

Review of: "Somatic Arts and Liveable Futures: (Re-) Embodying Ecological Connections"

Usha Varanasi¹

¹ University of Washington

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I was drawn to the title of this paper because I strongly believe that we need to cultivate connectedness to nature with the aim of reciprocal healing of people and the rest of the planet as one whole. The paper accurately describes ecological disasters that are causing fragmentation of life in all forms, resulting in deep ecological grief. While I am not an expert in somatic arts to validate the author's assertion that this art form can evoke oneness with nature, we do know that in most cultures, especially Indigenous cultures in different parts of the world, some form of somatic art is used in their ceremonies to pray for the healing of their corner of the world suffering from drought, famine, or diseases.

The premise that integration of somatic arts into ecological awareness can reconnect us with our natural environment is a hopeful one, but the paper is primarily based on one workshop. We need many systematic studies to test the power of somatic arts to bring about the manifold benefits described by the author, including world peace. Watching dance performances outdoors, such as the early morning dance on boats on the river Ganges, engendered a peaceful feeling within me, but I noted that the dancers were quite tense while balancing and performing with precision. Therefore, I am hesitant to endorse the conclusion of this paper without more data on physiological or other confirming parameters that somatic arts can bring about personal and ecological healing.

This research and its contributions can open doors to new perspectives, but I believe much more work is needed. I have given a good rating to this paper because I desperately wish that we could find a viable solution towards the healing of people and the planet, as I discuss in *Ecopsychology*. 2020;12(3):188-194.doi:10.1089/eco.2020.0011. Therefore, I commend the author for giving us somatic art as one such solution.