

Emotions and Interconnectedness of the Body  
Healings of Holistic Therapy in  
The Netherlands



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2017



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## Healings of Holistic Therapy in The Netherlands



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\*The cover illustration is the Johre Symbol, meant for energy healing. Literally, the symbol means “white light”. The symbol enables white light to flow easily and helps the recipient of energetically healings to release what does not serve. The purpose is to release any kind of blockade so that white energies around a person can flow freely. The symbol connects to spirits guides and ascended masters. The symbol is well known in Reiki energy healing.



## Acknowledgements

Investigating our western culture is interesting, as it provides an insight into what we take for granted in our own daily practices. As I was brought up living in a Western country, this thesis made me aware of and helped me to unravel blinds spots in my own culture and therefore in myself: a human being with a mind, body and soul. Taking Western dualism as a lens to see Dutch contemporary culture, it struck me how much we are focused on one side of this dualism; rationality. This study has focused on the subordinated, other side of the dualism in Western society: emotions and feelings, and likewise, the interconnectedness of body and mind. During my time in the field with holistic therapy practitioners, it was shocking for me to experience how much we can learn from this other, underprivileged, sensitive side, and how far this side has been pushed aside and is not experienced by Western people. Our intuitive bodily knowledge is of invaluable truth and richness; our body is full of experiences and our deepest knowledge lies within it, waiting for us to awaken it.

I am very thankful for doing this study. It made me aware of my own devotion to a rational state of mind and, likewise, the pushing away something very valuable. For example, have you ever wondered how often we start a sentence with “I think...” instead of “I feel...”? Yet, have you ever considered how much power these words “I feel...” contain? If the words rest on a bodily sense of truth, a feeling deep inside that makes your whole body shiver, then these two little words have power. No further questions are needed, because you *feel*. The beauty of these words is that they do not distinguish those who are ‘privileged’ to have followers when saying “I think...” from those who do not, and thus probably are less educated. I hope, that this thesis contributes to everyone's inner feelings in order to make them shine.

I am very grateful to the many people who have taken an interest in the topic of this thesis. I initially expected my topic to be a bit too obscure or provocative to skepticism, but that was nothing but the truth. Course mates, friends and family all listened very carefully and asked many questions about this study and many conversations ended with them asking to read my thesis when it is finished. Their interest suggests, which is a conclusion of this study as well, that

it feels as if there is an urgent request to stronger engagement to a notion of feelings and emotions in Dutch society. Although I experienced healings myself -which were invaluable to understand my participants better- it was my participants who have been tremendously invaluable to this study as they showed the concrete bodily effects of their healings.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who has spent time with me to accomplish this study. I am very grateful to Anke (which is a pseudonym) who did much work in order to let me observe her healings and open up her network to me. Without your openness and wisdom, I could never have done this research with so much pleasure and dedication. I was really thankful that I could be with and learn from someone who spoke wisdom in every sentence and was so dedicated to her work.

I am very grateful to all recipients of healings. You were all willing to share with great dedication your most sensitive stories to me, whether that was during healings or interviews. Furthermore, people working for or studying at the Institution to Complementary and Alternative Medicine (School of Energetics) opened up themselves in every possible way to inform me. My same gratitude is to therapists at Regression and Reincarnation therapy. Thank you all for your patience and trust in me.

I am very grateful to my tutor Marike van Gijssel, as she always approached my writings and ideas positively and with great clarity. Your positive attitude and trust in my writings and topic encouraged me to write with joy and dedication, also in moments when I was insecure about it. Thank you for your openness, positivism, and clear reviews. I learned a lot from it.

Last but not least I want to express my gratitude towards my family and friends. You all have encouraged and inspired me fiercely to finally finish my study. Without your support I was never able to make this thesis in the first place. Koen, my partner in crime, you have given your utmost patience and dedication to lift me up in times when needed and have given endless trust in me.

Thank you all. It was my great pleasure to learn from you.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

*A while ago I experienced a continual feeling of anxiety and melancholy. I came to a point I did not want that feeling any longer and searched for help. I also experienced a pressure on my chest and had a strong feeling this would not be solved with medication, which led me to plan a private healing session at an energetic holistic therapist. During the healing, I was taken back to the moment I experienced heavy emotions about loss and feelings of guilt and sadness, which I experienced as a baby. During that time, I was a baby and my father experienced these emotions because his family suffered a great loss: my father's brother committed suicide. The emotions my father experienced at that time, I felt too, but I had not realized I felt that until this moment of healing. The energetic holistic therapist told me babies can feel emotions heavily because they are not yet used to the "harshness" of the outside world: "Then emotions can become pent-up in your body as one is not able to express it freely" she says. I cried, and with the energetic holistic therapist guiding me, I spoke out loud to my father it was not his fault. I repeated the sentence until I did not feel the urge to say it anymore. At that moment, I felt a "heavy load" falling from my chest, and subsequently, air flowed into my lungs, and I have never before experienced breathing so smoothly and so heavily. I had an imaginative experience of my father and my grandmother smiling, dancing and having the utmost fun with each other. In my images, they were dancing underneath the walnut tree at my parents' house and their bodies and the direct environment sparkled with happiness. I felt I was uplifted into a space without negativity. It was as if my images was playing as a movie in front of me. Telling this to the energetic therapist, she explained the walnut tree is a symbol of releasing old family patterns, which perfectly fitted my state of being. After the healing, I felt relieved and illuminated. Nowadays, two years later, the pressure on my chest is still gone, and I still enjoy breathing big flows of air into my lungs, as I was never able to do this before the healing. Additionally, I was also not aware of having such a "heavy load" on my chest, as I was used to this suffering my whole life. Simply, I did not know I could do better. I only felt I had some anxiety.*

The above description shows that pent-up bodily emotions can cause physical issues, as I obviously experienced during the healing. This thesis describes how emotions are interconnected to both the mind and the body and the phenomenological experiences of this connection through healing. This connection was researched among those who underwent healing given by holistic therapists in the Netherlands. Emotions take a central role, as my main participant, an energetic holistic therapist, explains, “emotions are heavily underestimated as we in the West are living in an overly rational society”. In opposition, holistic therapies in the Netherlands, mostly derived from Eastern therapies, see the body as physically and mentally interconnected (Adams 2002; Bear 2003), which is different than the reductionism of the body-mind split, or the Cartesian dualism, upon which conventional western biomedicine is built (Bendelow 2009, 12). Although this thesis only focuses on the body, the Western epistemology is filled with more oppositions, such as those between nature and culture, passion and reason, and individual and societal dichotomies (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 10).

Social scientists have proven emotions, as a continuous flux between the mind and the body, transcend the split, wherefore the body-mind dualism gains serious implications (Bendelow 2009, 13). In this thesis, an anthropological-philosophical approach is taken as I describe the phenomenological experience of my participants. Phenomenology examines what it means to be-in-the-world and describes the experiences of senses or feelings before they become subject to theory and concepts (Jackson 1996, 3). A phenomenological approach in this research is fundamental. It enables capturing emotions, visions, and feelings a person can experience during healings of holistic therapists. The body-mind split is critically viewed in this research as my participants show that emotions, gained through experiences, can be pent-up in the body and cause mental and bodily illness. This thesis shows that physical and mental diseases can be released by active engagement with emotions. As a result of releasing pent-up bodily emotions, my participants learned to sense their bodies and to acknowledge and express their emotions freely.

Embodiment as a methodological principle is necessary to capture the participants’

experiences. According to Merleau-Ponty (1962, 140-141 *in* Jackson 1996, 32), the subject-object domain should not be distinctive. Embodiment is the methodological principle that collapses these dualities because meaning simply exists in the doing what is manifestly accomplished by an action. Therefore, I argue that anthropologists, when conducting research about emotions, should integrate an embodied approach to capture the emotions of the situation.

## **1.2 Societal Relevance of the Case**

When exploring holistic therapy's domain in the Netherlands, I realized the western social structures are built on Cartesian dualism. The masculine or rational part, the scientific, is the only generally accepted method in the Dutch health care system and society (Bendelow 2009, 6). The Dutch health care system has a rational approach, emphatically with visible clarification, also known as Evidence Based Medicine (Bendelow 2009, 6). The epistemological tradition to western biomedicine is a cultural and historical construction and "not one that is universally shared" (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 7). In opposition, the episteme, holistic therapies, which can have an Eastern origin, see the body as interconnected and treat the whole person rather than the parts (Coward 1989, 68-93). Due to globalization, a multi-directionality of information, goods, and services travel on a daily basis over the world as well as do many holistic therapies since they became integrated into the western liberalizing society in the '60s and '70s (Adams 2002, 248). Physician and anthropologist Micozzi even describes the integration of holistic therapies in the West as "one of the most important reverse technology transfers in human history" (2002, 400). The constituent parts of the body-mind, matter, psyche, soul, self, etc., and their relations to each other are thus not only highly variable in different parts of the world (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 7), but also in the Netherlands.

This thesis focuses on holistic therapies as they are rising in western civilization (Adams

2002; Apud 2015; Bear 2003; Bendelow 2009; Micozzi 2002; Otterloo 1999; Pagis 2010; Zhan 2001). Holistic therapies are “aiming to replace the internal conversation in one's mind with a different kind of self-reflexivity: an embodied kind” (Pagis 2009, 267). Nowadays, everywhere in the Netherlands one can find an eclectic variation of Eastern holistic therapy schools, such as Mindfulness, Shiatsu, and Buddhist zen-meditation, Reiki, and Ayurveda. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports in the Netherlands estimates there are 40,000 alternative and complementary therapists, also known as holistic therapies, in the Netherlands<sup>1</sup>. This number has grown in 2017 as the number of self-employed workers grows in the Netherlands. There are 8000 to 10,000 new entrants a year, of whom 40 percent are employed in alternative and complementary health care<sup>2</sup>.

### **1.3 Theoretical Framework**

#### *The Cartesian Legacy*

Western science, with an emphasis on western biomedicine, is rooted in the fundamental opposition between mind and body, and spirit and matter (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 8). Western biomedicine is radically committed to materialism, the above-mentioned Evidence Based Medicine, and pretends to acknowledge the difference between what is “real” and “unreal” (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 9). Medical students learn about the rational genesis as founded by Aristotle’s biological view of the human soul in *De Anima*, as can be found in the corpus (ca. 400 B.C.) (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 9). Hippocrates and his students challenged the power of their competitors, who Hippocrates called “charlatans” and “magi”, through introducing the human body as a rational basis for clinical practice (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 9). Dualism as known today in the west has been fuelled by Rene Descartes (1596-1650), who determined nothing as true until he established ground for evidence (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 9). At the beginning of the modern era, Descartes “argue[d] persuasively that the only path to knowledge was the scientific side of the dichotomy and that we must ignore or control the artistic side” (Wagner 1982, 1207 *in* Bendelow 2009,

12). According to Descartes, only a rational mind can be taken on faith, as he expressed in his dictum: Cogito, ergo sum—I think, therefore I am (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 9). As described, western science is trapped by dualism.

In wider western society, other concepts related to the body-mind dichotomy are recognized by social scientists, for example nature and culture, structure and agency, and individual and society (Bendelow 2009, 13). Durkheim, who devoted an overly large part of his work to the relationship between society and individual, represented the society as the “highest reality in the intellectual and moral order” (Durkheim 1961[1915], 29 in Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 10). According to him, the opposite to society, individualism, seems to fail social integration and can, therefore, be regarded as pathological (Cohen 1994, 13). When he describes the body, he reduces it to a mechanism of emotions that produces the raw materials, the “stuff”, that generated the fundamentals for collectivity (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 10). Reducing the body to collective representations are what social science determines as “real” shared functions and identities (Jackson 2013, 4).

Human beings’ functions and identities are perceived as objective and are all understood accordingly in academia: as individuals fill roles, fulfil obligations, follow rules, perform rituals, and internalize beliefs (Jackson 2013, 4). This perception of the body as one-dimensional has led consequences, such as to fragmentation of daily processes: “Allegories of political, historical, or social processes” fragment western contemporary society (Jackson 2013, 7). Furthermore, the authority of western scientists gained power as they became people who had extraordinary power to explain mysteries (Jackson 2013, 6). As reductionism was cultivated, people integrated a thinking wherein they were “informed by” someone, for example a scientist, who *knew* how to solve their problems. The emotional or the feminine aspect, *feelings* of a person to declare their own bodily processes, was left out (Bendelow 2009, 12).

However, it must be emphasized that the epistemology of the dualism and reductionism is “one among many systems of knowledge” (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 10). Other non-Western civilizations have created a monistic world view wherein mind, body,

nature, soul, and matter are perceived as similar entities in relation to others (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 10).

### *Holism: Interconnectedness and Integration of Emotions*

Different from dualism as a fundamental principle in Western civilizations, monism find their basic principles of life in inclusiveness, as represented in for example the Chinese civilization (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 12). In the ancient Chinese yin/yang cosmology, which appeared before the 3rd century B.C., complementary dualities are balanced and thus are not opposing. The engagement of the dualities of the whole is emphasized (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 12). The entire cosmos is viewed in the oscillating poles of yin and yang, masculine and feminine, light and dark, hot and cold. Chinese cosmology concerns the harmonious and balanced relationships between the two (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 13). This pattern can be found in the body as well (ibid.) since holistic therapies can have their genesis in the principle of harmony. As the Chinese yin/yang cosmology thus see dualities in a constant flux with each other, dualism as known in Western society is based upon tension and contradictions, although scientists have proven emotions are a connector between dichotomies (Bendelow 2009; Leavitt 1996).

The tension and contradiction that Western dualism generates might be because Westerners leave the “emotional part” out, in contrast to Eastern cultures (Adams 2002, 254). Social scientists debated whether emotions belonged to either an identical biology, and thus to nature, or to locally specific sociocultural tradition, thus to nurture. The debate on anthropology of emotions has been thus trapped in dualism (Leavitt 1996, 515). However, later, emotions were recognized as a subjective bodily feeling that connects the mind and the body split. Emotions also transcend the gap between nature and culture, structure and agency (Bendelow 2009, 13), and body and society (Lyon and Barbalet *in* Csordas 1994). Emotions are subjectively felt and are socialized in specific social contexts (Leavitt 1996, 531). It is through people’s emotions that their activity has direction and force (Lyon and Barbalet *in* Csordas 1994). Therefore, theories that support dichotomization have developed a major issue as

emotions contest dichotomization (Bendelow 2009, 13).

Considering interconnectedness through emotions, I suggest it is highly important to conduct research on emotions in order to comprehend the notion of emotions in Dutch society (Leavitt 1996, 516). Leavitt (1996, 516) approached emotions to “bracket” them to recognize and deepen their concept. According to Lutz (2017, 182), it is crucial to recognize emotions belong to cultural groups as explicitly as possible because anthropology is a field centrally and distinctively concerned with cultural differences. She states that still most anthropologist see emotions as a universal phenomenon (Lutz 2017, 182). The contemporary debate of emotions focusses on the importance of intensities that shape human lives and the traces of human social experience (Lutz 2017, 186). Herein, the concept of emotions tends to break down the difference between material (bodily self) and immaterial (mind) (Lutz 2017, 186). Again, the interconnectedness of the mind and the body becomes interesting. Jackson (2013, 8) focusses on the concept of intersubjectivity as this helps to understand subjectivity between persons: the senses of others that people feel when interacting with others.

Also, Jackson (1989, 1996, 2013) and Ingold (2000, 2011) developed theories that shed light on interconnectedness. Jackson (1989) describes what he calls “lifeworlds”, wherein he introduces the invisible, ancestral traces that human beings *feel* and on which they act. This theory explains the embodiment of history and knowledge (Jackson 1989). Old, relational traces are recognized when concentrating on the body, as is achieved with holistic therapy in the form of embodied reflexivity. This can be accomplished during meditation wherein one listens to inner bodily knowledge (Pagis 2009, 186). Ingold (2000, 2011) goes beyond embodied interconnectedness as he integrates the engagement with the environment. Ingold (2000) explains the environment, including human beings, materiality, animals, plants, etc., can be impossible to see as separate because everything moves in the same field. The world is conceived as a monism wherein every movement unfolds into another. The unfolding of movement is an unstoppable process and affects everything in the field (Ingold 2000). Theories that represent interconnectedness are, in every aspect, opposed to western dualisms.

## 1.4 Goals and Structure of the Thesis

As I am interested in which role emotions play in the interconnectedness of the body, this thesis contributes to emotions and interconnectedness in the field of anthropology of the body. This thesis contests the philosophy of body-mind dualism rooted in Dutch society. The main argument is that release of pent-up bodily emotions through healings leads to mental and physical healing. Subsequently, people experience a better connection with their inner senses. To support this argument, I draw upon theories and data gathered from my fieldwork. The aim of Chapter 2 is to show on what grounds my participants turn their backs on Western biomedicine as they are no longer interested in approaching their body from a solely rational and fragmented perspective. They no longer want to be passive subjects, devoted to medical knowledge; they aim for active engagement with their own bodies and emotions. Chapter 3 addresses the vision and methods of energetic holistic therapists. This is analysed with several concepts of the body: intersubjectivity and the body as being immaterial and material. With an ethnographic example of healing, it becomes clear how emotions interact in the body. I argue the acknowledgement and expression of emotions are highly important for human health. Furthermore, to comprehend the bodily emotions as expressed through healings of holistic therapy, I argue a phenomenological and embodied methodology are, in anthropology, of the same importance as semiotics and vernacular images when conducting research on emotions. I elaborate upon this integration of phenomenology and embodiment in the next section: methodology. Chapter 4 argues that people experience more interconnectedness of their inner senses after healings than before healings. It is shown that people act upon their new being-in-the-world in their daily lives. The conclusion argues for emotions as a connector between mind and body. Additionally, in the conclusion is suggested for a better integrations of emotions and feelings in the field of anthropology when doing fieldwork. Furthermore, more integration of a phenomenological and embodied approach as methodology in anthropology is suggested as this approach enables anthropologist to add another dimension to research in both fieldwork



and written ethnographies. To reach the goals of this thesis, I am concerned with the following main question:

How are emotions and interconnectedness of the body experienced through healings given by holistic therapists?

## **1.5 Methodology**

Integrating phenomenology in this thesis is vital as the body is viewed as a mechanism through which one can 'listen' through bodily sensation and feelings (Pagis 2009, 269). Scholars (Csordas 1990, 1994; Jackson 1989, 1996, 2013; Stoller 1989) have shown phenomenology provides solid insights into these notions of embodied emotional experiences. As described, in Chapter 3, I argue that embodiment as research methodology provides the extra dimension of 'feeling' as embodiment enables experiencing the other. Phenomenology opens up a space wherein the lived experiences of the other can be described. In this thesis, methodological principles of anthropology are necessarily broadened toward a phenomenological and embodied approach. In so doing, I was able to explore and feel, with my own body, the lived experiences of people during healings of holistic therapists. Embodiment is the methodological principle that collapses the dualities of the subject-object domain (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 140-141 in Jackson 1996, 32). This method helped me to comprehend the emotional lived experiences of my participants before venturing suggestions about what all holistic therapy practitioners might have in common through seeing and hearing on a discursive level, irrespective of their personal, cultural, or religious circumstances (Jackson 2013, 9). Furthermore, I focussed on emotions in an embodied way, as this focus gives the reader a deeper comprehension of what happens during ethnography (Leavitt 1996, 531).

In the beginning of my three and a half months of fieldwork, it was hard to capture the lived experiences of my participants during healings, as I was brought up in what Jackson (2013,

9) calls a fragmented-rational society. Also, in academia, I learned to translate human beings into shared identities and understand them through shared symbols (Jackson 2013, 8). Thus, I was (and probably still am) trained to interpret and analyse the body through my rational mind as a constructed object. It was only toward the end of my fieldwork that I was able to let go of my rational state of being as such and started to *feel* and recognize bodily emotions as a catalyser to understand the other. To accomplish that, I had to let go of my rational awareness focussed upon hearing and watching during healings. In healings, I had to let the moment be as it is through *experiencing with my whole body*: seeing, watching, and *feeling*. I thus integrated the notion of feeling. Feeling the emotions of the observed through my own body, and becoming sensitive and aware of that, thus opened a new space in anthropological methodological research for me. By *feeling* of emotions of the other in my own body, I thus integrated an embodied approach in addition to the methodology of *seeing* through observing what happens and *hearing* when interviewing with *spoken* words.

As described, during the first weeks of fieldwork, I was not able to capture lived experiences, including the feelings and emotions, of the one being healed. It was my main informant, an energetic holistic therapist, who made me aware of my body as the mechanism to capture the feelings and emotions of the one being healed since she had noticed that my presence at healings supported healings. At that moment, I realized that when observing healings, I felt various stages of distress, dissolution, and anger. These emotions went along with a healing, similar to emotions of a healing-taker. Although subjective, I thus in a way felt how the other felt, and in so doing, I collapsed the dualities of the subject-object domain as embodiment as a methodology does (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 140-141 in Jackson 1996, 32).

During healings I yawned a lot. I told this to the energetic holistic therapist whereupon she remarked that by doing so, I resealed the old, pent-up bodily emotions of the healing-taker: "When yawning, you help to release it," she said. Whether I wanted to or not, I thus became part of the process and participated (Turner 2000, 55). Toward the end of healings, recipients of healings always expressed themselves as being "relieved" and "feeling sparkles" and "warm spots in the body". Likewise, a heavy feeling in my body was also replaced with a pleasant,

uplifted, light bodily feeling. Being aware of the feelings and emotions I felt, and thus conducting embodied research, I was able to better comprehend the lived experience of healing-taker.

Anthropologists, as I did during fieldwork, thus also have an active role in the construction of representations (Turner 2000, 56) as I apparently, unconsciously, did through helping release bodily emotions. Simultaneously, this raises critical questions about objectivity when using embodiment as an analytical methodology. Therefore, I integrated reflexivity as a method as well. Although I was aware of the emotions of the recipient of healings as being an extraordinarily strong flow of anger, sadness felt as “heavy”, or “light” emotions as a pleasant feeling, I reflected on these emotions due to small talks and interviews with both the energetic holistic therapist and the healing-taker. In order to gain their own knowledge of emotions, in addition to mine (O’Reilly 2012, 155). I also reflected on my feelings and emotions because I wrote them down, which helped to clarify them and remind me to ask further questions of the recipient of healings (Diphorn 2013, 208). However, tension between subjectivity and objectivity exists in any ethnography (O’Reilly 2012, 98).

Above all, embodiment as an analytical methodology helped me to understand the emotions of my participant as I *felt* in addition to seeing and hearing. With a phenomenological approach, I was able to highlight the richness of my participants’ experiences (Dejarlais 2011, 97), which usually went beyond the visible, materialism. Phenomenology allowed me to describe emotions and images before they were constructed in shared symbols and shared identities (Jackson 2013, 9). This thesis thus describes my participants’ images, feelings, emotions, and expressions without analysing them for an already constructed concept.

I noticed my participants trusted me and spoke freely about their experiences if I explained the healing I had done myself and the emotions I experienced in their healing. Since I was trusted, they spoke freely themselves (Turner 2000, 55). One of the recipients even said, “I cannot tell my story to everyone because people do not understand it, but you do”. The embodied approach thus changed me as a researcher from an “outsider” to an “insider” wherefore I gained more knowledge of the existing culture of emotions of holistic therapy

practitioners in the Netherlands (Turner 2000, 55).

### *Further methodology and research population*

My initial contact was an energetic holistic therapist who had given me healings. The energetic holistic therapist was willing to let me observe private healings if the recipient of the healing agreed to my presence beforehand. I also participant-observed in the monthly meditation-mornings. I was able to follow ten of the therapist's clients, with whom five I bonded. I interviewed these five persons between the healings as well; therefore, I was able to gain their trust and build a rapport with each of them (O'Reilly 2011, 94). Furthermore, in addition to the interviews and observations, I talked after the healings with the energetic holistic therapist about the person and asked the energetic therapist what she experienced and how she would explain what happened. These different methods helped me to perform data triangulation; I could analyse the results of feeling, interviewing, observing, and small talks with each to see results of the same person from different perspectives (O'Reilly 2012, 155). This gave me a broad idea about the person.

As the Anke, an energetic holistic therapist was willing to open up her network of holistic therapy practitioners to me; I was able to use the snowball sampling method (O'Reilly 2012, 44). When using the snowball method, I was able to introduce myself at Institution CAM (which I will call the School of Energy), which offers education to become an energetic holistic therapist. Anke graduated about 15 years ago from the School of Energy.

At the School of Energy, I (participant-)observed four Saturdays and interviewed and had small talks during and outside the classes. When observing healings of the energetic holistic therapists, I noticed that regression to former lives happened frequently. Therefore, I searched for contacts with the School for Regression and Reincarnation therapy in order to generate data triangulation. As my thesis will show, bodily psychosomatic effects were remarkably similar: recipients who take healings by trained therapists experienced similar bodily effects.

## Chapter 2. Rejection of Body-Mind Dualism

This chapter focusses on the motivations of my participants in their engagement with holistic therapy. This chapter deals with the question, “what is people’s motivation to go to holistic therapists?” My participants show they reject what they perceive as three major problems in Dutch societal structures: an overly rational society, the conventional medical system that treats the human body as fragments, and the passive perception of the body in western biomedicine as “the usual way of being”. The rejection of these three perceptions are used as a lens to comprehend motivations to use holistic therapy: integration of emotions and bodily senses, the perception of the “body as a whole” and an active engagement with bodily emotions. The results show that my participants reject the one-dimensionally idea of the west: the rational mind as the utmost “part” of the body. This chapter also gives insight into the struggles to integrate the acknowledgement of bodily senses and emotions into Dutch rationalized society.

### 2.1 Rejection of Rationality

*“Our society is the Functional Society. [...] Children all need to be confident from their parents. Parents say: ‘yes, but my daughter is so insecure’. Then I think, yes, but she is fifteen years old, so that is not strange, right? It is part of the age. These things, I do not think they are realistic anymore... You need to have a good job, you need to have a career, you have to be thin, you need to sport, you need to have friends and your kids have to be perfect as well. We cannot keep up with this.”*

This quote is from a child and youth psychologist, Fleur, who describes our contemporary society as a functional society. Fleur explains she does yoga once a week and

goes once a month to an energetic holistic therapist: Anke. She goes to the therapist because she thinks a total clean-up of the inner body is needed: “Just as going to the dentist once in a while, a clean-up of the inner body is also necessary”. Anke, the energetic therapist Fleur goes to, discovered about 25 years ago she had “a natural talent to treat people energetically”. Knowing that, Anke studied to become an energetic holistic therapist. First, Fleur went to another energetic holistic who had the same education as Anke: “at this therapist, I started to feel my body again! I always was like this; shaking my legs, and at this therapist, I found out I haven’t felt my legs at all! That was shocking! Before I had cognitive therapy and physiotherapy but with her giving healings and exercises, I learned to feel my legs”. After the therapist retired Fleur searched on the internet for a replacement and found Anke.

I interviewed Fleur in her home. The house is a corner house with a view of a relaxed-looking greenfield, located on the border of the busy city centre of one of the biggest cities in the Netherlands; the location of the house almost feels like a metaphor for how she feels: surrounded by rush, but with a perspective on inner calmness. Her bodily gestures, such as head shaking “no” and speaking with a determined voice about the performance-oriented sociocultural structures in western society where “everyone has to fit in”, show what she perceives as callous and senseless. Fleur mentions contemporary Dutch society as “too performance driven” and “too individualistic”.

How does her understanding of society reflect contemporary sociocultural structures? Giddens (1991) is particularly interested in self-reflexivity of human beings in, what he calls, late modernity. He argues that late modernity creates a space for self-actualization and a search for identity (Giddens 1991, 71-73). Empowerment of the self is achieved through self-reflexivity, to create one’s identity. People are being self-reflexive in order to create certainty from uncertainty. In this modern era, the “individual lives by means of the reflexive organization of the self” (Giddens 1991, 153). This can be further reflected in Fleur’s remarks about Dutch society:

What we only do is continuing accordingly to what we *think* is permissible in society. But what we are only doing is following the footsteps of what society urges us to be. Like I did myself: after high school, I directly went to university, I was working hard at

university to graduate. Then I was graduated and then the next step is, in my case as a psychologist, to take care of a position in the health care. That is conceived to be the next step you have to accomplish. Therefore, it *feels* for me more like an endless path of continuing and not being allowed to stand still and reflect upon myself: how do I *feel* about my choices? What do I want?

The pressure of society is thus ahead of Fleur's *feelings* and what she noticed in her daily life as well. Fleur stresses she learned to *feel* her body during healing sessions at the energetic holistic therapist. Stress reduction and a balance between mind and body was another reason she wanted to practise holistic therapy.

Society, as a rational constructed, is reflected in heightened technology and knowledge systems (Giddens 1991). This challenges people to partake in the system, which simultaneously creates a space for individual performances (Giddens 1991, 4-6). Humanity is threatened through heightened technology and knowledge systems as well; humanity is at risk (Giddens 1991, 4-6). Not everyone is able to keep up. Keeping up with contemporary fluxes of heightened technology and knowledge systems in society pushes people to develop a rational mindset. The division of rationality or masculine as the "mind" in the western body-mind dichotomy forms the basis of the western being-in-the-world. This reduces the awareness of the division of senses and intuition, which is marked as the feminine side (Bendelow 2009, 13).

The prevalence of rationality is featured by another of mine participants, Lenneke: "I have pushed away my senses and intuitive side. It is the part in me that is sensible for feelings, emotions and experiencing 'invisible' colours. [...] As a child I already saw a lot of colours around humans. What you can probably notify as auras, as people call it. I told my parents but they found it nonsense. I did not have the feeling I could share these things back then." A large part of her life she developed her rational mind. Lenneke fulfilled two roles as director of governmental agencies, one at a faculty of applied science and one in an overly masculine institute: the police. Lenneke stopped working these jobs to explore her "intuitive side". At the moment, she is taking a course in intuitive energy, in order to develop her intuitive and sensitive side. Lenneke explains that her hard work and being rational on difficult and high-profile jobs could have pushed her sensitive and intuitive side away, the part in her that

experiences “invisible” colours. That her parents, as described by Lenneke, were not being able to acknowledge their child's intuition or experiencing colours, Suzy, a Reiki master, who I became acquainted with via Anke, describes as “dangerous for high sensitive children”.

Suzy mainly works with high sensitive children and emphasizes that “parents have to *listen* to their children. Otherwise, high sensitive children will feel not understood and tend to use drugs or get depressed”. Suzy, a highly sensitive person herself, is happy that more awareness is given lately to high sensitiveness as she notices herself. She is often asked to give readings in the Netherlands and Belgium and she wrote a book, “a Meeting with Extraordinary Children”<sup>3</sup>, and explained in an interview in a documentary, “Indigo Platform”<sup>4</sup>, about struggles that highly sensitive children experience. Now that holistic therapy is rising in the Netherlands (Adams 2002, 264; Bear 2003) as a counter reaction rational-oriented organizations rise and state their preference and belief in Evidence Based Medicine.

Tsing emphasizes that, due our contemporary globalized world, a “clash” of cultures produces movement and action (2005). Tsing uses “friction” as a metaphor for the “clash” of cultures and to emphasize the various controversial social interactions that make up society. This could be exemplified with the establishment of the Association Against Quackery, which is resistant to holistic therapy. To learn more about their resistance, I arranged an interview with a former chair of the association, who told me: “alternative medicine is nonsense as their theories are so different than *ours*, that it cannot be proven by science”. Tsing also emphasized that friction can occur on every level: micro, local, regional, national, and global (2005). Also, resistance to integration of the female side, intuition and emotion, into the medical world can be found at the highest level in Dutch society; the contemporary Minister of National Health, Well-being, and Sport, Edith Schippers, openly sets herself against the rise of holistic therapy by supporting the Association Against Quackery<sup>5</sup>. However, in addition to Lenneke, Suzy and the children she talks about, as well as my participants who take healings with Anke, want to explore and develop their emotional and intuitive sides. That is one of the reasons to be treated at holistic therapists.



## 2.2 Rejection of Body Fragmentation

Another reason my participants chose holistic therapy is the *holistic* approach of the therapy: the mind, body, and spirit (soul) are connected. This completely rejects the fragmented idea of the body and “the body as a machine” model in western conventional health care (Bendelow 2009, 13). In the body as a machine model, body parts are seen as subordinated to the brain (Bendelow 2009, 16). Hans ten Dam, the founder of the Regression and Reincarnations therapy in the Netherlands, explained his disagreement with the idea of the body as fragmented in conventional health care and the impersonal treatment given in hospitals. He used his wife, who was in the hospital for a few days, as an example. He explained he had not been in the hospital for many years and was in shock how impersonal the doctors reacted to him. He told me his wife had two different doctors, one for her stomach and one for her lungs, and that these two doctors did not have any clue about each other's work. He said, “a doctor asked my wife how my wife felt and did not look her in the eyes but instead ping ponged his eyes from a computer screen to a paper in his hands. Then my wife told the doctor that she could tell him herself how she felt”. Her body was treated as being split into parts. Fleur, as described in her quote, dislikes being split into parts too, as holistic therapy helped her feel her legs again. My participants of who took healings mentioned they prefer a treatment that includes both body and mind.

Bendelow (2009) argues holistic therapies challenge the system of conventional western medical power. She states healthcare systems in wealthy countries face difficulties in meeting demand as they become larger and more bureaucratic. Therefore, dehumanization is experienced by practitioners and patients. Bendelow states, “Dissatisfaction and disillusionment with biomedicine is endemic, in particular the depersonalization and fragmentation experienced through the perceived effects of Cartesian dualism which has permeated western scientific medicine” (Bendelow 2009, 16). These issues make people less interested in conventional western health care systems, as shown by Hans ten Dam’s and his wife’s annoyance (Bendelow 2009).

Being a Regression and Reincarnation therapist, Hans ten Dam expresses his disagreement not only on the fragmentation of the physical body, but also on the western approach to the soul. He argues that Regression and Reincarnation Therapy is scientifically proven as a therapy, as his predecessors Grant and Kelsey have shown in their book “More Than One Life”<sup>6</sup>. The therapy is based on the idea that mental health issues can be cured through a process of questioning, wherein the recipient “goes through” the origin of the issue. Whether the roots of the issue occurred as an adult, a baby, or happened in a former life, does not matter as “going through” happens with symbolic images and feelings reflected on sensitive spots in the body. As psychological issues are solved through that technique, subsequently, physical salvation occurs. Thus, the core of the therapy completely transcends the issue of a life with a beginning and an end. Pim van Lommel, a cardiologist, witnessed hundreds of *Bijna Dood Ervaringen* from individuals whose hearts stopped beating. He wrote his work *Endless Consciousness* (2001) about over 300 of these experiences of individuals, wherein his participants explained they went through a tunnel and arrived in a beautiful world. His idea of consciousness beyond life reflects the idea of Regression and Reincarnation therapy as life is perceived as not having a beginning and an ending. This therapy is completely opposite to Evidence Based Medicine as this only covers the visible, materiality. Furthermore, an active engagement with emotions and bodily senses is required in this therapy.

### **2.3 From Passivity toward Activity**

All participants, who went to healings of holistic therapists or were holistic therapists themselves, wanted to actively engage with their emotions and reject the perception of the body as passive. Acknowledging and releasing emotions, as the underlying problem of Lyme disease, was the same reason Merel went to holistic therapy. She suffered about nine years from Lyme disease, which caused tiredness in her whole body. This forced her to reduce her heavy workload as a consultant. After that, a long search for a cure took place. Merel said she

sees her bodily issues as caused by emotional problems: “I think the reason why I got the bacterial infection was because I suffered from problems I had to deal with, and someone else, who does not suffer from these particular issues, does not get that particular health issue I got. The illness exposed itself because I have to release the underlying problems.”

By “underlying problems”, she meant the unprocessed, pent-up bodily emotions. She wanted to actively engage with her emotions. Research has revealed that emotions connect both mind and body (Bendelow 2009, 13). Therefore, it is not strange that my participants wanted to receive help from a holistic therapist, as in conventional biomedicine emotions are excluded (Adams 2002, 262).

Via Anke, I was introduced to many of my participants, as I was permitted to join private healings with Anke at her practise. I also became acquainted with Margriet from Anke, who gave healings to Margriet. Margriet explained why she went to a holistic therapist in the first place: “I did not want regular health care, because then you get pills and that was not what I wanted. I did not want to have pills. Sometimes, I went to the Druïde [spiritual centre], I found that interesting. I thus thought already different back then”.

During the interview, she explained she went to Anke because she was so angry all the time and depressed. In the following ethnographic example, I describe how Margriet changed her body from passivity and devoted to medical knowledge to an active engagement with emotions. The example explains the notion of healing.

I interviewed Margriet 3.5 years after she recovered from her second bout of colon cancer. When I walked into her flat, I noticed the neatness of her and her husband’s flat. The atmosphere felt clean and the flat looked orderly. I was amazed by the view she had, living on one of the highest floors. Starting the interview, I immediately noticed this was a strong woman sitting opposite me. There was a strength and honesty in every word she said. Margriet asked Anke to join because Margriet was not sure whether she could explain her story well enough and, as she said during the interview, “a lot of people do not understand my healing process”. Due to the healings, it became clear to me that Margriet’s angry and depressed feelings were rooted in the terrible childhood she had been through. Margriet explained her father drank too

much, and then he became angry. This was when she should not be near him because he could easily beat her. As the oldest child, Margriet took care of her younger sisters and brothers because her parents failed in doing so. After high school, there was no money for her to study, so she started to work. Her childhood situation made her angry and depressed, and at the multiple healing sessions she received from Anke, she revived these moments again as Anke and Margriet explained. Margriet said that in one of the first healings, she cried out her anger in her childhood. During the interview, Margriet told me she got colon cancer for a second time in 2013, so she received chemo therapy. She was treated with chemo therapy in the hospital and the recovery process of her stomach, which is close to her colon, did not go well. She had to stay in the hospital for 107 days. She gained different problems, like gastric draining, as her stomach did not want to work.

I pictured Margriet lying there, angry and depressed, and doctors explaining medical jargon, which would clarify her stomach problems. Repeatedly, day after day, Margriet's body was exposed and surrendered to doctors and nurses who had medical explanations for why her stomach was not recovering. Margriet told me the doctors wanted to perform surgery again after many months of lying there to find the specific problem in her stomach. Margriet said, "that was the moment I collapsed. That was the moment I wanted to be dead. I can remember that I said to the doctor 'if you are going to surgeon me again, you probably can help me to not wake up anymore'. The doctor said, 'how do you mean?' I told him I wanted to die". This was, I understood from Margriet, the first time psychologists went to Margriet's room to help her in her depression. However, Margriet did not want to tell the psychologist everything, "because they did not know anything about me". Margriet distrusted them. I realized this was the first time someone looked at her mental health since her body was treated as separated from it. As Margriet was still lying in the hospital, her body was devoted to medical knowledge. She, who belongs to the body, was in no way being perceived through medical science as the one who was able to understand and to seek salvation in herself. She was conceived as being passive.

This was the moment when Anke called Margriet to give her a healing. Anke had given Margriet several healings, before she developed cancer for the second time. Anke arrived after

visiting hours and closed the curtains alongside Margriet's bed. However, the sister did not know Anke specifically came to heal Margriet. At the hospital, standing at Margriet's bed, Anke told me during the interview she noticed a fire meditation was needed, to "burn away" the angry feelings and depression coming from her childhood. Anke told Margriet to throw everything that Margriet still, symbolically, *had in her stomach* in the fire. They both visualized a fire. Margriet said, "I threw every negative feeling that popped up into this fire, on a certain moment, I even laughed at it. Something popped up in my mind, for example a fight with my sister, and then I threw this situation in the fire as well. [...] Doing this relieved me, I felt space in my body". This appeared to me as Margriet actively worked with her emotions, that were pent-up in her stomach. Anke guided her during the meditation, although Anke noticed Margriet was enthusiastic and gave energetic strength to each word she said. Margriet said, "After the healing, I continued for a while and threw every negative thought in the fire. Nowadays, I sometimes still use the fire." Anke emphasizes Margriet's story is remarkable as not everyone is able to release pent-up bodily emotions so easily. She says this story dangerous to tell, as people must not have the wrong impressions of a healing. She stresses not everyone can do this so powerfully as Margriet

Shortly after the meditation, the doctor entered the room in the hospital. Margriet says, "the doctor was pleasantly surprised, as he said that the last time he saw me I was lying as a dead duck and now I was looking very well". Margriet who had been in the hospital for over 100 days was doing so well that she could go for her first weekend leave, the doctor decided. When she returned from her weekend leave there was no reason to keep Margriet in the hospital because her stomach worked again.

At the end of the interview, I asked Margriet how she sees her life at the moment. She said she does not believe the cancer will return because she digested the emotions that lay underneath her bodily illness. When we were almost done with the interview, Margriet told me in a trustful and powerful way that she knew for sure that people could become ill because of unprocessed emotions: "I know for sure my transformation came when I processed the emotions of my childhood. I do think I already processed a lot of emotions, but I needed that

last push". By "last push", she means the fire meditation.

After Margriet's interview, to gain a complete picture about her medical situation, I made an appointment with the nurse, Stephanie, who treated Margriet during that time at the hospital. At the hospital for the interview, Stephanie told me the same as Margriet did: that she was treated for cancer, only, after the chemotherapy, her stomach did not seem to start working. The nurse told me kindly a medical explanation of Margriet's situation and said, after the weekend leave, Margriet was doing well and was released from the hospital. Stephanie said that before this interview she went through Margriet's medical file and noticed the "good results after the weekend leave". Stephanie said she just told a colleague they must send more people on weekend leave because "relaxation apparently works". Stephanie was surprised when I told her the story of the fire meditation. She said that was not in the medical file. I told Stephanie that Margriet never said it because she was afraid no one would understand her. Stephanie explained later that Margriet is still coming back for her medical check-ups, but now, 3.5 years later, no cancer has been found. She said, "mostly as a person gets cancer for a second time it means the beginning of the end of life. But Margriet, yes, but I do not know the figures exactly."

This example shows the shift from passivity of one's own body and emotions, toward an active approach of digesting old emotions. Margriet clearly assured me she needed the last push and processed emotions that caused her cancer. Being "informed by" authorities is typical for our contemporary society (Heelas 1996, in Adams 2002, 247). As in the last two centuries, people progressively shifted from a predominantly collectivistic or socio-centric order toward a self-informed or individualistic self. People changed their thinking from "belonging to" toward being "informed by" the institutions in which they are embedded. The authority of the one holding knowledge matters (Heelas 1996 *in* Adams 2002, 247). Margriet's example shows the body is seen as a passive object in the medical world, as Margriet just laid down and heard doctors and nurses talking medical jargon.

When Margriet went to the root of her issues, during the meditative healing, she actively engaged with her emotions. Lyon and Barbalet (*in* Csordas 1994, 52) explain our

everyday understanding of the body has been massively influenced by medicine, as well as understanding of approaches of the body in social science. In biomedicine, the body is regarded as an external entity from which epistemological knowledge is derived (Lyon and Barbalet *in* Csordas 1994, 52). Moreover, the patient is tacitly subjugated to the medical professional. As Lyon and Barbalet say, “The skills of medicine are diagnostic and treatment (surgery or drugs) oriented and these require the patient to be subordinate to the practitioner” (*in* Csordas 1994, 52). In the biomedical field, an unhealthy body is not considered an entire entity but rather a structure with failing systems and its respective symptoms (Lyon and Barbalet *in* Csordas 1994, 52).

## **Conclusion**

Motivations for holistic therapy users are clearly opposed to the philosophy of the body-mind split, as my participants show in depositions of three major characteristics of Dutch medical health care system: rationality, fragmentation, and passivity of the body. My participants chose to reject rationality and the identity-oriented western world, which is fuelled by forthcoming heightened technology and knowledge systems of modernity and globalization. My participants explained how they are no longer interested in the fragmentation of their bodies. Instead, they want to integrate and develop their intuitive side to accomplish mental and bodily healing. With an active engagement of their emotions, they reject their body as being passive and devoted to medical knowledge and medicine. The next chapter delves deeper into the engagement with emotion due to healings.

## Chapter 3. Emotions in the Case of Healing

In the last chapter, my participants emphasized their rejection of a subordinated role of emotions in Dutch society, as the one-dimensional rational side of dualism prevails. In opposition to rationality, this chapter focusses on the acknowledgement and expression of emotions as envisioned by holistic therapists. This chapter explains that working methods of energetic holistic therapy transcends the body as being material through integration of immateriality (emotional energy) of the body. Working methods of energetic holistic therapy are further analysed with the contemporary debate of emotions in affect theory, as the theory focusses as well on the body as both material and immaterial (Lutz 2017, 186). The analysis touches upon intersubjectivity and pre-subjectivity as these “spaces” of the body can be substantiated through an ethnographic example of Barbara’s healing. It becomes clear that acknowledgement and expression of pent-up bodily emotions is an important part of my participants’ healing processes. Furthermore, the importance of phenomenology and embodiment is emphasized when anthropologists conduct research on emotions.

### 3.1 Why Emotions?

*“Due to emotions, we experience our life as it is. Our life contains moments of anger, sadness, joy, etcetera. Suppose, if you do not have emotions you would live as a robot because you cannot become angry for example. If you go to a doctor and say there is ‘something’ then your blood will be tested, but your bodily senses are left out. We have to connect with our body and express our emotions in order to live in accordance with our inner feelings. That is what helps us to experience life the fullest. [...] That is why it is so important we have to learn to feel our body and the senses of our body. If we are not doing that, emotions are going to pent-up in our bodies, and because of that we will get tired, bodily issues will occur, and we are going to live on an autopilot.”*



This quote is from energetic holistic therapist Anke. In small chats with her, when at her house to observe healings, she always emphasized the importance of bodily senses and *feelings* in the body. Once she said, “our society is trapped with rationality. We have not learned to sense our body. The first thing that we learn at primary school is to learn how to use our heads: one plus one equals two. We are not concentrating on the body as a whole”. Students who study to become energetic holistic therapists also emphasize the importance of *feeling* bodily emotions. According to energetic holistic therapy, emotions underlie bodily illness; Anke explains, “People are coming to me with physical and mental problems. Mostly, they have no clue that beyond these problems lay undigested emotions. They just come because there is ‘something’”. Energetic holistic therapists stress that, due to our rational society, people have not learned to acknowledge and express, and thus digest, single emotions. Therefore, undigested emotions become pent-up in the body and cause bodily issues. Anke stresses she cured herself of skin issues by releasing old pent-up bodily emotions. In holistic therapy, the body is used as the centre of knowledge and, therefore, is the mechanism through which one should “listen” through bodily sensations, feelings, and images (Pagis 2009, 267). The body is used as the mirror of the self. In holistic therapy, one turns to the body to gain a better understanding of oneself because knowledge is anchored within the body (Pagis 2009, 267). Given bodily emotions such a central and important place reflects feminist thinking. Reasoning and objectivity learned through western biomedicine is not applied at all.

The initial debate in the ‘80s on emotion criticised the distinction of dualism: between emotion and reason, the unintended and the intended, the bodily self and the immaterial mind (Lutz 2017, 182). Lutz stresses critiques emerged because of the rise of several intellectual movements, which belonged to feminism. Here, feminism pointed to the cultural structuralism that devalued the capacity associated with the female (2017, 182). Feminist asked for a careful examinations and deconstruction of the ruling categories associated with males, like objectivity (Lutz 2017, 182). Subsequently, this led to debate on emotions wherein emotion is highlighted as the missing link between mind and body, structure and action. Emotions would fill the gap

between dichotomies of what is marked as the division of the rational or the masculine, and of senses and intuition, which is marked as feminine (Leavitt 1996). Multiple studies have shown bodily emotions connect the mind and the body (Bendelow 2009; Csordas 1994; Leavitt 1996). The connection between the mind and the body reflects the idea on which energetic holistic therapy is based: emotions can cause bodily illness and the release of emotions heals these same bodily illnesses. This is seen in Anke's vision and her curing her skin problem, as well as the healing example of Margriet in the last chapter.

Although this debate has highly problematized the Cartesian dualism of our contemporary societal structures (Bendelow 2009, 13), in anthropology nowadays, the study "of emotion has still not fully escaped the straitjackets of reason versus unreason, civilized versus primitive, (monadic) self versus society" (Lutz 2017, 182). According to Lutz, that is necessary: although new ethnographic material has shed light on this dualism, this was achieved in a world that is constantly contested and changing (ibid.). Plus, as Lutz argues, "the study of emotions must continue to struggle against an intellectual heritage - embedded in words, things, and relations of power - that requires intense effort to withstand or think without." A doctor, with whom I attended meditation classes, described the tension of the integration of holistic therapy: "I found it difficult to integrate into my daily practices. My daily work and colleagues are so materialistic minded. Evidence Based Medicine is so difficult to compete with. as everything in medicine is based on reason, facts and objectivity I always have the idea that these things [listening to bodily feelings] have to be measured with whether it is true or not, objective, or if it works or not". However, she encourages her clients to listen to their embodied emotions and inner feelings and sometimes encourages them to go to holistic therapies. How do holistic therapists help to acknowledge and express emotions of their recipients? What are the methods of holistic therapists?

### 3.2 Methods of Energetic Holistic Therapy

During fieldwork, I focussed on different forms of holistic therapy: energetic holistic therapy, regression and reincarnation therapy, and meditation. I primarily focussed on energetic holistic therapy as I was allowed to observe private healings at the practise of an energetic holistic therapist and to observe classes at the School of Energy. Therefore, I will elaborate on the practises of (student) energetic therapists, although, as I discovered in the field, all holistic therapies I investigated had similar bodily aesthetics during healing and were focussed on unravelling pent-up bodily emotions and finding “the roots” of the issues.

I learned from Anke and the students of the School of Energy that they are trained to open their senses and *feel* (and sometimes see as well) emotional blockades of an individual they are treating. They see or feel energetic layers of the human body, what they call “the astral body” of a person. They concentrate on the person’s help question, and then, using their hands, they going “through the energy” of the client and “flow” the mostly “heavy energy” so it releases from the body. This technique has been derived from the astrologer and doctor Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), who wrote his dissertation about animal magnetism (Pattie, 1994). Here, the “animal” refers to life. His research, about the influence of planets on life on earth, further developed toward the magnetizing power of human beings. He argued people could magnetize other individuals as well (Pattie, 1994). His perceptions are the fundamentals of the School of Energy.

I was lucky to participant-observe in Anke’s monthly meditation workshop, wherein she explained in the first few hours what this “energy field” or “astral body” of human beings is. During these meetings, Anke followed Barbara Brennan’s book, “Hands of Light: a Guide to Healing Through the Human Energy Field” to explain the different energetic layers surrounded by a human body. In every workshop, she explained one layer; every layer has its own function. The first layer is the most related to the physical body: the “etheric body” and is the densest layer. The second layer is a bit less dense than the first layer; the “emotional body” is where emotional phenomena occur. The third layer, “the mental body”, is where emotions are

processed through the mind. Every layer becomes less dense up to the last layer, the seventh layer. The astral layers of a body can be explained through what Merel, a healing-taker, once mentioned. She said, “Anke goes deeper” in answer to my question of whether she noticed any difference in her body when going to a psychologist or the energetic therapist. According to energetic therapists, the humans’ physical eyes are mostly not able to see the astral body because western society is the focus on materiality and not the energetic immateriality. Anke mentions that she can *feel* these layers when concentrating on the human body. Because of her 20 years of experience, she developed an ability to see the layers as well.

Each layer is most strongly connected to a particular part of the body, as for example the throat or the heart. In 1963, Gerhard Baule and Richard McFee (*in* Zhou and Uesaka 2006, 72), of the department of Electrical Engineering at Syracuse University, for the first time, detected biomagnetic signals from the human heart activities, known as the magnetocardiogram (MCG). The human heart is the strongest biomagnetic source detected (Zhou and Uesaka 2006, 72). Later, in 1970, David Cohen et al., of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), first used a device known as SQUID (Superconducting Quantum Interference Device) and record the electric magnetrons along the human body (Zhou and Uesaka 2006, 72), which is what energetic therapists call the energy field around a human being.

This field might as well be what Jackson (2013) calls the intersubjective space between humans, or what Hannah Arendt calls “the subjective in-between” (*in* Jackson 2013, 8). Intersubjectivity shifts our full attention away from *the* person or *the* self as a stable character toward a space that generates “subtle negotiations and alternations of subjective experience as we interact with one another” (*in* Jackson 2013, 8). Jackson stresses different dimensions of subjective experiences: dialogically (in conversation or confrontation), intercorporeally (in dancing, moving, fighting), and introceptively ( what we call a sense of the others frame of mind, intentions or worldview (2013, 8). This last dimension might be the dimension wherein energetic holistic therapist are trained to *feel* the other. The director of the School of Energy clarified as follows to me after my question about how one *feels* energy around an individual:

“if you walk into a room and you notice that ‘*the words that cut like knives*’ then you do not walk to the kitchen and pick a knife to cut in the air?!” With this example, the director explained we experience energy from other human beings. Thus, humans are able to sense particular energy produced through emotions of individuals, which Jackson (2013, 8) thus calls the intersubjective.

The presubjective, a stage before the discursive formation, the stage before formulating a word or a feeling into collective representations and symbols, has made place for affect theory (Lutz 2017, 186). Lutz (2017, 186) stresses affect theory, as a successor of the presubjective, “is less interested in subjective understood as disembodied content and more interested in the idea that we should be looking for a presubjective but somewhat smarter body [...] the intent is to break down the distinction between the material and the immaterial” (Lutz 2017, 186). An example is the energetic holistic therapy, where a bridge is made between the immaterial and the material. During a class at the School of Energy, these terms were exemplified as “*grofstoffelijk* (the interconnection between materialism, of *seeing* the body and *hearing* words) and immateriality, or the *feeling* of the subjective in-between, what they called *fijnstoffelijk*. A student said during class, “people who believe in the existence of energy fields are not going to university to let this be proved, or to learn about it. You simply *feel* and *see* it exists”. As for Anke, and other students of School of Energetic therapy, they have been born with a quite far developed notion of feeling and experiencing bodily senses. At school, they train their senses even more. In the case of Anke, she developed her senses through experience of healing as well.

This section has explained the visions and methods of energetic holistic therapists. It has shown their philosophy about emotions as underlying bodily and mental issues. It explained pent-up bodily emotions are rooted in a person’s energy field and can be released through “flowing” the emotional blockade. The concept of emotions has been analysed through the anthropological debate of the presubjective, intersubjective, and affect theory. The next section shows, with an ethnographic example of a healing, how methods and theory are used in practise.

### 3.3 Healing: Integration of Emotions

The following ethnographic example of a healing shows the methods of energetic holistic therapy in practise. Furthermore, the healing shows how pent-up bodily emotions are released, and subsequently, ailments are cured.

I observed multiple healings by Anke her practise. Anke's practise room is located in her and her husband's house. The house is in middle-upper class neighbourhood. During the weeks I observed healings, I noticed Anke studied Chinese medicine and cosmology, which was clearly visible in the decorations in the house as well; the house was neatly furnished as per the feng shui principle; the balance between light and dark was noticeable. The room we were in was about 16 square meters, precisely big enough for three chairs (mine, Anke's, and the client's), a table, and a rolling bed whereupon the client received the healing. It was a neatly furnished room, and after every healing, Anke refreshed the linen a client used. On the walls hang diplomas, earned at the School of Energy and through other courses.

I always sat next to Anke, in a half circle with the client. The healing took two hours and always started with about half an hour of talking, which happens with Barbara's healing as well. It always occurred to me Anke could quickly find her client's issue. Barbara was tired and had to take a nap every afternoon. Anke and Barbara decided to start the healing, as Anke explained that, in addition to talking, the energy of the body also shows where healing is needed.

When Barbara laid on the rolling bed, Anke used her hands to concentrate on the energy in order to *feel* and flow the client's emotional blockade. Anke held Barbara's feet and immediately started to feel heavy arms and shaking. She *felt* what the client's body brought up. She explained she concentrates on the person's emotional help question. Then, mostly directly, she feels tiredness, anger, or other unpleasant feelings deriving from the person's body. Anke notices these particular lines because, she says, her body functions as a mirror. That helps to release the pent-up bodily emotions of the healing-taker, partly because the client gains awareness but also because Anke flows this, what she calls "heavy" energy.

Anke asked Barbara whether she feels the same. Barbara answered she does not *feel* the same emotions yet, at once, Barbara started talking about her father during her childhood years. She conveyed unpleasant experiences. Anke listened and continued concentrating on Barbara's body by moving her hands slowly to spots on and around her body. Anke explains, when she concentrated on the help question, the process of energy flowing through old pent-up bodily emotions triggers the recipient to talk about these old undigested emotions.

Silence fell for a couple minutes. Anke sometimes said she felt "heavy" energy. She groomed a lot when noticing heavy energy, as she said that helps to express, and subsequently release, the emotional blockade in the body. A couple of seconds later Barbara started to *feel* cold body parts, and she shook sometimes what reflected her notion of old pent-up bodily emotions. Observing many healings, I recognized the same ritual of these bodily aesthetics—cold spots in the body, shivering, seeing colours—at every healing. Also, at the school for Regression and Reincarnation therapy, I witness a demonstration of a healing wherein the recipient felt an alternation of cold and warm spots in the body, accompanied with a feeling of sparkling in the body. In Garrett's (2001) work about transcendental meditation and Reiki, she describes similar bodily emotional aesthetics: people often see colours, feel warmth, and sometimes shake or twitch while receiving Reiki. In Reiki, this is explained as a beneficial "release" of pent-up bodily memories (Garrett 2001, 334).

Sitting in the corner of the room, observing this releasing of unprocessed emotions also made my body feel heavy. I felt heavy, not good, extremely tired, and my stomach and other organs felt unpleasant. I yawned a lot. I was feeling so uncomfortable I did not know how to sit in my chair because I felt the emotions strongly. I kept yawning. Anke explained afterward she felt I was helping to release old, unprocessed emotions as well, as was "visible" through my constant yawning. She said if she noticed I was blocking the healing, I would no longer be permitted to observe. Anke also said these "heavy" emotions were releasing.

The ritual continued for about an hour: Anke moved her hands around Barbara: going from attached to the body to one meter from the body, as she moved through the described "astral bodies". Silence broke; Barbara talked about some unpleasant feelings about past

experiences, and she expressed sadness through crying and said how angry she felt. Anke continued by breathing heavily and advised Barbara to do the same. Anke groomed and said she also experienced tiredness and “heavy” spots in her body. Barbara says she feels heavy body parts as well. At once, Anke talked about images of some of Barbara’s aunts, which I found remarkable because Anke did not know anything about them. Later, I learned “getting” images is a mediumistic type of healing Anke uses to clarify inner processes of the healing-taker.

As the process continued, Barbara suddenly said she felt her legs becoming lighter: “They are sparkling” she noticed, “and I see beautiful colours.” At the same moment, Anke explained she felt the pent-up bodily emotions they were just working on released. She explained this is why Barbara feels sparkling in her body: because the energy is flowing as it should be. Anke continues to amplify Barbara’s remark by saying she feels a lot of light energy and sees a lot of colours as well. While they are talking about this, I am still yawning, but no longer feeling so unpleasant. Anke asked Barbara how she feels, and Barbara explained she felt more peace in her body. The healing continued, and I started to feel lighter as well, as the energy in the room slowly transformed from heavy to light.

Anke said she saw a group of African woman dancers, with feathers around their ankles. She explained it is a sort of shamanistic ritual. Barbara confirmed she always felt a strong connection with the African continent and continuous by saying these women are wise woman, who had curing powers. Barbara stated she felt as if her lips prick and said, in Africa, people stretch up their lips: “When talking about Africa, I get a very trustworthy feeling”. When Barbara says this, Anke explains she immediately feels the energy flowing very gently and says, “The energy around your head becomes richer”. Barbara said, “I feel a very comfortable and peaceful feeling.”

I noticed the healing came to an end because for them, and me, the unpleasant feeling is transformed into a light energy. Anke said she saw an opal colour. When she made this remark, I saw something I had never seen before. Observing this whole healing, and feeling my body take part in the healing, I noticed a light coming out of Barbara’s body. The air became



light, and the feeling I got from the energy in the room was almost unrecognizable, so delicate. It shined very strongly beginning at her belly and slowly filled the whole room. I said this to Anke, and she confirmed she saw the same: "This is," she explains, "because we went to a very old piece in the body of Barbara, and this peace was not able to shine for a long time. Apparently, this contact to the soul we just made is a piece where Barbara felt very good with and is now able to shine again and flow freely". I could not stop watching Barbara as the feeling of the light energy was so beautiful in the room. Although it felt good, and I felt so delightful to experience this, I was not sure if anyone who walked into the room then would notice the same light because my body went along with the healing from the beginning to the end. Seeing another dimension of a body might be, what Jackson calls, metaphorical qualities (1989, 142).

When the healing was finished Barbara fell into a short sleep, and I continued to watch her. I slowly felt the enormous light merge into a "common" vibration of energy; the light faded away and made space for what we would notice as "common" air. Barbara woke up, and the healing was over. When I walked to the door, saying goodbye and shaking hands for the next time, I still felt "illuminated", as if I had a very light body. In Anke's hallway hung a mirror. I looked into it and saw my eyes were widely open and sparkled. I remembered at once what a student-therapist of the School of Energy told me when I had a similar experience during classes: "your eyes are the mirror of your soul". I told Anke I felt as if I had a very light body, and she said she understood my feeling because she always felt illumination after a session. I realized the richness of the healings and how Barbara travelled through space and time as if it did not exist. As an observer, I felt how the healing enriched my inner body. These healings gave me a feeling of traveling through space and time and becoming illuminated.

The description of ethnographic healing substantiates the intersubjective experience (Dejarlais 2011, 90): a constant recognition of bodily aesthetics and feelings between healer and healing-taker. For example, Barbara had bodily aesthetics; bodily cold spots, shivering, and bodily emotions, such as sadness and anger, were reflected in Anke's body. Anke expressed, and therefore released, these embodied emotions of Barbara through grooming and flowing of pent-up bodily emotions in the energy. Remarking on these bodily languages of both healer and

recipient exemplifies the intersubjective space between two bodies (that of healer and healing-taker). Anke's images, about the dancing shamanic African ladies also show the connections with Barbara as she, subsequently, felt a prickle in her lip and felt comfortable with the images. These examples also show the pre-reflexive embodied sense of self, which is a different engagement with the world than the ones from rational modes of reflection (Adams 2002, 196).

The notion of light coming from Barbara's body indicates attention is not fixed solely on the material; the body should be understood as an epitome of flux and "not as a bounded entity subject to the empirical rules of biological science" (Csordas 1989, 1). The description of the healing shows that the immateriality, or what energetic therapists call "energy", can become "visible" as well. As "the light out of the body" became visible to me as well. This might be an example of the affect theory described above, as the "light out of the body" shows the distinction between immaterial (light out of the body) and the material (visible body) can be broken down (Lutz 2017, 186).

My observation also shows *my* subjective experience, although I reflected upon my experiences with Anke and Barbara, which is an embodied research method further stressed with phenomenology in the next section.

### **3.4 Emotions in Ethnography**

When elaborating on the ethnographic example of the healing, a phenomenological approach is fundamental. Phenomenology is a philosophical method that examines what it means to be-in-the-world and describes the experiences of senses or feelings before they become subject to theory and concepts (Jackson 1996, 3). Critical examinations of research, epistemology, and the constitution of knowledge have shown that "facts" are formed in the process of experience. Therefore, people's lived experiences are thus constituted in the moment rather than being pre-existing and fixed (Turner 2000, 51). Through "shared symbols, collective representations or conventional wisdom", many anthropologists clarify the inner

experiences of people (Jackson 2013,7). On the one hand, phenomenology as a methodology problematizes this methodological principle (Jackson 2013, 7). On the other hand, it opens a space for unlimited individual experiences as they happen. Phenomenology can illuminate another, extra, dimension as the lived experience of someone. In the case of energetic holistic therapy, this means the lived experience of images, emotions, bodily aesthetics, and colours. Thus, phenomenology allows the researcher to describe people's inner experiences as unfixed, in a presubjective stage. Furthermore, philosophical anthropological concepts, such as phenomenology, can thus become more concrete due to ethnographic examples (Dejarlais 2011, 90). Enhancing the lived experience of someone is where anthropologist excel; anthropologist describe an everyday situation as experienced by people, "before venturing suggestions as to what human beings may have in common, irrespective of their personal, cultural, or religious circumstances" (Jackson 2013, 9). Therefore, I suggest anthropologists should integrate a phenomenological approach, especially when conducting fieldwork on emotions.

Phenomenology can describe society in its lived experiences; the role of the anthropologist should be a part of this process to represent the construction from it (Turner 2000, 52). In the beginning of the healing, when Barbara's "heavy" energy was reached, I did not feel well at all. As described, I no longer knew how to sit because of the terrible feeling in my whole body. After Anke and Barbara experienced a lighter and more pleasant feeling, I experienced it with them as well. Feeling this gave me the opportunity to better comprehend what Barbara was going through. Embodied ethnography thus gives me the opportunity to learn that culture occurs in a world in which one lives and experiences interaction (Turner 2000, 52). Embodiment thus shifts the perspective away from seeing culture as "principally located in people's mind in concepts and values" (Turner 2000, 52). Culture is lived and, when living life, constituted (Turner 2000, 52). Therefore, my role as an anthropologist is not only mainly analytical and reflexive but "as an embodied, sensing, acting, socially situated participant" (Turner 2000, 52).

Emotions can constitute a particular experience in the past, and these emotions echo,

build on, and allude to emotions and events in the present (Beatty 2010, 431). It is the experience of emotions that constitutes a complex and individual situation in the past and which manifests in the present (Beatty 2010, 431). Beatty (2010) elaborates on the narrative side of emotions as they manifest in the history-as-lived of an individual. Barbara shows her being-in-the-world was interwoven with emotions of sadness and anger gained from experiences in her childhood. Beatty explains historians have tackled many problems encountered in the field by ethnographers, but it is the professional advantage of ethnographers to enrich or “oppose positions of realism and epistemological despair” (2010, 431). Therefore, the history-as-lived is a narrative constituted through words, verbal or written, *and emotions and images* of the individual. Thus, emotions and images construct narration as well because why should images and emotions be excluded from reality as this unfolds in worlds as well? (Beatty 2010, 431).

My personal experience integrating embodiment led to experiencing another dimension, as I included my bodily senses in addition to seeing and hearing. It must be mentioned that the energetic holistic therapist made me aware of my bodily presence in the room, (luckily) benefitting the healing. As for me, I made myself actively aware of senses of my body. Being actively aware of my body to sense the recipient also made me realise I was not only an observer, but also an active participant, whether I wanted to be or not. Thus, my body—while sensing and feeling—was active participating. I realized that embodiment, as a method, thus always happens because bodily senses, feelings, and thoughts are always “in the air”. The subjective in-between is always present and influencing the other. Thus, despite any attempt to let cultural processes proceed untouched, a researcher is actively participating (Turner 2000, 55) and can have more awareness of bodily senses. My body moving along with the healing enabled me to feel “heavy” and sense “light” energy and thus opened pathways to observe people’s inner (historical) experiences. Consequently, through participation, the anthropologist becomes the object of study rather than a variable to be controlled for through analytic reflexivity (Turner 2000, 55).

## Conclusion

This chapter has shown that emotions can be felt and experienced in an intersubjective space of human beings, as both the healer and the recipient reflected upon similar embodied experiences. The ethnographic example showed that, when following Lutz (2017) regarding affect theory, the material, the body, and the immaterial “energy” can be broken down; the intersubjective space itself is full of different kinds of energy, constituted through emotions. The ethnographic example, furthermore, shows that old, unprocessed emotions can be released through energetic holistic therapy. The fact that historical unprocessed emotions can become pent-up in the body, enriches the study of the human body. Instead of solely focusing on words, symbols, and behaviour, a healing gives insight into people’s lived experience.

When researching emotion, the methodologies of phenomenology and embodiment are highly welcome. A phenomenological approach enables anthropologists to describe the lived experience of the observed, including images, feelings, and emotions. An embodied approach creates the opportunity for anthropologists to experience the observed’s bodily senses and feelings, which gives the reader an extra dimension when integrating, in addition to hearing and seeing the senses in the written ethnography. Thus, anthropologists are good at describing as completely as possible what happens on the ground.

## Chapter 4. Enhancing Interconnectedness

The former chapter mainly focused on the holistic therapist's vision of bodily emotions and clarified that unprocessed emotions from former experiences can become pent-up in the body. Through healing, my participants were shown to actively engaged with their emotions. They learned pent-up bodily emotions are expressed as bodily diseases and mental issues.

This chapter explains that people experience bodily and mental change after a healing and delves deeper into the interconnectedness of mind and body, as my participants experience their inner feelings rested upon historical knowledge, which Jackson (2013) explains as someone's "lifeworld": someone's historical knowledge acting out in the present. This chapter explains that a healing of energetic holistic therapy enables people to experience their inner sense more strongly than they did before healing. Subsequently, this experience leads to self-transformation and other choices in life, such as preferences in work, that lead to further development of the embodied emotional, artistic side.

Furthermore, this chapter explains how people's environment and social relations act upon their change as they integrate a better notion of their inner senses. The meshwork theory of Ingold is used because this theory describes the interconnectedness of life. Using the meshwork theory, the corresponding effect of emotions is described as well.

### 4.1 Interconnectedness of Body and Mind

*"Before I went to healings, I did not even notice I had so many emotions spinning around in me. I always became silence when my family and I had issues again. When I started to go to healings, I started to feel a lot of emotions going through me but I could not recognize these emotions. At least I felt them. I was not able to speak to my family about how I felt about them. Now, I recognize my emotions, and can speak them out loud. I am so happy with that."*

In this quote, Merel, who suffers from Lyme disease, explains she acknowledged and expressed her emotions. In addition to recognizing and expressing her emotions, Merel noticed her bodily tiredness, Lyme disease, was fading. Healings of energetic holistic therapy helped her with her disease. I also saw this self-transformations processes happening, as I saw her occasionally in the fieldwork period.

In addition to observing three healing sessions with Merel, I spent two afternoons interviewing Merel in her home. I interviewed her between the first and second healing and the second and third healing. Before these healings, Merel had had about ten healings from Anke. I learned Merel was a quiet woman, very kind and willing to explain her story. She found it important that people's expressions of emotions are more generally accepted in the Netherlands. In the first interview, I had to make effort to have my questions answered; she was only able to give short answers. She presented herself as tired. Merel's interior did not seem to fit the tired and modest woman I became acquainted with. The interior of Merel's house looked very expressive and fashionable, decorated with many colours and modern furniture. A big DJ turntable and mixing desk fit the Ibiza-lookalike decorated garden. When I saw Merel, she was always dressed very fashionably and creatively. However, in the last interview with Merel, her expressive interior and clothes did seem to fit her personality.

In the last interview, Merel was transformed into a very talkative woman. Before the interview, I expected to repeat sentences in different ways to obtain more information from her, but there was no need. As we were sitting in her house at a fashionable, industrial table with her dogs running around, she talked freely about her new being-in-the-world. She had even excused herself because she was very tired in the last interview: "Now, I really feel better," she said. "Now I just do things, before the negative emotions overruled me and kept me from going [...] Now I feel much more energetic and lively. I can express myself whenever and however I want." Merel's body can be perceived as intercommunicative and active as it became like this through the expression of emotions (Lyon and Barbalet 1994, 48). According to Lyon and Barbalet, the body can be viewed simultaneously as "an agent in its own world construction" as it has the power for self-transformation through emotions (1994, 48). Anke

also mentioned people have the power for mental and bodily self-healing when releasing emotional blockades in the body.

My participants showed that both mental and bodily healing occurs after pent-up bodily emotions are released through healings of holistic therapy. Emotions connect the mind and the body (Bendelow 2009; Leavitt 1996); thus, creates serious questions about the body-mind dualism so heavily featured in Western society (Bendelow 2009). Merel wanted to try holistic therapy first because she knew her bodily issues, caused by Lyme, were not only bodily but also mental. She wanted to actively involve her emotions in her healing process, as explained in the last section of the first chapter of this thesis. Merel felt she needed to act upon her embodied historical knowledge in order to heal. Anke could help her, as Merel said: “Anke goes very deep. [...] At Anke I felt something happened in my body. I *experience* in my body what she means. At a regular therapist you get, proverbially speaking, a note on which your issues are written, which I experienced as correct, but you do not *feel* it in your body. At Anke, it really gets me.” Emotions of former experiences are rooted in the body, as explained in the former chapter.

In the second interview, Merel recalled the last healing wherein she revived a connection with her deceased mother. Observing this healing as well, I noticed unresolved family issues came up. This was also common, as everyone’s healing I observed involved the releasing of family-related issues experienced in former experiences in life (mostly childhood). Also, family-related issues of ancestors popped up during healings. When chatting with Anke after a healing, she reflected upon her 20 years’ experience as a healer. According to Anke, we, in the west, do not see and *feel* these things in our daily lives because we have never learned to sense and feel: “We stopped feeling the connections we have with our passed relatives, and feelings we have in our body [...] In our society we simply do not learn to make contact with our body because we are only busy with our heads. That is why we cannot solve bodily issues, because we are disconnected from our body. That is why I want to help people to restore the contact with their body. As we actually are able to sense and feel ancestral issues, as these are the things we have to solve. Our body has self-healing powers.”

The quote shows an energetic holistic therapist revealing the interconnectedness of



ancestral family lines in the present on a deeper level, an embodied level. This resonates with Jackson's (2013) concept of "lifeworld", which explains the embodiment of history and knowledge. The relationship with a person's ancestors, the environment, animals, and other people are all manifested in someone's state of being. These relationships have left traces that a person feels and acts upon. How all these relationships and traces interact in someone's present moment can be described as someone's lifeworld (Jackson 2013, 7). Someone's relational traces and further historical knowledge can be experienced through concentrating on the body, which happens during holistic therapy. Subsequently, reduction of pain (Garrett 2001) or healing can occur (Pagis 2009).

In the last healing of Merel I observed, Merel and her deceased mother restored what Anke called, "the unhealthy relationship between mother and daughter". In the healings I observed, I learned that Merel felt, from her early years on, she had to take care of her mother and siblings. Merel's mother was not able to care for anyone, as she never recovered from the losses of her own mother and sister. Merel never released this "caring pattern" she had made her own. Merel explains she revived the relationship with her mother as follows: "That feeling is coming out of myself; first, I was not able to contact it. A lot of anger was blocking the way to it. I am not sure how and if I really make contact with my mother, but my feeling says so. Or maybe it is the mother inside me, or a piece of my mother inside me. I do not know how it works exactly. I do not want to rationalize it. It is just the feeling I have. Right now, it is very welcome. It is very comforting and encouraging." Thus, Merel was helped through experiencing interconnectedness with her inner senses and *feeling* the body. Enhancing the notion of emotion and bodily senses also reflects her chosen job. In the following quote, Merel shows she does not want to continue her position as a consultant when she starts working again:

At every session with Anke it popped up that I wanted to do something with coaching and creativity.. Because I think I can give people tools as I have been through the same where they are in. So, I would like to do something with coaching and combine this with cooking workshop, painting, drawing. I prefer to give these workshops to children or youth. I want to integrate creativity because I like being creative. [...] This is really something I never wanted to do before or during my disease. I have changed a lot. I really have opened up a new of being in the world.

Merel thus wants to develop her artistic side and simultaneously rejects the idea of self-identity accomplished through high prestige jobs, as discussed in the first chapter of this thesis through Giddens (1991). My participants show their being in the world changed as their foremost notion is that they are more connected with their inner senses. Also, Margriet firstly had to engage actively with her pent-up bodily emotions to release them before she was cured, as described in Chapter 2. Not only on a bodily level was she cured from colon cancer, she also changed mentally. In the interview I had with her three years after the healing of colon cancer, she mentioned how now she feels her inner self:

For example, before the curing I was invisible for everyone. That really struck me. For example, when I walked into a store people always jumped before me in the queue. It goes further than that as well: it is about not being visible at all. But now, after curing, nobody is jumping before me in the queue! I am really changed, I really changed a lot. Before I always adjusted me to everyone. I was not able to be myself, because I always adjusted myself. But I have changed. Now I sense who I am. I am able to *feel*. And that is where it is all about; to be able to *feel*.

Merel's and Margriet's stories showed that a feeling of interconnectedness with their inner senses could be reached after releasing old pent-up bodily emotions. Unfortunately, due to the limited time of fieldwork, I was not able to partake in more complete healing processes.

However, after every individual healing session, all my participants felt "a relief", "liberalization", "more energetic", "a good feeling", or expressed themselves in similar ways. Also, direct bodily effects accompanied these bodily expressions. For example, Barbara noticed bodily effects after the healing elaborated in the last chapter. At one healing session, Barbara's help question was to become less tired. When I saw her again a couple weeks after the healing, she informed me she did no longer had to take afternoon naps. I asked her if the healing made that happen. She said, "it is not so clear, but I am really happy now. That sort of happiness you have as a child. A kind of relieve". On top of that, Barbara suffered from an overactive urinary bladder in the first healing I observed. In a former interview, she enthusiastically told me she was released from the overactive bladder issue of which she suffered almost one month: "after the healing, I went home and slept. Directly after I noticed the problem was gone. As was a habit, I thought that I had to go to the toilet. But it was not the case". I also noticed Barbara's

eyes were widely open and she looked much better than the first time I saw her. It must be mentioned as well that I stopped following one recipient of healings as she skipped the third healing I was to observe. She repeatedly said, “nothing is helping me”. According to Anke, a healing will not work if a person does not open herself to it. As other energetic holistic therapists believe as well, they cannot force a particular healing as it has to occur naturally: “The body tells”, Anke said, and “you can also block your body from healing”.

Thus, people can experience both mental and bodily healings through healings of holistic therapy due to the release of pent-up bodily emotions. Therefore, emotions fill the gap between the mind and the body (Bendelow 2009, 13). These results are thus opposed the tension and contradictions between mind and body dualism of western civilization (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, 13) and show a more balanced idea of interconnectedness between mind and body.

My participants who experienced embodied transformations also experienced changes in their interactions in their direct social relations, on which is elaborated in the next section.

## **4.2 Interconnectedness with Environment**

As described, the body can be seen as a subject of change as it has the ability to create its own world constructions (Lyon and Barbalet 1994, 48). According to Csordas, the body should be understood as an epitome of the changes of sociocultural structures (1989, 1). Giddens agrees and argues the “body is the locus of the active self” (1984, 36). Furthermore, Giddens states the physical characteristics of the body are “obviously not just an extension of the physical characteristics of the organism that is its ‘carrier’” (1984, 36). These scholars have shed light on the embodied agency of human beings and have agreed upon the human body as the centre of change. My results show the body can transform.

Ingold goes a step further to include the environment (2000, 2011). Ingold claimed a conception of the human being as “a singular nexus of creative growth within a continually

unfolding field of relationships” (2011, xii). According to Ingold, things— human, animals, plants, stones, and other objects are interconnected and are all moving in the same field (2000, 2011). The environment, wherein everything *moves*, is a constantly unfolding story; both human being and their surroundings are constantly acting upon each other (Ingold 2000). This field of interconnectedness is shown in the example of Barbara’s healing, when immaterial emotions transcend the body, and these emotions were felt by Anke and me.

According to Ingold’s monistic worldview, when holistic therapy practitioners experience self-transformation, this unfolds into their environment as well. Thanks to holistic therapy, my participants integrated their senses and feelings; they learned to feel their bodily senses and act upon them. Their being-in-the-world changed, as their notions of feeling and bodily senses enhanced; they were aware of the interconnectedness of emotions.

For example, Fleur no longer felt comfortable with her profession as a youth psychologist. She realised she was barely able to treat her clients with an interconnected approach of the body -wherein both mind and body are connected and interconnected with the environment. Her working methods are limited to cognitive behavioural therapy to solely the child him- or herself.

Because my mindset has changed. I notice that I am changing a lot. I get and feel resistance to constantly making solely cognitive diagnoses. I have to label children as being ADHD or autism, but all the time I am thinking: ‘this child does not have the right guidance of the parents.’ I do not want the blame the parents of course, but if the children have to change, then the social environment of the children has to change as well. [...] I have learned that from Anke as well, and I truly believe that too: there is a constant interaction between persons. For instance, when my children are acting annoyed, I realise, that they are acting annoyed because I am stressed.

As Fleur says, if her children are acting annoyed, they are actually reacting to Fleur being stressed.

Life elements are thus reacting back and forth and are thus moving multi-directionally (Ingold, 2011). This idea is further explained in Ingold’s “meshwork theory” (Ingold 2011). Meshwork theory explores the life along imaginary lines, and here, the lines do not have an

ending and move through each other. Meshwork theory concerns everything we see being alive and constantly in flux in the stream of open-endedness (Ingold 2011). It is matter of cultural reproduction, that the shape or form of the living thing changes (Ingold 2011). This not only means life on earth does not have an ending and carries over into the next life. It also means an action corresponds to another action. As shown in Fleur's example of her children, if Fleur is stressed, her children's reaction is annoyance. This example shows meshwork theory is applicable to emotions, as people correspond to each other's emotions.

I could understand Fleur's example due to my own healing described in the introduction. My healing shows I experienced, as a baby, the "heavy" emotions of my father. Due to a healing of energetic holistic therapy, these emotions were released from my body, as I felt a "heavy load" falling from my chest and immediately thereafter I could breathe deeply. After several healing sessions, I also learned to talk about emotions and revived a notion of my inner feelings. I opened my senses and learned to integrated these senses into my daily life, just as my participants did. Thus, emotions are moving in the same field in which everything interacts because emotions are reacting. Anke mentioned, in one of the many interviews I had with her before and after healings, that people are drawn to situations that reflect their own states of being. These situations occur, as my participants and I experienced, to let these people interact with particular emotions stored in their bodies. Once a person has learned to interact with these particular emotions, they release. The world, the environment, is thus exactly how we made it, so we can experience it in order to release it again. Here, life on earth becomes a never ending story, as things, like emotions, are unfolding, causing friction, and releasing all the time.

This chapter has shown that people experience healing due to the feeling of interconnectedness between mind and body. Curing diseases through healings opened a bodily space to experience inner senses. The experience of the inner senses changed these people's being-in-the-world. They also acted upon their new being-in-the-world; they changed or were willing to change things in their environment, which shows emotions, although subjective, are sensible. We are moving because we are reacting to movements of other's emotions.

## **Conclusion. Toward bodily Emotions and Feelings**

Holistic therapy contributes to emotions, just as this study has contributed to emotions within the anthropology of the body. Emotions reflect the feminine side: intuition, feelings, and bodily senses. This side has been subordinated in western society, as the rational side has prevailed. In western history, thinkers such as Rene Descartes have fuelled this one-dimensional, rational side of our society. Western society still is constructed upon this dualism; conventional western health care is a great example of treatment according to the mind-body split (Bendelow 2009). As this study has shown, holistic therapy practitioners reject the western notion of the body as rationalized, fragmented, and passive (Bendelow 2009). Instead, they integrate the other dimension of the body, the feminine side of emotions and feelings, as well.

The experience of the feminine side—emotions and feelings—through healings leads to a notion of the body as a whole. This study has shown that the treatment of the body in parts, as common in conventional western health care, is rejected by holistic therapy practitioners as they experience emotions as underlying causes for bodily and mental issues. Therefore, engagement with emotions and bodily senses is highly important in holistic therapy to release pent-up bodily emotions, which subsequently lead to the body as a self-healing mechanism. The body as passive, devoted to medical epistemology and knowledge, is not what my participants wanted (Lyon and Barbalet *in* Csordas 1994). They rejected the idea of Evidence Based Medicine as the solution to their bodily and mental issues (Lyon and Barbalet *in* Csordas 1994). Instead, my participants strived to control their own bodies, gaining awareness of their emotions, and through expressing and releasing them, the body can self-heal. The acknowledgement and expression of emotions was a main concern of the recipients of healings and healers to accomplish that.

This study discussed the concept of emotion. This occurred on Lutz's request: anthropologists should debate the concept of emotion itself, instead of criticizing what they see as emotions (Lutz 2017, 182). Presubjectivity of the body and the intersubjective spaces

between bodies was focused on (Jackson 2013) in order to comprehend the transcendence of emotions out of the body. Analysing this as an observer of a healing, *the body* can be seen as both material and *immaterial*. This study explained how emotions can be experienced as subjective in-between (intersubjectivity), as an energetic holistic therapist experiences the recipient's emotions. Following the contemporary debate about emotions and affect theory, my study has shown emotions are able to break down the material (body) and the immaterial (mind) (Lutz 2017, 186), as releasing pent-up bodily emotions could be experienced, as well, through the healer and me as the observer. Also, it was by intermingling this study's ethnographic material on healings that conceptualizations of emotions were substantiated.

Phenomenology, as a research method, enabled me to identify the lived experiences of my participants during healings. Emotions could be substantiated because phenomenology as a methodology theorizes emotions. Phenomenology allows ethnographers to describe the lived experience of participants: their emotions, feelings, and images in a particular situation (Jackson 2013). Jackson (2013) stresses that emotions, feelings, and images are the gateways to people's inner experiences instead of symbols and other conventional historical wisdom (Jackson 2013, 7). Therefore, emotions, bodily sensations, and images that happened during healings are precisely what is telling about people; they experienced historical knowledge of the body as it was experienced by them. Thus, phenomenology introduces an extra dimension with which to research the other: people's lived experiences.

It was only with an embodied methodology that I could experience the emotions of recipients of healings and integrate these into ethnography. Observing and participating when feeling recipient's own bodily senses helps an ethnographer to experience a situation to the fullest (Stoller 1989, Turner 2000). Furthermore, I was actively participating in healings, whether I wanted to or not (Turner 2000, 55). Observing healings let me feel the emotions of the observed as well: in addition to the energetic holistic therapist, I also helped the emotional blockade of the recipient to flow with my bodily presence. This study has contributed to an embodied approach to conducting research as well, as embodiment enabled me to *energetically* approach emotions of the body. In addition to hearing and seeing, this study has

contributed to an embodied approach that included a notion of *feeling* emotions as well. I argued that anthropologists should integrate their own bodily feelings to understand the other. The advantage of conducting research on the ground is that anthropologists in particular can enrich readers through written ethnography about the lived experiences—which includes emotions and feelings—of the observed (Beatty 2010, 431). When performing fieldwork on emotions, I therefore suggest anthropologists integrate a notion of their bodily feelings and emotions as well, in addition to seeing and hearing, in order to better comprehend the other.

This study shows, in Dutch society, a rejection of one-dimensional body-mind dualism: rationalism, is present. Also, my participants showed a rejection of the fragmentation of the body through biomedicine (Bendelow 2009, 16) and the body as controlled and devoted to medical knowledge (Lyon and Barbalet in Csordas 1994). Instead, holistic therapy practitioners yield emotions for bodily and mental issues. Ethnographic examples of healings show an interconnectedness of mind and body as both mind and body could be healed. This interconnectedness of mind and body shows images of historical knowledge of the inner body that both the healer and the recipient experience in healings. The experience of healings is theorized with the concept of “lifeworlds” in which the body acts upon historical relational traces (Jackson 1996). My participants showed that a better connection to their bodily emotions and feelings, and the acknowledgement and expression of it, as an effect of healings, improved their lives.

However, what the interconnectedness of the concept of “lifeworlds” does not show is the interconnectedness to the broader environment; the effects in wider society including the environment. As my participants experienced an improvement in their lives due to healings, a change in their social environment happens as well. This change in social relations is explained by Ingold’s meshwork theory, as this theory describes an endless unfolding of things in the world wherein actions endlessly correspond (Ingold 2011). On the one hand, my participants had a strong intention to integrate emotions and feelings into their daily jobs. On the other hand, they noticed that their social relationships acted upon their transformed being in the world. The theory of meshworks presents monism and, therefore, rejects ideas of dualism as



known in western society. The theory does not only include human beings, but includes movement in the environment as well. Considering this theory, everything on earth acts in the same field. Therefore, a transformed being in the world has effects on wider society.

### **Limitations**

As this study has shown, my participants' enhanced notion of bodily emotions and feelings has changed their choice in daily behaviors or in their career. They preferred a job with a better integration of the feminine side, emotions and feelings, or they acted in accordance with their emotions, intuition and feelings. How does this enhanced notion of emotions and feelings develop further in society? The ethnographic material of this study is focused on the healing of body and mind and therefore takes no account of further acknowledgement and expression of emotions and feelings in wider society. As things are endlessly unfolding in the environment, a better integration of emotions and feelings can be noted in wider society as well (Ingold 2000, 2011). Considering the theory of meshwork (Ingold 2011), I recommend further research be conducted about effects of an integrated notion of the emotion and feelings of human beings in wider (Dutch and western) society.

Additionally, with a focus on the interconnection of mind and body and the effects of this interconnectedness with regards to social relations, this study was limited to the interconnection of the mind and body through emotions. This study's ethnographic material does not reach the scope of debates about emotion connecting dualism of, for example, agency and structure (Bendelow 2009, 13). However, according to Ingold (2000, 2011), every action corresponds to another action. Considering that in the monistic world view, emotions can have a much broader effect on the interconnecting of other dualisms as well as solely the connection between mind and body through emotions. Therefore, in addition to the recommendation above, I recommend further research be conducted about emotions in wider (Dutch and western) society in order to describe how the integration of emotions contests contemporary hegemonic rational structures, based on dualism, in western society.

## **Answering the Main Question: How are Emotions and Interconnectedness of the Body Experienced through Healings given by Holistic Therapists in The Netherlands?**

As Lutz (2017, 186) argues, there is still much to research concerning emotions because most anthropologists see them as a universal phenomenon. It should be the task of anthropologists to unravel emotions as culturally explicit, since anthropology is a field concerned about cultural distinctions (Lutz 2017, 186). This study has contributed to emotions of the body, as a connector between the mind and the body in Dutch society. Since it was through healing of holistic therapy that pent-up bodily emotions are released, both bodily and mental issues could be healed. Therefore, this study has shown how Dutch holistic therapy practitioners have transformed their being in the world towards a better integration of bodily senses and feelings. This study has been two-fold. Firstly, it showed emotions as a connector between the mind and body. Therefore, I suggested that enhancing the acknowledgement and expression of emotions accomplishes self-healing processes of mental and bodily issues. Secondly, when arguing for further acknowledgement of emotions, anthropologists themselves should integrate bodily emotions and feelings into their research tools as well, in order to understand the other.

Lastly, acknowledgement of the emotions within the body is raising in the western society due to the rise of holistic therapy practices (Adams 2002, Otterloo 1999). Therefore, I suggest that contemporary western scientific medicine—categorized as rational, fragmented, and passive—is challenged by holistic therapies with their integrated notion of the feminine, emotional, and intuitive side (Bendelow 2009). Although it might be too extreme to conclude that the rejection of the tensions and contradictions of the body-mind dualism is gaining ground in Dutch society, there are signs that people in Dutch society integrate a different notion of the body; a body with a better integration of emotions and feelings .

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## Non Academic Resources

### Chapter 1, introduction

1. Report of a written debate *Eerste Kamer der Staten Generaal*. 2014. "Inzake Regeldruktoets wetsvoorstel (Wet kwaliteit, klachten en geschillen zorg (Wkkgz)).

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2. Letter of the Minister of National Health, Well Being and Sports to *Eerste Kamer der Staten Generaal*. 2014. "Regels ter bevordering van de kwaliteit van zorg en de behandeling van klachten en geschillen in de zorg (Wet kwaliteit, klachten en geschillen zorg)".

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### Chapter 2: Rejection of Body-Mind Dualism

3. Grobben, Suzy. 2013. *Een Ontmoeting met Bijzondere Kinderen*. Maastricht: Boekenplan.

4. YouTube. 2014. "Indigoplatform Onmoette Suzy Grobben – Paul Codde –." Accessed April 5.

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5. YouTube. 2013. "Minister Schippers (VWS) spreekt tot de ledenvergadering van de Ver tegen de Kwakzalverij." Accessed March 10.

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### Chapter 3: Emotions in the Case of Healing

7. Brennan, Barbara. 1988. *Hands of Light: a Guide to Healing Through the Human Energy Field*. Bantam: Reissue edition.