

Ideal and Practice, from Sport massage to Sexually-tinted Tantric massage

An Exploration of Taboos in the Border areas of Massage

Drs. Kees Kaldenbach.

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kalden@xs4all.nl

Responses welcome!

Also available online, divided in 8 web pages

<http://kalden.home.xs4all.nl/auth/massage-sexuality-0a.html>

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Abstract

Massage and sexuality have overlapping elements but also distinct elements. This article focuses on experiences in massage and the area of taboo regarding the overlap in massage and sexuality in three different countries I have visited: Netherlands, South Africa and the USA.

Within these three countries six areas are highlighted:

- 1) Sport massage / Swedish massage
- 2) Medical Massage / Physiotherapy
- 3) Chinese / Japanese rub massage and pressure point massage
- 4) Holistic Massage
- 5) Erotic Massage
- 6) Tantric massage.

After an introduction a) with more or less objective **descriptions** of these six types of massage follows a section b) expressing the viewpoint and the **best practices** of massage professionals. This section is followed c) by some views and **experiences** by clients.

One finding is that the boundary between massage and sex is sometimes not easy to make, and that massage and the erotic and in some cases are inextricably linked. Finally d) there is an attempt to construct a model of the field and some thesis. The thesis is mainly ethical in nature, whereas the article itself

is mainly descriptive. Very little indeed has been published on this taboo subject. This article presents a first rough impression, exploration and survey of an untouched area, where no author has yet dared *"to get one's fingers burnt"*, and the article does not strive to be exhaustive.

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Introduction

Text found on a website: *"... one of the biggest non-sexual pleasures that a human body can experience is massage"*¹

Text found in a flyer: *"Have a professional massage in the comfort of your own hotel suite for health and relaxation. Please note this is not a sexual service and inappropriate calls will be reported."*²

The first of the two quotes above highlights the glory of massage and describes the pleasure of massage as essentially separate from sexuality. The second text advertises hotel visit-with-massage, and emphasizes health and relaxation, but then if necessary, threatens to bring in the police.

These quotes succinctly illustrate the current tension in Western society between the worlds of massage and sexuality. They show the need for the masseur / masseuse (m/f) to clearly position himself or herself.

Massage is a specific and specialized form of desired touch, given spontaneously or professionally on demand. For most mammals and humans touch and skin contact is essential from birth for the proper development of attachment, and for a pleasant and balanced inner and social life.

Taboo

For this article an initial exploratory study has been done on the situation in three countries, the Netherlands, South Africa and the USA. Each of these three countries has its own particular history in terms of attitude to physicality, massage, nudity, touch and sexuality. The contrasts explored here between these three countries shows how these very different cultures deal with ideal, practice and taboo.

The taboo on the combination of massage and sex strongly emerges, because a partial overlap exists (the intimate setting, the nudity, the touch, possibly pleasure) and because there are also a - culturally defined - big difference with sexuality (sex only in intimate relationships, in conjunction with genitals, erotic excitement and possibly an orgasm).

¹ <http://sports-blognow.blogspot.com/2008/05/hormone-weight-loss.html>, read on 8 November 2010, spelling corrected.

² Flyer, Jacque, Cape Town, South Africa.

USA

In the USA for many centuries, starting with the *Pilgrim Fathers*, there has been a majority puritan ideal of chastity. There, massage may have played a minor local role as a direct import from countries of origin.

In the years 1910-1920, the sex industry in the U.S. disguised itself behind the label *massage parlors*. Thus the term massage was 'stolen', and massage became a front for the sex industry. As a counter-movement in that era legislation was created to strictly separate the two fields of massage and sex. A result in the USA has a current system of strict rules for body covering and other strict professional rules in this fairly prudish country.³ Prostitution is banned in most states, but there is still a place for sexual counseling.⁴ In the USA countercultures also exist that are more European oriented, particularly in California (the Esalen massage center) and masseurs working in the main cities of the East Coast. In Hawaii lomi-lomi massage is practiced. In Canada the situation is also somewhat more relaxed and enlightened.⁵

South Africa

South Africa has three large, distinct cultures. Among *black* populations in South Africa (Zulu, Xhosa, etc) massage plays virtually no role. Covering the body and prudery are now widely established and have become a basic rule. Sexuality has now emerged as a major problem because few blacks talk about it and many men and women do it secretly.

For the *Indian* population, who form part of the "coloreds" a general restraint in sex and nudity exists as well at present, but an ancient Hindu tradition

³ "Hands Off - The Validity of Local Massage Parlor Laws" [notes] *University of Richmond Law Review*, Vol. 10, Issue 3 (Spring 1976), pp. 597-645 10 *U. Rich. L. Rev.* 597 (1975-1976).

In Michigan, USA there is government control regarding massage as "...a legitimate public purpose: To discourage 'surreptitious' prostitution at massage parlors," to ensure that only "serious practitioners of massage" would operate parlors, and to decrease the likelihood that parlors would be used..."

Source: Tracey D. Weaver, 'Constitutional Law': *The Wayne Law Review*, Summer, 1998, 44 nr 613, and *Annual Survey of Michigan Law*, 1 June 1996-21 Can 21 1997.

There is also worry in Great Britain: Albert J. Velarde: 'Becoming Prostituted - The Decline of the Massage Parlour Profession and the Masseuse', *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 15, Issue 3 (July 1975), pp. 251-263.

⁴ ASEP- Association for Sexual Energy Professionals

ASSECT- American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists

ACSB- Association of Certified Sexological Bodyworkers.

Jaiya is one of the sexual wellness workers: her web site is

<http://newworldsexeducation.com/home.php>

⁵ Source: Sheremata, Davis. "Low-down on rub-downs: massage parlours sell fantasy, but also a little sex."

Alberta Report 24.7 (Jan 27, 1997): 36:

Canada: Edmonton vice squad detective Terry Sopka says the some of the parlours are fronts for prostitution. "We probably have 200 massage services in Edmonton, and I'd say in 10% of those you could get a sexual service," he says. "We drop in on them once a week or every two weeks, and I think that serves as a deterrent. Mostly we make sure the people who work there have a massage license." Det[ective].

Sopka says licensing is the main focus of his department, which laid 40 charges in 1996 against massage parlours for using unlicensed masseuses, charges that carry a fine ranging from \$400 to \$10,000."

of massage has been preserved. For Muslim coloreds there is a great reticence.⁶

For the *whites* of Dutch and British descent, massage is largely uncharted territory. After a century of isolation and being cramped (also under the influence of the Calvinist church) from 1994, the era of the Mandela government, South Africans reached a period of enlightenment; the acceptance of diversity in sexuality is even enshrined in the Constitution. In general, South Africa remains a conservative, neat, prudish land.⁷ Again, sometimes massage is a front for sex trade.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands is a thoroughly petty-bourgeois and commercial country with a culture that was once heavily Calvinist but at the same time, due to its harbors, outward looking and with an open interest in the outside world. Curiously, Swedish massage was developed in Amsterdam by Metzger around 1870.⁸

Since 1962 the contraceptive pill has been widely welcomed and large numbers of people have left the Christian churches. The Netherlands thus experienced a relatively extreme wave of social and sexual revolution – resulting in a large degree of freedom and hedonism in word, image and lifestyle.

Sex workers can work openly in the Netherlands and do not need to hide under a different label. However, due to reasons of privacy and for the need of anonymity sex workers still prefer to hide. In the open, sex is sometimes disguised behind other labels.

Hunger for Touch

In the ordinary everyday mainstream Western countries studied here: The Netherlands, South Africa and the USA, there is very little room for meaningful touch between people - especially for positive touch contact between people who know each other superficially. For most people a welcome touch on the bare skin is a scarce commodity. Associations: Keep your distance. *“On my body no polonaise”* (*“aan mijn lijf geen polonaise”*) being a standard Dutch colloquial expression.

This is the prevailing code: only among relatives is a bit of touch and cuddle allowed. Perhaps this is also true in a team sport; when a goal is scored, one can hug team members. Finally, in a crowded bus or train perfect strangers

⁶ Information from source G, South Africa, January 2011: A young (colored) Muslim in Cape Town is a masseur and has huge problems with his Muslim family because it is considered to be inappropriate for a Muslim to hold such a job. The prime issue is probably the contact with a client who is naked on the table. Perhaps for the family the mental association with sexual contact is a decisive objection.

⁷ That is to say, prudish as seen from The Netherlands. “We like to put clothes on in South Africa”, a statement from a staff member of the Africa Museum, Johannesburg, December 2010, questioned by the author about the lack of nude studies in a large photograph exhibition.

⁸ <http://scriptiesonline.bib.hva.nl/document/137715>, p. 9. In this paper E.W.K. Bartels and J. Stam describe his luxury massage practice in the Amstel Hotel, visited by royalty. Metzger also gave healing massages for free to poor people.

can be pushed around, but that is probably it. Keeping distance between human bodies is the norm.



Fig. 0. Pod of hugging hippos at St Lucia, South Africa. Photo by the author, 2010.

Indeed, touch is easily associated with getting too close and with having sex - with all the restrictive social codes that belong to sexuality. Traditionally in the Netherlands, South Africa and the USA there is a relatively severe deficiency regarding touch for a large percentage of the population, especially when we compare the situation here more touchy-feely, physically warmer cultures around the Mediterranean and elsewhere in the world.

Therefore, men and women in the Netherlands sometimes consciously seek a little more warmth and touch when meeting in a busy cafe or nightclub. A passing hand on the shoulder while going past a colleague in the workplace can also be accepted, with a smile and a kind word. That form of touch is intended to express appreciation, sympathy, confirmation, friendship and the feeling of being good colleagues. The maximum people would allow would be an arm thrown over the shoulders of the other person.

Body Massage

For a large dose of good, abundant touch, body massage is the accepted way of achieving this in the Netherlands, South Africa and the USA. Massage on bare

skin has become a socially reasonably acceptable and effective way to compensate the current deficiency.

This how a massage works: by appointment, in a confined space, for financial compensation, the masseur carries a range of massage types and techniques such as kneading, long strokes (*effleurage*) and pressing. The whole experience answers to a set of implicitly assumed or explicitly mentioned desires, expectations, security agreements and demarcations.

Massage has the quality of intimacy. Being separate from others, behind closed curtains or doors. In that seclusion something beautiful goes on between masseur / masseuse (m / f) and client. The room where the massage takes place is separate. The masseur is also required to maintain confidentiality. The client decides later whether - or with whom - they will tell about receiving the massage. It is a *touchy* subject.

Six Types of Massage

At first glance it all seems so clean and uncluttered. In the field of massage in the Netherlands, South Africa and the USA these six fields of massage can be broadly distinguished:⁹

- 1) Sport massage / Swedish massage
- 2) Medical Massage / Physiotherapy
- 3) Chinese / Japanese rub massage and pressure point massage
- 4) Holistic Massage
- 5) Erotic Massage - *and finally*
- 6) Tantric massage.

This list of fields in massage raises many questions. Are these six areas of massage clearly divided into separate compartments? Are sexuality and massage disconnected areas? To answer that question we begin with **a) six general, more or less objective brief descriptions** of each of these six areas.

Next, what are **b), the Best Practices** in each of those six areas, and what is the professional experience of the masseur / masseuse, particularly on border areas? What are the variations and deviations?¹⁰

What is **c) the perception of the client** communicated, in each of those six areas, particularly on border areas between massage and sex?

⁹ This list is not complete but fairly representative.

¹⁰ This article is descriptive in nature. The term deviations is used here in the sense of using other, less standard paths, not necessarily of acts that should be condemned.

The outcome: can

d) a visual schematic map or a model be presented to show these issues of sexuality and border areas of massage?

These are basic questions this article will address.

A remark about methodology. As the subject of this article is more or less a taboo subject in the world of masseurs, literature is sparse, as is shown by various internet searches and *data mining*.¹¹

Therefore, in 2010 during field research a great number of masseurs and clients all over the world were questioned by the author. Due to the taboo nature of the subject the results remain anecdotal and impressionistic in character. Please do not expect a coherent theory!

Definitions (General, More or Less Objective Descriptions)

In order to ensure that author and readers can broadly understand each other in terminology, a few brief descriptions will follow first.

1) Sport Massage and Swedish Massage

Sport massage - in short - is a pleasant, positive *tune-up* for muscles and tendons, a technical maintenance and repair job for the physical human body. The comparable Swedish massage is also a form of tune-up, but then including a system of pleasant touch. Both are distant and neutral in character.

Sport massage (and therefore also Swedish massage) is beneficial for many different things; promoting the flexibility of the body and the maintenance of healing of the body's "hardware". Not only do muscles and tendons receive attention, but connective tissue and skin as well. The result is enjoyable for a feeling of total relaxation. Sport massage also supports and enhances other biological systems in the body: blood circulation, hormonal levels, control of mind over body and the feeling of being alive and healthy. It can also help in reducing or preventing injury, inflammation and pain.

Qualification, Certification, Licensing:

In the Netherlands anyone can nail a sign 'Masseur' on the front door. The profession is thus totally unregulated by law. When a salon or a hotel hires a new masseur / masseuse (m / f) one is usually asked for a diploma, issued by a generally recognized and renowned training institute for massage, such as

¹¹ Digital searches were done in the retrieval system of the South Africa National Library and yielded nothing. A librarian in the USA with access to all scientific and legal *journals* has spent two hours at my request to search for sources, but in the end he has found very little.

Leffelaar, or the *Akademie voor Massage en Beweging* in Amsterdam. In neighboring Belgium, in contrast, the professional qualification 'masseur' is arranged by law, as it is in the vast majority of countries in Europe at present.

In South Africa there is a legal distinction between therapeutic massage (requiring medical licensing) and beauty massage (only requiring a certificate).¹² In the USA, the massage professional must have a permit (license) in those 32 States, which have a "massage law".¹³

Strangely, a certified or licensed massage therapist does not necessarily do a better job than a masseur who by practice and self-study has found his or her own way. A good quality *touch* reveals itself within one minute to the recipient. A good sports masseur or Swedish masseur (m / f) knows in broad terms what treatments can and cannot be performed in any given situation (see below).

A small but distinctive feature between the six fields of massage is the concept of the term "energy". "Energy" is used in sports and Swedish massage in the sense of power, battery, purely in a technical, almost objective way.

A remark about the term "transcendence" (flight of the soul) as represented in the visual model: transcendence is the experience of deep (soul) connection. A symbol for transcendence could be this: a man or woman standing on the ground, feet connected to Mother Earth, with arms stretched wide out to the side; these outstretched arms indicating the relationship with fellow human beings and the raised head focusing on the relationship with higher powers.

In this article, the author ranked sport massage and Swedish massage as follows:

¹² E-mail message from Rudi Baker, Managing Director, *Healing Hands International* to the author, January 3, 2011: "In South Africa, if you practice therapeutic massage (treating specific disorders) then you need a 3 year diploma and must be registered under the allied health professions council. If you do non-therapeutic (part of a beauty treatment or for general relaxation) then a certificate will suffice."

¹³ Counting 32 states in 1995.

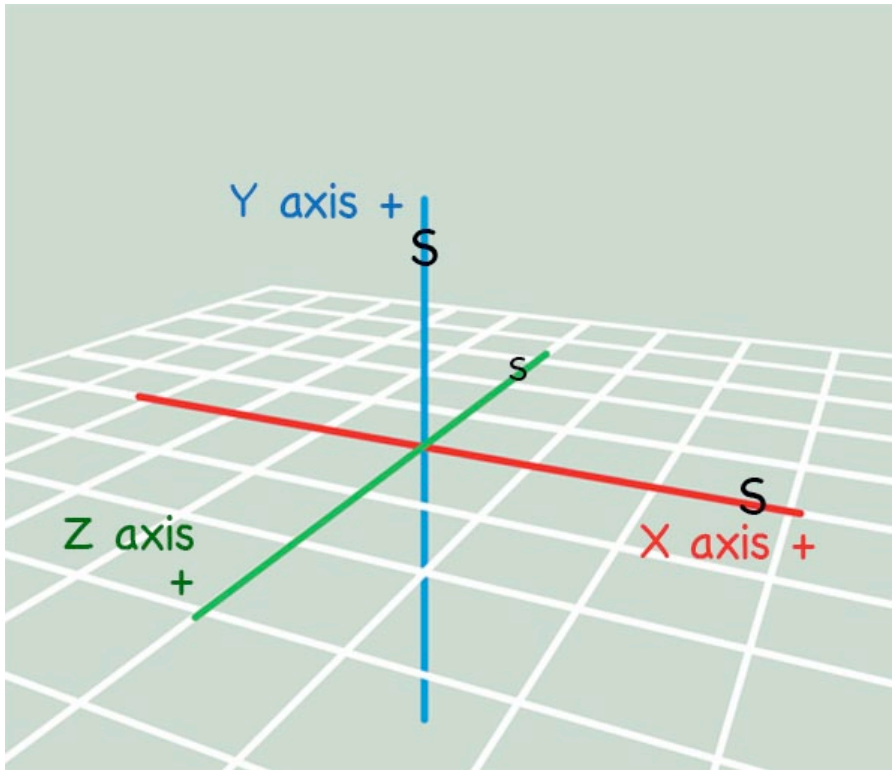


Fig. 1. Sport Massage and Swedish Massage.
 X axis: high for social acceptance¹⁴
 Y axis: high for "garage job"
 Z axis: low to transcendence (flight of the soul).

2. Medical Massage / Physiotherapy

Much of the above also applies to medical massage / physiotherapy. Even more than the above sport massage, medical massage / physiotherapy is geared to aid in recovery from injuries, dysfunction or discomfort. This type of massage helps to eliminate or reduce for example; stiffness, cramps, limited movement, all of which cause difficulty in daily life and welfare. Sometimes medical massage/ physiotherapy is also aimed at reducing pain, such as in *triggerpoint* therapy. In medical massage, of course a great deal of very specific modern Western medical knowledge is included.

The medical practitioner/physiotherapist knows exactly which treatments can be performed in a given situation. Experts speak of intended "indicated actions". The opposite unwanted acts are called contra-indications, actions not recommended or prohibited in a given situation; as in edema, early pregnancy in women, varicose veins, damaged skin, skin diseases.

The term "energy" is used in physiotherapy, as in sport massage.

¹⁴ The author uses holistic massages as the measure.

In the Netherlands as in Belgium, the professional qualifications of the medical massage practitioner and the profession of physiotherapist are fully regulated by law; the training is also formally organized.

In this article, medical massage is ranked by the author as follows:

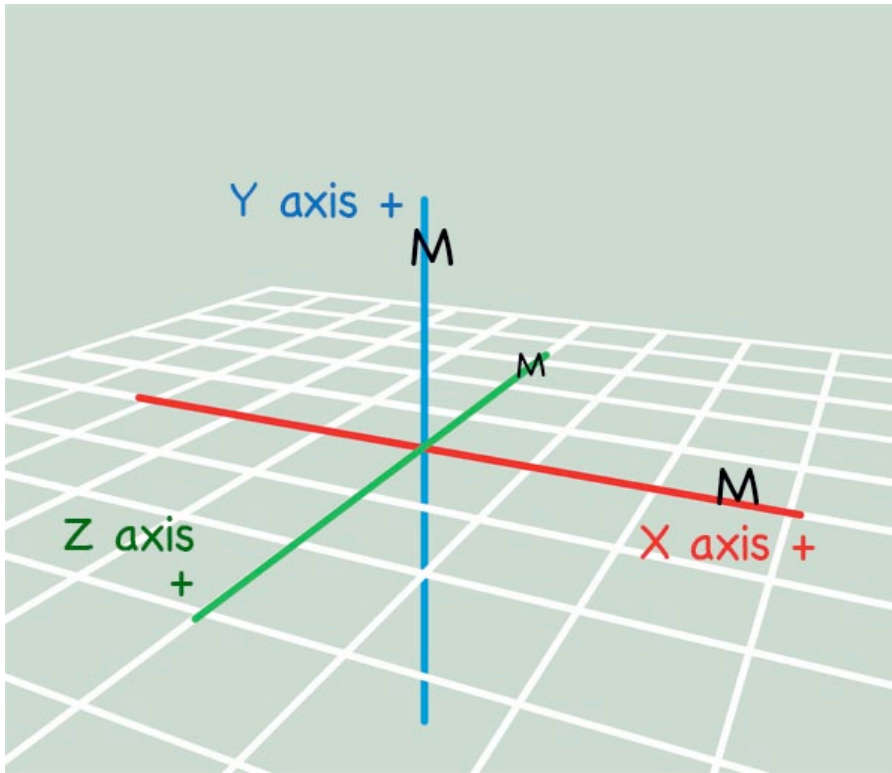


Fig. 2. Medical Massage and Physiotherapy.

X axis: high for social acceptance
Y axis: high for "garage job"
Z axis: low to transcendence (flight of the soul).

===Extra note added after publication date: Thomas J.A. Terlouw, 'Introduction and development of medical gymnastics in The Netherlands in the nineteenth Century' in Thomas A Terlouw, red./ ed. *Geschiedenis van de fysiotherapie gezien door andere ogen*, Amsterdam, 2004, p. 39-66.===

3. Chinese/Japanese Rubbing Massage and Pressure Point Massage

This type of massage follows a unique and ancient insight, theory and culture. It also speaks its own language. Chinese/Japanese rubbing massage and pressure point massage (including shiatsu) is based on practical knowledge that has been

gained over a time span of centuries. That knowledge of body functions and bodily reactions is contained in a coherent logic embedded in its own exotic terms. Therefore in Western medical view it is widely regarded as exotic, and from a scientific point of view as incomprehensible and therefore less relevant. In typical Western medical literature, this form of treatment is rarely mentioned. However, the effects of relaxation are accepted in Western medical literature. The eastern traditional terminology is in line with concepts of balance of energy and energy pathways in the body, and makes use of words such as life force (*chi, ki*). It labels the patient's observed situation in terms of *water, wood, fire, earth, metal*, and words such as *energy lines or meridians*. Blockages in *chi* are seen as a cause of disease and being prone to falling ill. Within the Chinese and Japanese practice all these fields are measurable, accessible, and can be influenced through touch and pressure points. These insights and treatments are often effective and the treatment has often proved efficient, and thus an ancient, pure oriental healing knowledge has been recorded within its own system. It is now a viable part of complementary and alternative medicine.

Training as a pressure point massage therapist (and acupuncture therapist), requires sustained and serious study, with renowned masters in that healing art. Graduating following study with a master and subsequent training under a master are required.

In the Netherlands and Belgium, these job titles are left to the field, and are not determined by law.¹⁵ However, there are four associations in the Netherlands - a situation similar to that of architects where BNA membership indicates a guaranteed level of education and quality.

Chinese / Japanese massage rub and massage pressure points have been ranked by the author as follows:

¹⁵ The Dutch acupuncturist Peter van Kervel reported in a telephone conversation in January 2011: There is no legislation in the Netherlands, but a policy of tolerance. Business affairs are managed by the profession itself, and there are currently four professional organizations. Health insurers examine which associations (and their members) deliver quality assurance and then reimburse treatment for their clients. The effectiveness of acupuncture has been tested and demonstrated in such Asian countries as China, Australia, New Zealand and also in the USA. See also a recent thesis at Erasmus University, Rotterdam, on the application of acupuncture and *moxibustion* (a type of smoke marker).

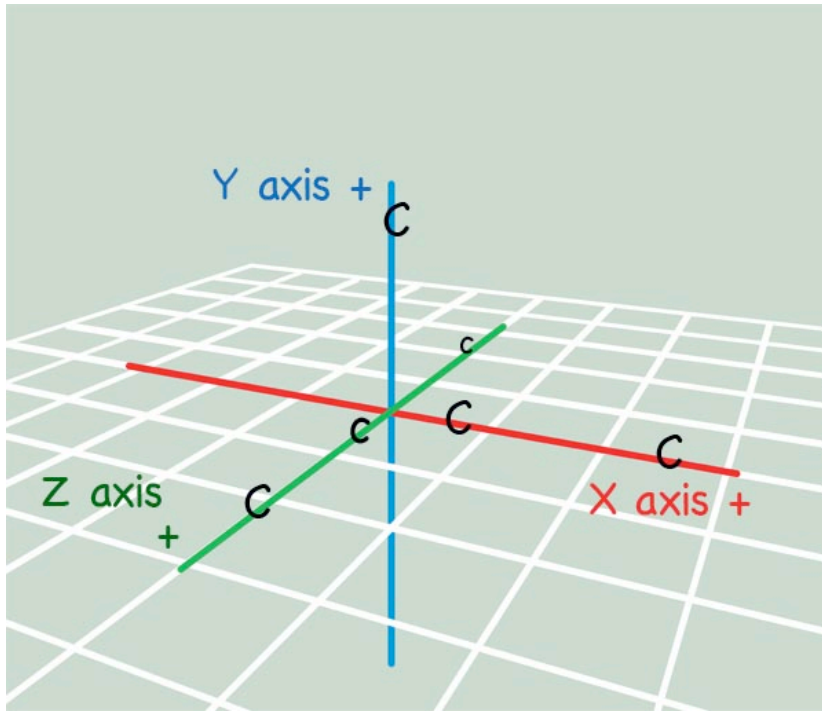


Fig. 3. Chinese/Japanese Rubbing Massage and Pressure Point Massage.
 X axis: medium to high for social acceptance
 Y axis: high for "garage job"
 Z axis: low, medium to high for transcendence (flight of the soul).

4. Holistic Massage

This form of massage refers to the concept of *holos* (the Greek word for *whole, all*). It is a manner of massage that aims to with the entire human being and is essentially relational in nature. Masseur (m / f) and client are united for an hour or longer in an encounter, a tactile *dance of life and being*. Holistic massage focuses on the welfare of clients in a broad sense, and uses terms such as "energy", "inspiration". The soul is elusive, an article of faith; if you like, a name for the deepest part of the being. The soul can also be seen as the individual poetic expression of the unknowable mystery of our existence.

Holistic massage emphasizes the wholeness of body-mind-soul of the client who receives it. This requires the masseur (m / f) to not have only basic knowledge of the body and special massage techniques, but also concepts of feeling, empathy, compassion and intuition, because this form of massage addresses human *hardware* and *software* - and is addressing the unknowable. At best, a successful holistic session implies an impressive encounter between client and therapist. The client is physically touched and also touched on another level; that is a desired core quality.

Here, we again find the benefits enumerated above in sport massage, but

achieved through a different body massage route, with generally calm and even slow movements (but not necessary using soft or light pressure).

The aim is to do good to the whole human being. A holistic session therefore usually begins with a short conversation over a cup of tea. In the Netherlands the title "holistic masseur" is open, and not regulated by law.

The term "energy" is sometimes used by holistic masseurs in the sense of feeling and experience of natural energy and charisma, such as that expressed in the animal contact that exists between a pet and its owner.¹⁶

Holistic massage has been ranked by the author as follows:

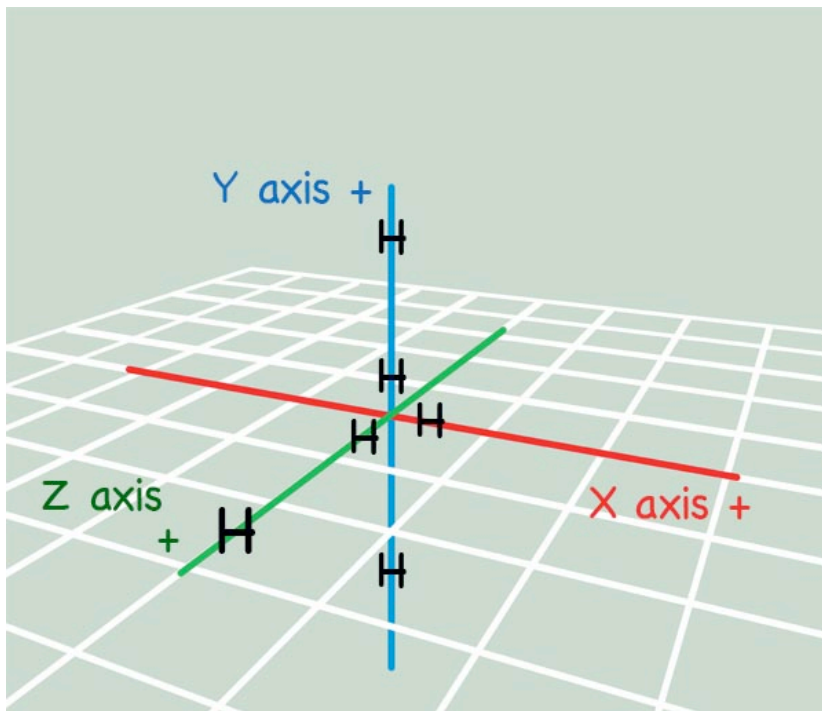


Fig. 4. Holistic Massage

X axis: medium for social acceptance
Y axis: low, medium to high for "garage job"
Z axis: medium to high for transcendence (flight of the soul)

5. Erotic Massage

Erotic massage is a way for the client to gain new, exciting, sensual and/or

¹⁶ Also used in the TV series The Dog Whisperer,

sexual experiences by ordering them. This type of massage takes place by appointment by a selected specialist masseur/masseuse who is sexually gifted and who likes to do this work. This type of massage gives the customer the luxury of choice and order *a la carte*: without fear, the client can precisely state their own wishes, desires and boundaries when having the introductory discussion. The client can also choose to be open to a new unknown experience, to go beyond known boundaries and indicate at the moment what is okay and what is not during the process.

Erotic massage can be an encounter in the depths of feeling. Contrary to what outsiders might be thinking, an erotic massage is often not primarily focused on touching the genitals, or sexual excitement and orgasm. Genital touching can or cannot be on the program, and hence rules are set and demarcated in mutual agreement, in tune with the nature, needs, experience, knowledge and boundaries of both parties. Experts will agree that experience of erotic pleasure is not situated between the client's legs, but rather between the ears, with hope, desire and play. A good click or "energy" between client and Eros masseur or masseuse is obviously necessary, because it is give and take, and a meeting in a very intimate nature.

For the record, penis-vagina sex and oral sex are held by many erotic masseurs in the Netherlands to be outside the range of erotic massage. Everything is however dependent on the nature of the arrangements between the client and masseur (m / f).

Erotic massage is ranked here as follows the author:

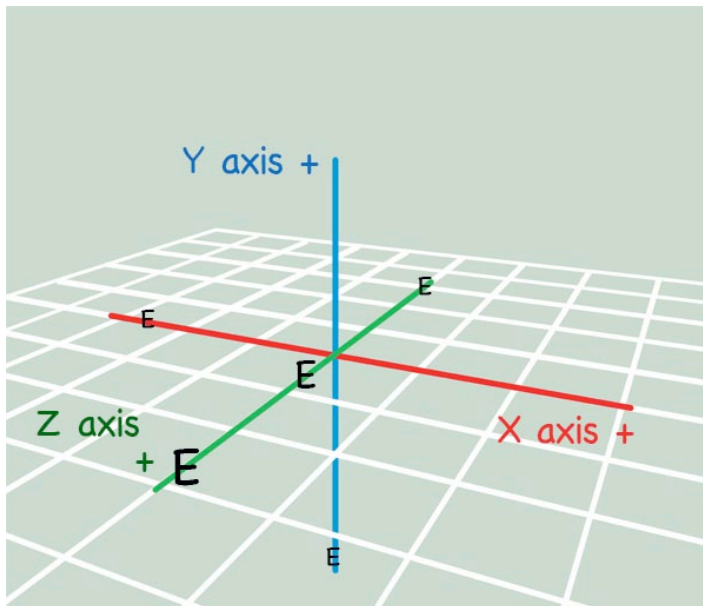


Fig. 5. Erotic Massage.

X axis: very low for social acceptance
 Y axis: very low for "garage job"

Z axis: low, medium to high points for transcendence (flight of the soul).

6. Tantric Massage

The term Tantra has its origins in India, and focuses on managing, increasing and enjoying the flow of sexual energy in the body of man and woman. Through courses, books and videos by Ray Stubbs and by Baghwan / Osho (1931-1990) his *Neo-tantric* method has become known in the West and it may include massage.

Tantra and Tantric massage makes for a deep meeting between therapist and client and is therefore related to holistic massage. At best, there is a deep, lush and moving sense of connection. A commonly used term in Tantra is "desire" (and "desire for desire").¹⁷ The five senses of man and woman are invited to become more sensitive. There are various types of tantra:

- White tantra, the traditional, more spiritual Indian and Tibetan Tantra with among others, meditation and breathing exercises.
- Blue tantra is more *yin*, somewhat more physical, but still cautious and reluctant.
- Red Tantra is more *yang*, can be applied naked. Sometimes it involves touching genitals and female orgasm is permitted. Orgasm of the man can be experienced from within, but ejaculation is not recommended.

A good "energy" between client and Tantra masseuse/masseur is of course always necessary.

Tantric massage is ranked the author as follows:

¹⁷ Literature: series of books by Margot Anand.

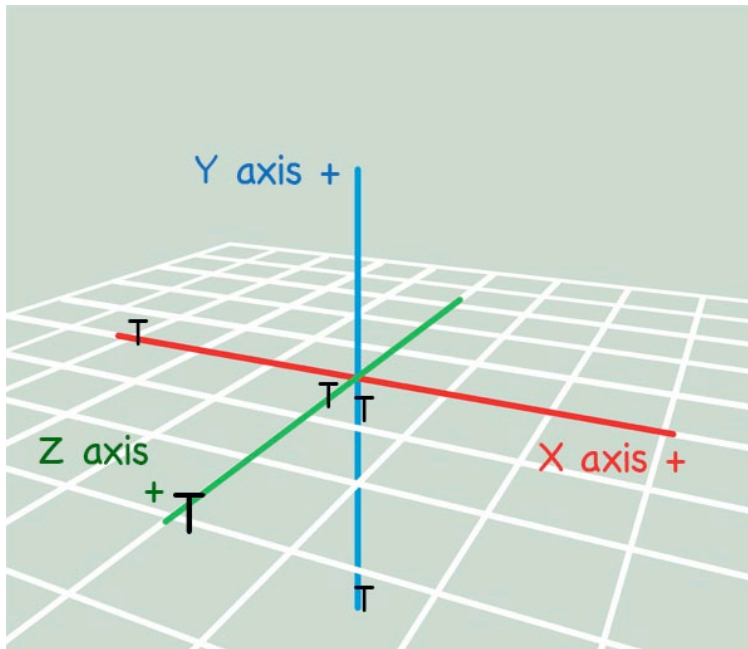


Fig. 6. Tantric Massage.

X axis: very low for social acceptance
 Y axis: low to medium for "garage job"
 Z axis: medium to high for transcendence (flight of the soul).

Further Descriptions

Sexuality

Sexuality - in the context of this article - is the magical and wonderful borderline between the physicality of *I and the Other*. Broadly speaking, it is understood as the totality of feelings, opinions and experiences related to sexual orientation and self-definition, the individuality and physicality of the man or the woman.

Both in body and mind, sexuality causes an increased and enhanced perception of reality, sometimes a rush and at best, a peak experience in human life.

The positive, pink cloud of terms related to sexuality include: body, skin, pleasure, ecstasy, identity, and beyond – let's take a broad look – desire, contact, connection, emotions, dreams, desires, sexual drive, conquest of the other, to allow to be *conquered*, the game of attraction and retreat, excitement, and also to achieve a physical orgasm. Central to Western culture is always freedom of choice and free will at some point in time to enter upon or cease the sexual contact.

By way of contrast: another set of shaded clouds shows the more complicated and thorny fields as in: daring, taboo, monogamy, adultery, jealousy, vulnerability, old pain and new pain, becoming wounded in body and soul. For in

sex you become open and therefore vulnerable.

"Sexual" is a term used by us in the West at basic level refers to reproductive drive and gender and perception of one's own genitals, either male or female, while the term "Eros" indicates the meta-level, the divine and dangerous, bewitching, the maddening *insufflation* by the mysterious Greek god Eros in women and men.¹⁸

Intimacy

Intimacy is understood here as any kind of very personal encounter in proximity and in seclusion, with full consent of both parties. Intimacy could include sharing of valuable experiences and highly personal secrets. *Caveat*: If a woman mentions in a conversation: "I was intimate with my boyfriend last night", then she might mean something else.

Hormones

The feel-good hormones released in massage include oxytocin (also known as the cuddle hormone and the hormone that enhances bonding between mother and baby), and also other active elements with nice effects such as endorphins, peptides.¹⁹

¹⁸ Bruce S. Thornton, *Eros. The Myth of Ancient Greek Sexuality*, Westview Press, 1997, p. 18 makes clear that within the Greek conception of Eros also lies a maddening, brutal, powerful danger.

¹⁹ Jan de Boer, *Vrijen in verbinding*, Ten Have, 2010, p. 48.

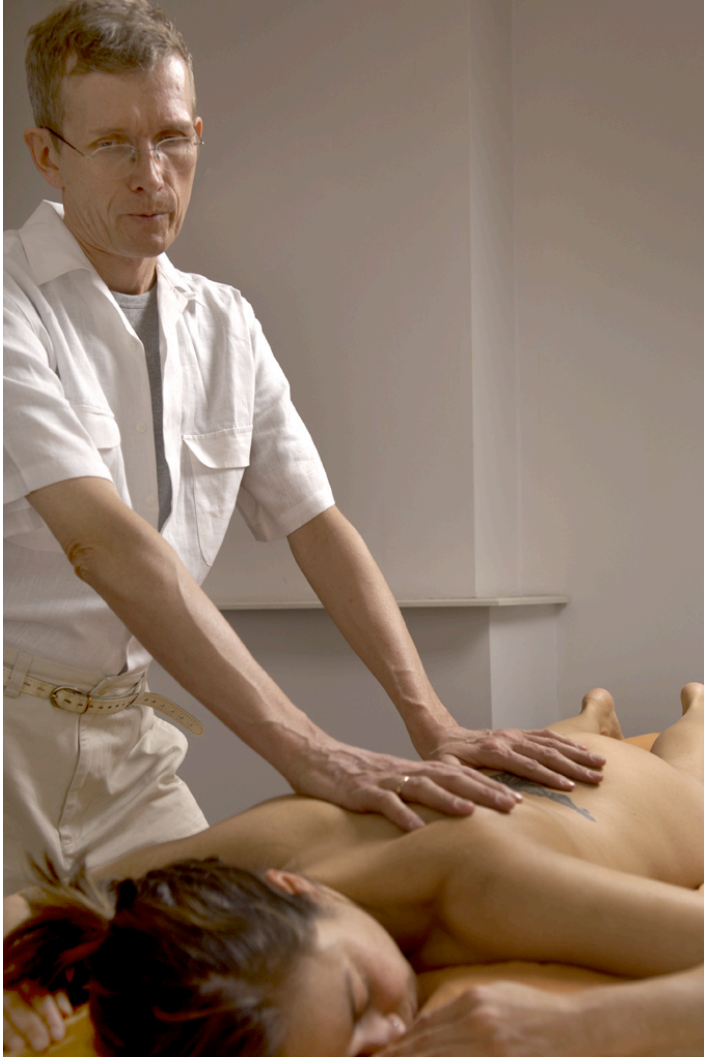


Fig. 7. Masseur in action, with full attention. Nudity of the client may point at a certain type of massage. Which one? Photo by Jeroen Leclercq.

Experience of masseurs concerning sexuality within the six types of massage

The last section was about defining the terms. Now for each of these parts:

- 1) Sport massage / Swedish massage
- 2) Medical Massage / Physiotherapy
- 3) Chinese / Japanese rub massage and pressure point massage
- 4) Holistic Massage
- 5) Erotic Massage
- 6) Tantric massage

follow experiences and best practices of the masseur b), experiences by clients c), and finally d) a graphic model.

What follows is impressionistic in nature, a first survey. Please do not expect a coherent theory.

1. Sport massage / Swedish massage

1b *Best Practices*, the masseur's point of view (m / f) in sport massage and Swedish massage.

A sports masseur just wants to give a good *straight* sport massage. In the world of sport massage, a-sexuality is a standard and strict reticence regarding the areas of sexual organs is taken for granted. The general guideline is that the masseur / masseuse (m / f) focuses on a large part of the physical body in massage, but in intent and touch stays away from touching genitals and uses prudence in touching inside the upper legs and the groin. It is all about the aforementioned functions of repair, the garage job, and not about enjoyment, although pleasure and enjoyment can come up as by-products; the intention and practice among the entire massage is neutral and a-sexual in the mind of the masseur (m / f).

A good reason for asexuality is that the parties involved are unequal in knowledge and expertise about what effects touch can bring about. The masseur (m / f) is the professional, knows the tricks of the trade and just because of that basic inequality there must be a code to hold back, to keep a professional distance.²⁰

Many sports masseurs want to keep a spotless personal reputation and must exclude any risk of allegations and accusations. That is why some sports

²⁰ A masseur's career is also dependent upon reputation. Compare the slogan from the USA, 1950s: "A girl has got to watch her reputation."

masseurs insist that their clients keep on underwear and sometimes even a bra during massage. Another way to emphasize chastity is the planned way to move folded sheets and towels, a precaution that has been elevated to a fine art in the USA. If a massage of the buttocks region happens at all in the massage plan chosen by the client, then sometimes the touch is done through the underwear or on the bare skin, if it is covered by a cloth and thus chaste and invisible to the masseur (m / f).

The subculture of sports is often dominated a strong culture of tough heterosexual males (especially in soccer, American football and cycling). There a male masseur will massage the naked male buttock of the sportsman; is has become so logical and so expressly desexualized that such action is acceptable, and thus established.

Remains the problematic area of contact in the region of the groin and sex organs. Sports masseurs must sometimes for technical reasons address complaints and deal with the groin. There can be pain in or around the genitals themselves. And then the human body "on automatic" can react with excitement, with an erection, becoming wet, etc.

For the male, erection and erection fear is a known problem and can poison a massage by becoming more focused on fear and danger than staying in the moment, in the here and now. An erection can be expected when touching the skin and areas close to the sex (abdomen, hips, groin, buttocks). An erection that comes op in a man in – even in liberal The Netherlands but also in other countries is often experienced as an uncomfortable problem area during sport massage and Swedish massage.²¹

For women, the perceived problem and the minefield are usually larger and the red zone extends from the region of the breasts to the abdomen, hips, groin and buttocks. From childhood, the physicality of girls and women often has become a sensitive area, sometimes after painful experiences. Association: *Mimosa pudica*, aka *sensitive plant*, *shameful plant*.

The official held asexual nature of sports has its price. Masseurs touch the bare skin of men and women. In some cases, Eros may come into play and erotic feelings may emerge in one party or both of the parties at the same moment. A number of male and female sports masseurs / Swedish massage therapists, have eventually abandoned their profession because some customers repeatedly called for touching the genitalia - especially men do - so the massage threatens to become a one-sided sexual service provided by the masseur / masseuse.²² Alternatively, a female client can become sexually excited while receiving a regular sport massage or Swedish massage and can clearly express this through breathing, sounds and body movements. Again, emerging horniness on the massage table opens up a potential minefield of contract, order, intent, ecstasy

²¹ By comparison, many states of the USA also enforce strict laws on the use of many covering towels in massage and even avoiding chest massage near nipples for men.

²² Many of these stories were told to the author since 2003.

and sexual excitement.

The commonly held code of sport massage and Swedish massage is that the masseur (m / f) cannot respond to erotic wishes or behavior of the client and that even explicitly expressed desires of the client should not be honored. By definition, no sexual services are provided. After the massage, the masseur can put into words what happened.

However, the reverse world also exists on the massage table. There are masseurs (m / f) who find a specific body of a man or sportsman attractive and who are eager to do exciting things to this man, famous or not. Some men, athletes to Federation and Olympic level, have told me that to their surprise official hired sports masseuses (in competitions abroad) within the privacy of the massage room spontaneously went across, and ended a sport massage with an erotic massage including contact van genitals and serving a happy end. Later on, at the bar, drinking a beer, these sportsmen discussed it with grinning amazement.²³

Another case of massage, performed in a private home in South Africa in 2008, a masseuse working with a regular (non-erotic massage) for a male client unintentionally was so carried away by the ecstasy of massage of her hour-long touch on the body of this man, that she finally proceeded to kissing and licking the penis of the man in her mouth. Shortly afterwards her shame hit and her feeling of guilt intensified.²⁴

A male customer reported going to a beauty salon in England and receiving an unexpected blowjob from a masseuse while having only ordered a regular massage.²⁵

In a spa in a five star hotel in Cape Town, a masseuse told this to the author: Of all massage clients eight in ten are neat. Two out of ten, mostly men from the Middle East, behave in an annoying way, and grope the masseuse. She usually chooses to give a warning and otherwise walks away. At the reception counter there is usually a first survey and estimate. A potentially nasty customer may get a somewhat older and less attractive masseuse!

1c. Experiences of clients with sport massage and Swedish massage.

For most people in the Netherlands who go out to get a massage, the sport massage and Swedish massage are the most popular home & garden variety. Just because it is considered normal and is usually accepted by the social environment. The vast majority of women and men experience this massage in a neutral way.

²³ Stories told to the author since 2008.

²⁴ Interview, November 2010 by the author of a male client, who was not charmed by this event, South Africa, The masseuses response: "Oh, how terrible, I have just been so utterly unprofessional and bad, normally I do not do this stuff at all, I do not know what came over me."

²⁵ Story told to author, January 2011.

However.

The receiver is nude or nearly nude and is touched in a prolonged way. This can be a situation where the client is feeling vulnerable. Or alternatively the client is sexually stimulated, for the sexual-response curve to a stimulus in an average healthy man is often fast, uncomplicated, primary and primitive. In the form of a cartoon the effect of the average man is to be compared with an **electric switch** with a down position and up position. Associations: Man the hunter. *All Men Are Pigs*, that's the perception.

The release of feel-good hormones can occur sport massage in small doses and in Swedish massage perhaps a bit more. A majority of heterosexual men will not mind at all on the massage if at the end of the massage session an attractive masseuse moves beyond the initial order of sport massage and Swedish massage to more sexually oriented styles. From the masseuse's point of view that can be good for client satisfaction and future sales.

The woman, by contrast, is in terms of emotions and experience of her body and willpower usually much more complicated and usually she is slower in the upwards curve of her sexual excitement. In this image, the physical and emotional switchboard of an average woman in a similar cartoon is the rather **complex control panel** in the cockpit of an airplane: Many are the switches of various sorts, and there are a multitude of red and orange warning lights. Association: "*Was will das Weib?, What does the woman want?*".

Some women on the massage table experience a growing wave of Eros, during sport massage or Swedish massage, and they allow themselves to be surprised, and carried away there at that moment time, possibly with a reduced neocortex consciousness, saying 'yes'. That excitement can be unintentional and arise naturally. The masseur (m / f) can select two paths: one of self-restraint and remaining neutral (that is the accepted *best practice*) or more or less go hand in that erotic stream and go beyond the accepted code and start stimulating and acting "bad". In circles of sport massage and Swedish massage the latter approach is seen as highly undesirable. What is prohibited can however be very exciting. So sometimes things happen in the privacy of the room.

Case: In a large Amsterdam school, chair massage is given to teachers and other staff members. One of the male masseurs is a pretty, well built, dark skinned guy coming from Surinam. Female teachers, comparing notes afterwards have admitted to each other that he is so "nice and exciting" that some females have repeatedly offered their bodies.²⁶

The female client can thus go along, and ride along the wave like a beach surfer, enjoy her unexpected crest of Eros and at *that* time say "yes" in word and gesture to the masseur (m / f). That word provides validation to herself, and

²⁶ According to my source (female, ca. 35 years), in December 2010 this chair masseur has been reticent and did not enter upon these offers.

validation is also the masseur's experience.

And then, be it a few hours or days later, she may have doubts. Angry or outraged, she demands satisfaction. A complaint is filed with the practitioner or also, in revenge one floor up, with a fellow practitioner, a salon director or a professional organization. A partly comparable situation can arise in a consensual sex date, which is later reported as a "date rape".²⁷

Experiences on the massage table on the boundary of sexuality are often kept secret by masseuse and client. There are a lot of stories on this topic that can be found in the section *Erotic stories* on the Internet and in print. To what extent they are based on true events is difficult to ascertain. Eros is powerful and has many loopholes.



Fig. 8. Hands in full contact with on the back of a client. in *Sport Massage and Medical Massage*, hands are the extension of the mind. However, in *Holistic Massage* they are extensions of the heart. Photo by Jeroen Leclercq.

²⁷ The essential difference is in fact the inequality between masseur and client.

2. Medical Massage / Physiotherapy

2b *Best Practices*, the masseur / masseuse's point of view in the field of Medical Massage / Physiotherapy.

In general the complete description here recently noted in sport massage. The existing taboo against sexual contact will be heavily experienced by the medical practitioner (m / f) in this field since the Hippocratic Oath is in force, and moreover the code of conduct of doctors and all other agreed rules. An erotic moment or a liaison between medical staff and client during the period of treatment belongs to the great taboos, and leads to serious problems, so the handbrake is firmly drawn and all lights are on red.

For doctors there are few limitations in the technique of touch; if there is medical necessity they can enter their own finger in client's cavities, mouth, anus or vagina to touch these parts. In medical training there is a glaring shortage of women who want to serve as a voluntary model for teaching the art of medical touch.²⁸

During their schooling, physicians learn about the danger of transference and counter-transference, patients who fall in love, etc.

This section below ===== in a box frame

Medical touch in historical perspective

Historical perspective shows the opposite of restraint, because for many centuries there was a lot more leeway. From the late Middle Ages to about 1900 the male physician could and did administer medical vaginal massage to a tense woman.

This was the medical thinking: If she was hysterical, the *Hyster*, or uterus had an off moment, and according to the prevailing view was walking about within the female abdomen. Vaginal massages were also prescribed for unhappy, lonely, neglected or stressed women, up to the point of manually generating an orgasm. This treatment was common and was so time-consuming that the male doctor experienced it as a *humdrum* job; in the eighteenth century it was passed up to the midwife, who thus also treated non-pregnant women.²⁹

From about 1870 consumer magazines in England, France and the USA showed and advertised for a multitude of medical massage vibrators and other devices that were intended for use in the privacy of the bedroom.

²⁸ For women: a hidden call for an extra source of income!

²⁹ Catherine Blackledge, *The Story of V*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2003. The author read the Dutch translation, Page 273, 291, 345. Hiking of the uterus (hyster) is mentioned by Plato in *Timaeus* and is repeated by Galen.

This historical perspective aside – the current taboo on sexual relations in the medical world regarding sexuality is strong.

===== End box =====

2c From the viewpoint of the client in the field of Medical Massage / Physiotherapy.

Clients, both men and women should be able to rely on a neutral attitude and neutral actions of a doctor and a nurse. Eros remains a powerful force. The Medical Board is there to deal with reported excesses.

However, in stories and erotic daydreams there is ample room for the night nurse, her gentle and kind services to hospitalized, injured patients. Especially in a lazaret situations with men slowly recover from illness or injury strong sexual desire will 'raise its ugly head'. See also numerous examples in novels, movies, cartoons, jokes.

3. Chinese / Japanese rub massage and pressure point massage

3b *Best Practices* in the massage, the masseur's point of view (m / f) to rub massage and pressure point massage.

From about 1850 Chinese and Japanese culture is marked by great restraint on sexuality. Especially on the side of masseuses (females) it is considered strange to mix pressure point massage with Eros. The male client can have a desire for sexual pleasure anyway. Associations: man the hunter, man the boar. It is considered wise for the masseuse to put a brake in this.

During the years 2009 and 2010 in Amsterdam, a large number of Chinese massage parlors opened, especially in the downtown area, estimated at more than 20. In the windows are billboards, in words and pictures, they show that only rub massage and pressure point massage takes place. These institutions were established in rapid succession in retail shopping (incurring all high cost of rent, gas, electricity, municipal taxes and other expenses). At fees of 25 Euro to 40 Euro per massage for half hour to one hour this is very odd. A person who does some math realizes that this is economically not feasible.³⁰

³⁰ Something else might be going on according to the Dutch press. Sources in Amsterdam speak of other activities in the back room and/or laundering dirty money. The author is neutral in this respect. A Dutch 2011 book focuses on illegal trafficking in human beings, also in the sex trade. Martijn Roessingh, Perdiep Ramesar, *Slaven in de polder. Hoe sekswerkers, schoonmakers en seizoenarbeiders worden uitgebuit*, Amsterdam, 2011. Chapter 6 is about massage salons and how the grey area between massage and sex is hard to patrol by the police force due to manpower shortages. The authors observe that staff in the Chinese

3c From the viewpoint of the client to rub massage and pressure point massage.

The author currently has no information about this part. Input is welcome!



Fig. 9. Masseur in a Holistic Massage, with a client on a futon. The large mirror fell over to the floor during the photo shoot and the visual result of this accident was used creatively as an artistic prop. Photo by Jeroen Leclercq, 2006.

Holistic massage

4b *Best Practices*, the masseur's point of view (w / v) in holistic massage.

The intent of holistic massage wholeness of touch and experience, conveyed by means of a spiritual attitude and fitting massage techniques, usually quiet *effleurage* (long strokes) by request strong or not so strong and, furthermore *tapotage* (percussion), pulsing and many other more creative forms.

salons may sometimes cross the line to sex - whereas in the Thai salons giving a happy-end hand job is not seen by the staff as real sex.

The client is almost naked or completely naked on the massage and stays half covered - alternatively the client is completely naked if that is OK with the masseur (m / f). The attitude towards body is more accepting and relaxed. This allows touch of the skin around the abdomen, groin, sexual organ on mutual agreement. That style of touch is less strictly judged as taboo – all of this remains very much dependent on how the masseur (m / f) feels and how the client is feeling about skin and nudity. There will often be an initial conversation about life, work, stress and the specific wishes.

Highly dependent on the nature of the holistic practitioner, there will often be an attitude of restraint and working correctly. Most holistic massage therapists will also flip upon hearing the term "naughty massage".

However, there is a gradual scale in the profession of massage (m / f) who are more conservative/correct to other colleagues who are also more Eros-oriented and who are open about the sexual byways that could be explored. Presumably the latter group constitutes a minority. It remains a taboo subject. When holistic massage therapists do peer review and talk among themselves about the trade, there is often a taboo-less openness and atmosphere of communication and thus much if not all can be explicit and outspoken.

Belonging to the conservative, reserved group is Ms. H, a holistic masseuse from the vicinity of Durban, South Africa. Ethnically, she is of upper-class Indian Hindu descent and starting from her religious beliefs, she went into this vocation to help people go forward in life. Her drive is purely spiritual: her touch assists clients towards light and divinity. She made the conscious decision to work purely asexual, and forces customers keep their underwear on, covering the whole hip section with a cloth and refrains from touching any buttocks and groin. She remains neutrally dressed in a wide dress. Because: *"I do not want to go there. A lot of escort houses have opened these last few years in South Africa and all of those ladies call themselves masseuses."*³¹

Another conservative practitioner, R. from California, USA decided to take a *masterclass* in Amsterdam, Holland. For the first time in his life he was able to and allowed to touch buttocks and breasts (after receiving OK from the teacher and the female model). This was a strange outlandish but interesting experience given his strict education.

Masseur S from New Your City is instead a more liberal type who likes pushing the envelope. His outlook and practice resembles a free-thinking European. This forces him to keep a low profile and seek a private enclosed circle of liberal clients.³²

³¹ Interview by author, December 2010.

³² Interview and massage exchange with the author in New York City, 2005.

The holistic practitioner should be sensitive to "energy" and to develop good antennas.

4c From the perspective of the client in holistic massage.

The client in this market looks around and sees what there is on offer. The client could be a liberal type of person, perhaps visiting saunas and nude beaches and can also be interested in the alternative world. He or she senses inside what is desirable and thus chooses holistic massage from their own history and their own sense of flavor. He or she can often be vocal what the request and style should be.

If the client has specific needs and thinks that with a given masseur there is room for Eros, then a holistic massage with a slight erotic color can be requested. See below what sport massage and Swedish massage in practice under the influence of Eros can happen intentionally or unintentionally.

See further below on the desired erotic hue - under erotic massage.

Case study from 2009, reported by masseur F: A holistic massage in a room with two tables, and two massage therapists. On the tables was a married couple, of which the woman was notary public by profession. At the end of the session, the faces turned up, a list of options given and the female client chose the abdominal massage. The male masseur F then offered, option a) being a slow circle on the soft abdomen, while type b) in the movement of 8 also would go down along the thigh and then up through the inside of the groin area up just past the sex, back up to the belly. The client opted for b). Perhaps because the parallel couple massage gave her security? Out of curiosity? A need for a new experience?³³ Most holistic masseurs would avoid that question and the average female customer would not give an OK to perform this movement.

According to another interviewee male masseur, N, another session in a massage parlor went remarkable. A British woman, who ordered a holistic massage, rose gradually into sexual arousal. *"Is this OK with you?"* Asked the masseur and after affirmation by the client after it became a warm massage with a final orgasm. Within that type salon that activity was obviously not called for. After the therapist asked: *Are you gonna sue me?* To which the client responded with exactly the same words: *Are you gonna sue me?*³⁴ This language expressed a slight worry in both parties about the element of danger and taboo. The question in this case is whether the masseur at the time received sufficient validation. Or whether that day he moved on the sharp edge of the knife.

³³ Interview by author, 2010.

³⁴ Interview by author, c. 1995.

5. Erotic massage.

5b *Best Practices* in the massage, the masseur's point of view (w / v) the erotic massage

Acting in the interest of the client, that value comes first. The erotic massage is given in the interest of the woman or man who is receiver, who orders and who pays. The masseur is working in this style will be very involved and yield his or her own personality: the nature of the meeting, the color and flavor and energy of his or her own life style, sexual orientation and sexuality. One shows what one is inside. Erotic massage with detachment on the part of the masseur / masseuse is a contradiction and would probably be self-destructive.

Especially since Eros and sexuality such a big, defining role in life, the erotic / tantric massage becomes a difficult terrain.

Compared to the life of a prostitute, the erotic / tantric masseur (m / f) shall offer less of one's physical body for the benefit of the client.

To bring sexuality into the session and to take it from the session: In peer groups of Eros masseurs (m / f) it is emphasized that an erotic masseur and masseuse needs a primary relationship (or a number of primary relationships) in which ample erotic goodness is achieved. So in the profession, the focus might become yielding, being able to give, donate. The intent of erotic massage becomes a free waterfall of physical pleasure, seeking a sense of physical, erotic glory. As mentioned above, the touch of the genitals, arousal and orgasm are optional. In the opening sentence it read:

"... *one of the biggest non-sexual pleasures that a human body can experience is massage.*"³⁵ and here these two worlds fuse together seamlessly. Erotic massage combines these two worlds and become void – it ends the taboo area of tension.

During the hippie era one massage therapist in California, USA dared to plunge into the deep end of erotic massage. Kenneth Ray Stubbs states "*I became an outlaw in the field of massage.*"³⁶

During a meeting with a peer group of erotic masseurs and masseuses (2010) a question was tabled by masseur P whether a masseur or masseuse may enjoy giving erotic / tantric massage. This question elicited great concern and strong emotions in the group. In the end the best practice and the golden rule for erotic masseurs was voiced: act in the interest of the client.

That does not prevent an erotic masseur (m / f) also can enjoy of the session,

³⁵ <http://sports-blognow.blogspot.com/2008/05/hormone-weight-loss.html>, seen 8 november 2010, spelling adapted.

³⁶ Stubbs quote in de DVD "*Path of the Sexual Shaman, Teachings on Energy, Orgasm and Wisdom*", 2009. See Internet for many other titles of books and DVDs.

like a great cake chef can enjoy making great pies. There remains one significant difference: the erotic masseur works with the body proper, ie. his or her own. He or she can use hands but may also use the full body and touch with the chest area, torso, mouth, cheeks, ears, teeth and use other creative variations. This implies: he or she always brings his or her ego along.

Hygiene. When it genital or anal area is touched, there is a sliding scale of precaution and hygiene. Some masseurs do nothing about precaution. Others sometimes wear latex gloves, use a condom or a dental dam, and further use antiseptic germicidal gel where needed.

Case, told by masseur N: Sometimes an erotic masseuse hired by a couple (male + female) for a session in a hotel room, where the erotic masseur acts as third partner. During the preliminary the safety limits are agreed. At one extreme is an instruction situation in which the active partner is taught massage movements, given on the body of the partner laying down.

The other extreme is a free party with three people, a more libertarian path with creative play and touch. In this trio, the masseur (m / f) can agree whether or not to participate in penetration.³⁷

Earlier on erotic massage has known its heyday: In the pre-Christian Middle-East one may find links between the fields of religion and the field of Eros in temple prostitution.

In erotic massage the term "energy" is again of great importance: see under Holistic massage.

5c From standpoint of the client in the erotic massage

Ideal: he knows what he wants and she knows what she wants. The client who orders has really thought it out, has plucked up courage and stepped over a social and psychological hurdle. Imagine, paying someone for sexual touch! The phases of ordering and performing usually take place without difficulty and conflict. In practice, the male client in many cases, is clear and focused (yang) and indicates which direction the Eros should go, while the female client is (yin) and more frequently expresses less clearly defined wishes, might want to be surprised, and pampered and transported by the expert Eros-masseur.

Case: a black woman, highly educated, heterosexual, went to masseur Y in 2010 in order to investigate her boundaries. To feel where her experience would take her: "... *initially I wanted to get out of my comfort zone and explore my sexuality / experiment.*"³⁸ After the massage, she wrote that it was a good meeting and after

³⁷ Interview by author, 2010.

³⁸ Interview by author, 2010.

several months later she came back for a repeat by this masseur.

6. Tantric massage.

6b *Best Practices*, the masseur's (m / f) point of view to the tantric massage

Talk to one hundred different tantric masseurs and get one hundred different stories about the nature and interpretation of tantra.

One area is the white or blue tantra, that of the cautious type. The five senses and managing energy flows play a major role.

By contrast, the red tantra, the more erotically oriented type. The genitalia can possibly be included in the action.

Practitioners of 'blue' might point an accusing finger to 'red': you are too sexual and that is not intended or not allowed. Supporters of 'red' however, may find 'blue' perhaps too cautious, yin, sort of kids' play.

Through tantric touches and energy flows a variety of pleasant hormones can be released into the body.

In the Netherlands and South Africa the profession of tantric massage is not regulated by law, and is openly advertised.

In most states of the USA a tantric masseur will remain in hiding and build a small customer circle to avoid prosecution in connection with prostitution legislation. Visits of undercover cops can be expected.

6c From the perspective of the client in tantric massage

In advance the customer needs to consider what 'color' tantra he or she wants to get into and where the flow of experience should carry oneself. The garden of tantra is deep and wide - and has shady groves, parks, fountains of glory, lots of cool lakes and hot springs where you can enjoy in an extended way. And there will be a couple of chasms that may scare you. Then you walk away, or you decide to test them with heroism.

General: “*Grund zum Abbruch*” / Grounds to break off

For the practitioner in any of the abovementioned six types of massage an undesirable situation can arise when a client initially agrees to certain limits and rules but does not honor these rules. For example regarding the touching by the client to of the masseur's body (m / f) during in session, or if the client continues to whine to get certain (sexual) services off the agreed menu.

A client who continues to touch, grab, whine, and keeps making requests against

the express wishes of the masseur / masseuse causes stress. In most of the six areas of massage this difficulty is a well known phenomenon. In Germany, one speaks of "*Grund zum Abbruch*" a crisp way to indicate a reason to abort the session. And sometimes, in desperation, even to break off a career.

Legislation

Legislation in the Netherlands. The APV (APV= General Police Regulations) states that massage rooms can have doors but should not have locks. The legislation assumes that in massage the genitals are not touched. Masseurs who do touch genitals are strictly obliged to apply for a brothel license, compliance with this rule varies greatly. It is up to a city or local government to enforce this and implement it. The result of this legislation can be guessed: erotic masseurs (m / f) ignore this law and choose not to sign up. The question is whether a law so far removed from reality is still functioning and whether it should be kept on the books.

Because the doubtful social acceptance of erotic masseurs, even in this very liberal, libertine and open society of Holland is just, just within - or completely over the edge, most erotic masseurs do not want to disclose their name or their work and thus to the outside advertise a different label.

Since 1994 and an industry of escort call girls has sprung up in South Africa who use the label "masseuse". There are ads in newspapers in the category *Adult* or *Massage* placed by men and women who present themselves as masseur / masseuse and describing themselves as "well endowed" or "sexy" and other terms in that vein.

In the USA, the tradition and laws vary by state. Prostitution and sex work are strictly prohibited in most states and thus hiding. And thus grows an enticing, forbidden fruit.

Ethical learning moments. Thesis by the author

1a) In sport massage, Swedish massage and therapeutic massage a male masseur must strive be reticent about sexuality. The female masseuse is afforded more leeway - for culturally determined reasons.

1b) In order to protect the patient, medical massages must always work in an a-sexual way.

There could however be cases where a victim of incest or other trouble needs the touch of a masseur or emotional body worker in order to seek healing in body, mind and soul. Intimate contact is in this sense a controversial issue

because the client is already damaged. Sometimes a sexual touch can become healing and liberating.

2) In a holistic massage or other relaxation massage a client gradually become in a state of Eros, unwanted and unplanned. The masseur / masseuse must formulate a policy for themselves, how to handle this situation.

3) In a tantric massage or erotic massage is the garden of delights are wide and deep and the mutual agreements made between the client and masseur (m / f). become all determining.

4) If a customer feels and reports that a given masseur (m / f) has "Crossed the Line" there are at least three options:

4a) The masseur has objectively trespassed and is wrong. Theoretically this could be determined if a video recording exists. A subsequent verbal description is possible, but very subjective and difficult to formulate. The allegation can become a matter for the vice squad. The police and the prosecution will probably initially assume the veracity of the claim by the female. One may question whether that reflex is wise.

4b) The practitioner has acted correctly in objective terms, but the client picked up, with inner antennas, unspoken feelings, vibrations and energy, and has translated these in terms of Eros as though the masseur has "gone beyond the pale." The existence of this energetic situation needs to be considered.

4c) During the session the masseur has repeatedly asked the client for specific permission to touch, and has received permissions, but later on, afterwards, the client is shocked by the chosen paths and feels insecure or damaged. This course of events also needs to be considered.

5) Among peers, there is great reluctance to face this issue of massage and sexuality; it remains a taboo area. I would like to argue that this broad topic is opened up for discussion by peers in massage but also sometimes between masseurs (m / f) and clients. So there will be less fear and more relaxation, pleasure, openness and in the end, if so desired, frankness in touch.

Conclusions

A more or less objective description (a) of the six types of massage was relatively simple to formulate.

The *Best Practices*, or ideals (b) in each of the six areas of massage gave a clear-cut picture. However, experience of masseurs (m / f), particularly on border areas of massage and sexuality, reveal fault lines and areas of overflow, "bleeding" with variations and deviations either allowed or disallowed.

The perception of the client, c) on each of those six areas also gave a view into "*bleeding*" on border areas between massage and sexuality. Thus the ideal situation and the practice within a number of massage fields are at times far apart, because the 'maddening' force of Eros sometimes pulls at people strongly.³⁹ A general conclusion from case studies is that the borderline between massage and sexuality is sometimes not so easy to draw and that massage and the erotic are in some cases inextricably linked.

³⁹ Thornton, op. cit., p. 76.

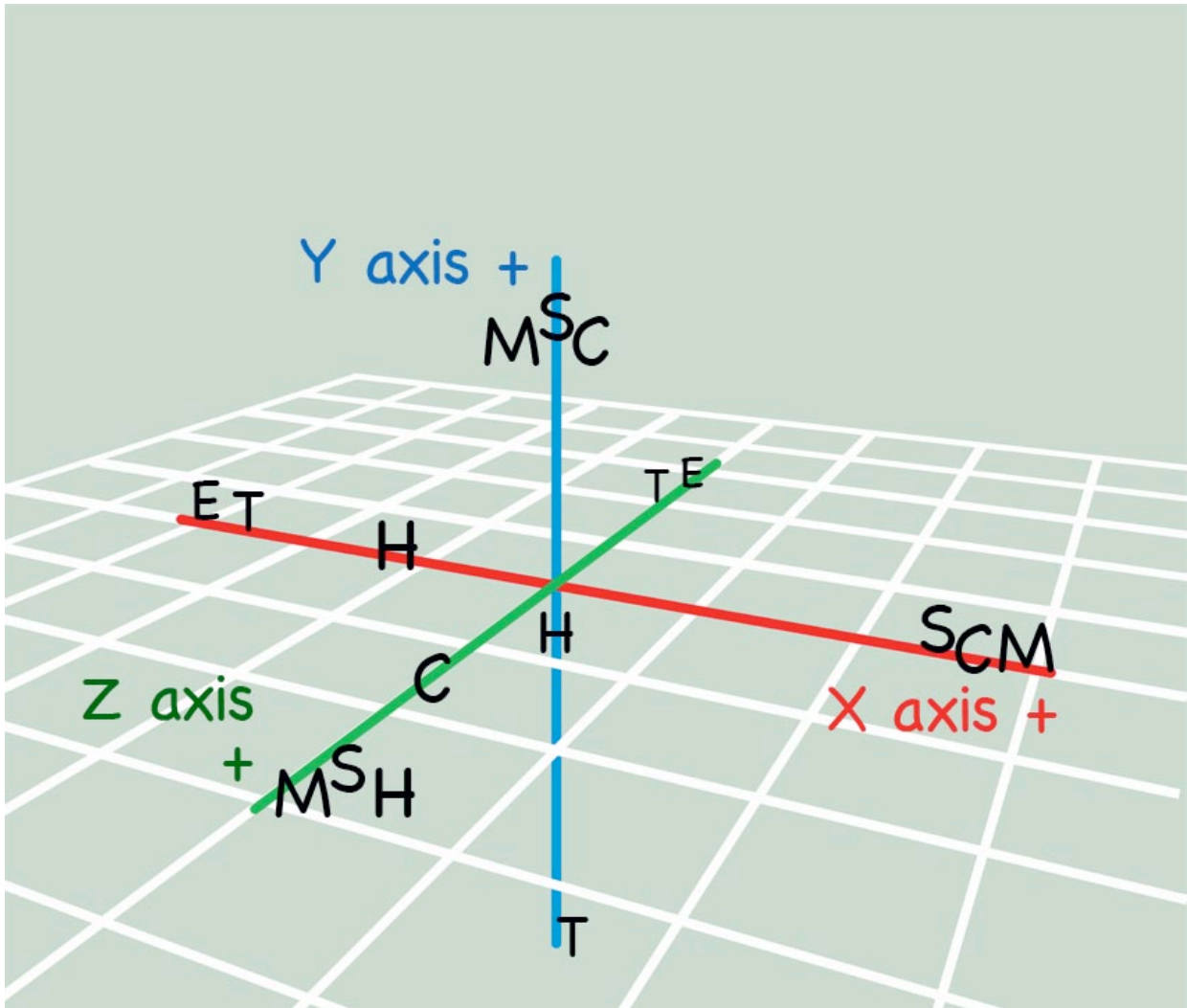


Fig. 10. Simplified Model of the Massages discussed above graded on a scale and placed together on three axes:

X axis for social acceptance

Y axis "garage job"

Z axis transcendence (flight of the soul)

S = Sport massage / Swedish massage

M = Medical Massage / Physiotherapy

C = Chinese / Japanese rub massage and pressure point massage

H = Holistic Massage

E = Erotic Massage

T = Tantric Massage

Literature

Literature is very scarce because of the taboo nature and what literature exists is still more about the legal than about the profession of massage.

Syllabi in use for massage training can address this issue, but are not publicly available.

See other sources in the footnotes.

About the Author

Drs. Kees Kaldenbach (1953) lives in Amsterdam and has an education background, and he is currently active as an art historian, tour guide and masseur. Email kalden@xs4all.nl

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