



Language and Sexuality (Through And) Beyond Gender

Costas Canakis, Venetia Kantsa and Kostas Yiannakopoulos

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This volume is a collection of papers on aspects of language and sexuality as understood and problematized by scholars in linguistics and anthropology. The idea behind this volume was to bring together people working on language-and-sexuality issues from within these two fields given that linguistic research on this topic is, more often than not, fieldwork-related and anthropological research characteristically focuses on issues of sexual onomasiology and semasiology, a concomitant of its preoccupation with social categories and categorization. This endeavor is in many respects a continuation of the discussion on the social constitution of gender while following up on a slowly but steadily growing tradition of research on language and sexuality, both in relation to gender and beyond it. Although gender and sexuality may be thought of as distinct, in principle, they interact not only in the framework provided by heteronormativity, but also in contexts where their presupposed alignment is questioned, if not summarily rebuked. Therefore, if there is, indeed, something to be said about language and sexuality beyond gender, any such discussion will also have to go through it. On the other hand, work on gendered language will have to co-estimate the findings of research on language-and-sexuality. Contributors in this volume have assumed a variety of theoretical positions from which to tackle their diverse topics, covering a wide range of sexually relevant language pertaining to heterosexual, lesbian, gay, and queer experience but also to voice, silence, the unconscious, and nationalism. Issues of identities and desires inevitably take center stage in many of the papers, reflecting dominant theoretical approaches and tensions in the field, even as authors may remain skeptical of the usefulness of the ensuing polarizations. At the same time, the polyphony envisioned by the editors and contributors in this volume will be operative in the ongoing critical appraisal of theoretical stances towards the intricate indexical relation between language, gender, and sexuality.

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