



RESEARCH PAPER

**Beauty Metaphors in Advertisements: An Ecological Discourse
Analysis**

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DOI [http://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2021\(5-II\)1.44](http://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2021(5-II)1.44)

PAPER INFO

ABSTRACT

Received:

August 28, 2021

Accepted:

December 21, 2021

Online:

December 24, 2021

Keywords:

Eco-Linguistics,
Framing, Metaphor,
Grammatical
Metaphor,
Ideology,
Nominalization
Stratal Model

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Skin whitening creams (SWCs) advertisements frequently manipulate beauty metaphors to frame the cognition of the masses for their sale promotion. This research aims to decode the link between the symbolic discourses of seven advertisements of SWCs and the exploitation of human feelings for commercialism. An ecological discourse analysis of the Grammatical Metaphor (GM) used in SWCs advertisements has been conducted. The study draws on Fairclough's perspective of CDA in the systemic functional linguistic framework of the stratal model (Martin, 1993b; Halliday, 1985). The results demonstrate that Ideational and interpersonal GMs are deployed to impart information that seems to be neutral through nominalization, mood, and modality to justify the sociocultural divide of fair and not fair beauty norms for commercialism.

Introduction

Beauty cream advertisements are wildly broadcast in the world. Cook (2001) argues that they are used as an efficient medium to "create awareness, construct identities and attitude." In SWCs advertisements of developing countries like Pakistan, the normative female beauty is constructed based on "European standards of feminine beauty ideals." The rhetoric of these advertisements is used to inform readers and motivate them to acquire better life options by using SWCs. This activity does not happen in a vacuum (Rajagopal, 1998). It has a subtle link with Northern & Southern European Caucasian cultural hegemony. It builds an association with cultural, social, economic, and political ideologies of developing countries to create a site for capitalist market forces by exploiting consumer desires and by controlling every aspect of their life (Tseelon, 1995; Bordo, 2004; Grosz, 1994; Butler, 1993; Weitz, 1998).

Advertisements' language subtly shapes the ideals of capitalism and their unjust objectives as "universal" to get economic hegemony as "natural" to increase market demand (Foster, 2001; Foster et al., 2011). Feminist and post-colonial analysts endorsed SWCs Ads Linguistic manipulation. They argued that the Eurasian / Eurafrican beauty myth in developing countries like Pakistan, India, and many other southern countries is evidence of post-colonial cultural dependency. Salamini (2014) opined that the white man created hegemonic beauty culture to sustain their cultural hegemony. He argued that European/Western configured standards are acknowledged as universal standards of feminine beauty by developing or less developed countries rather than the beauty norms constructed from their own respective cultures.

Furthermore, it might be assumed that marketing these beauty creams in the guise of beauty myths has ideological roots. It creates many ugly sociocultural issues in developing countries, such as sociocultural marginalization and physical and psychological problems among women who do not have hegemonic traits the beauty myth. Such a scenario raises a need to analyze the purpose of these "European standards of feminine beauty" in skin Whitening creams advertisements (SWCs), which might be called hegemonic beauty culture.

Many studies have pointed out Skin Whitening creams ads' glorification of white complexion's harmful effects on individuals' lives in the Pakistani context. Most of the studies did a qualitative analysis. Saira Maqsood (2015) used thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews using grounded theory to analyze the biased role of media in promoting white complexion superiority. Ismail, Loya, and Hussain (2015) found a significant part of advertisements, social factors, and inferior complex in creating obsession for fair skin in males and females using survey questionnaires. Likewise, Sohail Kamran's (2010) study based on qualitative data gathered from interviews of twelve focus groups reports that fair creams advertisements in Pakistan initiate different potential issues. These issues reinforce stereotypical roles of women, hurting women's self-esteem and teaching negative values (hatred, inferiority complex) in society. Kaur, Arumugam, and Younus (2013) found language manipulation in beauty cream advertisements as a source to access idealized lifestyle by using Fairclough three dimensional framework. Rahman (2002) recognized while analyzing middle-class Indian Hindu women in New Jersey that skin color, besides other variables such as caste and occupation, is an essential parameter. Skin color is vital for a woman to acquire an economically sound, educated, and professional male spouse for a respectable life. In short, all these research works conducted qualitative analyses at the semantic level of Skin Whitening creams ads expose hidden sociocultural ideologies for promoting this hazardous product. Moreover, many medical reports from South East Asian and Middle Eastern countries (Murphy et al. 2015; Naser & Kirm, 2015), besides Pakistan (Chaudhry, 2014; Gul, 2012), have highlighted health risk by the usage of different brands of Skin Whitening creams due to the dangerous level of mercury content. Regrettably, there is no effect on purchasing these beauty creams, especially in the Pakistani context (Askari et al.,

2014).

The researches, as mentioned earlier, are likely to spread awareness among the masses through qualitative analysis. However, these studies could not give them linguistic understanding to become independent critical readers or independent eco-literate individuals. The linguistic analysis of skin whitening cream ads enables decoding their discursive language use. It allows them to understand how Skin whitening cream ads' bring to life a beauty myth in the domain of social reality and its consequent effects on physical reality.

The present research based on eco-linguistics analysis of SWC ads aims to analyze the destructive effect of language on its environment based on the following question:

- How is SWC ads' language used to construct beauty myths to distort the sociocultural and psychological ecology of Pakistan?

The environment of language comprises its users' social, natural, and psychological aspects. The present study critically evaluates the discourse of beauty creams ads through the Fairclough model to expose the hidden agenda of SWC manufacturers and provide readers (users) tools to resist such written addresses and rehabilitate a healthy environment in society.

Material and Methods

Beauty creams advertisements are considered media discourse since they engage language and social processes. In reality, advertisement rhetoric propagates beauty ideals – fairness, slimness, youthfulness, light skin, long legs, and big eyes. These propagated ideals are an intricate racial and ethnic coding. Hence, this research conducted an eco-linguistic analysis of written discourse used in beauty creams ads at two levels: semantic and lexico-grammatical level with the help of the Fairclough Model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) by using SFL grammatical metaphor (GM) as a tool.

This work used 11 SWC ads and selected 60 grammatical metaphors. The researchers expanded them into their congruent form to dig deep for exploring destructive stories that distort society's ecology according to the desired motives of a business tycoon. Further investigation was carried on by classifying GM: ideational and interpersonal. The Ideational Grammatical Metaphors are further divided into experiential and logical metaphors. The interpersonal grammatical metaphors are classified into mood metaphors and modality metaphors. These grammatical metaphors provide a linguistic base to expose the discursive link among language, power, and identity in beauty cream ads language.

The researcher conducted eco-linguistic analysis, which draws on

Fairclough's critical discourse analysis of Pakistani 11 beauty cream ads. Grammatical Metaphor (GM) was used as a tool for analyzing beauty creams ads' linguistic structures at semantic (qualitative) and lexicogrammar (quantitative) level with their embedded caucasian sociocultural hegemony.

Results and Discussion

The following section deals with Eco-linguistic analysis in the systemic functional grammar perspective, based on lexico-grammatical analysis of Ideational and Interpersonal metaphors embedded in 11 ads related to the first research question.

Ideational Grammatical Metaphor (IGM)

IGM is usually present in texts that carry abstract ideologies and hidden motives (Derewianka & Jones, 2016). It molds text construction by making some information more explicit than others. This work found that IGMs were employed frequently to purposely encapsulate relational attributive details on the skin in SWC ads. It grabs consumers' attention as David Crystal claims that ad language "is generally laudatory, positive, unreserved, and emphasizing the uniqueness of a product" (Crystal, 2010a). These IGMs consolidate that skin can be stated healthy if the skin has white color; otherwise, the skin can be said unhealthy and dull, which will not be considered beautiful. The advertisers manipulate beauty as an existing social reality for successful life specifically, in Pakistani society. At the same time, the discursive language of advertisements can be better understood if the current social facts, such as the successful life behind the discourses, are analyzed. Dijk states that the production and construction of discourse consist of the "personal cognition of social actors and the socially shared cognition of social actions as the members of the similar epistemic community" (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018a). Inevitably, Pakistani society, according to van Dijk, as the knowledge contains the same criterion to conceptualize the standard of beauty that is just and mere "Whiteness" (Dijk, 2012). Thereby, the notions about the skin have been embedded in young girls' minds in Pakistani society, meaning that the ideas for white complexion are internalized into female children, so these ideas become the essential parts of their cognition. In short, the Pakistani feminine community, in this way, endeavors to whiten their skin at all costs. Fairclough states, "Better understanding requires better explanation. Thus CDA combines the critique of discourse and explains how discourse figures in the existing social reality as a basis for action to change the reality." (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018b).

To critique the conceptualization of Whiteness, it needs to consider SWC ads in the context of social cognitions: ideologies, belief systems, norms, and values. Hence, to expose the above-mentioned targeted function of advertising language, 60 IGMs (nominal groups) were expanded to their congruent forms to disclose the real intentions of SWCs ads. The harmonious forms of the 60 Ideational Grammatical

metaphors (nominalization) are listed in the table: 1.

Table 1
Non-congruent and Congruent Form of Ideational Metaphors Used in the Beauty Cream Advertisements

No.	IGM (Metaphorical Wording)	Congruent wording
1	Intensive Whitening Night Cream based on the unique Lumiskin 4D White Complex	The cream is for night use It has an intensive effect, and it will whiten the skin. The formula of the cream is unique It has Lumiskin 4D White Complex.
2	Intensive Whitening Night Cream based on the unique Lumiskin 4D White Complex	The cream has an intensive effect It is fresh for the skin. The cream will give you a glow, and you will look healthy.
3	Its breakthrough formula enriched with cherry and multivitamins	The procedure has breakthrough products. It is enriched with cherry. It has vitamins which are of many types
4	A clinically tested and certified-100% safe to use Men's Fairness Cream	The cream is for men usage It will make your skin fair. The cream is clinically tested. It is certified. it is safe to use the cream for skin

After converting metaphorical meanings of IGM into congruent meanings, the researcher counted the process types' frequency to explore how the reality of beauty myth is constructed in the SWCs ads. The researchers found that in IGMs, the highest frequency of Attributive Relational Processes (57%) are discursively utilized. They encapsulate for laudatory purposes of SWCs. Ads used both Material (41%) and Behavioral processes (2%) for authenticity and the uniqueness of skin whitening creams in the ten advertisements as presented under in Table 2

Table 2
Processes Type Frequency and Percentage

Process Types	Frequency	Percent
Relational attributive	71	57 %
Material	51	41 %
Behavioural	2	2%
Total	124	100 %

The researchers found 71(57 %) attributive relational processes, 51 material processes (41%), and 2 behavioral processes (2%) after converting IGMs of 11 ads into

congruent form. Ads' writers deployed 60 Nominal Groups in 11 advertisements. They discursively impart a great fund of knowledge about white skin concisely. For instance, attributive relational processes (57%) are used dominantly in these ads. They are used to characterize the SWCs and assess them by assigning an evaluative attribute to the user (Halliday, 2014) like "The formula of the cream is unique," "The cream has an intensive effect.", and "The cream is clinically tested and certified." It seems that these attributes of SWCs ads entice the customers that the SWCs will materialize their dreams (being beautiful) instantly. The following dominant processes were Material Processes (41%). They highlight the transformation of skin into white one such as "it will whiten the skin.", "The cream will make your skin fair." and "The cream will give you glow." It means relational processes acted as a backdrop and materialized the beauty myth into reality, as David Crystal endorsed that the language of advertising "tends to be vivid and concrete" (Crystal, 2010b). Hence, advertising language used in the skin whitening creams is used to increase and construct a criterion of Whiteness and fairness as mental concepts of beauty in the cognition process of costumers for a hidden purpose: to increase purchase. Next, the ads' writers did not ignore customers' physiological and psychological reactions by using 2% behavioral processes in 11 advertisements. "Both elements, psychological and linguistic, are essential: they combine to produce a single 'brand image' of a product (Crystal, 2010b)". In other words, Pakistani costumers behavioral cognition frame is further exploited by selecting IGM in the title of the SWCs like "fair and lovely," "face fresh," "white skin," "Fair skin," "Glowing skin," "Healthy skin" according to constructed beauty myth/criterion of the society.

In short, SWC ads encapsulate the White complexion myth through different processes and GMs to serve implicit purposes. Firstly, these processes conveyed tempting qualities by ensuring the performance of these creams either figuratively or physically, which purposely entice and arouse an irresistible desire in the consumers' cognition to purchase SWCs. They desire to be fair and white because of Pakistani society's constructed sociocultural cognitive system, even ignoring the negative aspects of SWCs. Secondly, GMs' employment in advertisements propagates condensed information about the White skin to endorse the concepts of the superiority of White over dark among the social actors of the Pakistani society for commercial purposes. It results in adverse medical effects on skin health and "lowering women's self-perception" and then persuade them to get relief from these negative feelings as emotional exploitation through the specific SWC persuasion.

Depersonalization of Beauty Attributes

GMs, help to achieve depersonalization in SWC ads. Through objectification and fossilization of finite processes, GMs convey the timeless and unassailable truths about beauty and ugliness. Halliday (1985) explains the characteristics of GM that, "they depersonalized ads as they do not mention human doer and time. Hence, the nominalized processes are not grammatically finite. It means that GM detaches the process so that it is not normally possible for a process expressed by a verb. It is

therefore inherently generalized.” (Thompson, 2014). It manifests that the advertisers, therefore, utilize the excessive amount of nominalization to present the attribute of their creams in the guise of facts and generalized objects, for example,

Table 3

Double Transitivity of Metaphorical and congruent readings combined

1	Congruent form	The cream will protect your skin; your skin is vulnerable to UV rays; the cream will protect you from the signs of skin, which darkens the face during the day.			
	Non-congruent	Your skin is vulnerable to the sun’s UV rays and signs of skin darkening during the day.			
	Process Types	Your skin	is	vulnerable to the sun’s UV rays and signs of skin darkening	During the day.
	Rel. Pr.	Carrier	Relation, attributive	Attribute	circumstance
		The cream	will protect	your skin	
	Mat. Pr.	Actor	Material	Goal	
		the rays of the sun	are	UV	
	Rel. Pr.	Carrier	Relational, attributive	attribute	
		the cream	will protect	You	from the signs of skin
	Mat. Pr.	Actor	Material	Goal	circumstance
		the signs of skin	darken	the face	during the day.
	Mat. Pr.	Actor	Material	Goal	circumstance
2	Non-congruent	This non-oily skin lightening cream improves skin tone evenness, giving it an instant radiance and sun protection.			
	Congruent form	The cream radiates the skin instantly, protecting the skin from the sun. The cream does not have oil, and the cream lightens the skin. The cream improves the skin, and it evens the skin tone.			
		The cream	does not have	Oil	
	Rel. Pr.	Carrier	Relational, attributive	Attributive	
		Cream	lightens	the skin	
	Mat. Pr.	Actor	Material	goal	
		The cream	improves	the skin	
	Mat. Pr.	Actor	Material	Goal	
		It	evens	the skin tone	
	Mat. Pr.	Actor	Material	Goal	
		The cream	radiates	the skin	instantly
	Mat. Pr.	Actor	Material	Goal	circumstance
		It	protects	the skin	from sun.
	Mat. Pr.	Actor	Material	Goal	circumstance

Table 3 shows that agency's role in non-human agents such as “cream” in the non-congruent language seems to neutralize it with nominalization. In contrast, the human agents, the advertisers, can be easily detected in the congruent language. Thus

the GMs play a dual role in SWC ads. Ads writers use GMs to propagate the attributive information about skin whitening creams. They convert personal information of creams via nominalization into “thingyness” to make the biased information non-negotiable. In the description of the language of advertising, David Crystal confirms the significance of IGM. He proposed that it “lend an air of vagueness- and thus safety- to the claims for the product (Crystal, 2010b)” and manufacturer.

IGMs in SWC intend to show the quality of non-finiteness as they use nouns. Their “thingness” of attributes and processes present the advertisements in the form of logically existing social reality (Thompson, 2014). Since it can be noted through the analysis (Table 3) that IGMs are used to excite the sociocultural inherent consumers’ feelings to purchase SWCs.

Interpersonal Grammatical Metaphor

Precisely, interpersonal grammatical Metaphor for its evocative description can be considered the primary advertising function. It grabs customers' attention through the Metaphor of mood and Metaphor of modality (Song, 2018). Primarily interpersonal Metaphors are used to persuade the customers through a high level of propositional attitude. Hence, 51 metaphors of mood that consist of 43 present simple tense clauses (84%), 7 past simple tense clauses (14%), and 1 present perfect (2%). On the other hand, 8 metaphors of modality which comprise 3 obviousness (37.5%), 3 evaluation (37.5%), 1 validation (12.5%), and 1 probability (12.5%) as shown in Table 4

Table 4
Frequency of Interpersonal Metaphors

Metaphors of Mood (declarative)	No. of frequency	%	Metaphors of Modality	No. of frequency	Percentage
Present Indefinite tense	43	84%	Obviousness	3	37.5%
Past indefinite tense	7	14%	Evaluation	3	37.5%
Present perfect tense	1	2%	Validation	1	12.5%
Total	51		Probability	1	12.5%
			Total	8	

Moreover, the present simple tense is frequently used in Interpersonal grammatical Metaphors to perform three functions, i.e., the existence of the state as a fact, the habitual action, and the happening of action at present (Biber, 2010). The Present tense functional usage is likely to suggest that the advertisers explicitly utilize it to represent European opinions (beauty myth) related to the skin as undeniable

facts to persuade the people and simply promote the sale of SWC beauty products. Likewise, people's feelings are also manipulated by teaching the need to acquire Whiteness through evocative description using Metaphors of mood and modality. In this way, the costumers' passion or desires to get permanent fairness and glowing skin are incited as if the applicants would attain, control, and sustain the beauty skin by applying beauty creams on the skin, for example, the simple present tense-aspect in the examples below:

1. Intensive Whitening Night Cream based on the unique Lumiskin 4D White Complex promotes cell renewal, *delays*, and *inhibits* the development of dark spots
2. The active formula *stimulates* natural mechanisms in the skin to give the complexion an intensely fresh and healthy-looking glow.
3. Olay Natural White Day Glowing Fairness cream *nourishes* and *helps* protect your skin with 7 fairness benefits in just 1 bottle powdered with a tri-vitamin boost of B3, pro- B5, and E and SPF 24/ PA++ for your natural glowing fairness.
4. This non-oily skin lightening cream *improves* the evenness of skin tone.

In the above (1-4) sentences, the declarative mood is realized in the present simple tense. Their declarative stance “*delays*,” “*inhibits*,” “*stimulates*,” and “*improves*” in the beauty creams assure that the creams will lighten, brighten and vivify dark skin. The simple present Metaphor of mood highlights the high level of polarity, for example, “*is*” rather than using the modal verbs “*may*” to suggest a propositional attitude of the advertiser. It might be inferred that advertisers purposely use polarity to focus on the guarantee of the above-cited sentences (1-4) and implicitly dictate their customers to purchase the SWC beauty products. Moreover, According to Bibber, Leech, and Conrad (2010), “the simple past tense is sometimes used to support a situation at present and gives information about the stance (Douglas Biber, 2010). For instance, SWC advertisers describe the whitening of skin complexion through creams in the simple past and present tense to validate the efficiency of SWCs. It establishes a causal relationship in the propositions of the advertisements. An ad proclaims that the consumers applied the cream on the skin; they become fair having radiant skin. In this way, the sequential use of present and past tense aspects manipulate the Metaphor of mood to develop logical links and convince customers emotionally and rationally to purchase SWCs. The declarative Metaphor of mood use in statements (1-4) suggests subtle plotting of capitalist advertisers. They used it to arouse the masses' motivation by injecting the constructed concepts of Whiteness as a criterion of beauty into Asian brown women to purchase SWCs.

Modal Adjunct

The performance of the creams is further authenticated with the help of modal adjuncts since they embody the advertisers' judgments on the possibility of transforming dreams (acquiring Whiteness) into reality (to be white) through SWCs. Hence, the researcher found that the Metaphor of modality performed the functions of obviousness, evaluation, presumption, and probability in the ads given below in Table No.5

Table 5
The Metaphor of Modality and Their Functions

Clauses	Modal Adjunct	Type of Modal Adjunct
<i>instantly</i> brightens and lightens skin for a fair pinkish glow	Instantly	Probability
a <i>clinically</i> tested and certified- 100% safe to use Men's Fairness Cream	clinically	Presumption
The cream absorbs <i>easily</i> without leaving any oiliness.	easily	Obviousness
It is <i>equally</i> good in all types of climatic conditions	equally	Obviousness
Hope to millions of women around the world, <i>especially</i> in Asia	especially	Validation
the Haldi Bleach Crème works <i>safely</i> and <i>effectively</i>	safely	Obviousness
Olivia Haldi Bleach Crème, which gives your face, arms, and body <i>gently</i> and <i>effectively</i> .	gently effectively	Evaluation Evaluation

In Table 5, SWCs ads have astutely used modal adjuncts to persuade the customers. This use is following Crystal's (2010) opinion, "to get people to identify the product, remember its name or at least feel that it is familiar, and persuade them that it is worth buying, ads rely almost totally on the use of language." The modal adjuncts in metaphors of modality discursively construct the positive opinions of consumers about the impact of the creams. Therefore, it could be interpreted that the intensity of propositional attitude in ads narrated by the Metaphors of mood and Metaphors of modality prescribes "what it means to be a woman in our society." This finding assimilates with Fill's (2002) claim that advertisers urge women to use their recommended products to take care of their outer look.

Pakistan Ecology and SWCs

In the backdrop of the above findings, SWC ads linguistic manipulation is likely to establish an unrealistic stereotypical ideology of beauty. Beauty ideology represents global capitalism and the cultural-political supremacy of the power

stakeholders (Stoddart 2007; Elden 2016). Ads represent this supremacy in interpersonal and ideational grammatical metaphors. Jamesson (2009) reasoned that binary categories such as 'fair/dark' 'beauty/ugliness' shape identities to produce consumption behavior of the masses rather than having rational "goods and services" in markets. It is a severe threat to ecology at all levels: social, cognition, and psychological.

The "White Caucasian Woman Ideology" has post-colonial historical roots in the Pakistani context. The post-colonial approach defines white color as a symbol of virtue and beauty; black color stands for ugliness and evil. Unfortunately, this "Caucasian ideology" is kept intact by Pakistani local SWCs manufacturers for their commercial pursuits and strengthened through the discourse in the literary books and movies at the expense of distorting sociocultural ecology at the social, cognition, and psychological level. The excessive proliferation of SWCs media communication has made beauty myths a normative reality (Kuldip et al., 2013). Feminist discourses have disapproved of the construction of beauty myth because it has initiated an unnecessary competition among women, which acts as an obstacle to achieving gender equality.

Further, it has categorized women into different groups: age, weight, color, youth. It means that the beauty myth is creating an "invisible class" among women, which tends to marginalize a majority of women (Karacan 2007; Wolf 2013), and it serves as an instrument of discrimination and harassment against women (Sakar, 2014). It has created low self-confidence, a feeling of inferiority, and self-inadequacy. These beauty cream companies invest millions of dollars to produce, validate and maintain the Whiteness ideology in peripheral societies. They excessively organize beauty pageants competitions in developing countries, and most titleholders of beauty pageants' competitors belong to peripheral countries. It seems as it helps them advertise their beauty products conveniently in thickly populated areas of the developing countries by exploiting the emotions for white color. However, such economic tactics cannot contribute ecological development of national or international economics because these tactics are not based on natural production systems. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that the enactment of sociocultural ideologies like "White Caucasian Woman" in the developing countries can be a barrier to build their own rational and psychologically sound ecology for a better future and remain entangled in the vicious web of social, cultural and psychological exploitation.

Conclusion

In the light of the above discussion, lexico-grammatical and semantic aspects of skin whitening creams advertisements have subtle links in the construction of beauty myth, which has vested interests in the capital world at the local and global levels. In reality, Capitalist forces have distorted the positive and healthy ecological setup worldwide. Character, moral values, and virtue have become insignificant in

sociocultural ecology. On the one hand, capitalism is developing an irrational production system by ignoring the human safety limit as skin specialists consider their products clinically harmful for the skin. On the other hand, women are busy in a blind race to attain physical beauty and ignore character and moral values, which is the right choice to maintain the peaceful ecology of society. This work argues for spreading critical literacy by developing active reading skills among people through lexico-grammatical awareness among the masses. So they could decode destructive ecosophies of beauty cream ads into constructive ecosophies by liberating themselves from the hidden snares of capitalist economy for a healthy ecology at an individual and global level

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