



Embodied Shame: Uncovering Female Shame in Contemporary Women's Writings

J. Brooks Bouson

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Examines how twentieth-century women writers depict female bodily shame and trauma.

How does physical, emotional, and sexual abuse shape women's perceptions of their bodies and identities? How are women's psyches affected by the sexual, racial, and cultural denigration that occurs when women's bodies are represented as defective, spoiled, damaged, or dirtied? *Embodied Shame* skillfully explores these questions in the context of recent writings by North American women, contributing to work in shame theory and to feminist analyses of the intersections of theories of the body, affect, emotions, narrative, and trauma. By examining popular contemporary fictional and nonfictional texts, including Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women*, Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina*, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, and Lucy Grealy's *Autobiography of a Face*, J. Brooks Bouson illuminates how deeply entrenched bodily shame continues to operate in contemporary culture, even as we celebrate the supposed freeing of the female body from the social and cultural constraints that have long bound it.

"Bouson attracts immediate attention with her compelling title. After a tight introduction, the author offers chapters on works worthy of intense critical analysis ... Throughout, Bouson provides clear considerations of where and how these works will extend the discourse of shame theory, which is a relatively new area of scholarly work." — CHOICE

J. Brooks Bouson is Professor of English at Loyola University Chicago. She is the author of *Jamaica Kincaid: Writing Memory, Writing Back to the Mother* and *Quiet As It's Kept: Shame, Trauma, and Race in the Novels of Toni Morrison*, both also published by SUNY Press.

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