

Women's Embraces: The Meanings That Women Attribute to The Breast Throughout Life

Mariana Machado Berno and Dr.Patrícia dos Santos Begnami

Fundação Hermínio Ometto, Brazil

Abstract

Women and their breasts engage topics and discussions inside the Brazilian culture, with a influence from Western European and North American culture, that limit their circulation spaces, like breastfeeding in public, topless and female nipple censorship in social midia. Often women's breasts are treated as a separated part from the body, they are objectified and have aesthetic standards and attributed meanings that completely unpersonify women and ignore their life experiences. This research had the goal of understanding the various meanings women attribute to their breast, women with various ages and different life experiences, since for many years the narrative about female bodies were registered by the male view. In order to know those many meanings, four Brazilian women over 18 years old were interviewed, having as triggering question "What meaning does your breast have for you?" and other questions that could make explicit how those meanings were built during these women's lives. The interviews raised reflections that were analysed from the phenomenological research method, having as starting point the debate proposed by Merleau-Ponty about the body-subject as an existential basis of the perception in the construction of the world and culture. This opening made possible to listen how the interviewed women made their breasts relations and meanings, making explicit the coexistence of various meanings and the plurality of the being while in a embodied reality and in a consciousness that is corporeal, in which is at every moment meaning signifying them experiences and the way they look at them world.

Keywords: women; phenomenology; breasts; embodiment; bodies