How Forests of Qualia Emerge

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses an environmentalist activity known as forest therapy in a suburb of Tokyo and formulates *qualia* as a rhematic textual process semiotically calibrating an encounter with forests in such a way that its effects seem raw, natural, or "unmediated." In particular, it ethnographically demonstrates how a distinctive cooccurrence style of Japanese language use, involving ideophones and euphonic forms with various diminutive effects during forest therapy interactions, becomes a perceivable object of the senses qua discursive form, whose effects—which are not natural but naturalizing—further equips participants in forest therapy sessions to apperceive and discursively specify the attributes of other perceivable things, now taken to be "immediate" sensuous truths, through a process whose effects Peirce captions as qualia, or *facts of firstness*. The article further reveals that such a naturalized—and thus therapeutic—encounter with forests is figurated through various rhematic, text-metrical patterns that rely on specific discursive resources, which cumulatively diagram agents' affective attunements to a nonhuman forest world, while enacting *transspecies* engagement with animals and "fictionalizing" the (lost) animistic linkage in the Anthropocene with "wildness" through their bodies as phatic nexus.

Recalling the nonhumanistic—nonlinguistic—orientation or "turn" in contemporary anthropology, this article (re)focuses on the issue of language use to approach the chiasmic keystone between so-called *nomothetisch* and *idiographisch* phenomena—nature and culture, nonhumans and humans, and so on—and seeks ethnographically to reveal how the relationality between nonhumans and humans semiotically arises through forms of language use in a genred and enregistered communicative interaction. I employ and develop

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a Peircean semiotic insight—*qualia*—which has been incorporated into the ethnographic inquiry as a methodological pathway to access experiences with material entities or the emergence of firstness,[1] and reformulate qualia as a rhematic textual process semiotically calibrating an encounter with forests in such a way that its effects seem raw, natural, or "unmediated." Even more radically, it is not felt as linguistic, cultural, or semiotic at all but as "immediate" sensuous truth (Harkness 2022, 59).

In particular, I analyze an environmentalist activity known as forest therapy (in which participants attend a lecture on the therapeutic efficacy of a forest, enter the forest at night, and lie on the ground) and demonstrate how a distinctive cooccurrence style of Japanese language use, involving ideophones and euphonic forms with various diminutive effects during forest therapy interactions, becomes a perceivable object of the senses qua discursive "form," whose effects—which are not natural but naturalizing—further equip participants to discursively and "naturally" specify the attributes of other sensuously perceivable things in a particular way as a result of participating in interactions. That is a process whose effects Peirce captions as qualia, or *facts of firstness* (*EP* 2.272). In fact, the words and expressions selected and uttered during forest therapy describe sensations and depict them with various diminutives through poetic, text-metrical patterns, which cumulatively diagrams agents' affective attunements to a nonhuman forest world, while enacting *transspecies* (Kohn 2014) engagement as voicing effects between humans and animals and "fictionalizing" the (lost) animistic linkage with nature as "wildness" through their bodies as phatic nexus. A certain number of agents gather in a suburb plateau region, which is moderately distant from cities, and participate in forest therapy sessions both in encountering such narrations and also in encountering the "natural" phenomena being depicted and described through them, (re)producing as its effects a certain type of people with a certain "taste" to the other things. Thus, I contend that qualia are rather a potential quality space, or rhematic textual process, generated through and saturated within the course of genred and enregistered communicative interactions, which yields a typification process equipping interlocutors to sensuously perceive them as natural encounters with nature. This is the central ethnographic fact the discussions below bring forward, through which I further explore ways of theorizing the human and nonhuman nexus—the issue of Boasian categorical apperception—which also allow us to

1. Munn (1977, 1986); Manning (2012); Chumley and Harkness (2013); Chumley (2017); Harkness (2017).

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semiotically merge the fields of environmental, linguistic/semiotic, and ontological anthropology.

"Turn" and Realism

In the Anthropocene—an age of environmental crisis—the importance of rethinking and reconstructing the interrelationship between humans and the natural environment has been robustly discussed in many fields. In political and historical ecology and the environmental sociological and anthropological fields, for instance, through investigation of environmentalist engagements for preservation and conservation, the natural environment has been analyzed and conceptualized as inherently ethical, political, cultural, and ideological; locally situated in communities; and historically transforming through the process of negotiation among various social agents.[2]

Further, the so-called ontological turn has gained a substantial presence in recent sociocultural anthropology as a critical response to anthropocentrism, that is, the culture/nature dichotomy and other equipollent oppositions in modern anthropological premise (Henare et al. 2007). It indicates that modern Western anthropology arises through various dualisms, such as subject/object, self/other, interior/exterior, science/indigenous knowledge, or *erklären*/*verstehen*, which instantiates an epistemological—humanistic—approach for representing the latter, that is, *Ding-an-sich*, in a way that is as "transparent" (or perhaps unmediated) as possible. In such a framework, however, the latter unavoidably emerges as a reversed image of the former, the ethnographic description of which only becomes a *route* of self-discovery to secure the *roots* by reconfirming the unbridgeable divide between self and other, observation and participation, or ethnography and field reality. Such attempts of cultural description at *realism*—or the formula of Malinowski centrism—imply, in advance, the consequence of self-reflexively generating the same dualisms and failing to identify the location of the *real*. Ontologically attuned anthropology intends to turn away from such a Western epistemological, humanistic framework to represent a cultural reality as realism and seeks an alternative approach that can uncover the real—that is, the process through which the relationality between subject and object, self and other, culture and nature, human and nonhuman, or semiotic entities of any sort, emerge. In this sense, this ontological "turn" of anthropology allegedly arises as a semiotic—thus nonhumanistic—approach of the ethnographic

2. Agrawal and Gibson (2001); Anderson and Berglund (2003); Peet and Watts (2004); Argyrou (2005); Dunlap and Brulle (2015).

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inquiry to others. Such a theoretical orientation has been particularly elaborated through discussions of dwelling, animism, perspectivism, multinaturalism, multispecies ethnography, and anthropology beyond the human, incorporating Peircean insights into its ethnographic analysis.[3]

"Provincializing" Language; or, Language Remains Saussurean Just When Nonlanguage Is Rendered Peircean

Here, let us briefly review the way in which the tradition of ontological anthropology semiologically (mis)construes the role of language use in human/nonhuman affairs. Although this tradition incorporates the Peircean trichotomies into its analysis of the cultural process through which humans and nonhumans arise as semiotic entities, its own attempt to apply such insights to language use and communicative interaction within ethnographic settings is not yet sufficiently developed. Since language is perceived by writers in this tradition (1) as something whose dominant and fundamental elements are its symbolic, abstract, or arbitrary features (which Saussure ascribed to the abstraction he called *langue*) and (2) as something which is perhaps distinctive to humans (as Saussure's followers have maintained), any contemporary analysis of language use and communicative interaction tends to be regarded as a methodology that exemplifies a Western epistemological and human-centered framework of cultural description, whether alleged to have roots in Saussure or Kant, or alleged to have possible origins in Boasian anthropological holism (Kohn 2015, 314). Thus, any ethnographic analysis with a focus on language, communication, or any allegedly "linguistic" phenomena, is somehow treated as if it exclusively highlights "humans" and excludes nonhuman entities from its analytical scope. In fact, the act of calling its own endeavor as one of "provincializing" language and communication (Kohn 2013, 38) reveals a quintessential token of residual linguistic ideologies, which appear to derive from a semiological dyadic framework in which language is assumed to communicate abstract propositional sense alone, and the capacity of language users to use language to refer to concrete entities in the universe around them is ignored. Thus, language and communication have become the methodological chiasmus for incorporating Peircean semiotics into a sociocultural domain that, oddly enough, excludes them.[4]

3. Ingold (2000); Willerslev (2007); Descola (2009); Viveiros de Castro (2009); Kohn (2013).

4. This epitomizes the very limit of this ontological "turn" as a disciplinary agenda, as it seems to purposely or politically avoid to engage in the issues of language use and communicative interactions in order to create such a "turn." Thus, it fails to reflexively reveal their disciplinary assumptions on language, narrowly focusing on or extracting only a fraction of language (Agha 2007). This "beyond-the-human" project survives as a "turn" only within a certain disciplinarily and institutionally confined chronotopic envelope on nature and culture.

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Needless to say, Franz Boas was aware of the methodological opposition of Neo-Kantianisms within German intellectual traditions, that is, of *Naturwissenschaften* and *Geisteswissenschaften*,[5] and conceived of anthropology as a science that integrates and encompasses both methodologies (1887, 138; cf. Agha 2007). Following the Humboldtian tradition, Boas termed such an attempt *cosmography* and grounded the descriptive linguistic analysis of sounds and grammatical categories in Native American languages—the primacy of categorical apperception—as its keystone (1911; cf. Silverstein 2004a).[6] Besides, as Roman Jakobson (1957) successfully employed Peircean semiotics into the theorization of language and communication, language has been long understood as unavoidably indexical, and its structure is also (meta)pragmatically constructed, anchored to the deictic center (i.e., *origo*),[7] of speech event through *shifters* (i.e., denotational indexical duplex). It is also a multifunctional phenomenon, emerging in its speech event and recursively contributing to entextualize such an event, or *message*, in the pragmatic present (Jakobson 1960). Thus, Jakobson opened a methodological pathway that allows us to systematically incorporate Peircean semiotics—and thus to link the *nomothetische* to the *idiographische*, so to speak—in pursuing the linguistic analysis of communicative events through attention to *indexicality* (Caton 1987).

In this sense, if Kohn's Amazonian ethnography, for example, employs Peircean semiotics to call for an "anthropology beyond the human" through challenging the dichotomies of Saussurean linguistics (continuously, through its Bloomfieldean and Chomskyan phases), it seems incredibly odd that it neither discusses nor even refers to either Jakobsonian semiotic formulation of language and communication or the series of methodological discussions in Boasian tradition of linguistics, which resulted in the launch of four-field anthropology. Although both studies (i.e., Boasian linguistics and Jakobsonian semiotics[8]) seem

5. On the Neo-Kantian framework of *Naturwissenschaften* (i.e., *nomothetische Gesetzewissenschaften*) and *Geisteswissenschaften* (i.e., *idiographische Geschichtswissenschaften*), see Bunzl (1996, 53) and Stocking (1996, 4–6).

6. Boas's stance undoubtedly reminds us that when we aim to methodologically integrate these two intellectual traditions, and thus possibly dissolve or deconstruct the so-called nature/culture dualism, a detailed linguistic description and analysis could be one possible chiasmatic pivot for such an endeavor.

7. On origo, see Bühler ([1934] 1982).

8. In other words, Boasian linguistics and Jakobsonian theorization of language, is not narrowly confined to language structure or semantico-referential function, but encompasses communication as sign-processes and semiotic entities of any sort in general, including nonverbal acts and events practiced by humans and nonhumans. Agha (2007, 229) indicates that the Boasian study of units of language structure is linked, through the lens of the problem of grammatical categories, to the study of denotational-cultural classifications, so that the seemingly contingent variability of classifications across historical languages (what Saussure calls *langage*) can be studied in relation to typological-universal frameworks for grammatical categories—absent the relativistic bias created by a commitment to the so-called arbitrariness of units of *langue*.

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to be labeled as "humanistic" in the sense that they are grounded in the analysis of language (Kohn 2013, 8–9; 2014, 5; 2015, 311–15), such an approach to what is "beyond the human"—a metapragmatic caption for the realm of nature, material, body, sense, or the nonhuman devised by "turning" away from abstract "language" (or Saussurean *langue*), while ignoring concrete events of perceivable language use—indicates, ironically enough, that Kohn's allegedly semiotic ethnography itself adopts and self-reflexively reproduces an outdated semiological framework.

Qualia as Facts of Firstness

Recognizing such a "disciplinary agenda" as provincializing language and its slippery dance between semiology and semiotics in contemporary anthropology, I squarely focus on the issue of language use and communicative interaction to approach the chiasmic keystone between *nomothetisch* and *idiographisch*, nature and culture, or nonhumans and humans, employing and further developing a Peircean semiotic concept, qualia, that has been incorporated into the ethnographic inquiry to methodologically make it possible to access the emergence of firstness in anthropological discussions.

Qualia are facts of firstness (*EP* 2.272). In particular, Peirce enunciated what he called a semiotic *phaneroscopy* and indicated that events and actions create the basis of knowledge, aesthetics, and the historical evolution of life forms and the universe. Occurring *hic et nunc*, they are inherently attributed with certain qualities and features in themselves that remain hypothetical as abstract potentialities until they instantiate in signs. These qualitative potentialities are instantiated and thus emerge as *qualia*, taken to be sensuous instances of such *qualities*, while they are inherently typified through and into enregistered and genred interactions organized around hypostatically abstracted and culturally valorized *qualisigns* (Gal 2016, 132; Harkness 2017, S34). Hence, qualia are rather a sensuous typification process of being experienceable "forms" of qualities, thus firstness appearing under its form of secondness—that is, facts of firstness (qualities, instantiated or embodied in entities or events)—logically posited between qualities as firstness (abstract, uninstantiated properties or attributes) and qualisigns as thirdness (as linking an object with an interpretant in a sign) (Chumley and Harkness 2013, 5–6). Let us also recall that this typification process of firstness (features and qualities), to be experientially "formed" and sensuously "felt," operates through rhemes as a mode of interpretant, reflexively calibrating the sign to the sign's quality or character itself. As Nakassis (2019) points out, such a reflexive sign-process to the sign itself can be explicated with

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the insight of well-known Jakobsonian poetics: "Rather, the aesthetic function focalizes signs as sign-vehicles, which is to say, to use the Peircean terms, as *sinsigns* (or tokens) phenomenal, palpable forms in their existence in time and space—and thus *qualisigns*—signs whose semiotic function devolves to their imputed qualities. The poetic function, thus, is a reflexive metasemiotic function calibrating the sign to its own sensuous material form *qua* form" (69).[9] Thus, rhemes are self-figurative, self-standing, or self-contained effects qua "form" in the process of a broader metasemiosis of qualitative potentialities, through which a sign becomes a unitarily metricalized, socially established, and thus enregistered and genred interactionally textualized whole. Obviously, this is the effectiveness of rituals and ritualization—that is, Silverstein's concept of "indexical-iconicity" (1992, 321; 1993, 52), which stems from the explicit metricality (i.e., reflexive textuality or unity) following multilayered poetic structures deployed in parallelism (i.e., projected axes of selection) throughout the interaction: "Ritual is self-grounding as an indexical-icon within its figured universe and, as such, makes a strong, though semiotically implicit case for what can only be called an ideological order within a culture. The site of institutionalized ritual and ritualization, then, provides an essential place where societies and social groups in effect articulate the ideological" (1992, 321). More specifically, a ritual emerges as a *rhematic iconic legisign* in the (meta)textual process in Peircean terminology and thus "diagrammatically" epitomizes a certain conventional *type* (macrocosm as the nomically calibrated realm) of experience as a *token* (microcosm calibrated as the empirical realm) (Stasch 2011). In this sense, qualia (or, better, a *quale*) figure in effect as a part, or an element, of this self-figurative, unitary, thus rhematic (meta)textual process—diagrammatic configuration of occurring event and practice—which calibrates the event and practice to its form as its given (or natural) possibility, thus *tone*, through invoking the comparison and predication as projected axes of selection of socially conventionalized values (Gal 2017, S143).

The methodological significance of approaching qualia in ethnographic studies exists at this point. That is, it encompasses the rhematic sign figuration, or the domain of firstness, in relation to secondness and thirdness among the Peircean trichotomy; thus, it signifies the semiotic textual process of *typification of tone entokened* (Harkness 2020, 5). It allows us to empirically analyze a sensory, material, bodily, noncultural, nonhumanistic, "natural" domain (*tone*) as sensuous encounters and feelings (*token*), which interactionally, ritually, and culturally

9. See also Silverstein (1993); Keane (2003); Chumley (2017).

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entail particular events and practices (*type*). This approach also serves as an attempt to critically engage in, further elaborate, or possibly reconfigure both Boasian and Jakobsonian approaches to semiosis focalizing the primacy of categorical apperception—that is, the issue of language use for ontologically attuned ethnography. Harkness succinctly formulates this point: "We can say that qualia are some of the semiotic effects that feel the least semiotic because they are reflexively apperceived as raw or unmediated feelings of encounter with the natural or given properties (i.e., "qualities") of what there is to experience. . . . In the ethnographic analysis of qualia, much of the problem revolves not merely around asking how culture shapes experience, nor even asking how culture makes experience possible, but, even more radically, how culture shapes experience in such a way that it doesn't seem cultural" (2022, 59). I shall credit the development of the qualia project in anthropology from the initial qualia framing as "instantiation" of quality, which was somewhat reductive and simplistic, to the further developed treatment of them as facts of firstness, which is not merely the Aristotelian qualification, that is, the analysis of salient lexemes and their hypostatic abstractions, but rather the process, space, or "domain" of an experiential condensation qua representamenal unity at the far reaches of the genuine sign itself.[10] Grounded at this semiotic understanding of firstness as a rhematic sign-process, I demonstrate that language use through various ideophones and euphonic forms of Japanese serves itself as a perceivable object or "forms" of the senses qua diminutives and diminution (or infantilization) and further equips its interlocutors and "diagrams" their sensuous attunements to discursively specify the attributes of other sensuously perceivable things (see also Manning 2012, 24).

Forest Therapy and Wilderness

The environmentalist activity called forest therapy is also known and practiced as a part of *nature interpretation*. Nature interpretation stems from the activities carried out by naturalists such as Mills (1870–1922), Tilden (1883–1980), and others who worked as guides for visitors to introduce the natural environment in the Rocky Mountains from the end of the nineteenth century (Nash 1969, 189). Today such guides, called *nature interpreters* (hereafter represented as NI; see also Satsuka 2015),[11] provide visitors with opportunities for various

10. Based on the Peircean classification of sign types in 1903 (Parmentier 1994, 17), enunciating what he calls the domain of *rhematics*, Harkness (2022, 65) shows us how the rhematic textual process from rhematic symbolic legisigns to the rhematic iconic qualisign operate on this principle of representamenal "condensation" and qualitative potentiality, which becomes a singular, unitary element of feeling as the quale "of" what there is to experience.

11. Satsuka (2015) examines Japanese tour guides in Canada's Banff National Park, known as nature interpreters, and ethnographically reveals how "nature" emerges discursively through their acts of cultural

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firsthand experiences within a natural environment. These activities were deeply associated with the environmentalism of American modernity, which was initiated with the Transcendentalism of Thoreau and Emerson in the East and later developed in the Midwest and further in the "Great" West by John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Annie Dillard, and Edward Abbey, and others (Nash 1990; cf. Cronon 1991).[12] Such a genealogy of "deep-ecological" thoughts provides a historical background for the investigation of the metapragmatics of nature-experience elsewhere, such as in Japan, as the following discussion clarifies.

Below, I examine forest therapy as a part of a nature interpretation activity in Japan, which is conducted in Imidas (a pseudonym). Imidas is a well-known Japanese institution for environmental education located in the plateau region in the Yamanashi prefecture. It was founded in 1938 by an American missionary who came to Japan as a committee member to rebuild the local YMCA, which was destroyed by an earthquake in the Kanto region. In 1945, the missionary realized that cultivating mountainous areas and reviving farming villages were crucial for reconstructing a postwar Japan based on democracy. He built a model rural farming center based on the Brotherhood of St. Andrew's training camp and established an educational experiment project for introducing highland farming in this region.[13]

In 1986, Imidas established the Environmental Education Division, which provides nature-experience programs for visitors and plans environmental projects

translation, which is inherently related to their personal concerns in the (post)modern social and historical backgrounds on the issue of nature and humans in search for the "self" as "subject" (*shutai* 主体).

12. The key contrastively lexicalized qualisigns in this genealogy of environmentalism—wilderness and sublime—provided the basis for the national-natural history of America in the nineteenth century about the other imagined entities: the American (Mid)West versus the East (Gal and Irvine 2019). This attributed quality, or qualisign—*Wilderness* of the West—is well articulated in a well-known essay by Thoreau, "Walking": "It is hard for me to believe that I shall find fair landscapes or sufficient ***wildness* and freedom** behind **the eastern horizon**. I am not excited by the prospect of a walk thither; but I believe that **the forest** which I see in **the western horizon** stretches uninterruptedly toward the setting sun, and there are no **towns nor cities** in it of enough consequence to disturb me. . . . Every sunset which I witness inspires me with the desire to go to a **West as distant and as fair** as that into which the sun goes down. He appears to migrate westward daily and tempts us to follow him. He is the Great Western Pioneer whom the nations follow. . . . **The West** of which I speak is but another name for **the Wild**; and what I have been preparing to say is, that in ***Wildness*** is the preservation of the World" (Thoreau [1862] 2002, 157–62). These thoughts later contributed to the foundation of national parks as imagined totem poles of "purity" for "preserving" or "restoring" wilderness in the West (Kosek 2004), which were directly related to the rise of deep ecology movements; the development of the literary genre Nature Writing (Morton 2009).

13. After JR East (former Japan National Railways) began operating a limited express train, *Azusa* (あずさ), between Shinjuku in Tokyo and Matsumoto in Nagano prefecture in 1966, this plateau region in Yamanashi became highly commercialized as a tourist spot, and a growing number of farmers began operating guesthouses. In 1971, the first issue of the Japanese fashion magazine targeting young women, *non-no* (ノンノ), prominently featured a dormitory operated by Imidas, and the region became a popular resort destination providing accessible nature for city dwellers. In the 1980s, after the death of the missionary, restaurants, souvenir stores, and shops run by celebrities, called *talent shops* (タレントショップ), began to line the streets in front of the JR East station, giving this area a new face as a major tourist spot.

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in cooperation with corporations, governmental agencies, and educational institutions. Recently, multiple scholars in sociology, education, and politics have collaborated with Imidas to launch various nature-experience programs. I conducted fieldwork in Imidas from 2006 to 2007. Most participants in the nature-experience programs, including myself, came from urban areas in the Kanto region of Japan. For several days, we stayed in lodges and participated in a variety of nature-experience programs, including indoor lectures on the relationship between body, mind, and the natural environment, collaboratively conducted by NIs and medical doctors, and outdoor poetry writing activities, or *qigong*, in the forest adjacent to the lodge.

To provide additional context surrounding forest therapy: the Forestry Agency of the Japanese government established "forest therapy bases" (森林セラピー基地) in 2005 as part of its accreditation process, referring to places where forest bathing—which, according to "scientific/medical evidence," has preventive medical effects (see also Satsuka 2015, 151–54)—can take place. It set up a nonprofit organization called the Forest Therapy Society to implement this project and has certified areas as forest therapy bases all over Japan. Although Imidas itself has not been certified yet as such a base, several nearby plateau regions in Yamanashi prefecture have been designated bases. Such an accreditation process indicates that forest therapy, or nature-experience, has been increasingly institutionalized, thus becoming a product of "social value projects" (Agha 2011). This indicates that *qualic* experiences taking place in the forest—interactions that are supposed to, or not supposed to, take place—at Imidas are likely to be framed within a larger institutionally configured reality on various types of values. The discussion below also unfolds; the forest therapy session in Imidas hosts the lecture on the therapeutic efficacy of forest to demonstrate the effects, or scientific evidentiality, of preventative medicines of forest (fig. 1).

Entering the Dark Forest

Below, I examine a forest therapy session,[14] which is one of those nature-experience activities in Imidas. Before entering the forest, approximately 20 participants gathered in a hall in their lodge for a half-hour lecture on the efficacy of forest therapy in holistic medicine by a psychosomatic doctor who runs a medical clinic in Akasaka, Tokyo. In this lecture, the following aspects were explained using PowerPoint slides:

14. This forest therapy took place one night in July 2006.

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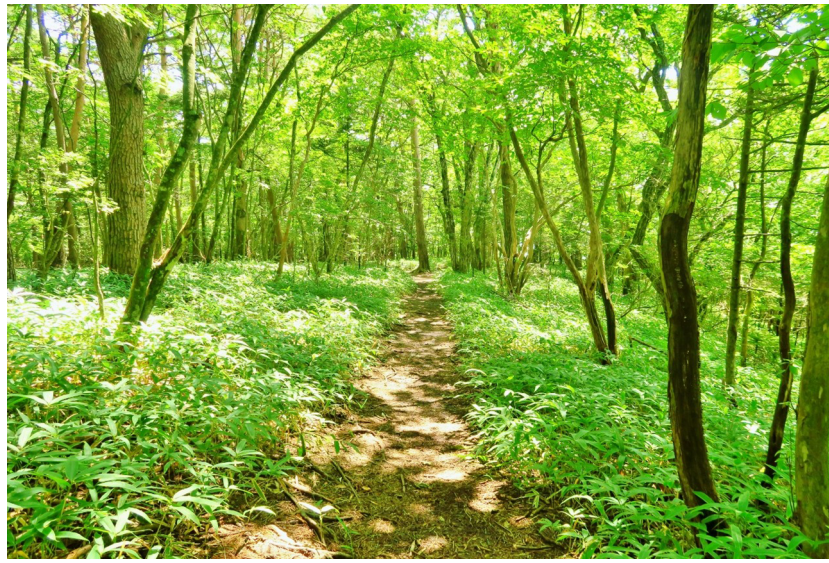


Figure 1. A forest around Imidas. This image was provided by Imidas.

1. What is forest therapy?

   It was initially developed in Germany in the nineteenth century: for example, Sebastian Kneipp's natural remedies (i.e., the natural cure movement),[15] which primarily use plants such as herbs and aromas but do not use medicine.

   It improves people's lifestyle by creating a holistic awareness of the human body and health, including diet, exercise, rest, and relief from mental stress. It is a part of holistic medicine, as patients enhance their spontaneous capacity to heal their own bodies.

2. Why is forest therapy good for health?

   The forest stimulates bodily senses when participants hear the creek murmuring, touch the bark, feel the woodchip trail, and smell tree nuts and mushrooms.

   The forest is filled with volatile substances called *phytoncides*, which are emitted from coniferous trees, that inhibit bacteria and other

15. Sebastian Kneipp (1821–97) was a German priest and a naturopathic medicine movement pioneer who promoted a holistic treatment concept based on five pillars: hydrotherapy, phytotherapy, exercise, balanced nutrition, and regulative therapy (Locher and Pforr 2014).

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microorganisms. When humans breathe them in, they have refreshing effects on their bodies.

There was a case showing that a 40-minute forest bathing session reduced the amount of the mental stress hormone called *cortisol*. Forest therapy suppresses sympathetic nerve activity, which is one of the autonomic nerves and has an excitatory effect.[16]

By entering the forest, a person's balance of autonomic nerves can be improved by 70 percent, and mental anxieties can be controlled as the immune system becomes activated.

3. What is good about the forest around Imidas?

Coniferous trees are present, and therefore phytoncides are abundant in the forest air.

It is flat and easy for people to walk through. Various activities, such as lying in the woods, walking barefoot, and looking up at the sky, are possible.

In this lecture, the doctor emphasized that the forest around Imidas was filled with phytoncides, which stimulate the senses of the human body, suppress sympathetic nerve activity, relieve mental stress, and thus holistically heal the body.[17] Hence, the participants became keenly aware that the forest they were entering was a therapeutic space-time medically and scientifically proven to reduce bodily and mental stress and that walking in and directly experiencing forests through the five senses would promote good health (see also Lindfors 2021). After the lecture, the NI and participants left for the forest at around 8:00 p.m. Transcript 1 contains the NI's opening remark of the forest therapy when they gathered in front of the lodge:

Transcript 1

NI OK, now, I will guide you all. In front of you, now we are looking there, but the forest is on the other side. We will go into the forest exactly on that side. Ah, such a fantastical fog coming in, isn't it? It is **absolutely dark and dark** . . .

16. In the guided walk through the forest that I participated in, participants measured the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems' parameters before and after the program and verified the difference.

17. The doctor formulated reasons for why he started forest therapy: (1) He knew of some cases where even cancer was cured through practicing qigong in the forest. (2) Natural remedies were practiced in the suburbs of Tokyo and became popular in other places in Japan. (3) He used to belong to the Wonder Vogel Club and had been interested in nature in general.

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Transcript 1 (*continued*)

今からですね、皆さんをご案内するのは、皆さんの正面、今、向こうを向いておりますけど、向こう側の森。まさに、あっち側の森の方に行こうかな、と思います。ああ、**幻想的な**霧ですね。**真っくらんくらん**、です。

NI (distributing flashlights with a red light to the participants) The red color **light** isn't so **dazzling** to **human** eyes. It also doesn't surprise **wildlife**. So, well, we are a large number of people . . . when this many large mammals enter the forest, other mammals run away, so wild animals may not come nearby so much. But, when we observe squirrels or moles closely, we use this red light too.
赤い色の**光**というのは、まあ**人間の目に入ってもですね、そんなにも、眩しく**はありませんし、**野生動物**にとってもですね、これ、あの、驚かない光なんですね。なので、まあ、あの、これだけの大人数がですね、大型哺乳類が森の中に入ると、他の哺乳類が逃げて行ってしまうので、あんまり、こう、野生動物が近くには来ないかもしれないですが、ほんとに近くでですね、リスとかモグラとか観察する時も、この赤いライトを使う感じですね。

NI OK, this is the entrance of the forest. It is like, "Wow," right? Well, it is dark, isn't it? Do you hear any sound? You might hear **the sound of water dripping like *pota, pota***, and **the sound of the wind**. It is quiet inside the forest.
はーい。ここが、森の入り口です。「おおー」という感じ？えー、黒いですね。音は、何か聞こえますか。**ポタポタ**と**雫の音**と、**風の音**が。静かな森の中ですね。

Here, the NI's narrative entextualizes the forest as a space-time for wildlife (i.e., animals), possibly generating its comparison to the lodge as a sphere for large mammals (i.e., humans), accompanied by light (dazzling) and darkness, as if those mammals as humans "invade" the dark wild world with light, thus "enlightening" the darkness. Notably, when the NI described the sheer darkness of the forest, she used the words *mak-kuran kuran* (真っくらんくらん), which denotationally means "absolutely dark and dark." While highlighting the darkness of the forest, the repetition of the adjective *dark* seems to have a diminutive effect somehow attributing a round contour to and animating the night forests with such a character, and thus possibly weakening the fearfulness of the night forests by using the euphonic form ***kura-n, kura-n***, in contrast to the basic form of this adjective verb, *kura-i*. This usage of the euphonic form and its repetition may also evoke the so-called motherese (i.e., the parental language used with children) or perhaps an anime-character register in Japanese, attributing somehow the infantile and adorable quality both to the darkness of the forest and to its interlocutor herself. The dark, wild, and slightly scary forest of animals cloaked with fog at night is animated and trans*formed* qua a "form" of a little round, childlike, and possibly approachable space-time for the large mammals, or humans. In addition, arriving at the entrance to the forest, the NI asked the participants if they hear any sound from the forest and imitated water dripping slowly and gently by repeating the onomatopoeic word ***pota, pota***.[18] These syllables maximize the

18. I also discuss the NI's use of onomatopoeia to describe the nature in transcript 3.

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contrast in the sound sonority: being combined with consonants of the least sonorous sounds (prototypes of consonants) within the sonority hierarchy (i.e., [p] and [t]), the low vowels with the most sonorous sounds (prototypes of vowels), and the medium vowels (i.e., [o] and [a]). Thus, the repetition of [***po-ta***] with vowel elongation begets a highly perceivable shape and sound of water, thus sensuously salient as dropping drip by drip in the silent forest. Discursively linked and sensuously activated to the qualitative elements of forests through the use of ideophones, the participants finally entered such a qualitative forest space-time. In the forests, the NI encouraged the participants to take a deep breath and find a comfortable place on the ground to lie down. Transcript 2 provides the NI's explanation when all the participants arrived in the middle of the forest:

Transcript 2

NI If you [1]**look up**, you can **see the sky** a little through the trees, can't you? Do you [2]**hear** any sound? Just as before, you can **hear the sound of water dripping**. . . I think everyone can sense the differences in the air between day and night. At night it [3]**feels moister**, and if you breathe it in through your nose, you can feel the **damp**, **pleasant air** passing [4]**through the inside of your nose to the trachea**, the respiratory system.
[1]**上を見上げると**、ねえ少し、木々の間から**空が見えます**ね。何か、音は[2]**聞こえます**か？先程と同じく、**雫の音がね、聞こえます**ね。・・・昼間と夜と、皆様も**感覚的に分かる**かと思いますけれども、夜の方が[3]**しっとりとして**ですね、この呼吸器官もですね、すごくこう、鼻から、こう、息を吸うとですね、**湿った、良い感じのね、空気**がですね、[4]**鼻の中から、気管の方に通って行く**んじゃないかな、っていうのが感じられるかと思います。

Here, the NI encouraged the participants to be aware of their bodily senses and guided them to see the sky, hear the raindrop, feel the moisture, and smell the damp, "pleasant" air of the forest at night, thus charting a structured space of experience in the following order: (1) eyesight ⇒ (2) hearing ⇒ (3) touching ⇒ (4) smelling. Exploiting rhythmically these different senses one after another, the NI directed the participants to go deeper into the natural world, bringing a congruent projection of external space into the interior of the participants' bodies through the respiratory system—perhaps filled with phytoncides from coniferous trees. The NI did not linguistically elucidate how the air in the night forest is "pleasant" (*ii-kanji* 良い感じ); but it was made ineffable instead, and the participants had to learn to sensuously (but not ideologically) specify the textural difference between the air and pleasantness as *ii-kanji*. They seem to be directed through this discursive route to find or "extract" their deeper selves, or roots—an indexically saturated and semiotically unmediated feeling of nature in bodies. After NI's explanation, participants were asked to lie on their backs on the ground for about 15 minutes:

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NI As mentioned in the previous lecture by the (psychosomatic) doctor, lying down in the forest for a while is "**simple, but the best**." Well, not in **the forest in the daytime**, but in **the forest at night**. Open the sheet a little, look up and flop down. **Leave your spine on the ground like this**. I want you to take some time to do these things now.
先程の、先生のお話の中でもありましたように、ちょっと森の中で寝そべってみるっていうのも、「**単純ですけど、一番良いんですよね**」というお話がありました。えー、それをですね、**昼間の森**ではなくて、**夜の森**の中で、ちょっとですねシートを広げてですね、ゴロリと上を見上げて、横になってみる、**背骨をですね、こう、大地に預けてみる**、というような、えー、少し時間を取りたいなという風に思います。

Here, quoting the psychosomatic doctor's "scientific" explanation in the lecture on forest therapy, the NI's reported speech reconfirms the therapeutic efficacy from firsthand contact with the forest to the human health and mind: "simple, but the best." The NI, in turn, let the participants find comfortable places to lie down, their back touching the ground in the middle of the forest, and spend time quietly alone. They were encouraged to be a "simple" existence as a body or become a part of the soil, nonhuman, or *Ding-an-sich*, touching and sensing its cold, rugged surface texture with the entire body through the spine in the dark, silent forest, distant from the noisy, dazzling, stressful, humanistic realm.

Accordingly, to create such a "simple" nonhuman space-time, while the participants lay on the ground for approximately 15 minutes, the NI mostly stayed "silent" (which made for a noticeable contrast with other sections in the program during which she robustly depicted the qualitative features of the forest) and let the participants not hear human language, lying apart from each other, or other humans. Although such poetic distribution between "talking" and "silence" is more vividly observable when compared with daytime forest therapy, such a metapragmatic switching between them within this nighttime program undoubtedly served to discursively enact the participants' natural experience with nature in a dark silent forest. During this activity, the NI further provided an emblematic utterance in regard to the linkage between humans and a nonhuman world, as seen in the following:

Transcript 3

NI There are no dangerous or scary things, so, for a little bit, please spend your time **touching this air of the natural world, and going inside of yourself**.
危険な、あの、怖いものはありませんので、少しですね、えー、**[A]自然界のこの空気に触れながら、[B]自分の中に入りながら**、えー、過ごして頂ければと思いますが。

Here, the NI encouraged the participants to feel the natural environment by (*a*) "touching this air of the natural world" (*shizenkai no kono kuki ni furenagara*

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自然界のこの空気に触れながら), as well as to be aware of their bodily senses and possibly to internalize the external by (*b*) "going inside of themselves" (*jibun no naka ni hairi nagara* 自分の中に入りながら).

(*a*)	自然界 の この空気 に 触れ ながら *shizenkai no kono kuki ni fure nagara* [touching this air of the natural world]
(*b*)	自分 の 中 に 入り ながら *jibun no naka ni hairi nagara* [going inside of yourself]

A clear parallel structure emerges between *a* and *b*, contrastively conceptualizing the natural world (*shizen-kai* 自然界) and yourself (*jibun* 自分) but mutually presupposing each other; and notably, this kind of parallelism recurrently emerges throughout the forest therapy at Imidas (see transcript 7). Thus, the comparability and iconism between the dichotomized domains, that is, nature and human, is maximized and foregrounded in effect through the parallelism, synaesthetically allowing the participants to "touch" (*fureru* 触れる) the inside of their bodies, as they are touching the outside "air" (*kuki* 空気) of the natural world (see also Nozawa 2015).[19] The participants were directed to isolate themselves from any kinds of nonphysical, nonphatic, and presumably human connections and to experience the sensation as if the "exterior" (nonhuman) and the "interior" (human) were turned inside out, being physically and materially contiguous with nature at their bodies as the phatic chiasmus—a "figure-ground reversal" (Wagner 1987, 62).[20] In other words, the NI directed them to metamorphose from a human being in the here and now to a cosmic being out there, as if encountering nature/others (*shizen* 自然) is equivalent to discovering human/selves (*jibun* 自分).[21] The NI instructed the participants to get inside

19. Nozawa (2015) illuminates how "contact" (such as touching, connecting, and bonding) and "air" serve as a trope for the quality of human relationships and communication, or its management, in contemporary Japan.

20. The demarcation between "the things out there" (nonhuman) and "the things in here" (human) itself is discursively produced, and they must learn that division through practicing and correctly discerning to become aware of their internal bodies.

21. As a part of the online advertisement for Imidas, the similar lines recur as

五感を使って、森を感じよう。
Feel the forest using all five senses.
そして「今・ここ」にいる自分の心と体の声に、そっと耳を澄まそう。
Then, gently listen to the voice of your mind and body in the "here and now."
いつの間にか、あなたは本来の自分に還る。森で、澄み切った自分に還る。
Before you know it, you return to who you are. In the forest, you return to your perfectly clear self).

Here, it also indicates that sensuously feeling forests is considered as listening to voices of mind and body. To enter forests is to "return" to, and thus rediscover or reencounter, "perfectly clear" selves through five senses (i.e.,

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the natural world and also to discover nature in their deeper selves—that is, a semiotically unmediated, *downshifted*, contact with wildness, thus otherness, in themselves, a quale (see also Parmentier 1994).

NI When I came to preview the forest, well, I heard such a voice in the distance. I heard a high-pitched voice, like "***kane, kane***." And this is the deer's bark. **So, please don't worry**.
昨日の夜、下見に来た時に、えー、遠くでですね、こんな声を聞きました。「**ケーン、ケーン**」っていう、高い声を聞きました。で、これはですね、鹿の鳴き声です。なので、あの、**安心してください**。

While all the participants lay quietly on the ground, they heard wildlife. The NI explained that when she came into the forest for a preview, she heard a deer's voice, and imitated its cry, putting stress on this onomatopoeic word, ***kane***, ***kane***, with a high-pitched voice, and thus framing it as belonging to a faraway animal realm through a citational device (i.e., *-tteiu* っていう) in the past tense (i.e., *-kikimashita* 聞きました). In this sense, this onomatopoeic utterance differs from the one with ***pota***, ***pota***, which imitated the sound and shape of water dropping. Explicitly changing the phonetic tone to the high-pitched one, the NI rather metapragmatically quoted the deer as an animator[22] and acted as its shamanistic human (Du Bois 1986, 328). She let the participants feel the immediate presence of nonhumans in the forest, while also indexing and underlining the difference between the presented and the presenter, or the animated and the animator. Such modulations from "culture" to "nature" via pitch, parallelism/reduplication, or onomatopoeia serve as a compounding miniritual of animalistic instantiation. The participants do not merely hear the sound of animals; they also encounter the voice of wildlife, which is a voiceless entity in the Anthropocene that humans can access or "touch" only when they become unmediated to nature, or "simply" exist as a material entity in the dark, silent forest away from its adjacency pair—the dazzling, verbally mediated world of cities and towns (fig. 2).[23]

In this forest therapy interaction, onomatopoeia clearly serves as a type of poetic and aesthetic language (Asai 2015, 15–18). The typical examples, such

sumikitta jibun 澄み切った自分). It seems that such a realism (laminating or discursively creating an ontology between nature and humans, bodies and selves) is the very residual ideology to entextualize this (postmodern) environmentalism as a discourse genre. Through the genred discourse, senses become the essence of humans, and they find who they truly are through senses in the interaction.

22. Perhaps like a Yukaghir hunter's animal mimicry (Willerslev 2007).

23. It is also noteworthy that the NI reminds the participants that if they hear a similar sound, that is a deer's cry, confirming that such an animal voice is not anything to be afraid of: they are wild animals but harmless to humans, which well explains what kind of nature-experience is enacted in this forest therapy.

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Figure 2. A participant lying down on the ground in the forest at Imidas. This image was provided by Imidas.

as *papa* and *mama*, repeat syllables with maximal sonority contrast between consonants and vowels (Jakobson 1960). In this sense, onomatopoeic words and expressions are figuratively foregrounded and thus, through such effects, become highly recognizable as self-contained unitary signs qua their form, shape, contour, of their own quality and character: "The poetic function points up that signs are—as a function of their embodied bundling of qualities—always multiplex, internally fractionated such that they may typify themselves; which is to say that the aesthetic quality, or poetic functionality, of any sign (or stretch of signs) projects, if only potentially or virtually, textuality—relations of indexical co-occurrence and iconic coherence" (Nakassis 2019, 69–70).

Therefore, poetic languages can cooccur as diminutives, that is, rhemes, which reflexively calibrate the sign to its own quality (i.e., embodied bundling of qualities). Although onomatopoeic words and expressions are often presumed as the natural and transparent reflection of human bodily and innate sensations, for the present purpose of semiotic discussion on quality as facts of firstness along with the Boasian conception of categorical apperception, what is particularly important is that the association of onomatopoeia with the qualic experience

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of environmental, material, nonhuman entities is not "natural" but, rather, "naturalizing" (Asai 2015, 17–18; cf. Chumley 2017, S5). Onomatopoeia is indeed perceived as the linguistic reflection of subjective, introspective, and sensory experience, and thus an example of unmediated, motivated, nonarbitrary phenomena of language. Such a phenomenon, or phenomenology, is semiotically explicable as an effect of its rhematic textualization on firstness occurring within a broader metapragmatic, communicative, and sociocultural (thus intersubjective and interdiscursive) process. In other words, it is a semiotic process of genuine signs descending on and condensing in the quale as momentary semiotic suspension "below" the domain of genuine signs (Harkness 2022, 73). Accordingly, onomatopoeia has the effect of naturalizing (i.e., rhematizing) an occurring event and thus semiotically generating the "least semiotic" experience, so to speak, in the sense that it is apperceived as an unmediated, motivated, or nonarbitrary property in real-time communication.[24] Even more radically, they do not appear as indexes at all—not even ideologically "felt" as semiotic—but as a sensuous truth.

After experiencing a simple, phatic, but cosmic linkage with the natural and chemical world, the NI and the participants left the forest and headed back to the lodge. Transcript 4 contains the NI's remarks on returning to the forest's edge:

Transcript 4

NI: Let us go out to that side with **electricity** over there.
Yes. Well, it became **bright**. Ah, it got **brighter**. Ah, just came back to **the lifeworld (*Sahā*)**.
あそこのね、**電気**のある方へ出て行きたいな、という風に思います。
はい。はあ、**明るく**なった。ああ、**明るくなった**。ああー、**娑婆**に出ましたね。

The therapeutic efficacy of this interactional text seems to materialize as the tropic effect of the two events: (*a*) The lecture on forest therapy (natural cure) by a psychosomatic doctor; and (*b*) The journey into the forest to perceive the efficacy taught in the lecture. Specifically, this journey serves as a sensuous metamorphic passage to experience a wide range of senses and become aware of a phatic, simple linkage with the wildness through or in the body as a deictic nexus. That is, the participants (1) depart for that dark forest at night; (2) see, hear, smell, touch, and breathe natural sensations into the body in the deep forest; (3) feel unmediated with nature and become nonhuman "out there"; and (4) return to this bright human lifeworld (*shaba* 娑婆) of electricity.[25] The

24. This naturalizing effect through poetic language use is also linked with the nomic evocation of naturalness in the other case of forest therapy (see transcript 7).

25. The NI used the highly religious (Buddhist) term "the *Sahā* world" (*shaba* 娑婆), meaning "*this* lifeworld." Utilizing Buddhist terminology, which is largely used to deal with death, the NI's utterance contrastively positions the natural world as *that* dead/spiritual world.

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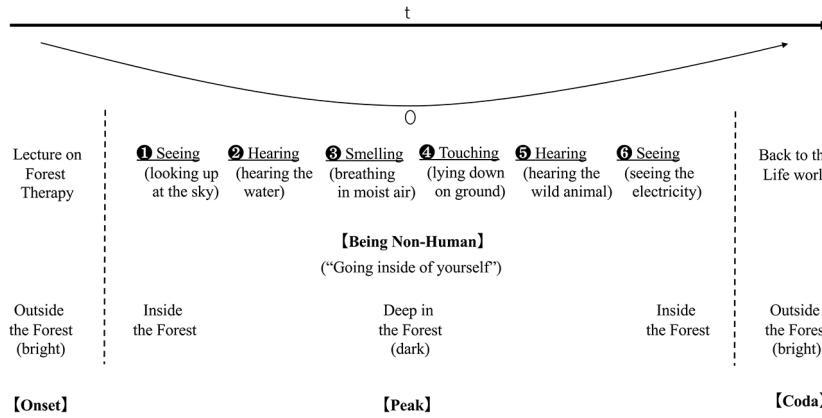


Figure 3. Sensuous route of forest therapy

participants develop an awareness of their physical immediacy with nature and their bodily senses, acquiring the skill to hear the voice of wild animals or a voice of their bodies—that is, to feel, touch, and thus "extract" wildness and animality in themselves, or a quale "of" nature as a singular, unitary, and momentary suspension in semiosis below the domain of genuine signs. Figure 3 shows the metamorphic form of this sensuous encounter with senses, wildness, and animality in humans, or "the others in the selves," designed to experience this therapeutic efficacy (see also Silverstein 2004b, 2006).[26]

Transspecies Engagement

Another example of forest therapy to be examined below was conducted with the same NI and participants in a forest setting from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Here, I focus on the human-animal interaction that unfolded when the NI and participants encountered a black large-breed dog rushing toward them during the guided walk through the forest. By showing how the NI and the participants cooperatively managed this indexically contingent contact with an animal, I demonstrate how the *transspecies* encounter between humans and animals is deictically enacted through the origo transposition and how the "animistic" genre and register framing of this discursive text—which seems to consistently regiment, conventionalize, and even institutionalize different instances

26. This chart is developed based on Silverstein's *oinoglossia* (wine tasting and its talk) discussion, which revealed how the actual aesthetic material, wine, is ritually and discursively encountered in phases: (1) visual; (2) olfactory; (3) gustatory; (4) internal olfaction; (5) vaporization, with the "peak" being the gustatory stage, which is seemingly the closest stage toward which and away from which all the other stages seem to proceed (2004b, 641). The similar phased structures discursively emerge in this forest therapy with a peak around its "smelling" and "touching" stages to sensuously encounter forests and animals going inside of themselves.

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of environmental activities and projects at Imidas—is interactionally generated and achieved through the activity.

In this activity, the NI and participants walked into the daytime forest outside their lodge and the participants were encouraged to be conscious of all the bodily senses and actively use them. The NI led the participants deeper into the forest by explaining the characteristics of plants and small animals walking along its woodchip trail. This activity followed the similar threefold ritual structuring employed for the night forest therapy: (1) leaving the ordinary human realm, (2) stepping into the nonhuman forest world to actively use all the bodily senses, and (3) returning to the outside of the forest. After about an hour, as they were passing through a dense part of the forest, the dog suddenly rushed toward them along the narrow trail:

Transcript 5

1	NI:	Aaah, ❶ it has come! ❷ Wait, aaah! Hahahaha . . . あぁ、来たー！待てー、ぁぁー！はっははは。
2	Participants:	Wooooooooo! うぉぉぉぉー！
3	NI:	Hahahaha. Hahahaha . . . ははは。ははは。
4	Participant B:	It is a dog. I wondered if it was a bear. 犬かぁ。熊かと思ったよ。

In transcript 5, the utterance ❶ "it has come" (*kita* 来た) indicates the completion of the arrival of something in the past (perfect tense), but here it refers to something in a progressive state approaching the deictic origo of communication. Obviously, this usage of the perfect tense implies that events that are (not) expected to happen have occurred sensationally, creating a sense of urgency in the group. Immediately after that, the NI used an imperative to address the dog ❷ "Wait" (*mate* 待て) as if it were moving away from the origo, which therefore indicated that the deictic center was transposed to a position chasing the dog:

Transcript 6

1	The owner of the dog:	I'm sorry. すみません。
2	NI:	It's all right. いえー。
3	The owner of the dog:	There is absolutely no problem at all, but this dog is certainly big. 全然問題はないのですが、でかいので。

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Transcript 6 (*continued*)

4 Participant B:	It surprised me. びっくりしたー。
5 Participant A:	That is huge. おっきいー。
6 NI:	Haha, hahaha . . . Yeah, it is big, isn't it? It is cute. はは、ははは。ねえ、おっきいですね？可愛い。
7 Participant A:	It is just like a bear. 熊みたい。
8 NI:	Look. He is saying, "You can't catch me." ほら、「捕まりたくないんだ」って言ってる。 He is saying, "Let's play more." Hahaha . . . 「もっと遊ぶんだ」って言ってる。ははは。

In transcript 6, while the NI and the participants were in shock, the dog's owner appeared behind them and caught it, telling them that it was not dangerous. Hence, although the dog's sudden appearance undoubtedly shocked the NI, she could have noticed the presence of its owner chasing after him and would have immediately realized that the dog was not wild and was therefore harmless.

Accordingly, the NI directly quoted the dog's "inner voice": "He is saying, 'You can't catch me' He is saying, 'Let's play more'" (line 8). Through this direct quotation of the dog's inner voice as origo transposition, the dog and participants intersubjectively gained "personhood" with each other, thus deictically generating a transspecies engagement (Kohn 2014). The dog is voiced as a human-like creature, and humans emerge as an animal-like entity. In this sense, the NI and the participants deictically experience the selves as "not animal and not-*not* animal" (Willerslev 2004). It is noteworthy that the NI's direct quotation, personification, or "intersemiotic translation" of the dog's voice (Jakobson 1959), "You can't catch me. Let's play more" (*tsukamaritaku nai-**nda**, motto asobu-**nda***), is uttered with the repetition of the euphonic form [-***nda***](んだ) of the affirmative particle [-*noda*](のだ), which serves as a diminutive, bringing forth the infantile and innocent character of the utterer—that is, like a human child or as *yuru-kyara* (ゆるキャラ), in contrast to the assertive and adult-like image invoked by [-*noda*].[27] The deictic, improvisational, and intersubjective

27. *Yuru-kyara* (ゆるキャラ) is the abbreviated form of "*yuru-i* mascot character" (ゆるいマスコットキャラクター). *Yuru-i* means "loose" in Japanese. *Yuru-kyara* was first developed in the 1980s to help promote local events, organizations, and businesses. Since 2000, the use of *yuru-kyara* has increasingly become popular in the tourism industry as a way to revitalize local regions. It is undoubtedly a phenomenon that has been cooccurring with the rise of environmentalism that this paper is examining, possibly associated with this "looseness" as its dominant qualisign of diminution and infantilization, characterizing postmodernity qua "posthumanity" in Japan.

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footing shift of the NI semiotically downshifts the huge and intimidating (bear-like) dog into a "cute" (*kawaii* 可愛い) and "loose" (*yurui* ゆるい) human child playing in the forest. Accordingly, the shocking contact with wildness is reconfigured as a pleasant, harmless, and harmonious experience during which humans can "dwell" (Ingold 2000) with animals, joyfully chasing each other as if playing hide-and-seek with an animal. It is infantilizing or, in a sense, "domesticating" the big wildness of nature through the small wildness of the infant child. Thus, the discourse framing—that is, both its textual genre type and register contextual features of this forest therapy—emerges and is "restored" as if the "lost" animistic relationship between animals and humans in the Anthropocene, or perhaps "interanimality" (Merleau-Ponty [1956–60] 1995, 247) was reconstructed; and the fearsome wildlife becomes personified and domesticated, as it were, from the perspective of human "owners" of animals as it was also implicitly indicated in the NI's imperative utterance ❷ "Wait!" (transcript 5, line 1).

Through the deictic origo shift made by the NI's direct quotation of the dog's inner voice, the human-animal relational encounter is embodied for the NI and the participants. At the same time, such a deictically sharing of personhood with the animal using the affirmative particle's euphonic form, *-nda* んだ, may characterize the encounter as an infantile and innocent, or possibly a fictional space-time, that is, Neverland.[28] In the following transcript, with such a romantic evocation of the iconism between humans and animals, the process of regenerating the animistic interactional framing, which might have been "collapsed" by the accidental contact with a dog rushing into it, is cooperatively finalized between the NI and the participants:

Transcript 7

1	Participant F:	It surprised me. びっくりしたー。
2	Participant C:	Yeah, right? I wondered what was coming. ねぇー。何が来たのかと思った。
3	NI:	Haha, hahaha . . . はは、ははは。
4	Participant A:	I have never seen such a thing. すごい初めて見た。
5	NI:	He just crept up on us, like ***doron***, ***doron***, right? Hahaha . . . **ドロン**、**ドロン**って来ましたね？ ははは。
6	Participant B:	This forest is perfect. この森は、最高だね。

28. Satsuka (2015) describes the similar discourse, which recognizes nature as the imagined thus fictional place of Neverland.

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Transcript 7 (*continued*)

		[(A)]Dogs also become happy, and [(B)]humans become happy as well. 犬も喜べば、人間も喜ぶ。
7	Participant F:	Haha, humans become happy as well. はは、人間も喜ぶ。

In line 5, the NI again repeats the onomatopoeic word ***doron, doron*** to reflect the quality and shape of the heaviness of a large dog's running movement. Emerging repeatedly, the onomatopoeic word, with its repetition as a type of poetic, self-focusing language use qua diminution with the use of euphonic form, certainly serves as a key sensuously perceivable object to rhematize an infantile character to this institutionalized nature-experience and human-animal encounter taking place in Imidas.

While the NI and participants were reflecting on the accidental encounter with the dog, the other emblematic one-liner—that is, possibly a master trope[29] of this enregistered, genred, and even institutionalized discourse of nature experience—was recited by Participant B in line 6: "This forest is perfect. Dogs also become happy, and humans also become happy" (*kono mori ha saikou dane. inu mo yorokobe ba, ningen mo yorokobu* この森は、最高だね。犬も喜べば、人間も喜ぶ。). As indicated below, this utterance shows explicit syntactic parallelism between lines *a* and *b*, contrastively positioning but iconically indexing the dog running along the trail with the humans walking in the forest, with both feeling "happy":

(*a*)	*inu*	*mo*	*yorokob-e*	*ba*
	犬	も	喜べ	ば
	[Dogs	also	become happy	and]
(*b*)	*ningen*	*mo*	*yorokob-u*	
	人間	も	喜ぶ	
	[Humans	as well	become happy]	

As noted above in transcript 3, this type of parallelism (i.e., text-metrical structure) is recurrent in the forest therapy at Imidas. They mutually presuppose each other with the same lexicalized qualisigns, possibly serving as the crucial regimenting trope, conventionalizing and stabilizing the genred and enregistered interactions as forest therapy. While it was the NI's statement in transcript 3, the utterances here are composed interactionally with the participants.

29. On master trope, see Gal and Irvine (2019, 120–33).

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Let us also look at the aspect *-u* of this utterance in line *b*. If we examine the aspect *-u* of this utterance, we find that the last word of both lines, *yorokob-u* 喜ぶ (to become or feel happy), is used as the noncomplete or nonpast (i.e., present) tense, which also indicates the future tense. Considering that an animate noun *human* (*ningen* 人間) is used in the second line, which refers not only to the participants themselves but also to humans as a species, the noun *dog* (*inu* 犬) in line *a* also refers to both the huge dog they encountered in the forest and dogs as a species. Accordingly, the aspect *-u* of *yorokob-u* is not used as the future tense that dogs and humans will become happy, but instead operates as timeless present tense, which indexes laws, myths, and truths (see also Whorf [1939] 1956). In other words, this utterance rather operates as a performative statement, or "grammar, dry grammar" (Jakobson 1987), which manifests the immutable truth, establishing an (indexically) iconic relationship between the two communicative realms: (1) the de-temporal, mythical, nonhuman realm and (2) the occurring event of communication in the human realm (Silverstein 1993, 52). The series of these utterances nomically calibrate this interaction of the nature-experience in the forest as the faraway, immutable, and thus "fictional" space-time (see also Nakasiss 2020). Through such a nomic calibration, *this* forest before the NI and participants becomes the ritualized space-time instantiating *that* forest—an imagined totem pole of interanimality with harmless wildlife and pristine/preserved nature as "wilderness," or perhaps Garden of Eden—beyond the modern human quotidian in the here and now.

At the end of this segment, Participant B's utterance was reiterated by Participant F's remark "humans become happy as well" (line 7), as if it marks the ritual completion of restoring the lost animistic linkage between humans and nonhumans in the Anthropocene. Hence, the forest therapy at Imidas appears to be a diagrammatically formalized, institutionally genred, and enregistered interaction through its rhematic language use as a sensuous *route*, realism—or (ontological) "turn"—for modern, Western, humanistic selves to (1) revisit the nonmodern, non-Western, nonhumanistic place of nature; (2) perceive the quality of nature and feel the presence of bodily senses; (3) encounter a voice of the voiceless entities and discover the lost animism with others; and (4) re-*turn* to everyday reality to reconfirm the location of their own *roots*. They get to know a range of qualities of the forest through this discursive passage, where such qualities arise qua a tone as tokened here and now—that is, qualia, which generate and are, in turn, stabilized by a particular conventionalized and institutionalized type of nature-experience organized around master tropes as the wilderness, animality, and nonhumanity, or the (lost) phaticity with nature, in

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postmodern, Western humanity. The participants experience and perceive its qualitative language use and communicative interaction as raw, sensuous, and unmediated with nature, thus as a quality "of" forests, through their bodily senses, which further equips them to apperceive, encounter, and specify the attributes of other perceivable things as an "immediate" sensuous truth. I call such a sense-focal process of communication qualia as facts of firstness. Its sensuous, naturalized, semiotically unmediated effects they experience are not only lexicalized qualities but rather lie as a broad potential space achieved through every representamenal unity of the quale.

Conclusion

Recognizing the recent ontological orientation to nonhuman entities in anthropological discussions, I refocused my analysis on language use and communicative interaction as the sign-process through which the interrelationality between culture and nature, or humans and nonhumans, emerges. Specifically, I analyzed a forest therapy session—where participants attended a lecture on the "scientifically/medically proven" efficacy of forest, entered the forest at night, and lay down on the ground—and demonstrated how the session shows a threefold structure with the use of the forest and bodily senses cumulatively enacting the material connection with nature through bodies as the phatic nexus. This experience of nature is composed of poetic, textual-metrical language use with ideophones and euphonic forms of Japanese, begetting itself as a diminutive object of the senses qua a "form," and further equips the begetters of the language used in forest therapy to apperceive and discursively specify the attributes of other perceivable things thus as an "immediate" sensuous truth. I further analyzed one incident during a guided daytime walk through the forest in which the participants unexpectedly encountered a large animal rushing toward them. I examined how the deictic origo transposition with the NI's direct reported speech of the dog's (personified) inner voice allowed the discourse to create a transspecies space-time as voicing effects between humans and animals (i.e., a double voiced as the not animal, and the not-*not* animal) as the genre-register framing of the discourse emerges, is nomically reinstalled, and thus conventionalized and institutionalized through the parallelistic metanarration figurating the animistic but fictional relationality between humans, animals, and the natural environment.

The firsthand experience with nature is successfully achieved. However, it does not necessarily indicate that all participants perceive the same qualities of, or acquire the same "taste" to, nature in a way as instantiated through forest

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therapy. Somewhat ironically, one might even experience the "opposite" qualisigns—that is, arbitrariness, mediatedness, or unnaturalness of this naturalized figuration of interaction with nature through the deliberately enacted or "fictionalized" character of its language use and the genre-register schema. Such a sense of arbitrariness, mediatedness, and unnaturalness possibly resulted from a failed typification of tone thus as a secondarily attributed quality, may be even distinct, emblematic qualisigns—qua "fakeness" (Reyes 2021)—that might characterize postmodern environmentalism.[30]

Our social world today is organized around various types of interaction and communication with environmental, natural, or nonhuman entities. Squarely comprehending that it is semiotically entextualized—as relationality between self and other, subject and object, culture and nature, or humans and nonhumans—only through such a semiotic occurrence of communicative interaction[31] (Sedda 2022), assuming there is an environmental crisis caused by an unbalanced relationship between the natural environment and humans in the Anthropocene—which is undeniably the result of cultural communicative interaction—and language use is inevitably a part of, and perhaps the crucial element of, such a process, I articulate that the detailed analysis of language use and communicative interaction may be the locus of the ethnographic studies to investigate the natural-cultural process of apperception as facts of firstness through which specific interrelations and relationality between humans and nonhumans ontologically emerge. Through such analysis, however, it also seems vital to reflexively develop and possibly reconfigure the metalanguage, which makes such ethnographic analysis of language use and communication possible. Otherwise, the ethnographic studies of nonhuman entities can only operate as realism and thus continues to engage in the self-discovery ritual and self-reflexively generate "turns" in search of the real.

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30. Reyes (2021) contends that "fakeness" is an attributed quality, thus qualisign, of postcolonial elitism, which presupposes the existence of types whose tokens aspire to pass for tokens of differentiated types through double-voiced emblematic displays.

31. Sedda (2022) insists that the semiotic, as a weave of relations in ongoing evolution or relational dimension, exceeds both nature and culture, penetrates into matter, into the living, or lies at the bottom of both nature and culture, which crosses the human and the nonhuman or exists as a relationality between them.

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