

Exceeding the wraiths of bereavement, within the extractive euphoria of capitalist dissonance, at this late hour of our climate reckoning: we are here, bracketed out as ellipses held in suspense. **No longer (...) not yet.**<sup>i</sup>

Extinct, Threatened, Possibly Threatened, Not Threatened, Data Deficient and Not Evaluated.

Visible and measurable indicators of the health of an ecosystem.

Habitat shifts and alterations.

Storms and flooding.

Pests and diseases.

Fire regime.<sup>ii</sup>

Here I recall their entreaties at the arc of sylph-like dwindling, told in whispering drawn torrents that came to pool at my roots. Into green corridors, voices curled with threaded lineages and grew sonorous with me. Mother mountain, gifted stream, forest spirit.<sup>iii</sup> The advisory bird would announce a set of choral edicts, but the villagers chose not to respond. Their hands were sometimes bloodied by their care. I cycled through evanescence and absolute form in their world. Immensely sloping over high cliffs, held to their laws and on their breath, or when I convened with the turning rice. When that happened, we crouched together in wooden temples on the hill, and braced for gusts. The village songs at last turned to plenitude: it would mean the crop was good. Over seasons my mantle would shudder, brimming leaves, as riven faults cracked through darkly scorching skies. Theirs was a script made by the tillage of generations. Their signs and stories gathered the tangled ways of knowing, and laid blooming mosaic patterns before the abruptness of

"Considering the extent of our technological development, emphasis on the eco-philosophical aspects is not to be mistaken for biological determinism. It rather posits a nature-culture continuum within which subjects cultivate and construct multiple ethical relations."<sup>iv</sup> Towards doing worlding work that insists on the alterity of hope, Rosi Braidotti invites activists to consider an affirmative ethics. This ethics realigns paralysis, bereavement, and anxiety into collective capacity across pluralistic means of active practice and multitudinal human-nonhuman agencies. As a form of storytelling, affirmative ethics aim to narrate future imaginaries for inclusive sustainability, diffracted in the reflects of today. For example, in rising virtual reality scenarios, our embodied presence in beginning to be recognised as more than an interstice between simulacra and material affect. At the level of entry, the body divides and permits through accessibility barriers to the virtual reality space—such as through the admission of sight or hearing. Moving through a virtual environment, relational action or inaction determines positionality in the system. We can then recognise the presence of bodies as signalling indicators in a broader hierarchy of significance: which nonhuman avatars are absent, present, encoded or extracted by these virtual spaces? Writing on the concept of the avatar in 2008, Nancy Katherine Hayles posited that "...the avatar both is and is not present, just as the user both is and is not inside the screen...What transformations govern the connections between user and avatar? What parameters control the construction of the screen world?"<sup>v</sup> Today, the implications of virtual nature may therefore pick at hegemonic readings of nature itself, collapsing the division between physical and virtual nature experiences, the outside (and therefore Other) natural world and the digital space both operating as important sites of emotional and physiological consequence.<sup>vi</sup> To create and participate in virtual nature environments becomes a type of worldmaking, rife with both potentiality and response-ability.<sup>vii</sup>



Scan for References



Welcome to the Inner Forest.<sup>viii</sup>  
This activity will run for around 5 minutes, and will prompt you to participate in four extended reality scenes that accompany gentle, physical actions.  
Each scene locates you as part of a wider connected ecosystem of wellbeing, constructed by imagination, environments, and the embodied self. Please start in a comfortable neutral position. This neutral position should be one of rest, stillness and calm, however that feels best. That might be lying, sitting, standing, or whatever works for you.  
Take a moment to find your neutral position.  
As we move through these actions, keep in mind your levels of comfort. We want to avoid any movements that cause pain or discomfort. If you find that you begin to experience these, please return to your neutral position and simply visualise the scene in your mind.  
Here is a shell. Think of a beach you've visited, where you might find this shell.  
Perhaps you have a memory of a particular day at the beach, where you discovered objects had washed up on shore, including shells like this one. Stretch out, as if offering the shell to silent companions for inspection, as near or far away as feels comfortable. Now, draw the shell in close to yourself again. Imagine what other beings might once have held this shell, in a different way to you. Return to your neutral position.  
Repeat this gentle action as many times as you feel you would like, until the scene changes, or until you feel you would like to rest.  
We have arrived in a forest, the final scene in our journey today. This forest still exists in the physical world.  
Slowly move your shoulders side-to-side from your neutral position, as if you were weaving through tree trunks as you make your way through and between their forms. You are now transitioning through the Inner Forest to the next phase, being

Repeat this gentle action as many times as you feel you would like, until the scene changes, or until you feel you would like to rest.  
Here is a leaf from a Moreton Bay Fig tree. Also known as the Australian banyan tree, it can grow to a large height over many years. Have you encountered one of these trees before? If this tree could see, what might it have witnessed in the cycle of its existence?  
Each scene in this XR experience is intended to be activated with haptic triggers/audiovisual components (360-degree scenes and photography scans), with the aim of immersing the user in both the eco-narrative and the scene itself. The four scenes are designed to run for a minute each.

