

Future Directions in Feminist Phenomenology
The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario
May 23-25, 2013
David Chu International Centre, WSS 2130

Dr. Jenny Slatman, Maastricht
Friday May 24, 9:30 a.m.

Body Talk I: Habituation to Bodily Changes after Breast Surgery in Women

ABSTRACT

Although it might be true that the way people talk about their body, the words and idiom they use and the way they perceive their body, is conditioned by the language and normative practices they share with others. I believe that “body talk” also produces individuals’ personal body-biographies. On the basis of empirical data (interviews with women who have undergone breast surgery because of breast cancer), I will address the multiple narratives (medical, stories of others, individual experiences) these women are confronted with and in the context of which they create their own body story. I discuss how women who have undergone breast surgery make sense of their experiences of their changed bodies. I will show that we can identify different ways or patterns of re-identifying with one’s changed body, while focusing on practices or rituals of habituation against the background of the individual woman’s life story.