

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

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This innovative arts-based article is fresh, inviting, and unpretentious. It offers insight into complex concepts around ecological grief, somatic and neurobiological memory, apocalyptic thinking, and the "Planthropecene" while providing practical step-by-step methods for engaging with our grief and healing our modern ruptured relationship with the more-than-human.

I enjoyed the author's four distinct invitations to engage in embodied step-by-step guided meditations. This vividly involved me in ecosomatic theory instead of merely reading about outcomes that emerged from the group work at Floating University Berlin in 2022. Through ecosomatic practice, the author *shows* and leads a healing journey that invites my modern Western mind to reconnect with the earth and all creatures and beings sustaining me. His focus on vegetation within the more-than-human world is novel; animals, microbes, soil, and trees often dominate these narratives (Haraway 2016, Puig de la Bellacasa 2019, Stuckey 2010). His brief mention of the "Planthropocene" made me want to know more about learning from plants as our kin.

I particularly enjoy the invitation to awaken my embodied memories of co-evolving with other earthen creatures and beings. This is done beautifully. Thank you for the vivid photographs of your workshop; these lend a tactile, embodied feeling to the article, nearly immersing me in what transpired at the Floating University Berlin. I have a few suggestions for strengthening the article.

I recommend fleshing out "apocalyptic thinking" as a concept. What does apocalyptic thinking point to? How does it pervade modern narratives about our ecological crisis? Can it be compared to abyssal or binary thinking (Zembylas, 2017)? While apocalyptic thinking may appear as a call to action, why is it dangerous, beyond promoting the "humans against nature" narrative? Because it presents a binary: either we're doomed or we're going to be saved by a miracle or human ingenuity. This negates more-than-human agency going on everywhere always. How do we soften binary apocalyptic thinking in order to see the potentiality of infinite outcomes, mostly beyond human control or comprehension? Apocalyptic thinking comes from a colonial mindset, that props up the illusion that humans are in control of the more-than-human and that through our own ingenuity and science, we can "fix this mess." This ignores ecological degradation ongoing for thousands of years, focusing on the present moment and signifying the privileged elite who are only now waking up to discover what has been known by many, that things have been wrong or broken for a very long time.

I recommend exploring the etymology of '*soma*' on page 3. What does this Greek word signify? 1-2 additional sentences

will help me understand better the sentence “With eco-somatics, attention shifts from the body ..... to embodied ecological connections as a perceptual continuum.”

In referring to dance and somatic practice on page 2, I recommend checking out Snowber & Bickel (2015) and Snowber (2004).

On page 6, Abram’s work is cited, and that lack of perceptiveness towards the more-than-human is the cause of our crisis. Abram also traces written language as a source of disconnection. This can be linked to our modern overemphasis on cognition and discursive language at the expense of our eroded and denigrated innate animal intuition and sense of connection to the earth.

The beautiful, eye-catching artwork at the top of the article needs a caption citing the artist, date, and medium. Quick question: do you have permission from participants to show photos of them in the workshop? You may want to provide one sentence about this to alleviate any questions about privacy, images, etc.

I particularly appreciate your invitation to engage with the awkwardness of practicing ecosomatics in public, where people might notice us not acting as expected (p. 11). This is often a significant barrier to engaging with ecological grief, the fear of being judged. Active engagement with these difficult problems invites us to *be* awkward, to *feel* awkward, and to demonstrate awkwardness. Thank you for illuminating this.

In summary, this is an outstanding article in what I would consider the tradition of ABR (arts-based research), using embodied guided meditation. The article beautifully exemplifies good academic plain language, eschewing elitism and pretention that often pervades academic writing.

## References

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