Men and Women in Interaction: Reconsidering the Differences

For psychologists and gender-issue researchers, this book will illuminate recent studies in gender relations. For general readers it will offer a stimulating counterpoint to the views advanced in Deborah Tannen’s well-known work.

For many years the dominant focus in gender relations has been the differences between men and women. Authors like Chodorow, Gilligan, and Tannen (author of the best-seller You Just Don’t Understand) have portrayed males and females as possessing different traits, styles, and even different languages, viewing these gender differences as deep-seated and enduring. Aries sees the issue as more complex and dependent on several variables, among them age, race, class, and the nature of a given relationship. This is a critical review and re-evaluation of the empirical literature on men and women in conversation. It discusses why we highlight the differences between the sexes, the ways in which differences are exaggerated, and how this may be perpetuating the very stereotypes we wish to abandon.