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Julia T. Wood. 2013. *Gendered lives: Communication, gender and culture*. Australia: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning. pp. ISBN: 978 11333 074 1911 3330 7418.

Julia T. Wood's 10th edition of *Gendered lives* does not really need an introduction. That it is a tenth edition is itself a testament to the significance of this text. For both academics and students alike, it is considered to be a foundational work – most especially for undergraduates. This review is therefore simply a reiteration as to why this book is, and should remain, an essential source for those teaching and studying gender issues, whether in the fields of cultural studies, media or visual studies, developmental or sociology studies.

The book traverses a diversity of themes, from theoretical discourses framing the discussion of gender (masculinity[ies] and feminism(s) and queer theory, although post-feminism is notably absent) to gendered communication and gendered media, as well as practical or lived gendered lives (gender and work environs; gendered relationships; and gender and violence, for instance). The title of the book succinctly and accurately captures the contents and so, at a glance, the reader is immediately provided with insight into its subject matter.

What makes this book exceptional, however, is that it grounds all the theory and academic discourse within the lived lives of everywo/man. By this I am referring directly to the way the book is structured: it has block quotes in which women and men comment on their own direct, personal experiences of gender issues, relating specifically to the topic being discussed. These accounts range from 'Andrea' (p. 3) relating her stance on feminism and why she refuses to call herself a 'feminist', to 'Keith' (p. 216) commenting on his masculine friendships and how he bonds with his male best friend. These are extremely significant, because Wood takes complex and intricate (often abstract) concepts and makes them accessible and relatable. This is not ivory tower philosophising, but the phenomenological positioning of the theory as it relates to us: you and me. By providing these intimate and often highly personal comments and shared experiences on gendered issues (from gendered rape to gendered domestic violence), it gives the reader a reference point, engages with us on a personal level, and in my opinion makes us think of gender issues in a completely new way. Wood encourages us to engage with the consequences of gendered concerns without being preachy or moralistic. These highly personalised accounts make gender real, raise our awareness of gender in our own societies and cultures, and in so doing challenge us to reflect on what we might often take for granted, or do not take cognisance of.

This also extends to the many case studies Wood provides: of gender being overcome and of gender trauma (see the case study of Fauziya Kasinga of Ghana and her experience of forced genital surgery [p. 307]; and also MukhtarMai of Pakistan on overcoming gang rape and her refusal to commit suicide from shame [p. 315]). Not only are these extraordinary stories of men and women overcoming gender, they also offer an insight into international gender concerns. The cover of Wood's book boldly announces that it is an 'international edition', and indeed it is. South Africa itself features (unfortunately) with the inclusion of the horrific act of 'corrective rape(s)' (p. 297). But these fascinating case studies and personal inserts are not limited to only the heinous and the shocking. Included are the more general gender and media issues (hip-hop, advertisements, magazines and pornography) and how they affect an individual's body image and self-esteem; discussions on gender and education, with arguments for and against same-sex schools; and even on the gender bias prevalent in university hierarchies.

The book seemingly covers everything to do with gender: from defining or redefining feminism to clitoridectomies and male circumcision to gendered policies and inequalities. This is both its strength and its (minor) shortcoming. Many of these topics are brief (if comprehensive), but if readers are looking for an in-depth analysis or critique, then they will need to look elsewhere. Although Wood has pre-empted this as well, quite simply by providing references that are almost all-encompassing (and in almost every instance inserted within the text), she directly refers the reader to further studies/discussions. Despite this, I found myself identifying gaps in her coverage – unfair, I know, because it is impossible to cover every concept, idea or practice in gender, especially when Wood has already rendered such a stellar and comprehensive account. Still, I would have liked her to mention post-feminism, New Queer Theory, issues related to social media (such as revenge pornography sites) and the new movement of 'pornyes' (a movement where women have claimed the term 'porno' and made it positive; the women are not only performers in the adult film industry, but more importantly, they are now the producers and distributors of the porn industry and have control over the creative side and the dissemination of the end product). Regardless of my personal ambitions for even more inclusive themes, Wood is to be commended on an outstanding academic work that navigates the academic and the personal, raises the reader's consciousness and challenges academe.

This book should be considered critical reading for all scholars and students in the humanities.