



Title: Polite Lies: Essays on Being A Woman Caught Between Two Cultures

Author: Kyoko Mori

Description:

In this powerful, exquisitely crafted book, Kyoko Mori delves into her dual heritage with a rare honesty that is both graceful and stirring. From her unhappy childhood in Japan, weighted by a troubled family and a constricting culture, to the American Midwest, where she found herself free to speak as a strong-minded independent woman, though still an outsider, Mori explores the different codes of silence, deference, and expression that govern Japanese and American women's lives: the ties that bind us to family and the lies that keep us apart; the rituals of mourning that give us the courage to accept death; the images of the body that make sex seem foreign to Japanese women and second nature to Americans. In the sensitive hands of this compelling writer, one woman's life becomes the mirror of two profoundly different societies.

Reviews

Booklist:

Mori's exquisite language ... leads readers to an understanding of a ... country where life is a complicated system of symbols ... and conversation is an exercise in decoding the polite lies that obfuscate the truth.

Boston Sunday Globe:

Each lapidary essay in *POLITE LIES* ... expands to encompass a small universe of memory and reflection, analysis and synthesis, presented with an artist's touch.

Kirkus Reviews:

Mori's observations about lies and their consequences build to powerful effect.

Library Journal:

[A] poignant portrait of [Mori's] dichotomous life: a childhood in Japan and an adulthood in the American Midwest. "Polite lies" refers to the imbalance present in the two cultures and the resulting balance Mori establishes for herself and her readers with wit and warmth. The distinction between the public and the private colors the double world that Mori speaks of so eloquently ... This strong collection repeat[s] her impassioned desire not to be swept up in a lifetime of polite acquiescence as were the women of her youth.

Publishers Weekly:

This engagingly insightful discussion from one who has intimately experienced the two cultures is full of revelations about both.