under threat and must be defended.

This kind of mysticism in-and-of-itself is not intrinsically fascist. However, it is always vulnerable to co-option by fascism given that both share a common commitment to introspection, emotion and rootedness. Ireland squares the circle for us – given the episodic, stream-of-consciousness style which was always his literary stock-in-trade, the common structural pairing of these musings on nature with political, economic and social observations is telling. The two poles of this structural couplet reinforce the other, and I argue they reveal the intrinsic link between murder and environmentalism that must lie at the heart of ecofascism, seen in such passages as the following (immediately after the murder of yet another victim):

> He's been taken off the drip, one dependent fewer, and there's one less untidiness in the world…

> Tonight so much is mine. Sky and stars, sun and sea and mountains. How can I be so small and insignificant when in my head I contain the universe? Yet I am.

> Another ritual done. I am satisfied that ritual is a friend of order, and often brings order into existence. (Ireland, 2015: 205)

Another episode sees an intense, nauseating depiction of the dismemberment of Guzek, followed immediately by this account of Kennard (accompanied by his beloved dog Jim):

> I see again the tiny turquoise spider. I talk to it. Jim watches, what is he thinking? Would his words startle me if he could talk?

> As I gaze steadily I feel the whole world of hills, forest and sea, all breathing; the air, the sunlight, breathing. Everything is alive. (Ireland, 2015: 152)

Most significantly, this union of fascist murder and ecology is represented through the symbol of birds (which have always assumed especial significance in Ireland's literature, often as the bearers of intertwined natural and social themes – see, e.g., Ireland, 1984), who mark out Kennard's victims, the 'birdmen'. Kennard recognises his victims when he sees a solitary *Australian native* bird (including, amongst others, a kingfisher, a red wattle bird and a pallid cuckoo) sitting on their head as they first alight in Pacific Heights. It is significant to note here the role Australia's unique native birdlife has played in the construction of national identity (see, e.g., Long, 2017; McGregor, 2019). McGregor (2019) in particular has stressed how birds were central to naturalist Alec Chisholm's efforts to use 'nature to boost nationhood, and nationalism to foster love of Australian nature'. In particular, Chisholm argued that we must hold a 'fraternal attitude towards birds … if we as a nation are to develop any real measure of alliance with our native earth' (cited in McGregor, 2019).

Thus, a locally grounded, 'native' Nature that is metaphorically tied to the nation and symbolised through the birds, itself marks out the intruding misfits, the Others to be liquidated. It is Nature that

exacts its vengeance through the vehicle of Kennard. And when he has disposed of the victims with his rapier (whom he lovingly calls 'Ott')? The birds fly away – a distinctly Australian Nature is freed of the burden of a superfluous population, a superfluity Kennard recycles into repairing that very Nature. Surely here lies a maximal moment of ecofascism. The most extreme elements of the far-right today seem to have little compunction about killing migrants and perceived foreigners on the grounds of national sustainability and habitat preservation (Harwood, 2021). However, even they have not yet countenanced killing people to be used directly in that effort. However, through aesthetically teasing out its rationale, Ireland shows us that this is in fact a logical endpoint of ecofascism, a kind of hyper-*Volksgeist* in which an intense, mystical relationship between Nature and an exclusive community is fertilised by the enemies of that very same community.[4] A literary handling of this ideology thus gives us a glimpse of its potential material future, a glimpse which I argue is more incisively plotted by Ireland than any contemporary scholarly account could hope to achieve.

An ecofascist future?

It might be objected that Ireland's Kennard Stirling is not the prophet of an ecofascist future by dint of the fact that his programme of environmental 'repair' is an entirely individual endeavour. Given the earlier identification of fascism as entailing a dense mass-associational society, the fact that Kennard executes violence as a sole affair (as opposed to violence committed as part of a group, like, for example, the Nazi *Sturmabteilung* or Italian Blackshirts) might seem to render him more a character in the mould of the Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, rather than a committed fascist.

There are two inter-related points I would note in relation to this objection. Firstly, in the case of emergent, and extremely violent, ideologies like ecofascism, it is almost inevitable that early manifestations will, at least in part, take the form of individual action by fanatics. Ecofascism sits at the extreme end of Moore and Roberts' (2022) and Lubarda's (2020; 2024) 'far-right ecologism', which covers a range of anti-liberal mainstream parties, anti-democratic organisations, and networks of radical/terroristic individuals (see, e.g., Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011; Forchtner, 2020a, 2020b; Moore and Roberts, 2022; Smith, 2021). These lattermost, which include individuals like the Christchurch and El Paso killers, act as lone wolves (which is not to disregard their online connections), precisely due to the fact that ecofascism is not yet a viable, institutionalised political movement. The fact that they act alone would not on any reasonable analysis deprive them of their status as fascists. Again to echo Benjamin (1996), the touchstone to this type of violence is not whether it collective or individual, but whether or not in breaking the law of the state it effaces it and seeks to establish a new, 'higher' law. The argument of this paper is that Kennard's project is only comprehensible on these terms.

In a deeper sense, it is precisely the embryonic character of ecofascism as a contemporary political force that highlights the significance of conceiving literature as a working of ideology. As Eagleton (2006) identifies, literature can foreground issues over which a society broods, and in this sense can culturally register economic and political developments before those developments register themselves. Despite seemingly positing Kennard as an extreme individualist who might be thought ill-suited to the collectivist bent of fascism, Ireland is seemingly forced to acknowledge that, however isolated the individual, the understanding of nature he works with must perforce end in fascism. Towards the end of the novel, Kennard feels that his project, based on isolated murder, is no longer sufficient to the task of repair. He grasps towards a broader conception of the issue and finds it through identifying a whole other group of legitimate targets – the disloyal rich. The project is enunciated by Kennard after an interjection from his subconscious, who he dubs 'Pym'. It is worth quoting Kennard's new mission at length:

That's it. My new project. I can see it. The single outriders who are the attack heading for the big score, these are the oligarchs, not the many honest CEOs rewarded for performance, but the few among the top money people whose greedy domination in dysfunctional capital markets weakens the spirit of social fairness, they are attacking outriders, not creators of wealth like the Steve Jobs of the world, but drones and cheats, overpaid bankers and facilitators resistant to regulation of their ingenious derivatives and other bundled and unscrutinised financial instruments, damaging the cohesion and morale of societies weak enough to tolerate them and not to examine and firmly regulate their activities in time to prevent financial crisis, crash, and the disgraceful rescue of these reckless cowboys and opportunists by the tax-paying public under the 'too big to fail' nonsense mantra, which is usually sheer political protection by their friends. Others of their ilk take large payments while heading enterprises that are failing, yet walk away with millions, with their shareholders complicit in the theft, and the morale of the population falls further. (Ireland, 2015: 265)

In this new, broader project we can see the addition of several classic fascist targets – bankers and financiers, who are seen as divorced from production and counterposed to an impoverished 'people' (a link Kennard makes earlier: Ireland, 2015: 264). At the ideological level, these targets have traditionally been associated by fascists with modernity and urbanism, which weakens the link between the race and nature (Lubarda, 2024; Nolte, 1965). Not only does Kennard's new project have a broader range of foes; he has actively chosen to intensify his campaign. The book ends with a transparent statement of his expanded programme: 'Tomorrow I begin plans for a bigger project, where naked truth will be displayed in the event. No stiletto, I need more powerful weaponry' (Ireland, 2015: 266). In the call for better tools than his stiletto Ott, it is hard not to see a shift from a campaign of isolated, individual murder to explicit political action revolving around terror by the deed. This reading is strengthened in Ireland's description of his departure by car, 'capital city street directories on the passenger seat beside me' (2015: 265). The image of rural virtue and urban decay/degeneracy is a common fascist trope (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011; Moore and Roberts, 2022), and one with especial potency in the Australian context given the significance of the 'larrikin' bushman in constructions of Australian identity. The fact that he leaves the former to wage terror in the latter is another indication that what we are dealing with here is a fully-fledged ecofascism.

It was argued above that, in depicting Kennard's project, Ireland creates a world where Kennard attempts to implant a fascist spatial logic in the Pacific Heights community. We noted there that this in a sense is a reversal of Poulantzas' (2014) chain of causality, with the local level here providing an ecofascist spatial blueprint for the nation-state. Given the aforementioned fact that ecofascism does not yet exist as a mainstream political movement, this picture makes sense to the reader of *The World Repair Video Game*, both within and without the text. However, Ireland concludes the novel at the very interface between the local and the national, rural and the urban, the story and the contemporary political scene. An ecofascist future must of necessity consist in this articulation of different spatial scales, brokered through a vicious, lawmaking violence (Benjamin, 1996).

Conclusion

In this article, I have concentrated on the specific handling of the question of nature in fascist thought. Due to the constraints of space, I can only mention in passing other elements of the text which speak to a fundamentally fascist politics: Kennard's preference for the vigour and dynamism of war over peace and equality; repeated reference to the fecundity of immigrants and the resultant threat to the demographics of Western societies; the subservience of class identity to national identity; the conviction that a global conflagration is imminent; and a belief that democracy has outlived its usefulness. These strengthen my claim that *The World Repair Video Game* is the

aesthetic unfolding of an ideology of ecofascism. There is the open question of whether or not this is an ideology that David Ireland was himself sympathetic to. It is impossible to know, particularly now he has passed away. Certainly, his later works are very strongly inflected with the themes of anti-egalitarianism, anti-statism (specifically targeting the liberal welfare state) and a trenchant anti-Marxism that could easily cohere as an ecofascist mindset.

However, Ireland's personal views are really beside the point. Literature as a fashioning of ideology always reveals more than it means to. This is particularly the case with fascist ideology. As a host of scholars have noted, fascism is fundamentally anti-rational (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011; Nolte, 1965; Rueda, 2020). This does not mean that it cannot be conceptualised through rational means, but to be truly understood at the affective level where it is most potent, we must have recourse to the author, the poet and the propagandist. D.H. Lawrence, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Yukio Mishima – in their work they capture the seductiveness of fascism. As I never tire of telling people, I did not truly understand fascism until I read Mishima's (2001) *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*. What can be said about fascism in the works of these authors applies doubly to the ecofascism of *The World Repair Video Game*. As mentioned previously, with ecofascism we are dealing with a movement that, barring the actions of a few right-wing terrorists, exists largely at the ideological level, and even there in an inchoate form. Aesthetic treatments of ecofascism, therefore, run ahead of its material reality, plotting in imaginative terms what an ecofascist future might look like and what it might entail. *The World Repair Video Game* is precisely such an ideological prefiguration. Ireland road-tests an ideology of ecofascism which is coherent, lucid and novel. It shows in aesthetic terms how a future ecofascism might synergise an essentialist link between the natural and social worlds, hatred towards those who resist the neoliberal link between labour and human worth, extreme violence and a deep, genuine nature worship. This understanding of ecofascism that has been reached through *The World Repair Video Game* thus directly speaks to Anson and Banerjee (2023: 157) claim that 'ecofascism is a *literary* project' and allows us to understand how the aesthetic serves as a vehicle through which fascisation, the process by which fascism establishes itself as a mainstream political movement (Malm and the Zetkin Collective, 2021: 251), comes about.

Aside from the specifically prognostic mapping of ecofascism, the arguments I have advanced in this article can also inform understanding of a number of contemporary political debates in which ecofascist tendencies can be discerned. Chief here is the current movement by the far and extreme right wing to couch anti-immigration policies as tools of national environmental protection, symbolised best in the notion of 'ecology is the border' (Malm and the Zetkin Collective, 2021: 133–179). Through uncovering the link between the spatiality of Pacific Heights and Kennard Stirling's project, we have seen how Ireland demonstrates that the equivalence of anti-immigration and environmental protection must always result in violence against outsiders and is intrinsically premised on an idea of Nature as locally oriented and tied to the space of the nation. Relatedly, I have demonstrated that, uniquely in the literature around ecofascism, Ireland has here further developed its internal dimension. Whereas both scholarly and aesthetic treatments of ecofascism tend to focus on the Other in racialised and gendered terms, Ireland shows us the means by which class can be brought within the ecofascist framework. This serves to put us on guard when governments deploy rhetoric and policies to stigmatise and punish welfare recipients, alert for the ways this might be deployed to the ends of ecofascism. Lastly, through the brute violence that is the essence of Kennard's project, Ireland forces us to see how easily calls for population control can be mutated to serve fascist ends. The analysis here gives a fresh complexion to the horrific sentiment of the El Paso killer when he declared '…the next logical step is to decrease the number of people in America using resources. If we get rid of enough people, then our way of life can become more sustainable' (quoted in Malm and the Zetkin Collective, 2021: 471).

For these reasons and more, the study of *The World Repair Video Game* promises dividends to scholars of ecofascism. We ignore the warning bell it sounds at our peril.

Highlights

- Studies Australian author David Ireland's last novel *The World Repair Video Game* as an aesthetic exploration of ecofascism.
- Explores how the book synthesises several key planks of ecofascism and aesthetically plots how they might cohere in an ecofascist future.
- Conceptualises the relationship between ecofascism and the system of 'insides' and 'outsides' that form the frontiers of the modern state.
- Extends scholarship on economy and space in literature to nature and space in literature.

Declaration of conflicting interests

Funding

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Notes

1. It is significant to note here that the couplet between the camp and mass killing was also a feature characterising the spatiality of other societies seemingly outside the capitalist camp. Examples include the gulag of the Soviet system, the killing fields of Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, and the current oppression of the Uyghurs in China. There are continuing debates about the exact class nature of all these regimes, particularly regarding the Soviet Union and China and whether or not they were/are a form of degenerate workers' state or a species of state capitalism. To concentrate on fascist genocide in this article is not to ignore or minimise the atrocities of these other regimes – it is simply to suggest that there is something unique about fascist genocide which warrants it being the specific object of focus here.
2. Staudenmaier (2021) correctly notes that neither the political left nor right possesses a monopoly over environmentalism, with the result that it is a field of contestation (see also Lubarda, 2024; Moore, 2020). Moreover, although right-wing movements can instrumentally use environmental issues to garner support, Moore (2020: 11) highlights the fact 'that there are some far right and environmentally friendly conservative groups that are genuinely committed to ecology and the natural world'. However, this does not mean that some type of horseshoe theory of equivalence between the far-right and far-left is at play. It is precisely on this question of mysticism that a fundamental difference can be discerned. Whereas mysticism plays the role of occluding the social origins of environmental crisis, most progressive forms of ecologism are armed with concepts that allow them to penetrate this veil (Moore and Roberts, 2022).
3. There is a suggestive link here to the so-called "law of return", which amongst other things suggested the use of human waste to restore nutrients removed from arable land (Saito, 2017). This law informed the early history of organic farming, within which the far-right exerted considerable influence, including in Australia (see, e.g., Gaynor, 2012). Richards et al. (2024: 48) have noted that '[w]hile the natural law of return in agriculture refers to the process of nutrients and organic matter being recycled back into the soil through natural decay and decomposition, the far right in Australia incorporated this concept into their propaganda

messaging and advocacy of anti-immigration policies to promote the genocidal principle of creating racially pure societies free from external influences'. Through Kennard's project of repair, we have a violent union between the two objects, whereby it is the 'natural decay and decomposition' of the external enemies that powers a reinvigorated Nature. Indeed, it is a material and symbolic project that produces a quite literal "Blood and Soil" relationship to land.

4. It is significant to note here that the effect of this union of mysticism/nature-worship and fascist political thought is to launder the land of its indigenous heritage. This is a vital ideological move, as from the perspective of this heritage the question of who belongs and who is an outsider upsets the exclusivity of ecofascism (see, e.g., Anson and Banerjee, 2023). Ireland shows the ideological means through which ecofascism can position the (white) settler 'as a harmonious and native figure in the spiritual and physical landscape' (Campion, 2019: 214). Considerations of space preclude me from further pursuing this important point.

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