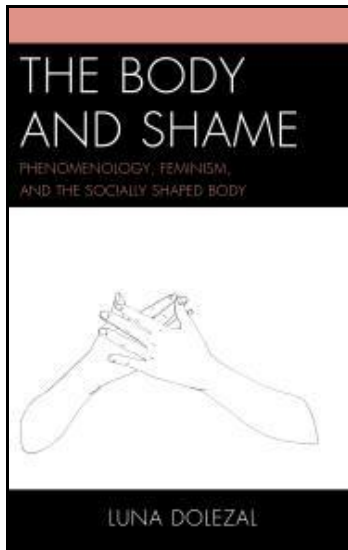


# LEXINGTON BOOKS

## THE BODY AND SHAME

Phenomenology, Feminism, and  
the Socially Shaped Body

By Luna Dolezal



In this very well written and eminently readable book, Dolezal deftly explores the concept of body shame from both the phenomenological and the social constructionist points of view, finding a tension between the phenomenological emphasis on constitution and the social constructionist emphasis on social constraint. The author expertly presents and evaluates the contributions to the analysis of embodiment and intercorporeality in Husserl, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault and Norbert Elias. This is a deeply original and instructive work, a genuine contribution to the study of embodiment and to the understanding of human social encounters. — **Dermot Moran, University College Dublin**

Every woman – indeed every member of an oppressed group – will find this topic resonant. Dolezal argues that, while ‘acute’ body shame is necessary to socialization (what Norbert Elias called ‘the civilising process’), ‘chronic’ body shame is undermining; its destructive potential is exemplified in the case of cosmetic surgery. Dolezal skilfully weaves together social theory (Elias, Foucault, Goffman) with phenomenology (Sartre, Merleau-Ponty) to outline a theory of the socially shaped body that will be required reading for feminists and social theorists alike.— **Katherine Morris, Oxford University**

### ABOUT THE BOOK

*The Body and Shame: Phenomenology, Feminism, and the Socially Shaped Body* investigates the concept of body shame and explores its significance when considering philosophical accounts of embodied subjectivity. Body shame only finds its full articulation in the presence (actual or imagined) of others within a rule and norm governed milieu. As such, it bridges our personal, individual and embodied experience with the social, cultural and political world that contains us. Luna Dolezal argues that understanding body shame can shed light on how the social is embodied, that is, how the body—experienced in its phenomenological primacy by the subject—becomes a social and cultural artifact, shaped by external forces and demands.

*The Body and Shame* introduces leading twentieth-century phenomenological and sociological accounts of embodied subjectivity through the work of Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault and Norbert Elias. Dolezal examines the embodied, social and political features of body shame, contending that body shame is both a necessary and constitutive part of embodied subjectivity while simultaneously a potential site of oppression and marginalization. Exploring the cultural politics of shame, the final chapters of this work explore the phenomenology of self-presentation and a feminist analysis of shame and gender, with a critical focus on the practice of cosmetic surgery, a site where the body is literally shaped by shame. *The Body and Shame* will be of great interest to scholars and students in a wide variety of fields, including philosophy, phenomenology, feminist theory, women’s studies, social theory, cultural studies, psychology, sociology, and medical humanities.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Luna Dolezal** is an Irish Research Council ELEVATE Postdoctoral Fellow based in the Department of Philosophy, Durham University and the Trinity Long Room Hub, Trinity College Dublin.

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