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Movement towards socioecological change:
The case of Ecosomatics

Wilma Lagerman

School of Global Studies, Gothenburg University

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Supervisor Thomas Daum

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Abstract

Several scholars both within and outside the field of human ecology argue that the perceptual human-nature divide contributes profoundly to patterns of unsustainability and weak sustainability visible in the world today. Deliberately engaging in conscious bodily-felt contact with the natural environment is suggested to uncover appropriate, embodied angles to approaching ecology and the environmental crisis. Herein, ecosomatics represents an exemplifying case of practices meant to evoke a sense of connection with the more-than-human. A growing subcategory to the more widely applied and studied field of somatics, definitions and uses for ecosomatics are currently underrepresented in academic literature. Through narrative and thematic analysis of qualitative interviews, it becomes discerned that ecosomatic practice appears to evoke experiences in long-term practitioners which enable perceptions of nature rooted in relationality and aspects of non-dualism to develop or deepen. These are described as leading to changes in behavioural patterns towards the more-than-human characterized by values of care and non-violence. They are also described as leading to developments in practitioners' sense of self characterized by non-separateness from the organic world, a trajectory resembling that in deep ecology described as *recognition of the ecological self*. Ecosomatics is proposed as a method of experiencing an alternative lived experience of interrelatedness with the larger ecosystem, in contrast to *cartesian dualism*. This is depicted by practitioners as a powerful tool for enabling recognition of agency and responsibility – over simply intellectual conceptualization – in face of the environmental crisis.

1.0 Introduction....6
1.1 Background....7
1.2 Purpose & Query....7
1.3 Delimitations....8
1.4 Structure of thesis....8
2.0 Research framework....8
2.1 Introduction to framework....9
2.2 Previous research....9
2.3 Theoretical & conceptual framework....11
3.0 Methodology & material....13
3.1 Research design....13
3.2 Data collection....13
3.3 Data processing & analysis....15
3.4 Ethical considerations....16
4.0 Results....17
4.1.0 Query 1: *How are practitioners currently defining ecosomatic practice?*....17
4.1.1 Ecosomatics as a merging of identities & practices....18
4.1.2 Somatically approached study of Inner-outer ecological relationships....19
4.1.3 Fluid Definition – Ecosomatics as Staying with change....21
4.1.4 Summary table....22
4.2.0 Query 2: *Have ecosomatic practitioners experienced long-lasting changes in their perceptions of nature through ecosomatics, and if so, what are these?*....22
4.2.1 Being nature: Non-dual perceptions....23
4.2.2 Relationality: Introduction....27
4.2.3 Relationality: Nature as kin/ally....28
4.2.4 Relationality: More-than-human empathy, reciprocity & mutuality....29
4.2.5 Moving towards Deep ecology: Dissolvement of self/ego....31
4.2.6 Summary table....33
4.3.0 Query 3: *Do practitioners perceive their ecosomatic work as a tool for positive societal change, and if so, how?*....33
4.3.1 Introduction: Change at the front & centre....34
4.3.2 Changing values and ways of being: Following the trajectory of Deep ecology....34
4.3.3 Activism of non-doing....35
4.3.4 Attention as power – Recognizing agency....36

4.3.5 Ripple effects 38
4.3.6 Summary table 40
5.0 Conclusions & Discussion 41
5.1 Query 1 41
5.2 Query 2 42
5.3 Query 3 43
5.4 Critical reflection & Final notes 45
6.0 References 46

1.0 Introduction

Several scholars both within and outside the field of human ecology argue that the perceptual human-nature divide contributes profoundly to the patterns of unsustainability and weak sustainability visible in the world today (Laidlaw & Beer, 2018; Beauvais, 2012; Thiel & Hallgren, 2019). Although western thought privileges thinking over feeling as ways to obtain knowledge, our reality is that we live through bodies that move and integrate input in ways that have been developed in accordance with all natural systems on the planet (Beauvais, 2012). Deliberately engaging in conscious bodily-felt contact with the natural environment may uncover appropriate, embodied angles to approaching ecology and the environmental crisis (Beauvais, 2012).

Ecosomatics is a nascent field as a tool for embodiment and direct relational experience of the more-than-human (Beauvais, 2012). Often practiced in form of improvisational dancing or movement, ongoing definitions are currently being developed by practitioners. Laidlaw (2023) proposes ecosomatics is the merging of the field of *somatics* with *deep ecology*, a philosophical narrative which suggests perceptions of nature that move away from an anthropocentric perspective to an eco-centric (earth-centred) view ("Deep ecology", 2023)[1]. Somatic and dance-movement therapist C.A. Burns (2012) has described ecosomatics as addressing the *mind-body split*, i.e., the work of somatic therapy, as well as the *earth-body split* present between humans and the rest of the planet (Beauvais, 2012).

Stemming from a millennium long Judaeo-Christian and Greek philosophical narrative of human dominance over nature (Thiel & Hallgren, 2019), and fuelled by capitalist accumulation of both capital and labour (Federici, 2004), the body-earth split and cartesian dualism of our time can be viewed as a deep ontological foundation of western thought, impacting human-nature relationships down to the level of mind and basic movement. The loss of ceremony and ritual in the western world has led to a widespread harnessing and appropriation of practices, often taken out of their cultural and ecological context, aiming to evoke a sense of connection with the more-than-human. Ecosomatics brings us to our

[1] Where *Wikipedia* has been used as a source for definitions in the paper, several encyclopaedic sources have been reviewed to deem the material in the Wikipedia page as well synthesised information.

immediate ecological context, starting from inside the ecological body itself, to ask the question – What is inside? What is outside? Are they separated?

1.1 Background

Somatics is a field within bodywork and arts, which uses subjective, sensory experience to obtain knowledge about the world ("Somatics", 2023). Named in the 1970s, founded upon a myriad of practices derived from different philosophical and cultural backgrounds, somatics constitutes a global network of movement and dance practices (Drury, 2022). This is something which the field has also been critiqued for. Drury (2022) argues that the use of the word *somatics* to certify global body-based practices falls in line with the European scholarly tradition of taxonomic formalization and standardization of non-western practices, gesturing towards Eurocentric scholarly habit and colonial history.

The human body is, in somatics, recognized as a living energy system comprised of communicating parts, and somatic practices – often in the form of improvisational movement and dance – aim to increase awareness of communication between these parts (Beauvais, 2012). This in turn is meant to evoke healing of the *mind-body split*, a key characteristic of cartesian dualism (Beauvais, 2012). For this reason, somatic practice is also applied as a psychological treatment tool for PTSD among other symptoms of trauma (Beauvais, 2012; Salamon, 2023). Bodies and thought patterns have evolved along with their ecological environment, systematically and constantly exchanging energy and information. The role of ***ecosomatics*** has been described as extending the somatic practice to tend to not only the mind-body divide, but also the body-planet divide (Beauvais, 2012; Burns, 2012). In ecosomatic practice, the practitioner explores their relationship to the place where the practice is being held through their immediate sensory experience (S. Etkin, personal communication, November 15, 2023). The term became public around 2008, in an endeavour to bring somatics and *ecological thinking* together (S. Palokangas, personal communication, December 5, 2023).

1.2 Purpose & Query

This paper aims to contribute to understanding if and how somatics, and more specifically ecosomatics, can reshape human–nature relationships and how it is being used as a tool to drive socioecological change by current practitioners. The research aims to add to the

emerging field of ecosomatics – its definitions and uses – through the qualitative collection of information from experienced ecosomatic dancers, aiming at answering the following questions:

1. How are practitioners currently **defining** ecosomatic practice?
2. Have ecosomatic practitioners experienced long-lasting changes in their **perceptions of nature** through ecosomatics, and if so, what are these?
3. Do practitioners perceive their ecosomatic work as a tool for **positive societal change**, and if so, how?

1.3 Delimitations

The study is delimited to the experiences of a small number of experienced practitioners, situated in Sweden and Germany. Due to the delimitations, generalizability can be viewed as limited to the experience of these practitioners. Moreover, indications can be brought forth on weather similar experiences can be obtained in any/other bodies. This would require further research to establish as conclusion.

1.4 Structure of thesis

Following this paragraph, the paper includes a section on Research Framework (2.0), including an introduction to methodological cultivation of the framework. This is deepened in the following chapter, Methodology & Material (3.0), which also includes sections on data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations. These are declared in tandem with reflections on choices for methodology and implications for research validity and reliability. Following is the result chapter (4.0), sorted by query and subthemes, with each subchapter ending with a summary table corresponding to the query in question. The summary tables are intended to provide an overview of the prevalence of a certain narrative or theme; they are not intended to convey the full complexity of relationships between these aspects. Finally, conclusions are reviewed and discussed in chapter 5.0 in tandem with suggestions for further research, ending with final notes reflecting on the research.

2.0 Research framework

2.1 Introduction to framework

Within the study, inductive and abductive elements are combined to analyse the obtained material. The concepts herein have been accumulated in tandem with the study unfolding. This represents the interplay of inductive and abductive elements in the research. The following concepts can, and herein will, be viewed as support for generating descriptions that arise in this study – via abductive approaches – rather than strict categories which the data is expected to fit into. This is further expanded upon in the methodology chapter.

The concepts and previous research are continuously cultivated to ground and position results arising in this study in relation to relevant academic writings. The history of merging movement with ecological awareness is most likely as old as movement itself. Hence, any review of previous research will be naturally limited when regarding this scope. Herein, the Previous Research section will focus on research relevant for the queries entwined with the term *ecosomatics*.

2.2 Previous research

In the book based on her doctoral thesis, *Dances with Sheep*, Anna Dako (2023) offers a methodology of *Felt thinking*, an ecosomatic practice inspired by contextualizing and re-thinking the nature of being human within a wider framework and viewpoints on wellbeing. Felt thinking is described as a practice-based method of self-inquiry, an experiential practice guided by being with nature in contemplative movement.

Dako proposes that somatic experience, as a form of contemplative practice, can become a living act of reconnection to the living earth and ‘a way of dipping into our primal resources for restoration that comes from being one with nature, as an enriching form of what Piaget called ‘animistic thinking’ in human development.’ (Dako, 2023). Through her practice-based research, Dako states her contribution to eco-phenomenology, i.e., the study of direct experience (Abram, 1996), as offering a practice for embedded relationality, with movement being described as a primal gateway to experiencing ontological relationality, through the lens of wellbeing. Within this present paper, ecosomatics as a practice for embedded relationality is further explored through lenses of deep ecology and non-dualism.

Also engaged in practice-based research, Laidlaw and Beer (2018) explore their proposal that somatic dance experiences ‘offer an antidote to society’s disconnection to the more-than-human’, and advocate for ‘the case of somatic dance experiences as a powerful tool for

transformative, embodied connection with the more-than-human'. A pervasive experience evoked through their practice-based research is described as understanding the world as a constant flow of movement, constantly shaping the practitioners becoming, entailing an ontological experience of interconnectedness (Laidlaw & Beer, 2018). Hereby, Laidlaw & Beer contribute to documenting shifts in individual ontologies evoked through ecosomatic practice. Nevertheless, Laidlaw and Beer acknowledge the limitations of their practice-based research as ones that would 'benefit from greater study that includes multiple viewpoints of embodied practice and a diversity of practice locations' (Laidlaw & Beer, 2018). They also suggest further research in order to identify behavioural implications of such experiences, and how these influence social practices (Laidlaw & Beer, 2018). This paper aims to contribute to such study of ecosomatics through compiling, comparing and analysing the experiences of different practitioners, practicing in different regions and environments.

Moreover, C.A Burns (2012) has stated that lack of human attention towards ecological reciprocity and 'participatory consciousness' is 'rooted in human's tendencies toward disembodiment' (Burns, 2012). Similarly, David Abram (2000) has stated that 'only a culture that disdains and dismisses the senses could neglect the living land as thoroughly as our culture neglects the land'. Burns goes on to state that, much as humans need embodiment practices to understand our own bodies and our relationships with other humans, we also need to practice somatically sensing reciprocity with the more-than-human world (Burns, 2012). This ecosomatic practice, as Burns puts it, can 'provide a context within which humans can somatically perceive the intersubjective field through contact, kinaesthetic empathy, and what might be called an earth-bound transpersonal awareness: trans- in being beyond the skin contained body ego, yet earth-bound in being rooted in present moment sensual intimacy.' (Burns, 2012).

This paper positions itself as a further exploration into how such experiences of 'transpersonal' or ecological awareness might come about through ecosomatic practice, and what implications these hold for long-term perceptions and behaviours. Important knowledge gaps remain in academic literature around definitions of ecosomatic practice and the potential role of ecosomatics as a tool for engaging with the more-than-human world. This research intends to provide further insight into the emerging field, through compilation and comparison of experiences of long-term practitioners, using concepts and perspectives

declared in the following section. Such insight might prove relevant for reviewing e.g. state or regional funding for arts, where interests intersect with environmental concerns.

2.3 Theoretical & conceptual framework

More-than-human is a post-anthropocentric term coined by David Abram (1996) referring to all earthly nature. The term will be used throughout the paper. Where it does not grammatically or otherwise linguistically fit the text the words *ecology, living world* or simply *nature* will be adapted instead. Usage of language shapes our perceptions and the *more-than-human* term aims to bring about reflection on how we often define *nature* as something outside the human, in line with ***cartesian dualism***. Often viewed as an idea-historical framework explaining western subordination of nature, bodies, and the female sex (Federici, 2004; Thiel & Hallgren, 2019), this dualism denotes that mind and body are distinct and separable, that the body belongs to nature and, often, that this aspect is hierarchically subordinated to the mind, associated with human culture. (Federici, 2004; "Body-mind dualism", 2023). Somatics is described as a methodology to transcend mind-body dualism (Beauvais, 2012; Salamon, 2023), and this term carries further relevance for the paper in order to approach descriptions of *non-dualistic* perceptions of nature, as well as perceptions rooted in *relationality* rather than hierarchy, which arise in the study.

Relationality is a central concept within many indigenous lifeworld's, based on the premise and lived experience that 'all things exist in relatedness' (Tynan, 2021). Tynan (2021) states that relationality is sustained and strengthened through practice which evokes this premise as a lived experience. Furthermore, ***non-dualism*** includes several different philosophical and spiritual traditions, such as Mahayana Buddhism, Advaita Vedanta and Taoism, which emphasize an absence of separation between phenomena in existence (Loy, 1997). There are many definitions in use for non-dualism and each tradition offers unique interpretations. The full complexity and nuances of non-dualism will not be discerned within the limited scope of this paper. Rather, herein, focus will lie on perceptual states discerned in the data resembling that of ***non-dual awareness***, which according to Loy (1997) entails a perceptual experience that the observer and the observed cannot be separated but form a whole.

Perceptions of nature is a major concept in human ecology, and make up the views, attitudes, aesthetic and moral conceptions of the more-than-human which humans harbour (Sörlin, 1991, pg. 26). The images and stories that societies have about ecosystems are

foundational for their perception of nature, which play a central role in shaping interaction and relationships between social systems and the planet (Marten. 2001, pg. 121). Recognizing different perceptions can help us understand why different individuals and different cultures interact with the environment in such enormously different ways (Marten, pg. 121). Theories and concepts around e.g. perceptions of nature can be viewed as a spectrum whereby individuals can relate to the more-than-human differently, at different times and in different contexts. Cartesian dualism installs a particular perspective on nature, characterized by a distinct separation between nature and culture and a world view which installs that the natural world is composed of parts lacking any intrinsic relationship to each other ("Mechanism", 2023). Nature, by extension, can within this perception on nature be viewed as quantifiable resource(s), a key characteristic of the weak sustainability paradigm (Nightingale, 2019, pg. 45). Somatics, as seen in the background section, opposes this perception by viewing the ecological body as a living energy system comprised of communicating parts in constant relationship to one another.

Deep ecology is a social movement and environmental philosophy which recognizes nature as a community of beings with inherent value and consciousness (Madsen, 2023; Laidlaw, 2023). Deep ecology is an environmentalist movement in the sense that it is based in the belief that humans must radically change their relationship to nature from one which values nature solely for its anthropocentric use to one that recognizes inherent value in all ecological phenomena (Madsen, 2023). According to deep ecology, the self should be understood as deeply connected with and as part of nature, something Arne Naess calls ***the ecological self*** (Naess, 2005). Naess claims that environmental degradation arising from anthropocentrism is due to a conception of the human self as cut off from its surroundings, seen as a solitary ego/self among other solitary egos/selves (Madsen, 2023). According to Naess, once the ecological self is realized, it will naturally recognize and abide to an environmental ethic which disowns acts of violence done towards nature and practices a ***biocentric egalitarianism,*** in which equal worth is recognized among all natural entities. (Madsen, 2023; Naess, 2005). Herein, Deep ecology provides a constructive framework to view developments in perceptions of nature. It also helps analyse how such developments may move into an environmental ethic through which participants describe behavioural changes in line with perceived positive effect.

Somatics is all about redirecting awareness and attention into bodily sensations. What today is called the ***attention economy*** entails an economical and societal structure where human attention is treated as a market commodity (Bhargava & Velasques, 2021). Understanding attention as a resource can be beneficial to the individuals becoming capitalized, and a methodology of ***attention activism*** through mindfulness practices has even been suggested (Vidyarthi, 2016). As attention and sensory awareness is at the core of somatic practice, using it as a method of reclaiming human attention within the attention economy herein becomes abductively revealed as a means of driving societal change towards perceived socioecological benefit and wellness.

3.0 Methodology & material

3.1 Research design

Case studies are meant to bring about detailed information on a particular case (Bryman, 2008, pg. 73). What Bryman (2016, pg. 62) calls the **exemplifying case**, entails a case which is chosen because it is thought to exemplify or even represent a broader category of which it is a member. Herein ecosomatics can be viewed as an exemplifying case of sensory-based practices meant to evoke a sense of connection with the more-than-human. Ecosomatics has been chosen as it is a growing subcategory to the more widely studied field of somatics which is underrepresented in academic literature.

3.2 Data collection

Given that the topic of research explores ontological aspects of ecosomatic practice, meaning an exploration into how reality is perceived, a **qualitative research method** is appropriately applied to this study (Bryman, 2008, pg. 347). As the aim is to explore world views and socioecological relationships an **interview format** has been applied, where the participants verbally explore their own relationship to the practice with the help of a semi-structured interview guide utilized by the interviewer. The verbal collection of information, rather than for example obtaining information through observing ecosomatic performance, enables a linguistic analysis of the data through coding of transcriptions and developing a thematic as well as narrative analysis of the information. The interview guide is mainly developed to steer the conversation in the direction of exploring how practitioners define ecosomatic practice; if and how perceptions of nature have developed over time in accordance with

ecosomatic practice; as well as if/how experienced practitioners use the method as a means for driving societal change.

The queries of the paper carry an **inductive** nature, as they intend to explore if theories can be developed through observations regarding the field of ecosomatics in relation to e.g. perceptions of nature, rather than assume and test any already existing theory (Bryman, 2016, pg. 23). There are, however, **abductive** elements to the research, meaning that theories and concepts are applied to analyse the material (Bryman, 2016, pg. 401). With abduction, the researcher grounds theoretical framing of the persons being studied in the language, perspectives and meanings that form their worldview (Bryman, 2016, pg. 394). These theories and concepts, as described in the section on theoretical framework, function mainly as analytical support for describing and categorising different perceptions of nature, as well as different ways of utilizing ecosomatics as a tool for societal change.

The **selection** of participants in this study is largely, by nature of the queries, purposive in the sense that it aims at interviewing experienced/professional ecosomatic practitioners. **Snowball sampling** is a technique in which the researcher initially samples one or more participants, who then refer the researcher to other participants which hold experience relevant to the research (Bryman, 2016, pg. 415). Herein, access was established to a network of professional ecosomatic dancers through an ecosomatic teacher and performer situated in Skåne, Sweden. The sample includes two dancers situated in Germany, and three situated in Sweden. As the author of the paper is not a long-term practitioner of ecosomatics, the participants to some extent act as **informants** into the field and functions of ecosomatics, beyond acting primarily as **respondents** to the study. A common risk-factor within snowball sampling is that of creating a homogeneous, non-representative selection. This is intended to be countered by the participants practicing in different settings and different parts of the world, which is likely to have enabled personal and unique relationships to the practice. The sample size has primarily been adapted to create a realistic time-plan for the scope of this paper. **Data saturation**, meaning enough data has been collected to develop conceptual categories related to the queries (Bryman, 2016, pg. 412), remains naturally limited by the scope of this essay. Data saturation has however been approached through depths of interviews. 1–2-hour long interviews have been performed with all participants.

External validity, meaning whether results can be generalized beyond the specific research context, must be approached via looking at the selection, as well as the intended data

saturation. Beyond the participant group, ideas and indications might be brought forth on whether ecosomatics could generate similar results in any/other bodies. These indications would, however, require further research to be derived as conclusions.

The interviews took part primarily **online**, due to resource and time limitations inherent to the scope of this essay, but also **in person** with one of the Swedish participants. A prime concern regarding the online interview format regards the effects on the **ecological validity** of the study, meaning whether findings are applicable to people's everyday (eco)social settings (Bryman, 2016, pg. 42). Sitting in front of a screen takes us quite far from the organic world, and it is very far from the space in which ecosomatic practitioners practice or perform. This could lead to hindrances in speech, in exhibiting meaning through movement, and in social comfortability for the persons being interviewed. Partly, this was expected to be countered by the fact that the interviewees are professional practitioners, and hence most probably used to reflecting upon and talking about their work. It was also intended to be countered by a "warm-up" conversation leading into the interview, as an opportunity for the interviewee to feel acquainted with the interviewer. Nevertheless, the ecological validity of this study could, due to the online format, be considered limited.

3.3 Data processing & analysis

The interviews were followed by **transcription** of the interviews for further coding of the material. Transcribing is a time-consuming endeavour, but it enables scientific **transparency**, allows more thorough examination of what persons say, and helps correct natural limitations of our memory (Bryman, 2016, pg. 479). Transcriptions are also intended to increase the **replicability** of the study, entailing a measure on whether the study itself is conducted in a way which can be repeated (Bryman, 2016, pg. 41).

Post-interviews both a thematic analysis and a narrative analysis has been applied to the transcribed data. **Narrative analysis** is an approach to qualitative data which emphasizes stories people use to account for events in and perceptions of their lives within a temporal sequence (Bryman, 2016, pg. 589-590). As a method for data analysis the narrative one carries close coherence to the queries, which aims to account for individuals' definitions, changes in individuals' perceptual landscapes, and stories from ecosomatic practice which portray intention towards societal change. **Thematic analysis** enables coding of transcriptions into categories that make up significant themes, which in turn make a

theoretical contribution to the area of research focused on (Bryman, 2016, pg. 584). Thematic analysis plays an integral and even inherent role in most qualitative data analysis; it is even sometimes viewed as more or less coding itself (Bryman, 2016, pg. 584). In this study, a thematic analysis has been used to inductively enable discernment of different descriptions of ecosomatics, perceptions of nature, as well as different ways in which the practice might be used as a tool for societal change. Thus, the use of thematic analysis in this study plays a foundational role for unravelling concepts and theories which can be used to respond to the queries. The two methods of analysis have been used in tandem throughout reviewing the data, as thematic analysis has been used to distinguish themes and keywords *within* the narratives, as well as to distinguish themes on a larger, narrative-scale. Hence, no clear-cut distinction between a narrative and a thematic analysis will be made in the results, which is mainly divided by query and subthemes.

Transcriptions have been slightly altered to suit written texts. Certain filling words and reaffirming sounds have been left out to better enable understandable sentences. Certain sentences have also been modified in order for the grammar to suit the written word. Though verbatim is concidered a standard method of transcription when using narrative analysis, this was overridden by the perceived importance of placing intended meaning at the forefront, rather than distract the reader by faulty grammatic. Since there is also the element of **translation** of the Swedish interviews into English, verbatim was simply not deemed superior to an **edited transcription**, in order to make the result coherent and suitable for the framework of the essay. Cursive has been added to the quotes during the transcription process where participants themselves put emphasis on the word(s). Bold letters have been added in throughout the coding process to underline particularly eminent phrases relevant to the subthemes and the queries of the paper. Slash signs [/] have been placed in during translation of the Swedish interviews into English where two English terms carry equal descriptive value to match the Swedish term.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Ethical principles in social research are generally broken down into four categories: Whether there is **harm** to participants; whether there is a **lack of informed consent**; whether there is an **invasion of privacy**; and whether **deception** is involved (Bryman, 2016, pg. 125). In the

following section, how these transgressions have been avoided in the thesis will be accounted for.

In an introductory chat, the participants were informed of the purpose of the study, shallowly introduced to the framework of the essay, and informed of their right to end their participation at any point if they would so like. They were also asked what **pronouns** they prefer to be referred to within the text, as well as what kind of **acronym** they would like to stand in place of their name, or if they would simply prefer their names to be used in full. Since the topic of the paper is not particularly sensitive, and participants are not particularly exposed in their roles as informants to the study, no extensive reason has been identified that inhibits full names from being used if the participant so prefers as part of their professional identity. The participants were asked if they **consented** to the recording of the interview as well as the use of the material within the scope of this essay. The material has been transcribed, treated and presented with an intention to stay true to the conversational context.

The **positionality** of the researcher entails both ontological and epistemological assumptions that the researcher carries with them into the study, as well as their intersectional position in relation to the interviewee (Holmes, 2020). As is common praxis in semi-structured interview methodology, the interviews have mainly been approached as conversations, taking into account the social dynamic both inherent and arising within the space of the interview. Prior knowledge and world views are unavoidable elements in any conversation. Conversational norms contribute to an affirmational language where prior knowledge appears concordant between the interviewer and the interviewee; a factor which potentially affects the **reliability** of the study, entailing wheter a similarly designed study would generate the same results (Bryman, 2016, pg. 41). Prior knowledge and worldviews have, however, primarily been intended as conversational tools to deepen the interviews, and not to drive any particular stance or assert ontological or epistemological information as facts.

4.0 Results

4.1.0 Query 1: *How are practitioners currently defining ecosomatic practice?*

The following subchapter is sorted by distinguishable narrative subthemes. The participants are introduced, along with parts of the stories of their initial meeting with ecosomatics. This is followed by a suggested definition for ecosomatics, revealed through the data and

compared to previous research. Finally, additional comments by participants declaring the importance of maintaining fluidity within any definition of the ecosomatic practice are declared.

4.1.1 Ecosomatics as a merging of identities & practices

All participants reference a *merging of identities* and personal *practices* upon being asked what their relationship to ecosomatics is. They testify to the ecosomatic term having functioned as a way of encapsulating, giving direction to and enabling further development in practices that were already present in their lives.

When asked how she would define ecosomatics and what her relationship to the practice is, Satu Palokangas laughed gently. "That's a really big question", she said. Right away, when asked to define the practice, Satu speaks of her early experiences in urban activism and her childhood relationship to land. She also speaks of her relationship to somatics. Satu recalls questioning the somatic practice she was engaged in early on for being held within a non-organic framework, exposing a desire for a somatic practice which would envelope her experience of interconnectedness with the organic ecosystem.

> "I started studying somatics kind of in the mid 90's. So, something, something, almost 30 years ago. And very very quickly, specifically when I kind of engaged with the specific study of somatics, it was, I always felt a little lob-sided, that we entered these temperature-controlled, clean spaces. To study internal events. And I kind of had to leave some **part of my centring and my sense of self** outside the room. So, it was an immediate questioning of 'why would you?', of what we do."

Satu accounts that the need for an ecosomatic concept, for her, arose out of a perceived missing piece in the somatic practice – that of including the organic outer ecosystem in the process of somatically studying internal events. Satu Palokangas establishes that several practices have been woven together by many different practitioners – including herself – to shape ecosomatics as a field.

> "I feel like the whole ecosomatic path has been a little bit like, **weaving together** all of these disparate, separate – that are not really separate – branches. […] **The information, and the practices, had been there**. […] So, in a way I've been doing it since I have been doing anything. But it was in my master studies in 2005, when I was so desperate to find some way of **putting together my somatic practices, with the**

> **performance practices, with my activism, with my teaching**; that when the term came up in 2008 […] I just thought 'this is it. This is it! At least now I know how to call this thing. And... when things have name, they can get shape."

Much like Satu, Johan Nilsson also depicts a constructive feeling of relief in finding a term that combines the different aspects of his work.

> "When I came across the ecosomatic term, perhaps it was 10 years ago - I'm not sure anymore, couldn't put a starting point […] - but when I found it, it was as if **my two professions, or my two passions, came together**. I think I was struggling with being a farmer who taught dance, or being a dancer who was growing vegetables, and I felt I never could put it together."

Johan and Satu portray typical descriptions shared by all participants in this study – that of ecosomatics becoming an umbrella term merging and giving direction to different practices and identities.

4.1.2 Somatically approached study of Inner-outer ecological relationships

In an early part of her interview, Shelley Etkin reveals a subtheme prevalent throughout the interviews – that of ecosomatics being defined as a *method for tracking inner and outer ecological relationships*, based upon the *ethical and practical foundations of somatics* as a general field. Shelley describes:

> "I think a big part of it [ecosomatics] is, **through different practices, learning how to track the inner changes.** And the environmental changes, [together with] this question of **what is really inner and outer?** And seeing how that simultaneous attention and perception, how they dialogue with each other. How they are constantly informing each other."

Tuva Hildebrand has, in more recent years, started exploring and using the term ecosomatics. They (Tuva) do however highlight the sometimes-undistinguishable line in between their long-term somatic practice and their ecosomatic practice. In reviewing their relationship to the practice, they describe how ecosomatics is, to them, a way of approaching the relationship between the inner and the outer ecosystem, through the ethics of somatics.

> "We chose to call this project 'ecosomatics', to highlight the connection. That it is about the totality, and not just what happens in *my* body and how *I* feel. Because somatic practices are about **using the resources of the body in a more sustainable**

> **way**; it is about **relating to one's body in a non-violent fashion**; it is about taking a step back and **observing the body**. Perhaps allow it to go into a healing process by itself. Our focus, and what I am thinking ecosomatics is, is to instead of only focusing on the human body, the **focus lies on the interconnectedness between the human body and the nature body**. The interconnection between the ecosystem in my body and understanding that I am a part of a very large ecosystem."

Tuva and Karolin Kent have worked mutually on projects labelled ecosomatic. Here, Tuva is referencing their shared experience. The two practitioners were interviewed separately but attested to a similar definition of ecosomatics being a way to explore relationships between the inner and outer ecosystem. Karolin describes what she views as the ecosomatic practice:

> "[T]he whole project, Sensuous repair, was about investigating 'what is ecosomatics?', and I wouldn't yet say that we have an answer. From what I understand it is […] about **mending the bridge between the large ecosystem and our [inner] ecosystem**. Understanding that we are part of the big ecosystem. That we have an ecosystem within our bodies, but that we are part of the whole. The separation which happened, at some point, when humans thought we should get up to other things, it has become so strong and dominant. To **heal** that is very difficult."

Approaching healing of the mind-body divide has long been the intended work of somatics as a general field (Beauvais, 2012; Salamon, 2023). Karolins quote, centred around the keywords *healing* and *separation*, suits well with the definition brought forth by dancer and researcher C.A. Burns (2012), stating that ecosomatics is a way to mend the mind-body divide, i.e., the intention and approach of somatics, along with the body-planet divide, i.e., the study of inner-outer ecological relationships.

Through the reviewed quotes it becomes discerned that practitioners perceived a missing link in the somatic practice – that of not just studying relationships between *inner* bodily mechanisms, but also including the interaction with the *outer* ecosystem, together with the inquiry of to what degree they are actually separable.

Shelley puts a practical aspect of this subtheme into a most concise formulation.

> "[W]herever the practice happens, the **place for it being held and where it's taking place, is part of the experience**."

4.1.3 Fluid Definition – Ecosomatics as Staying with change

Johan initially states, upon being asked to define ecosomatics:

> "I don't know if I have a definition. I'm thinking it [ecosomatics] **is very fluid**."

This description of fluidity within the definition of ecosomatics is a detectable theme throughout the interviews. The dancers unanimously point to the relevance of any definition of ecosomatics being adaptable to the practice evolving. Satu describes this perceived importance:

> "I wish I had a quick, easy definition. But I also feel like it defines me, it defines my practice; it's not that I define it. […] **[I]t keeps changing, and my practice is constantly evolving,** as it has to! The practice of ecosomatics has to be something that **keeps me in relationship with my own changing body in process, but also the changing process of the earth**. So, maybe that's the kind of widest definition I'm happy to live with."

Tuva states a similar stance on the importance of ecosomatics staying attuned to changes. They emphasize the importance of *starting with the experience* whenever teaching, rather than assume any already existing theory.

> "I think there are several different pedagogics. I can imagine there are persons who teach ecosomatics today who will proceed from theory. […] I will not say that this is wrong, but I think that in the lineage that I am from, there is something very powerful to **starting with the experience**. Begin in practice, and then allow persons to put words to it."

In the conversation with Shelley, this aspect of a fluid definition was discussed. To which Shelley responded:

> "I hope it **stays so fluid**. I think that that actually would be a real gift, to not lock it down. But to really allow it to evolve, as everything is evolving and changing. It is about **being with change**, being with these bigger planetary transformations that we don't know how to hold all at once, and which are happening in ways which we cannot predict and cannot control. Kind of, **being with that, as well as in the body**. As it is all the same."

Even though there is appeared consensus among the participants that any definition of ecosomatics should be attuned to the fluidity of movement practice itself, Satu still points to the importance of establishing definitions.

> "At the same time, the contradiction is that **we *need* to try to define it**. To some extent, to give it a container that can change. When I begin to teach, I need to define it, **though my experience**. So that I can invite others to that exploration. [..] if it's left too fluid, then it can be anything. And I've seen it, the definitions are so wide, that I don't always recognize it as the way I have found the practice. So, I think it's also **important that we take the time to define it, and then let go**. Let's see what the next shape of it is."

4.1.4 Summary table

	Karolin	Johan	Satu	Tuva	Shelley
Ecosomatics as merging of practices and identities, both within and outside the somatic field	x	x	x	x	x
Ecosomatics as method for studying inner-outer ecological relationships	x	x	x	x	x
Ecosomatics as based upon somatic practices and/or ethics	x	x	x	x	x
Ecosomatics as a fluid concept	x	x	x	x	x

4.2.0 Query 2: *Have ecosomatic practitioners experienced long-lasting changes in their perceptions of nature through ecosomatics, and if so, what are these?*

The following subchapter proceeds from Non-dualism, Relationality and Deep ecology as framework for analysing material relating to query 2. Initially, detailed experiences of non-dual states of awareness are depicted, followed by examined consequences of these on perceptions of nature. This is followed by a further introduction to relationality as it emanates from the data, and finally narratives which carry close coherence to the framework of deep ecology are revealed.

4.2.1 Being nature: Non-dual perceptions

Karolin was asked if she had experiences to share regarding students that have displayed alterations in their perceptions of themselves in relation to nature through the ecosomatic practice.

> "Yes. There are so many. […] One that occurred, that I can start with. It was a person who was here for the Sensuous repair workshop […] who said, after we had performed a sensory exercise in nature: 'How could I take down a tree after this? **I *am* that tree**!'"

This sense of *being nature* was a prominent theme discerned from the interviewed practitioners upon describing how the practice has influenced their perception of nature.

Tuva describes their (Tuvas) initial relationship to ecosomatics as being that of distinguishing what elements of the somatic practice reveals an experience of *non-separation* with the larger ecosystem, and further developing techniques based on these elements. In this, it becomes clear that enabling an experience of nature which is based on interconnectedness, sprung out of a state resembling that of *non-dual awareness*, is partly the essence of their ecosomatic practice. Tuvas tells the story of how they themselves shifted into this perception of *being nature* through a series of experiences which they describe as a perceptual shift in reality.

> "What happened to me was that I, before I started practicing this [skinner releasing technique; a somatic practice] I was very interested in western philosophy, I was also very interested in antiracism and feminism. But I did not have any personal interest in being particularly engaged in environmental activism. [...] I was living in New York, in cities, and the more I practiced Skinner releasing technique, as well as Eva's [Eva Karczag, a teacher] practices, **I started coming into a state** where I felt, '**Hold up, I *am* nature!**'. And I did not understand it than, but I believe in hindsight, that the [nature] metaphors enabled this. […] So, my entrance [into ecosomatics] was not about outspokenly practicing ecosomatics, but that these practices, which today might just be called somatic practice, thought me how I am connected to the larger ecosystem. It teaches me how I am sprung from nature, and it teaches me in an ethical way that my surrounding is constantly shaping me, and I am shaping it. What I eat will affect how my body feels. The health state of what I am eating before I eat it will affect how my body develops. **I cannot be separated from my environment**; I cannot feel good if my environment does not feel good. […] So, I started reflecting upon, if one could localise and understand **what specific parts of the somatic practice that give me these experiences.**"

Tuva describes the methodology of entering this state as the use of a very specific 'somatic language' by a teacher or guide, developed to reveal a '*extremely heightened state of being in the Now*' based on pure sensory experience without cognitive conceptualising. Tuva describes that this guidance places them in a state where language itself dissolves.

> "It is an experience of not being able to name my surrounding by the pre-determined, codified language - the phonetic word-based language. I experience it is as if **there is a distance between me and my environment, which disappears**. And that I am in *direct communication* with my surroundings. […] When I then return to 'reality' again, the linguistic reality, […] what I experience, is that I can **reshape my relationship towards language**. […] then I experience that **it becomes an eco-centric language**. […] One thing, which happens when I am in this experience, is that I feel ***complete***. […] And I discover that there is a certain type of longing, and a certain type of suffering, which comes from *not* being in this consciousness, this feeling of interconnectedness."

As seen, Tuva themself describe this experience as a state of interconnectedness, one of direct experience of their surroundings without a cognitive layer of conceptualization, and as an experience of a non-distance between the self and the surroundings. Tuva describes that this state leaves a lingering awareness that they cannot be separated from their environment – that they form a whole – and they describe that their relationship towards language shifts into one which places nature as a whole entity at the centre, whereby human is but one part of the whole. When applying the definition used by Loy (1997), Tuvas experiences might be viewed as non-dual states of awareness. They go on to describe how this state has influenced their perception of nature as a self-same entity.

> "Having an embodied experience that I am shaped and constantly affected by what is around me, makes me realize that if I enact violence on what it outside of me, it affects me. Because we are connected. If I perform actions that are violent towards nature, then that will also harm me, and vice versa. **It changes my awareness**. It makes me much more aware of, what kind of violence is done towards nature? How does that come back to me? On a macrolevel, historically, and an immediate... Then, I believe *everything* changes. **My whole perception** […] when **nature becomes its own body, which as much worth/value as a human**, and I understand how connected I am to it. This again, is connected to understanding that **I *am* nature**. There is no separation, and so I know that I am water. I am earth. This might sound religious, but materially speaking it is true."

Tuvas describes how embodied experiences from a state resembling that of non-dual awareness makes her more acutely aware of the struggle which all nature faces. They also depict these changes as drastic and long-lasting. Satu, as well, shares a deeply personal story of, through her ecosomatic practice, stepping into a perception of being an ecological body in climate change, characterized by non-duality.

> "[I]t [ecosomatics] has influenced my relationship with nature, in a way that **I realize that: I am not separate**. I am as much involved and experiencing the climate change, and especially the warming, the heat aspect of it that we experience more in the northern hemisphere. [...] I spoke with someone just recently about this. That it took me to a really dark place. Where I had to accept the terror and pain that this is bringing to us. And sort of stepping into myself and saying, '**This is it. This is my practice'**. And 'stop looking for an escape, in anything'. Whatever it is. Wherever we escape. So... yeah. And I think that that 'dark night of the soul' was really around the time when I sort of started to engage with **what the practice is**. So, how it has influenced my relationship with nature is that I've had to take all the blinders of that say 'I am somewhat separate'. **I am not separate in anyway**. And I can't... You know, it's hard to have children, and recognize that this is the environment where we are raising them. And what does that mean? What does it mean as a teacher?"

Satu testifies to ecosomatics having played an important role in evoking a permanence of said perception of non-separateness between phenomena in existence. She does, however, make clear that ecosomatics is one of several influences in establishing this long-lasting perceptual change. When asked about how the practice has developed her perceptions of nature, Satu answers:

> Satu: "As we practice it's harder to remember how we perceived when things have moved on so much. But I'm sure, I'm certain, that at some point the kind of dualism was more how I perceived the world. […] it has been landing over the years, that what felt initially like an exciting idea that rang true, that felt like 'this; I recognise this.' I think **the recognition has moved into self** – into my cells. That there is a... yeah. That I don't have to look for it. It's not something, like an outside thought, but **it has become an internal experience**."
>
> Interviewer: "A more non-dualistic perception?"
>
> Satu: "Exactly. Exactly. And **it's come over time, and it's come through the practice**, and it's come through the life becoming, and the world becoming what it is.

> So, I... Yeah. I mean it's influenced by everything, and certainly it's not just the ecosomatic practice. It's life and living through the experiences that we live through. [...] But I also had to experience this immense terror of **extinction of self**."

Though Tuva and Satu share similar experiences through their ecosomatic practice, and though they both depict similar perceptions of nature either deepened or evoked by their ecosomatic practice, their ontological assumptions differ greatly. Both speak to non-separation as a perceived *material* reality, however Satu also speaks of non-human beings' *ability to perceive*, hence ascribing a basic attribution of consciousness to non-human ecosystem bodies. She also speaks of *perception* as a foundation of reality, something which carries a clear resemblance to an ontological stance of *metaphysical idealism*:

> "Another thing that I feel is so essential, is recognizing that my perception is just one of trillions and trillions. Kind of recognizing that **the reality**, whatever that is and however we define that, **actually is... It's a perception**. But then if there are more of us, looking at it from different perspectives, then maybe more of the reality can become present. […] **everybody's perceptions are required in it, including the plants and the rocks and the minerals**."

Tuvas description of their experiences evoked by the ecosomatic practice includes feeling a sense of *aliveness* in non-human matter. They do not, however, attribute this sense of aliveness to an animate essence, but rather they assert a *metaphysical physicalist* stance in explaining their perception of reality:

> "What I experience is that **matter has its own life**. I do not experience that it has emotions, I perhaps don't experience that it can talk, but maybe I experience that it can move. […] I become aware that I am only seeing the form, but that there is also a *content*. And **the content of this form is in movement**. It is molecules and electricity in movement. This is even clearer when in a surrounding where things are actually living. Like trees, nature, animals."

Tuvas description of matter as constant movement resembles experiences brought forth by Laidlaw and Beer (2018) in their practice-based ecosomatic research. Furthermore, Both Satu and Tuva use the word *agency* upon defining their experience of non-human matter. They were both asked to define this term closer in order to discern what assumptions about nature the term carries with it for them. Satu broadly defined agency as '*An ability to respond* appropriately *in changing circumstances*'. When Tuva was asked if their (Tuvas) use of the

term ascribed a certain element of consciousness or animism to non-human matter, they replied:

> "I don't think that I would use those terms. This is why I use the word agency. It is because I think that every time one uses the words 'animated', or that there is a 'consciousness', everything becomes slightly vague. […] I think I am pretty physicalistic. **I do not know if there is anything beyond our matter**. I do not have the answers; I can think that, perhaps everything is simply electricity. Sometimes I think that when my molecules have separated, then there is no I. Then there is no soul. All energy has simply disintegrated and turned into soil. Spread out amongst other things."

Herin, we see that the narratives brought forth by Satu and Tuva, both coloured by an experience of non-duality, or non-separateness between phenomena in existence, rest upon differing ontological and epistemological descriptions of reality. That ecosomatics is described to evoke nearly identical experiences of non-separation between ecosystem bodies, but that these need not rest upon identical assumptions of reality, is an interesting find when revising a common description of metaphysical idealism as inherent to non-dualism.

Finally, Tuva was asked if they believe that the strong, trance-like experiences they portrayed were necessary to evoke this described sense of interconnectedness, to which they responded:

> "I experience that it [the sense of interconnectedness] comes from **taking time to be with your senses**. I don't think it requires a transcendental state. I think there is a shift in perception by just embarking on experiencing the surroundings with [the senses]."

4.2.2 Relationality: Introduction

> Karolin: "When we had the workshop in Höör, then she [Tuva] performed a hands-on lung exercise in the forest. Then there was someone who said that she experienced a very clear **relationship between the lungs and the tree.** That the oxygen is **interchanged** between her and the trees, all the time. And that the expansion of the lungs... It was as if the **trees became the lungs**. […] This type of experience can happen; I have experienced it as well. I can pay testimony to that."

Karolins statement once again points to another find within the research, that of ecosomatic practice appearing to *deepen* or *evoke* changes in perceptions of nature towards a *perceived relationality* within the interviewed practitioners. Relationality, as defined by Tynan (2021), entails the perceptual experience that 'all things exist in relatedness'. As declared in chapter 2.0, relationality is described as a sustained and strengthened through practices which reveal this experience as lived truth (Tynan, 2021). This perception differs from non-duality in that it emphasizes the *relationship* between entities, even more than their sameness. Throughout the interviews, these two perceptions appear to work in tandem within the narratives of the participants and carry many similarities. As seen in the quote above, an ecosomatic experience is here described as a recognition of being in relationship to a tree, followed by an experience of sameness – a direct experience of cellular respiration. The following sections are intended to display different elements or subthemes describing this phenomenon of *relationality* as deepened or evoked by ecosomatics.

4.2.3 Relationality: Nature as kin/ally

Shelley's narrative of nature revolves around keywords that expose a relational perception of nature, such as *communication, resonance* and of describing non-human entities as *allies*. Shelley groups together her experiences of working with the living world and does not encapsule her experience to be derived solely from ecosomatic practice. Shelley speaks largely of working with plant-medicine and gardening when describing this relationality, and she is asked how ecosomatics specifically has potentially deepened this perception.

> "It's actually such a good question. I feel like my body and my modes of perceiving have been so informed by dance and somatics as a background, that it [communication] happens before I even realize it's happening. I grew up with my older brother as a musician, so every sound that happened he would pay attention to in a very specific way. Like, the car, or the object, or whatever sound. I feel like this. I think back to that because it is such a clear example that when you are with music, everything becomes music. […] In a way **I feel like that 'attunement' is so built in**."

Here Shelley attests to somatics as a whole having fundamentally 'built in' and ability to tune into a sense of communication and relationality with the organic ecosystem. Shelley continuously references the individuality of different non-human entities and their abilities for communication and intelligence, something which could be viewed as an animate

perception of nature in addition to the relational element. Given that being in relationship, to some extent, entails there being a conscious reciprocity between the elements in relationship, an animate experience of nature seems near in reach to withholding a perception of nature characterized by relationality. Describing nature as kin/ally in itself entails a kind of relational agency and consciousness to the non-human world, and there is a resemblance in the narrative of several participants.

Karolin, much like Shelley, exhibits a perception of nature as kin/ally which has been maintained from a young age. She was asked if her perception of nature – specified as her *experience* of what nature *is* and who she is in relationship to it – has changed throughout time and ecosomatic practice. She answered:

> "I don't know if it has changed. Or if **I have only deepened it**. I don't think I ever would've thought or said I was not part of this [nature]. That is what has been so strong for me, always. […] There has [always] been something to being **friends with nature**. Then I think I have only defined it, understood it more and more […] So I wonder if my perception on this has changed, or if I've simply found ways of defining it, deepening it, living with it."

Satu, as well, spontaneously speaks of her relationship to nature from a young age already upon being asked the initial question of defining her relationship to ecosomatics, and a perception of nature characterised by nature as kin/ally becomes prevalent.

> "Forest has always been a meaningful place of resourcing, and kind of finding myself. And, since I was a child. So, I think **that connection is kind of the strongest kin that I have**. The strongest family that I've experienced."

Hence, a perception of nature based in relationality can be seen since long before the ecosomatic practice was formally introduced into Karolin's and Satu's lives. They both do, however, tell stories of being in nature as a child upon being asked what their *relationship to ecosomatics* is. This indicates a parallel drawn by the dancers between their present day ecosomatic practice and their childhood experience of nature as kin/ally.

4.2.4 Relationality: More-than-human empathy, reciprocity & mutuality

Johan speaks of an essential part of his practice as 'schooling the heart as a perceptual organ' and describes this practice as a way of *cultivating empathy*. He is first asked if he would

define this as an ecosomatic practice, to which he answers *yes*, after which he is asked what consequences and residues this practice has left upon his perceptions of nature.

> "If I open up for contact, contact with the human and the non-human, then... if I proceed from the heart... then it is hard to not be in the **desire to *take care of*.** I'm thinking that, care and caring comes... when we are in our heart-centre somehow, as humans. And I mean the most obvious is when we fall in love with someone. [...] But, schooling the heart as a perceptual organ means that **I am in this force more often, and with multiple objects**. Not that it is about an infatuation, or sexual desire, but rather about so much other attraction, meaning [...] other things calling for my attention. Also, **completely different values of care and nurturing**, […] seem to come out of being in one's heart centre. The result is that there is so much in my immediate proximity to take care of, always. [...] So I gladly make myself busy there, and not move further away. So, it [being in heart centre] has a consequence for the landscape – being that I want to take care of it – and for me, that I do not withdrawal from it. […] So that is where I build up my own communication and contact and produce/project this care. **Then the landscape responds back to me, and it goes on like that**."

Johan emphasizes the reciprocity between the landscape and the individual human being. The element of reciprocity is prevalent within Shelley's narrative as well, and she draws a link between a perceptual being's awareness of phenomena and enhanced life vitality in these phenomena.

> "I do believe that **life vitality, life vibrancy, is enhanced by giving it attention**. […] The **reciprocity** that happens between people and place, between people and everything else in the living world, that is what makes these places thrive."

Shelley describes that the ecosomatic practice makes space to be guided by the ecosystem in such reciprocity. Tuva, as well, signifies the prevalence of an experience of *mutuality* between ecosystem bodies upon being in ecosomatic practice. The following segment will provide an explanatory model founded upon the theoretical framework of *deep ecology* on how this perceptual shift takes place in the ecosomatic practice.

4.2.5 Moving towards Deep ecology: Dissolvement of self/ego

Johan, much like several other participants, reveals a narrative in which several practices and life-experiences have influenced his perceptions of nature. Initially, when relating to his perceptions of nature, Johan states:

> "For sure it [ecosomatics] has developed my view of nature, and I've dug deeper: But if it is the ecosomatic practice, my farming, or me writing articles on perceptions of nature; **I don't think you can say that one weighs heavier** than the other."

These perceptions, as depicted by Johan, involve viewing nature as its own organism with its own *consciousness*, as well as ascribing the landscape an *inherent value in of itself,* regardless of human presence in it. These perceptions of nature are in line with those suggested by deep ecology, and his story moves through the elements described by Arne Naess: That of *recognizing the ecological self* in order to recognize and embody an ethic based in *biocentric egalitarianism*, in which equality is recognized among all natural entities. When asked to specify upon the effect of ecosomatics on his perceptions of nature, Johan describes what Naess might classify as a journey of recognizing the ecological self as one which is constantly in relationship to other natural entities.

> "I feel that I am working largely on dissolving my ego. [...] The more I engage in ecosomatic practice, which can look in several different ways, the more I notice that status within working life becomes completely uninteresting: Having an identity as if 'this is me' professionally; that I would strive for salary, success, or a certain position: It has become totally irrelevant. So, it has been a dissolvement of many such sides in me as a person. Rather being in '**how can I be in contact with other living and non-living beings?**' How I can be in contact with my surroundings, is much more important than 'Johan' having an identity. […] Then we also arrive at that **care and nurturing**, that this somehow is the essence of contact. Is what I think. […] So, I can often feel that I care more about nature than humans. Human suffering, it touches me, but nature suffering, it touches me even more. Because it has a harder time setting [boundaries]. For good and for bad, it is a shame that I down-value the human. But, right now, I think that I am exploring another side of it."

Johan, much like Tuva, states that he uses symbolic language and nature metaphors in his teaching. In Tuvas narrative, a similar experience of ego dissolvement can be traced when they speak of experiences revealed through the guidance of what they call the 'somatic language':

> "It is about **using a language that enables an experience of the ego dissolving**. […] I can explain by explaining the contrast. [...] I, who also has an ego, which wants things satisfied within me, am scanning my environment through the lens that things outside of me should satisfy my needs. And then, I think that this table has a certain function, a very specific function. […] But in this other state, which I described as us having the same agency, then **I do not want more from this table then it wants from me**. Rather, we are meeting on a mutual plane. Where I am consciously attuned to that this table is touching me as much as I am touching it. My visual interpretation of this table's function disappears. So, I can relate to this table in a completely different way. **We are in mutual relationship**, where I am exploring. So, there is something about the predetermined [conceptions]... […] In that state, where there was no language, it was as if **everything had equal worth/value**. It was not more obvious that I should be the one doing something to this table, it equally well could be doing something to me."

Using the lens of deep ecology helps us track a trajectory within the narratives of the ecosomatic practitioners. Tuvas and Johans descriptions reveal how a more eco-centric – as opposed to human-centred – way of relating to the more-than-human is evoked through what Naess might describe as *recognition of the ecological self*, a concept deeply intwined with that of relationality. Naess claims that such a recognition will naturally abide to an environmental ethic which recognizes the more-than-human as of equal value/worth to the human – something which concurs with the stories portrayed by Johan and Tuva.

As seen in previous research (section 2.3), Burns (2012) has stated that ecosomatic practice can 'provide a context within which humans can somatically perceive the intersubjective field through [...] what might be called an earth-bound transpersonal awareness: trans- in being beyond the skin contained body ego, yet earth-bound in being rooted in present moment sensual intimacy.'. Through the concepts and theories used herein, the 'intersubjective field' can be viewed as a perceptual experience of relationality, whereas 'earth-bound transpersonal awareness' can be viewed as synonomous to descriptions of recognition of the ecological self. Hence, participants experiences herein continue to echo those by ecosomatic researchers pointing to ontologies of relationality.

As seen in section 4.2.1, Satu as well accounts for a similar timeline, through *dissolvement of self* and recognition of *non-duality* between ecosystem bodies and phenomena such as climate change. Satu describes this process as a deeply transformational time in her life and relates it

immediately to her ecosomatic practice through the statement of '*This is it. This is my practice.'*.

4.2.6 Summary table

	Karolin	Johan	Satu	Tuva	Shelley
Descriptions of or allusions to *non-dual states of awareness* through somatic practice	x	x	x	x	
Descriptions of embodied realizations of *relationality* through ecosomatic practice	x	x	x	x	x
Referencing having *major, quick shifts* in perceptions of nature/reality through ecosomatic practice				x	
Referencing ecosomatics as *deepening* and expanding *already present* perceptions of nature	x	x	x		x
Descriptions of *dissolvement of self/ego*, similar to deep ecology trajectory of *recognizing the ecological self*		x	x	x	
Claiming or alluding to *equal/inherent value in all nature*: Indicating a *biocentric egalitarianism*	x	x	x	x	x

4.3.0 Query 3: *Do practitioners perceive their ecosomatic work as a tool for positive societal change, and if so, how?*

The following section aims to answer query 3 in the paper. The interviewees unanimous answer of *yes* to the first part of this question will be reviewed in tandem with the aspects of *how*. Firstly, practitioners describing ecosomatics as a method for activism will be briefly accounted for. Second, the trajectory of deep ecology will be followed into intended behavioural changes. Finally, a concept of *attention activism* will unfold through the data.

4.3.1 Introduction: Change at the front & centre

Typically, change is, in the interviews, described as being at '*the front and centre*' of the ecosomatic work. Several participants use the word *activism* in relating to their practice before any question relating to query 3 was asked by the interviewer. Tuva, Satu and Karolin made clear that this matter is a core aspect of their work with ecosomatics. One of the first things which Satu points out, upon being asked about using ecosomatics as a tool for driving societal change, is that societal change cannot be separated or distinguished from change in general.

> "[**C]hange is the front and centre of this work**. For me. And societal change is part of all the other change. It's not just part of the change, an aspect of change. I don't specifically call it societal change, but I feel that **that's where it ripples to**, or it has to ripple to."

4.3.2 Changing values and ways of being: Following the trajectory of Deep ecology

Though initially expressing a concern of not being able to convey the perceived magnitude of ecosomatics as a tool for societal change ('*I could take three hours to answer that question*'), Tuva went on to talk about the topic.

> "What comes to me when you ask that question is that it **changes what I value**. And I see that it does so to others as well. Hence, it can **create change in how people live their lives**. […] I think if more people would become conscious, on a more embodied plane, of how much violence we act out and have been conditioned to receive, and then themselves want to change this... I'm thinking there is a lot to this being a **non-violent practice**. If I start to act non-violent towards myself and my surroundings, then we all might change what meat we buy, what clothes we purchase. **Our values would be somewhere completely different**."

This depiction of ecosomatic experience changing behavioural priorities was shared by several participants. As Johan speaks about schooling the heart as a perceptual organ, he emphasizes the potential of this method to change the choices and priorities we make.

> "It makes it less easy to be rational and productive. Because there are so many wonderful side tracks. It is not as interesting to put up a goal, and see it through in a productive way, because **so much else/more holds equal worth/value**. Which, I'm thinking makes me – or is my hope – it **makes me consume less resources**. I am so

> taken away by experiencing and *being with* nature, that I don't have time to do much dumb/harmful things."

Tuva and Johans storylines continue to follow a trajectory which again can be viewed through the lens of deep ecology: That of recognizing a type of biocentric egalitarianism, where equal worth is held between the human and the more-than-human, and moving this into an environmental ethic which disowns or stops engaging in acts of violence against nature. They express an intention for this recognition to change their own personal choices as consumers, and they both go on to portray intention for this perception to influence the students they teach.

4.3.3 Activism of non-doing

In discussing his ecosomatic practice in the section above, Johan mentions reduction in conventional productivity as a desirable endeavour for the benefit of the possibility of staying present in contact with the more-than-human. This act, of decreasing conventional productivity in favour of creating more sustainable circumstances and being in mutual contact with the more-than-human world, is depicted by other participants as well. Tuva states:

> "One thing which the practice is largely about, but which one cannot directly connect to ecology, is that we are trying to embody **non-doing**. To **not aim to gain something**. […] What I have seen this practice to for others, and what it has also done for me, is to **reevaluate what is important** to feel good and live in this world. Many of these realizations around what a body needs to feel good are in **huge contrast to what a capitalist and consumerist society feeds us with**. […] There are so many things which we consume, there are so many values and views that we are fed which we haven't chosen ourselves. For me, what this practice does, is it all the time takes me back to, 'what is it my body actually needs?'. And that is very little! What my body needs, it is not buying more products, it is not achievement-based success. It is not a bunch of expensive items. […] What do I realize I need when I'm in practice? To **feel connected to one's surroundings, to other people; to live close to nature; to live in a healthy environment**. To be in circumstances where there is much more mutuality in give and take."

Karolin makes a nearly identical claim, after declaring ecosomatics an activistic practice:

> "Oh god, there is so much to that question. It [ecosomatics] proposes a completely **different way of living then that suggested by our society**. And that is pretty radical,

> I believe, to **propose that we stop**. Propose that we listen, and move from that, rather than from doing and producing."

The two participants have embarked on mutual ecosomatic work, and therefore it is not suprising that they would use a similar vocabulary on the matter of activism of non-doing. Ecosomatics being described as a *radical alternative* to present societal norms - through the act of *stopping and listening* – is, however, shared by all participants. Shelley describes:

> "Learning to hone, tune, **pay attention** [...] is very important. The shift from nature as everything we know that basically the world has done, like continue to extract and use and abuse... Insert, everything, we already know. **This shift is already there in the way of relating**."

Holding this result up against the concept of *the attention economy*, where human attention is treated as a marked commodity constantly being extracted from the individual, may provide a descriptory framework of the changes entailed by the participants. The following section will dive further into this.

4.3.4 Attention as power – Recognizing agency

> Tuva: "Language has power. We have to recognize that **the language we use has incredible power over our attention**. The word **attention** is very important in this. Also, very political. Today we are living in a society which is constantly trying to pull your attention; into the screen, into money, into these different worlds. Here [in the use of somatic language], it is about guiding your attention, so that thinking is really only about listening to what you are experiencing in the Now."

An academic definition of *attention activism* has not been found in the research for this work. In public culture, a definition can be discerned resembling that of *reclaiming attention and sharpening an ability to redirect attention through mindfulness practices within an economy which treats human attention as a market commodity* (Vidyarthi, 2016). In light of this, Tuvas description of the 'somatic language' reveals an awareness of the functioning of the attention economy, and a desire to cultivate the somatic language in a sense that redirects persons attention into sensory experience in the present moment. Exploring the concept of attention activism, might reveal nuance to the ecosomatic practice as a method for manifesting societal change.

Satu speaks about attention as a *tool to recognize agency*. She brings a quote to the interview:

> "'The **quality of attention is radical and subverting** because it involves noticing the things you don't see if you are looking at the world through the categories you have been given.' […] he talked about the ***duty* of perception**. […] To some extent it is like reconfiguring an old knowledge in these times. Where it is kind of essential. So, it really that **quality of attention**. [...] It's **from perception arises possibility for action**. For responsibility. By acting I mean by speaking, by moving, by doing something. So, it's really that – yes, I perceive the terror. I also feel like, I need to be able to find a way to **bring that into an action**. So that we don't get drawn into that difficulty of... we don't get sort of... that our **agency** isn't squeezed out by how terrifying future looks like. And I'm really curious on how to keep that sensing, perceiving, to acting, moving."

Satu speaks about redirecting attention and expanding perception as a means of cultivating agency in a changing world. Satu describes *agency* as a cellular function, inherent to all organic beings, and as 'the ability to respond appropriately to circumstances.'. Through conscious recognition of agency, Satu entails that capacities to act are evoked. In this, she touches upon a core aspect of somatics as it is being used as a psychological treatment tool for PTSD among other symptoms of trauma, which is that of stepping out of a 'freeze' reaction upon a trauma being triggered (Salamon, 2023; Van der Kolk, 2014). Herein, Satu entails that the ecosomatic practice of recognizing agency as a cellular function is a means of stepping out of a global 'fight-flight or freeze*'* reaction as individuals respond to chocking prospects of a changing environment. Satu teaches ecosomatics at the Theather Academy of Helsinki, and mentions that many of the questions that are being brought into the practice by her young students are questions on how to cope with a future facing e.g. climate change. Satu speaks of the non-dual perceptions evoked by ecosomatic practice as a 'call to action'.

> "I often say that, once we begin to see something, **once we begin to perceive the world as non-separate, it is also a responsibility**. Because we have to act on that perception. We can't just say, oh yeah, it's all non-separate, and then I keep behaving like [we] did. […] We have to keep acting as the world is non-separate. Me, not separate from the world. So, **the perception is a call to action**. The **agency is already interwoven in the perception**. So, that's why it's radical. And subversive. Because it turns around those categories."

Turning to the herein unfolding concept of *attention activism*, Satu's statement adds an element of *action* and *recognition of agency* to consciously redirecting or expanding perception. From viewing oneself as a separate entity from the rest of the world, to being an interwoven participant with a responsibility to act upon non-dual perceptions. This might seem paradoxical in the light of ecosomatics as a tool to embody non-doing, as reviewed in the prior segment. A statement by Karolin might interweave the two aspects:

> "Through listening to yourself, you are able to listen to your surroundings. It is impossible to listen to your surroundings if you are not first listening to yourself. Firstly, respecting yourself, to then be able to respect others. […] It [somatics] […] is about living sustainably, about being in a *listening* – in a *being*, not a doing. **Through being in that, moving forwards**, and perhaps achieve more than you would if you were in a doing."

4.3.5 Ripple effects

When asked how they use their work as a tool for societal change, all participants develop a narrative focused on the ripple effects of teaching ecosomatics to others. Johan, upon first being asked if he uses the practice as a means to manifest change towards a perceived grater good, responds:

> "Yes. […] Because I teach both gardening and dancing and create workshops with the theme ecosomatics. [I have] seen how people change. […] A student [may] have a really strong experience from a 10–15-minute exercise. Which really is almost nothing. Yet it is huge. Because they... No one has ever asked them to be in that state. In an internal room, or a sensory room... To offer them this, it makes them have a strong experience and if they remember it, they will somehow - I hope – use it. It will come back, or they will feel at home there […], **bring it into their professional life, their every-day life, their love life and what not**. So, it is some kind of **slow-paced activism**. It is not an activism that loudly tells someone else to change themselves, rather it is some kind of promise of slowness. That, **if you give me your attention** – especially in a class-setting, where it is understood that if I am your teacher, you have permitted me to somehow work with your attention – then **I can give you an experience which changes you**."

Karolin, upon being asked if she uses the practice as a tool to drive societal change, also carries a narrative centred around the key word ripple effects.

> "There is something to, through changing yourself, creating **ripple effects**, which I really believe in. Then, it is important that it does not just stay in an enclosed bubble. So, my way of working with this is to **try to reach out wider**. [...] The questions that arise are incredible from almost every single person who participates. **No matter prior experience, there is always some kind of 'Aha!'- experience**, or rather powerful experiences. A lot of existential questions show up. *Incredibly* often people say, 'Politicians should be doing this! What if all the politicians in the world would do this, at the same time! We would have a completely different world!'. […] I truly believe that one of the large **problems today is the separation**. That we don't see that we are a part. So, we make a hierarchy of humanity in relation to animals and nature, where we don't even see ourselves as an animal anymore. This is the large problem in how we are prioritizing and thinking that this climate change is not going to affect us in the end. So, I am convinced, but then of course, how do we get them to practice? That is where I want to believe **small streams make a great river; in ripple effects.** It is cool to see it grow. More people do this than you'd think. Ecosomatics is growing from many different areas. Everything from yoga, different sensory practices, consciousness practices, where people are interested. I think then that one can find a way to... to reach more people simply."

Shelley, like Johan and Karolin, asks herself, 'what is the minimum shift necessary to have a big ripple effect?'. When asked how she views the potential of ecosomatics to manifest societal change, she answers:

> "I think it's a question of scale. Because I feel it has a **ripple effect closest to the ground** […] it changes our experience, we have a different experience of what is possible. And I hope and want to believe – this is one of the core things I've held onto from feminism – that if you have a **lived experience**, it gives you a **sense of what is possible**. And until then, it's an idea or a philosophy, an ideology or a dream. But, if you have felt it in your body, and if you have the space to affirm that **experience as knowledge**, then it helps you to **create a different reality** where that can continue to have space. [...] So, I think it's closest to that – from the ground to the immediate direct experience – and then if I imagine those bodies who have been informed by that, moving around and interacting with other people, systems and societies; I do believe there is an echo, or ripple, that their ***way of being*** **changes**. And maybe that changes the next situation that they are in."

As seen, Satu's narrative when speaking of changes goes into the importance of creating an experience within the practitioner of non-separation between things and entites in existence –

same as intentions portrayed by Tuva. When turning to potential societal benefits and ripple effects of her work, Satu points out that she doesn't necessarily get to know what these are. Which she also describes as a part of the work itself.

> "It's almost like awakening a resonance within somebody. And [in] that, my work is done to some extent. Because **that person will take it on, and teach somebody else**, or take it into a question that they are working with. [...] **That's all I can do, with anyone**. Because I can't make them be agents in their own lives, they have to do that. And it's very much a therapeutic principle. [...] I find that **the somatic work, is a service**. It has to be. It has to be something we do out of the necessity of doing it. And, of course, then we can go into talking about that there is also the need to make money and live in this world and all that, that's somewhat a separate discussion, because I still think that all the work I do is to serve the living world. And it's really all I can do, and by that, I mean ***it's all.*** **I bring my whole self to it**. So, it's really essential that **we perceive the work as a service**. For me, that keeps me... The ego stays more at ease."

4.3.6 Summary table

	Karolin	Johan	Satu	Tuva	Shelley
Use of word *activism* upon relating to their ecosomatic practice	x	x	x	x	
Depicts eco-centric *changes in values* and *behaviour* evoked or supported by ecosomatics	x	x	x	x	x
Describes *stopping and listening, expanding perception* or *consciously relating* through ecosomatic practice as *radical alternative* to present societal norms	x	x	x	x	x
Describes use of ecosomatics to *cultivate or reclaim attention*		x	x	x	x
Signifies importance of *ripple effects* in describing their use of ecosomatics as a tool for societal change	x	x	x	x	x

5.0 Conclusions & Discussion

The following section is sorted by query, aiming to *summarize* the results and provide *conclusions* to the research questions. Conclusions are highlighted through the theoretical framework – i.e., the abductive approaches – in tandem with implications of the research for the theoretical framework becoming revealed. This is followed by final notes and additional suggestions for further research.

5.1 Query 1

How are practitioners currently defining ecosomatic practice?

When asked to define their relationship to ecosomatics and their definitions of the practice, participants generally reference a *merging of practices and identities* connected to their ecosomatic practice. Practitioners emphasize the importance of *maintaining a fluidity within the definition,* as an essential part of the practice is described as *staying with change.* At the same time, several practitioners describe that revealing a tangible definition is an endeavour in their own practice.

Generally, practitioners pinpoint the importance of *lived experience* in defining ecosomatics to others. They review several experiences in their lives, often centred around activism and perceptions of nature based in relationality and non-separateness from the organic world, which created a need for their somatic practice to recognize the outer ecosystem as part of their inner experience. This process is often described as the preface to an unravelling of the concept of ecosomatics. A distinguishable definition for ecosomatics arising through the interviews reads as: *Ecosomatics is a collection of embodiment methods for studying inner-outer ecological relationships based upon the ethical and practical foundations of somatics as a general field*.

This definition is suitably added to pre-existing definitions, as the one brought forth by Burns (2012), stating that ecosomatics encapsules the work of somatics – mending the mind-body divide – as well as tending to the body-earth/human-nature divide. Herin, this definition has been expanded upon and an element of fluidity has been added. In light of Drury's (2022) critique of somatics as a general field contributing to Eurocentric scholarly tradition of taxonomic formalisation of non-western practices, this fluid element might move towards

recognition of the fluid *nature* of movement practice itself, as something unable to be standardized or 'coined' via western praxis.

5.2 Query 2

Have ecosomatic practitioners experienced long-lasting changes in their perceptions of nature through ecosomatics, and if so, what are these?

In this particular study, ecosomatic practice appears to evoke experiences in long-term practitioners which enable perceptions of nature rooted in relationality and aspects of non-dualism to develop or deepen. These are described as long-lasting and as leading to changes in behavioural patterns towards the more-than-human characterized by values of care, mutual reciprocity, and non-violence.

A majority of practitioners depict perceptions of nature based in relationality established before any formal ecosomatic practice was outspoken. They also pin-point several other factors throughout life influencing these perceptions. Hence, this perception of nature cannot be deemed a drastic change in perception due to ecosomatic practice. Ecosomatic practice does however clearly distinguish itself as a significant factor in *deepening* these perceptions for the participants. This resembles descriptions by Tynan (2021) stating relationality as a practice, rather than a static concept. This also echoes Dako's (2023) practice-based research entailing that ecosomatics can be used as a 'animistic' gateway to experiencing ontological relationality. One participant describes major and long-lasting shifts in perceptions of nature evoked through ecosomatic practice, elicited by a state resembling that of *non-dual awareness* and moving on to enable development of perceptions of nature rooted in relationality and a sense of self characterized by non-separateness from the organic world. Through such altered states of awareness, practitioners herein confirm the observation by Laidlaw and Beer (2018), stating that ecosomatic practice might enable an understanding of the world as a constant flow of movement, constantly interacting with and shaping the practitioners becoming. This depicts a ontological experience of interconnectedness, which herein has been furthered examined through lenses of relationality and non-dualism.

Burns (2012) speaks of enabling a 'earth-bound transpersonal awareness' through ecosomatic facilitation. Herein, this statement has been examined through following the trajectory of deep ecology as it applies to the experience of the interviewed practitioners. Several

participants depict a narrative of developing what can be deemed a *biocentric empathy* and *biocentric egalitarianism* through processes of *dissolvement of ego*, or recognition of the self as non-separate from the organic world – what Naess (2005) might call *recognition of the ecological self* – through the ecosomatic practice.

Satu and Tuva both attest to the magnitude of direct experience, evoked through ecosomatic practice, of non-separation between phenomena in altering their perceptions of reality in general and nature in specific. An interesting find when reviewing the framework of non-duality is that Satu's ontological framework is likened to one of *metaphysical idealism*, whereas Tuva's is likened to that of *metaphysical physicalism*. Both participants recognize non-separation between ecosystem bodies as a *material truth* which has *moved into conscious experience* through the ecosomatic practice. Tuva especially attests that use of a 'somatic language' infused with nature metaphors enables this recognition.

5.3 Query 3

Do practitioners perceive their ecosomatic work as a tool for positive societal change, and if so, how?

Typically, enabling change towards perceived individual and/or societal benefit is described as a core endeavour of ecosomatics within the study. A probable geared position of the participants must be considered when reviewing the research; if the practitioners did not find ecosomatics a useful tool, they are not likely to have stayed with the practice. Majorly, significance is emphasized on ecosomatic practice *changing ways of being* and *values* within persons partaking in the practice. Practitioners in this study point to the *ripple effects* of their teachings as being a significant part carrying the intended change into the societal level. An intended effect of teaching is described as that of revealing an *experience of interconnectedness* and *non-separation* from the larger ecosystem within persons partaking in practice, which in turn is intended to evoke a sense of *mutual worth/value* with the ecosystem as a whole, and a desire to take *care* of the more-than-human. This trajectory follows that of deep ecology in that revealed perceptions of self and nature as rooted in non-separation might naturally evoke behavioural patterns which adhere to a *biocentric egalitarianism* and disowns indirect or direct acts of violence towards nature.

Ecosomatics is herein proposed as a method of experiencing an *alternative lived experience* of interrelatedness with the larger ecosystem, in contrast to the perceived human-nature divide and Cartesian dualism. This is depicted by practitioners as powerful in enabling recognition of *agency* and *responsibility*, over simply intellectual conceptualising, in the face of the environmental crisis. This falls in line with Beauvais (2012) proposal of the importance of conscious bodily-felt contact with the more-than-human in uncovering approaches to the crisis at hand.

A previously quoted statement by Shelly indicates how the deep ecology movement may be benefited from cultivating and studying the effects of ecosomatic practice, in stating that: '*if you have a lived experience, it gives you a sense of what is possible. And until then, it's an idea or philosophy, an ideology or a dream.'*.

Experiences of ecosomatic practitioners might also add to a potential field of *attention activism*. An essential part of the work of ecosomatics as it relates to societal change is described as *stopping and listening* through the faculties of human attention. This is described as being in a *non-doing*, and through that revealing actual needs of the body and psyche, rather than assuming harmful behavioural patterns characterized by consumerism. Cultivating attention and expanding perception is also described as a means of *recognizing agency*, defined as *'an ability to respond appropriately to circumstances*'. This, in turn, is intended to mobilize the individual to move from a 'fight, flight, or freeze' reaction into an active *recognition of responsibility*. An academic definition of *attention activism* has not been found in the research for this work. Herein, material has been gathered to support the development of such a concept, based upon descriptions also found in public culture (see e.g. Vidyarthi, 2016). A suggested definition for such a concept herein reads as: *Use of mindfulness and embodiment practices to recognize agency and sharpen an ability to redirect and reclaim attention within an economy and political environment which treats human attention as a market commodity.* Further research is suggested for the development of this concept, and such an endevour might prove useful in organizing human attention in face of the environmental crisis.

Burns (2012) has stated that humans need to practice somatically sensing reciprocity with the more-than-human world in order to enable 'kinaesthetic empathy', i.e., an experience of mutual exchange and empathy with the rest of the living world. This paper has endeavoured to explore effects of such practice on behavioural patterns. The contributions herein can be

viewed as indicative. Further understanding potential implications of ecosomatics on broader sociocultural behaviour would require more focused social research.

5.4 Critical reflection & Final notes

Ecosomatics is a relatively nascent field and academic work on its definitions and uses is scarce in volume. This study adds through the existing literature through further exploration into experiences of long-term practitioners filtered through lenses relevant to the field of human ecology. Further research is suggested to map the field of ecosomatics – its prevalence and uses – in order to understand the potential influence of this practice. Further inquiry into the history of ecosomatics via a post-colonial lens is also proposed be beneficial in order to track the cultural heritage of practices becoming encapsulated by ecosomatics.

Results herein can be viewed as indicative but promising in reviewing cases meant to evoke a sense of connection with the more-than-human and tending to the human-nature divide; a major concept within human ecology. This study suggests that ecosomatics, as it is currently being used by practitioners, might contribute to perceptions of nature which move away from an anthropocentric perspective to an eco-centric, resulting in behavioural change disowning acts of violence towards nature. The small size of the participant group entails that more research is needed to fully establish generalizability within the group of long-term ecosomatic practitioners. The interviewees reference several experiences alluding to similar changes in students regardless of prior experience and world views. This would require further research to establish as conclusion. Such research could be relevant for reviewing e.g. state or regional funding for arts, where interests intersect with environmental concerns. In Sweden, examples of such funding is found in Region Skåne and Kulturrådet supporting the development of *Plattform för Improvisation & Somatik*, *PIS*, a national platform for somatic practices and art.

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