



playGROUND (v 1.0):
Ecosomatics at Work and Play
In the Landscape
Nala Walla
April 2009

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“Americans around my age, baby boomers or older, enjoyed a kind of free, natural play that seems, in the era of kid pagers, instant messaging, and Nintendo, like a quaint artifact.”

-Richard Louv, author of *Last Child In the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature Deficit Disorder*

4.1 *ECOSOMATICS*: A WORKING (and playing!) DEFINITION

Ecosomatics is an emerging interdisciplinary field which connects healing arts, movement education, improvisation, psychology, performing arts, and good old-fashioned play, with ecological consciousness.

The first time I encountered this term was in an article by my teacher Susan Bauer in 2008 (see Resources), and I was excited by the possibilities—at long last, a field of study which could heal the separation between mind, body and Earth, a field which encourages direct sensory perception of one’s body both *in* the natural environment, and *as* the natural environment.

In the following multimedia document, I hope to shed some light upon this growing field. This document will evolve as the ecosomatic dialogue and experimentation continues, so please stay tuned for subsequent versions.

4.1.1 WHAT IS *SOMATICS*?

In order to understand what *ecosomatics* is, it will be helpful to begin with a definition of *somatics*.

If you were to pose the question, “What is somatics?” to ten different somatic practitioners, you would get ten different answers. I attempt my own version here.

When you look at me, you can objectively see that I have a body. What you cannot see is my subjective experience, my proprioceptive, or felt-sense, of my own body. In 1976, Thomas Hanna coined the term *somatics* to distinguish this “inner body” from the outer, or gross, body.

He based this on the wholistic Greek concept of *soma*, which means, “the living body in its wholeness.”

Thus, *somatics* refers to the art and practice of sensing the soma or “the body as experienced from within.” The somatic sense is a veritable “sixth” sense, as it cannot be adequately explained by any of the other five categories: taste, touch, hearing, sight, or smell.

In an age where experts and professionals in the health field often give conflicting diagnoses and ineffective treatments, *somatics* is empowering concept that affirms our innate knowledge of our own body, and encourages us to deeply participate in our own healing.

By tuning into our direct sensory experience, we can learn to release habitual tension and pain, instead optimizing for ease, efficiency and enjoyment. Any movement—sacred or mundane—can be re-patterned in this way, from dancing, to skiing, to simply getting in and out of a chair or washing the dishes.

We can also apply these sensing-skills in service of restoring a sustainable relationship to Earth, like planting trees, using a shovel, or creating a community dance. For example, combining the patterns we sense in nature and in our bodies can help us understand efficient design in a garden project. When we do this, we venture into the realm of *ecosomatics*.

4.1.2 ECOSOMATICS

e • co • so • ma • tics

1- The art of sensing the 'inner body' as a way to connect to the greater social and planetary(Gaiac) bodies. 2- The view of somatics as inseparable from ecological health and sustainability. 3- The practice of using somatic principles to facilitate and enhance sustainable work in the landscape--i.e. gardens, farms, village building.

In an ideal world, there is no separation between somatics and ecosomatics. All of our activities are undertaken with the consciousness that everything is connected. In the words of ecopsychologist Theodore Roszak:

Once upon a time, all psychology was “ecopsychology.” No special word was needed. The oldest healers in the world...knew no other way to heal than to work within the context of environmental reciprocity...It is homely common-sense that human beings must live in a state of

respectful give-and-take with the flora and fauna, the rivers and hills, the sky and the soil on which we depend for physical sustenance and practical instruction.

--from the essay "Where Psyche Meets Gaia" in the anthology
Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind

However, since we do not live in an ideal world, we use remedial words such as ecosomatics, ecopsychology—even the ironic eco-economics!—to draw attention to the pivotal work of our time: the evolutionary shift to an integrated, just, and sustainable culture that acknowledges and respects the ecology in which we are embedded.

The word *ecosomatics* has recently evolved to describe a gateway to the natural world via our own bodies, owing to the fluid nature of the Self. It expresses a world of boundaries which are at once distinct, and permeable. And though the term comes from a scientific language that the modern human—steeped for generations in a rational worldview—can understand, the concept is as old as humanity itself.

4.1.3 A WORDFLOW: *ECOSOMATICS IS.....*

Ecosomatics is an integration of arts and ecology | Ecosomatics is a gateway to connection with the Universal | Ecosomatics is way to bring movement practice outdoors | Ecosomatics is a healing of the perceptual split between mind, body, and Earth | Ecosomatics is fun! | Ecosomatics is a soft technology | Ecosomatics is a deep inquiry into the boundaries of the Self | Ecosomatics is a refusal to cloister bodybased arts to the bamboo-floored studio or velvet-cushioned theater | Ecosomatics turns the inside out, and outside in | Ecosomatics is a blending of art and politics | Ecosomatics is a challenge to the notion that the arts are a luxury | Ecosomatics is a demonstration of the indispensability of the moving arts to everyday life | Ecosomatics is a rejection of classist stigmata assigned to Earthwork | Ecosomatics is a merger of conventionally separate disciplines | Ecosomatics is a demonstration of how the moving arts can facilitate a lasting positive impact upon the natural, and the social, landscape | Ecosomatics is a way of returning to balance | Ecosomatics is at play in the landscape | Ecosomatics is an activist's tool | Ecosomatics is a way of life

4.1.4 ECOSOMATICS AT THE BCOLLECTIVE

Our philosophy at the Bcollective is that EARTHWORK IS A SACRED ACTIVITY. Work in the landscape can help us make our bodies and social skills strong where they were once atrophied, as we

simultaneously embody our ideals of health and abundance. We believe that the tools of the embodied arts, which originated in the context of the village, do not only belong in the halls of academia or among “professionals” in theater or dance—they are destined to return to the folk, where they can be put to use on an everyday basis in service of massive, grassroots change in our communities and gardens.

We believe that the bodybased arts are a highly evolved technology to teach us how to best use our bodies in the landscape. For example, yoga postures (asanas) have developed to tune our bodies to the daily tasks of a building and running village—squatting and reaching to harvest food, flexing arms and legs to carry water or dig a foundation. To learn how best to push a heavy wheelbarrow and build an earthen house without throwing out our backs, becoming bored, or sunburned, all we need do is tune deeply into our bodies.

The Bcollective, through workshops, performances, and practice, aims to facilitate a shift away from a paradigm of slavery where we push our bodies beyond their capacity, and learn to honor our need for proper alignment, rest, and social engagement. Our philosophy encourages us to let go of outdated notions of manual labor as a “chore” and learn to value earthwork as an enjoyable and healing endeavor.

4.2 ECOSOMATICS APPLIED: PROJECT DEMONSTRATIONS

Over the last few years, I have been facilitating art projects that aim to heal the split between mind and body, art and science, work and play, theory and action. All of the projects involve a reweaving of dance, film, and architecture with permaculture, gardening, and ecology—fields which were all formerly separated, sometimes by wide chasms. The aim is to use the arts to help achieve our goals of repairing our landscapes and creating humane dwelling systems. Below, I have included several descriptions along with short videos to give you an idea of what these ecosomatic projects involve.

4.2.1 CHOP WOOD, CARRY WATER

date/time: 25 April 2009

location: Bcollective Homestead, WA, USA

***Click on the link below to watch the video *Chop wood, Carry water* ***

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= Bgi2qVBCUU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bgi2qVBCUU)

The above short video, filmed at the Bcollective Homestead, illustrates our ecosomatic approach to some of the most basic skills in the landscape—chopping, wood carrying water, and shoveling.

4.2.2 DWELL PROJECT

date/time: 9 August - 17 August 2008

location: Earthdance Retreat Center, Plainfield, MA, USA

****Click the link below to watch the video *Dwell*****

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3NP45bHJ9rg>

An on-the-ground example of applied ecosomatic philosophy was the project DWELL: THE REWEAVING, for the 2008 S.E.E.D.S. festival (Somatic Experiments in Earth, Dance and Science.) Artist Nala Walla of the Bcollective collaborated with green architect Mark Lakeman of City Repair (Portland, OR, USA) to create a week-long project where we brought the body-centered skills of dancers onto a natural building jobsite.

Through communal construction of a nest-like dwelling, this project explored the physical rules that apply to the building process, the laws that apply our individual and social bodies, and the laws that govern the larger body of the Earth. What are the rules that apply to these macro and micro systems, and how are they related to natural law, and to each other? If our bodies are indeed our “dwellings” at the most basic levels, how can honoring the needs and limitations of our bodies inform the creation of sustainable community?

Through this project, several goals were achieved:

- The intimate connection between art and activism was explored.
- Conventionally separate disciplines were merged.
- The moving arts demonstrated their practicality to village building by applying ergonomic knowledge to the building site in a pragmatic manner—i.e. how to best use a shovel or a drill without injury to the body.
- Architecture took on a kinetic aspect, deeply rooted in place-based ceremony instead of merely cold abstractions of straight-edges and numbers.
- Both disciplines explored a rediscovery of their roots in village life, where no lines between dance, song, storytelling and the daily labors of shelter and sustenance were drawn.
- A Nest-Dwelling was built by a group of dancers, in a conscious manner, incorporating bodybased practice and ritual.

Further research and room for improvement: since dancers are certainly not immune to the deeply ingrained patterns of the dominant culture which separate dance and architecture, it was still a challenge to apply somatic skills to a hands-on project, even

with a group meeting specifically for this purpose. We all found ourselves sliding back into old habits. Finding ways for the group to self-organize, gently nudging each other back into alignment and consciousness when we “slip,” is an area for further experimentation. If you are interested in this research, I invite collaboration!

related websites:

www.seedsfestival.ning.com

www.cityrepair.org

www.communitecture.net

4.2.3 BODYVERSITY at HUE HUE COYOTYL

date/time: 7 March -16 March 2009

location: Huehuecoyotl Ecovillage, Tepotzlan, Mexico

click the link below to watch the video *Bodyversity at Huehuecoyotl*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTxZk3BQFhc>

In March 2009, activists came from all over the globe to Huehuecoyotl Ecovillage in Mexico to share strategies for creating change. Creative ways to approach timelines, budgets, marketing and web-based technologies were shared with the goal of making permaculture and regenerative design available to a broad sector of the public. In order to balance the “brainstorming” activities with embodied practice, Nala Walla presented a daily ecosomatic curriculum called “The Bodyversity.”

Bodybased games and exercises, offered in the mornings, evenings, or during breaks, served several functions:

- to help model cooperative behavior
- to help diagnose and identify areas for improvement
- to develop improvisation skills
- to contribute to the hands-on projects at the Ecovillage
- to help integrate this evolutionary material more deeply
- to help encourage an embodiment of ecoliteracy
- to help reaffirm our innate capacities to reconnect with our own bodies--the social body, the body politic, and the greater Gaiaic body.
- to bring enjoyment and relaxation to the project

A highlight of the week occurred when we moved a large pile of bricks up a steep hill in matter of minutes, via a twenty person

brick toss—singing songs all the while. It was truly an application of the “many hands make light work” principle, and people returned to the think-tank refreshed and more connected to the land we were visiting.

All the above functions were touched upon, though, it was clear that the entire week could have been spent deepening into the Bodyiversity curriculum. I look forward to offering longer retreats or entire semesters which plumb the depths of bodybased curriculum.

4.2.4 IMPROV(e): A HANDBOOK FOR ECOSOMATIC CHANGE

For anyone interested in trying out some of these games with in a group or community setting, I have created an ECOSOMATIC HANDBOOK as a starter-kit.

Please click on the following link to download the PDF, print (preferably on the back of junk mail!), and watch a video which will show you how to fold your own 8-page mini zine.

<http://www.bcollective.org/html/ideo.html>

related websites:

www.gaiainiversity.com

www.bcollective.org

4.3 ALONG THE BOUNDARIES OF ART AND TECHNOLOGY

As a practitioner of ecosomatics, not a day goes by when I am not confronted with the irony of using such hard technologies* as computers, video cameras, and websites to facilitate embodied practices. The preparation of this document is a case in point, as it required many disembodied hours in front of a computer, writing essays and editing videos *about* embodied practices. Because of this paradox, I have been deeply involved in research about human relationships to technology, and how we create boundaries with it.

*To clarify: because I consider many of the artistic, cultural and social systems developed by humans to be highly evolved technologies, I will often use the terms “social technology,” “embodied technology,” and “**S**oft **T**echnology” (**ST**s) to refer to these. I do this in order to differentiate them from “disembodied technologies,” or “**H**ard

Technologies” (HTs), which refer to any technologies which utilize machines external to our bodies, i.e. computers, cellular phones, autos, airplanes, etc.

Soft technologies like dance, ritual, storytelling, and song (the original software!) have always served as communication devices, information transmission systems, knowledge banks, and efficient energy utilization strategies. And as evidence continues to mount about the utter unsustainability of our hard technologies, an ecosomatic approach to life offers a shift in focus upon STs.

Imagine if we collectively turned off the computer one day per week, investing that time instead upon honing the more subtle arts of the body, and social body? Imagine a culture practicing somatic techniques, improvisation games, storytelling on a mass-scale? This is an exciting, and timely possibility, one for which our own bodies are advocating, when we take the time to listen.

4.3.1 NEST: AN EXPERIMENTAL SHORT FILM

date/time: 20 April, 2009

location: Bcollective Homestead, WA, USA

In this quirky short film, a computer-weary woman seeks solace in a bed made of sticks and branches, while a several activists describe their relationships with hard technologies.

4.3.2 BODY AND TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH

In modern Western countries, even as we sit squarely in the center of the digital revolution, many of us can still remember a time, not all that long ago, when our livelihoods, our communication, and our recreation did not depend on digital technologies.

Both the pace and scope of change in our lives brought about by these disembodied technologies are unprecedented in human history. While it is clear that millions of people, businesses, and institutions all over the world use and enjoy HTs, many are unsure about how to create useful and healthy boundaries with this exciting and fast-moving world.

While we are often well-informed about the benefits technology has to offer, an adequate assessment of the negative effects (both potential and real) upon our bodies and health at several levels—individual, social, planetary—has yet to be made.

• OUR INDIVIDUAL BODIES

eyestrain | back pain | racing heart | headaches | exposure to
Electromagnetic Fields | advertising pollution | workplace monotony

- THE SOCIAL BODY (BODY POLITIC)

slave labor conditions in building, maintaining, and disassembling
technology | cultural cloning—the homogenizing effect of technologies
upon indigenous cultures | alienation from body, family, traditional
skills, and the natural world

- THE GAIAC BODY (PLANET EARTH)

computer manufacturing byproducts polluting rivers, oceans, and even
outer “space” | massive piles of cell phones and computers awaiting
“recycling” | computerized weaponry, industrial and hospital waste |
massive landscaping to make way for technology: roads, power lines, cell
phone towers, nuclear plants, etc | technology’s effects on creatures i.e.
bees, whales, frogs, etc

As I practice the embodied arts, the significant impact that DTs have
upon my personal health is highlighted. This impact naturally extends
to the health of the natural world around me—the health of my garden is
neglected when I am on the computer all day—as well as the people
around me. I have therefore found myself interested in feedback about
how technology affects people’s lives.

Recent research demonstrates that the central practices of ecosomatics-
-using our bodies in the natural landscape—have profound healing
effects upon many of today’s rampant psychological disorders, from
ADD, to schizophrenia and depression. Richard Louv’s *The Last Child In
the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*, can direct
you to more information (see Resources section below.)

4.3.3 TRENDS

For the last six months, I have been informally researching people’s
relationships with technology by sending survey questionnaires,
interviewing , and initiating conversations with friends and colleagues
all over the country. My intention is mostly to create dialogue and
community support for boundary setting with HTs, as well as to gather
personal stories for creating performance on this subject (see above for
resulting short film “Nest”) It is clear that this is a subject which
deserves a great deal more research.

Several trends were evident among the people I surveyed:

- 1- INCREASING COMPUTER USE

Overwhelmingly, time spent on computers has increased over the last
generation. Thirty to forty hours or more weekly computer use is now quite
common. In the few cases in my survey where people cited a leveling-off, or

decrease in computer use in recent years, in all cases this was accomplished intentionally, i.e. after completing a university degree-program or by leaving a computer-intensive job.

2- CONTINUOUS COMPUTER USE

Very few people reported going more than one week without using a computer, and most use them daily for months and years on end. A couple were able to schedule computer “fasts” lasting anywhere from two to four weeks. Several people reported lifestyle choices in which they mostly stopped using computers for a time, for example, while traveling. In these cases, “unplugging” was often one of the goals of their trip.

3- DESIRE TO USE COMPUTERS LESS

Almost unanimously, people expressed their desire to spend less time on computers. Though, many noted that computers play a central role in how they earn money, and that renegotiating a relationship with computers may require a fundamental restructuring of their personal economy.

4- NEGATIVE HEALTH EFFECTS ASSOCIATED WITH COMPUTER USE

Most people associated some sort of pain and negative health effects with their computer use. One person referred to computers as “an ergonomic disaster.” Many expressed concerns that computer use--the internet in particular--has addictive properties.

5--AWARENESS OF NEGATIVE SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Most people reported awareness of the ethical, social and environmental impacts of their computer use, though most stated they did not know how to address their concerns about this.

6--INDIVIDUAL METHODS FOR COPING WITH COMPUTER USE

Strategies for limiting their computer use were improvised on an individual basis. People used embodied practices such as tai chi, yoga, gardening, hiking, etc. to “unwind” after using the computer. Many felt that these physical activities “keep them sane” and are necessary in order to spend hours at the computer for work.

4.3.4 “I’VE GOT IT UNDER CONTROL!”: MYTHS ABOUT TECHNOLOGY AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

“If I wanted to live without digital technologies directly in my life, I could live that way. However, the entire global life system is now affected by digital technologies and their fallout, so no matter where I go, or what I do, I will be affected in some way by digital technologies.”

–Survey Respondant

The last trend (#6) is of particular interest to me. When we purchase a computer, or sign up for an internet service, they come with no tools, warnings, or disclaimers:

Thank you for purchasing this E-GADget.

In order to help avoid negative side-effects such as:

- *eyestrain
- *head, jaw, neck, back, hip, leg and wrist pain
- *social alienation
- *addiction
- *boundary collapse
- *out-of-body travel

we are happy to provide you with the following,
government-sponsored and clinically-researched support
methods for avoiding these undesirable phenomena.

As the flood of hard technology over the last generation continues unabated, people are left to their own devices to invent strategies for coping with enormous changes. Many—including well-informed artists and activists participating in my own research—have never even considered that society, manufacturers, or governments can or should bear any of the responsibility to look for solutions.

Q: Do you think that technologies should be subject to accurate assessment and public vote before adoption?

- “Can't fathom such an option...[Can't fathom] our culture choosing to wanting to be informed or inform...”

Q: Please share any methods you may have for creating boundaries.

- “Will power. Only use them when needed. ”

In our culture, creating boundaries with technology is widely considered a personal responsibility. No one is forcing us to use a computer: it is our own ‘choice.’ But, in a society in which systematically stigmatizes blue-collar work and exports these job overseas, does this notion of choice ignore institutionalized bias towards white-collar work?

Technology critic Jerry Mander points out the prevailing cultural misconceptions that hard technology is inherently apolitical, and that its value can be evaluated on a personal level:

The airplane shrinks the globe; we can be anywhere on Earth in hours...
The computer permits us to ‘publish’ our viewpoints to a potentially vast audience...The rifle brings down the animal at 300 feet.

In fact, all technology is useful or entertaining, or else we'd have no interest in it in the first place. But to base our ultimate conclusions about technology mainly on our personal experience leaves out the social, political and ecological dimensions...What else do guns do? Is a smaller world better? Who else benefits from global computer networks?

In our individualistic society, we are not practiced in making judgments beyond our personal experience, but seeking the systemic or holistic effects...may be one of the most important survival skills of our times.

---from the essay "Technologies of Globalization" in the anthology *The Case Against the Global Economy*.

Today, we live in an era where boundary difficulties are present in every relationship at every level of society, between nations and between people. Tricky boundary and addiction relationships with our computers are part of this meta -pattern, and they merit a meta-response. It is not sufficient to simply assume that individuals alone can negotiate such a vast and unknown territory as cyberspace, for example.

And since we cannot currently rely upon government or industry to take the lead on this matter, I write to encourage us to take grassroots action in sharing the strategies we have developed for coping with hard technology. Collectively, we can begin to educate each other about the embodied practices we use to achieve balance, create support networks for exploring boundary skills in every area in our lives.

Below, I will share a list of tools and strategies which can help us to draw boundaries with technology. Much of this list was assembled through the survey and interview process. You will notice a lot of emphasis upon working in groups, as this is essential to counterbalance the notion that our relationship with technology is a private matter.

4.3.5

UNPLUGGING: STRATEGIES FOR DRAWING BOUNDARIES WITH COMPUTERS

PHILOSOPHICAL

- Set a bed time and stick to it.
- Refuse to use digital technologies while eating, and refuse to eat with people who use digital technologies while eating.
- Blur the lines between work and play.
- If you have difficulties negotiating your relationship to technology, understand that you are NOT alone. There are many others like you.
- Make peace with that fact that we cannot know everything.

- Set aside one or more days per week where you don't use your computer, car, cell phone, etc.
- Imagine yourself powerfully creating exactly the life you want.

TECHNOLOGICAL

- Program a timed, pop-up to appear on your screen, reminding you to take a break, i.e. every 45 minutes. (Free ware available.)
- Before getting online, create a "priority" list to guide you in email and web research. Do everything on your list before following tangents.
- If you are prone to "getting lost" in the web, have several websites bookmarked that are "on your life path," so you can transition back into meaningful work when needed.
- Program your computer to limit your web use. (Freeware available.)
- Keep track of how much time you spend with hard technologies. (Freeware available which tracks the time you spend on each program)
- Regularly turn your cellphone off when sleeping, eating, reading, etc. so it cannot disturb you.
- Use an internet service provider that reduces bandwidth (say by 98% for 24 hours) when a bandwidth limit is reached.
- **Click on the link below to access the free tools mentioned above at Spark Social Media**

<http://www.sparksocialmedia.com/group/soultech/forum/topics/tools-online-services-for>

ENVIRONMENTAL/EMBODIED

- Rise with the sun.
- Keep a yoga mat, hula hoop, roller skates, etc. where you can see them from your desk. Use them.
- Take a break when you are hungry.
- Take a break when you need to use the bathroom.
- Take naps.
- Use an outdoor toilet whenever possible (will keep you in touch with what's going on outside.)
- Live off the grid (you will become much more aware of how much electricity hard technologies consume.)
- Try living in a small house (you will go outside more often.)
- Spend time in a remote village.
- Share your concerns with others about computer addiction, EMFs, back pain, etc. Create a support group.
- Join a dance, tai chi, improvisation or other embodied arts group.
- Join a hiking, fishing, bird watching, wetlands remediation, surfing, or other group that will get you out in nature.
- Join a gardening group, neighborhood pea patch, or farm volunteer program. Make a pact to at least grow some of your own food.
- Throw "unplugged" parties where people share homemade food, drink, stories music, and games not dependent upon technology.
- Play with children outdoors. See the websites below for information on how to organize a group in your area to do this.

www.childrenandnature.org www.freerangekids.wordpress.com

Please feel free to email me with more strategies and ideas.
nala@bcollective.org

4.4 CONCLUSION: *THE TRIPLE BODY: SOMA, COMMUNITY, EARTH*

“Okanagans teach that the body is Earth itself. Our flesh, blood and bones are Earth-body; in all cycles in which Earth moves, so does our body. As Okanagans we say the body is sacred. It is the core of our being, which permits the rest of the self to be. Our word for body literally means “the land-dreaming capacity.”

--Jeanette Armstrong, Okanagan Teacher, Activist, Traditional Council

Every time we breathe in, a billion electrochemical reactions occur in our bodies, and a billion cells are born. Every time we breathe out, a billion more electrochemical reactions occur, and a billion cells die. If we are looking for evidence of cosmic patterns at work, there is no need to ascend to a fleshless cyberheaven. Our objective sciences have now provided evidence that universal patterns are right here, beneath our skin, and beneath the soil-skin of the Earth. These patterns can be experienced and perceived directly through somatic practices.

Many native cultures, like the Okanagan culture mentioned above, have perceived this miracle of body-mind-land connection for generations, and preserved this knowledge in their language, philosophy, stories, and their everyday lives. Yet, whether you are the child of Okanagan, or new-age parents, life centered around land-body has become more and more rare, and arguably more difficult, as the “technological age” paves and pollutes the land.

I believe it is imperative at this time to preserve the “soft technologies”: the skills, stories, arts which derive from Earth and body centered cultures, both ancient and modern. As they have always done, the soft technologies are helping us to create the respectful, sustainable cultures of the future, and thus ought to be widely adopted as best-practices, especially among activists. And as a pleasant side effect, your life will include more play, and more fun.

Ecosomatic practice affirms the natural joys (indeed, the basic human right!) of experiencing our own bodies—on the personal level (soma), the social level (community), and the planetary level (Earth.) Respecting our bodies as we would a fine instrument, practicing daily, and keeping them tuned, has become today more essential than ever before, as our embodied senses just may hold the key to the next phase of our evolutionary journey as human beings.

4.4.1 RESOURCES

BOOKS and ARTICLES

- *The Last Child In the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature Deficit Disorder*, by Richard Louv.
- *In The Absence of the Sacred: The Failure of Technology, and the Survival of the Indian Nations*, by Jerry Mander
- *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*
eds. Theodore Roszak, Mary Gomes and Allen Kanner
- *The Case Against the Global Economy, and For a Turn Toward the Local*
eds. Jerry Mander, and Edward Goldsmith.
- Article: "*Body and Earth as One: Strengthening our connection to the Natural Source with Ecosomatics*" by Susan Bauer, Conscious Dancer Magazine, Spring 2008.
- Article: "*How Technomania Is Overtaking the Millenia*" by Langdon Winner
- Article: "*Children and Nature Network Report*" by Richard Louv

WEBSITES

- Spark Social Media
www.sparksocialmedia.com
Offering workshops in "unplugging" in Seattle, WA, USA,
and links to digital tools for making boundaries with HTs.
- Applied Improvisation Network
www.appliedimprov.ning.com
Information on how improvisation tools are being applied everywhere
from schools, to corporations and nonprofits.
- The Berkana Institute
www.berkana.org
A worldwide network for grassroots and activist organizations.
- SEEDS Festival (**S**omatic **E**xperiments in **E**arth, **D**ance and **S**cience)

www.seedsfestival.ning.com

Social networking site for the SEEDS festival. Explores the intersections of permaculture, urban sustainability, architecture, dance, performance, somatics, and more.

- The Children and Nature Network

www.childrenandnature.org

Resources for reversing the current trend where children spend most of their time indoors. How to form local action groups for getting kids back into nature.