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Gender and Politeness

Gender and Politeness challenges the notion that women are necessarily always more polite than men as much of the language and gender literature claims. Sara Mills discusses the complex relations between gender and politeness and argues that although there are circumstances when women speakers, drawing on stereotypes of femininity to guide their behaviour, will appear to be acting in a more polite way than men, there are many circumstances where women will act just as impolitely as men. The book aims to show that politeness and impoliteness are in essence judgements about another's interventions in an interaction and about that person as whole, and are not simple classifications of particular types of speech. Drawing on the notion of community of practice, Mills examines the way that speakers negotiate with what they perceive to be gendered stereotypes circulating within their particular group.

Sara Mills is Research Professor in the School of Cultural Studies, Sheffield Hallam University. She has published in the areas of feminist post-colonial theory and feminist linguistics, and her books include *Feminist Stylistics* (1995), *Discourse* (1997), *Michel Foucault* (2003), and *Language and Gender: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 1994.

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To Tony, Gabriel, and Francis

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