ASEXUAL RESONANCES

Tracing a Queerly Asexual Archive

Ela Przybylo and Danielle Cooper

Introduction: Some Asexual Moments

Ela Przybylo: I have experienced asexuality on many levels in my relational and theoretical practice. Asexuality resonates in the highly charged and intimate, yet asexual, friendships that have populated my life since a young age. These friendships bypass "sex" in favor of other modes of being with others. My most meaningful community formations have also been poly-asexual, though tense with affective togetherness. Asexuality manifests itself in the premium I place on friendships, broadly understood, as well as on myself. In this sense, asexuality multiplies and configures relationship formations.[1]

Danielle Cooper: Like many others, coming out as queer in early adulthood involved distancing myself as much as possible from asexuality. Prior to coming out, I had considered myself asexual because there was no sexual component to my romantic relationships with cis-gendered men. As a newly out queer, I rejected my heterosexual past because I could only see that period in terms of repression, and, frankly, a threat to my legitimacy as queer. Rejecting my heterosexual romantic past for my queer sexual present, however, has only traded in old gaps for new gaps in my personal narrative because I cannot account for the romantic attraction I have experienced toward cis-men. I am beginning to wonder if my problem lies with the fact that I've always seen asexuality and sexuality as mutually exclusive orientations. *But why can't I self-identify as experiencing same-sex sexual attraction and opposite-sex asexual attraction?*

We begin this article on asexual archiving with two moments: how else? Moments speak to a queer method of archiving, to those "ephemeral and unusual traces" so

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necessary to archiving projects that seek to explore genealogies, past and present, of invisible or erased voices.[2] To archive a moment is to archive a feeling, an instance, a trace, a resonance. Almost nothing, but something. Also, a moment is always historical, of the past but also of the present. It is tangled somewhere within us, in the personal archive that we carry. Approaching an asexual archive, we must start with moments because there is, still, so little else to go on.

Asexuality is almost entirely absent in queer, feminist, and critical sexuality studies. In recent years, spurred by "science" and Internet-based asexual community organizing (in 2001 David Jay created the Asexual Visibility and Education Network), asexuality has slowly gained some academic coverage, though it has had little queer and feminist engagement.[3] This raises a political question: why the disinterest, the overlooking, the neglect? What is the fear that deters queer and feminist engagements and explorations of asexuality?[4]

This article questions and expands current definitions and possibilities of both asexuality and queerness. We employ queer theories and methods to push at the parameters of asexuality. In this sense, we take up the tools of queer archiving to inspire asexuality toward new directions.[5] Here we are not bound to asexuality as a sexual identity category articulated in the West in the last decade or so, nor do we offer an alternative "measurable" standard for determining what constitutes asexuality. Rather, we shift our focus to a blurrier imagining of asexuality; we are attuned less to self-identified asexual figures than to asexual "resonances"—or traces, touches, instances —allowing us to search for asexuality in unexpected places. Such a queer broadening of what can "count" as asexuality, especially historically speaking, creates space for unorthodox and unpredictable understandings and manifestations of asexuality. Through a queerly asexual reading strategy and an attention to the touches, instances, moments, and resonances, we begin to assemble an asexual archive that can accommodate the ephemeral and elusive fragments of asexuality that our methods uncover.

We also draw on asexuality to tug at queerness and its occlusion and exclusion of asexuality. Here the question of "why the exclusion?" is central. Asexuality encourages us to rethink the centrality of sex to feminist and queer politics, and to consider critically what has been at stake in the neglect of asexual articulations and perspectives by queer theory and the feminist movement.[6] But it is less that queerness should be expanded or revised to include asexuality than that queerness should be reworked and rethought from asexual perspectives. A queerly asexual approach alters how we read queer histories, identities, and practices. It challenges us to revisit queer histories, past and present, and encourages

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skepticism of any approach to sexuality that does not question the sociocultural centrality of sex.

Throughout, we make two central contributions that challenge both asexuality and queerness. First, we assert that where there is queerness there is also asexuality. In other words, those stories and historical figures embraced by queer readings and queer histories have, more than likely, untold stories of asexuality that have never been explored because of a culturally motivated, as well as feminist and queer, disinterest in asexuality. A reading practice attuned to resonances of asexuality will pick up on these instances, these touches that have been neglected and rendered invisible by a sexually motivated queer archiving and history. As Heather Love briefly comments when exploring the darker, "backward," and overlooked histories of queerness, there is "a tendency to read the queerness of queer desire as excess rather than lack. . . . But it would also make sense to understand queerness as an absence of or aversion to sex."[7] Second, we argue that asexuality is much more pervasive than commonly assumed. This is not about proving that it is statistically prevalent but about shifting the terms of discourse from "identity" to a broader and more expansive understanding of asexuality that will allow for it to be located historically, even prior to its modern articulations.

Our article proceeds with an overview of the existing archives of asexuality, categorized into the "truth" archive (consisting of scientific writing) and the "vernacular" archive (consisting of online community spaces and popular publications). We consider how both archives circulate in ways that often limit understandings of asexuality. Next, we outline the methods of reading and archiving that are integral to our project, arguing for a "queerly asexual" reading strategy, for an attunement to asexual resonances, and for a queer approach to archiving. Finally, we turn to two examples of asexual resonance that we feel effectively trouble asexuality's current parameters: feminist political asexuality and celibacy of the 1960s and 1970s, and the "asexual aesthetics" of the abstract expressionist Agnes Martin. These examples suggest that if we shift our desires and skew our thinking, we can begin to notice asexuality in unexpected and diverse cultural, historical, and theoretical sites.

Asexuality and Its Existing Archives

Asexuality's existing archives can be usefully understood as circulating within two predominant bodies of thinking. The first, the scientific literature on asexuality, consolidates a truth archive. This expanding body of work, while politically

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significant for increasing asexual visibility, legibility, and legitimacy, also operates as the "truth" of asexuality, as the proven fact.[8] Crucially, the truth archive informs and is informed by asexuality's vernacular archive, that body of examples that is more fluid and changing, but that still capitulates, too often, to certain exclusionary mechanisms and parameters of exception. The vernacular archive is compiled and assembled through web pages and blogs, the Asexual Visibility and Education Network (AVEN) website, news coverage, as well as literature on asexuality. Particularly, while these vernacular cultural texts resonate with a desire to uncover asexual histories and figures, this desire becomes constricted by several definitional parameters that enduringly delimit queerly asexual possibilities. The refrain of asexuality that most often surfaces is one that places a premium on the inherent or internal qualities of asexuality by emphasizing asexuality as unchanging over one's lifetime and as categorically "not a choice" but a naturally occurring (if unusual) state of the body *beyond* choice. The effects of this are to render asexuality relatively *unqueer*, in that it is routinely attached to both heteronormativity and self-declaration/identification.

One definitional maneuver that consistently appears in discussions of asexuality is that it is sought for as a natural, consistent, and indisputable proclivity of the body. This is very much evident in the truth archive of science, which is organized around seeking the "proof" of asexuality in and on the body.[9] Consisting of such "discovery" texts as the psychologist Anthony Bogaert's wave-making (though flawed) "Asexuality: Prevalence and Associated Factors in a National Probability Sample," as well as his subsequent publications, and further work by Nicole Prause and Cynthia Graham, Lori Brotto et al., Brotto and Morag Yule, and others since, this scholarship becomes compounded to form the "facts" and "truth" of asexuality.[10] It is referenced more widely than nonscientific academic literature on asexuality to either prove asexuality's validity, legitimacy, and existence and to increase its visibility or to inspire contestation of asexuality, as in recent pop-news coverage of asexuality on *Fox News* where Bogaert's book was featured in a very sensationalist, antiasexual, unfeminist, and unscientific discussion of asexuality.[11] In general, the truth archive of scientific texts on asexuality relies on the biological imperative, or what Gayle Rubin once described as a sort of sexual essentialism—"the idea that sex is a natural force that exists prior to social life."[12] It renders asexuality precultural, a direct result of specific presences and absences of hormones, genetics, or physiology.

The truth archive motivates a search for asexuality in perfectly embodied form, an asexuality that is ever present in the body, more or less unchanging throughout one's lifetime, and categorically not a "choice." When asexuality

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is sought for with these strict definitional terms in mind, it is found rarely, and next to never historically. This is because a figure or character (whether fictitious or actual) must embody a complete and unshifting dislike or disinterest in sex to be recognizable as what Bogaert attests is the "true asexual," as "the real deal—that is, a complete lack of sexual attraction and/or sexual interest . . .—not just a middle-age, on-again, off-again malaise about sex [but] *hard-core* asexuality."[13] Infelicitous language aside, such a limiting search for "true asexuality" (not to mention "hard-core asexuality") closes down queerly asexual possibilities for archiving, emphasizing wholesale and rigid asexual identity over asexual moments, glimpses, resonances.

AVEN, then, as the public face or voice of asexuality, and as part of the vernacular archive, frequently (though certainly not always if we take its forums into account), rehearses a biologically bound definition of asexuality. Kristin Scherrer argues that asexuality plays into a biologically based understanding of sexual orientation while "challeng[ing] essentialist understandings of sexuality as naturally being part of a human experience."[14] AVEN, often though not always, tends toward asserting asexuality as an unchanging state of the body; as its website argues:

> Most people on AVEN have been asexual for our entire lives. Just as people will rarely and unexpectedly go from being straight to gay, asexual people will rarely and unexpectedly become sexual or vice versa. Another small minority will think of themselves as asexual for a brief period of time while exploring and questioning their own sexuality.[15]

Also, asexuality is anchored as categorically *not* a choice, unlike celibacy, but rather something one is born with—"an intrinsic part of who we are."[16] This demarcation of celibacy *as* choice and asexuality *as* nonchoice is specious, since it does not account for the complex ways in which sexual identity, practice, and experience are never strictly "not a choice" but rather made possible by specific sociocultural discursive environments.[17] Such an emphasis on the unchangeable and inherent qualities of asexuality severely limits the possibilities for who might "count" or "pass" as asexual, patrolling the boundaries of "true asexuality," to draw again on Bogaert's phrase, and undercutting the possibility of assembling a creative and queer archive.[18]

In other words, then, when the truth and vernacular archives, interconnected and mutually informing as they often are, articulate asexuality as naturally occurring in the body, as *not* a choice and as more or less unchangeable, pos-

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sibilities for a queerly asexual archive are severely shut down. Yet, despite the persistence of such nonnegotiable definitions of asexuality, the vernacular archive does manage to locate and assemble more promising examples of asexuality. For instance, the "asexual" entry on *Wikipedia* offers a speculative list of asexuals that spans writer and illustrator Edward Gorey; the New Zealand author of *The Bone People*, Keri Hulme; and the much-loved fashion consultant of *Project Runway*, Tim Gunn.[19] Other notable figures often welcomed into the asexual archive include UK singer Morrissey, the protagonist of *Dr. Who*, and the literary figure Sherlock Holmes.[20] There is also an assemblage of asexual representations on TV in recent years, including on the series *House* in 2012, in the New Zealand soap opera *Shortland Street* in 2008, and on the popular American show *The Big Bang Theory*, 2007–12.[21]

In general, these examples tend toward reproducing a homogenized notion of "true asexuality" that anchors asexuality in permanence, in naturalized definitions, in nonchoice, and in self-identification. For instance, Gunn is welcomed into the archive because he self-described—on record—as "asexual," which is likewise the case with many of the other literary and celebrity figures.[22] To be archivable thus means to be self-identified and identifiable. Moreover, most of the figures in these archives are heterosexual, male, and, aside from being asexual, quite heteronormative. For instance, Sheldon Cooper of *The Big Bang Theory* exhibits a nonchalant scientific sexism toward women that is played up by the other characters of the show. One blogger commenting on the character Gerald of *Shortland Street* reflects on this predominance of male representations of asexuality:

> I . . . find it interesting that the first representation of television asexuality is male. I just can't avoid thinking about how gender plays into representations of sexuality. . . . Women are supposed to have a sexual "utility" that men don't need to have. . . . I'm not saying that asexual men have it easier; we all have our own issues to contend with. I just think that bringing up ideas of inequality anywhere they exist is the first step to true equality.[23]

Even in the far more intricate and layered example of asexuality found in Hulme's *The Bone People*, protagonist Kerewin Holmes exhibits a *lifelong* and *unchanging* state of asexuality: "But ever since I can remember, I've disliked close contact . . . charged contact, emotional contact, as well as overtly sexual contact."[24] In other words, then, all these examples are archivable because, in various ways, they play into a set of static notions of what can be classifiable as asexuality, touching on asexuality's presumed unchangeable, inherent, and self-identifiable qualities while rehearsing patterns of heteronormativity and maleness.

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To queer, trouble, and expand existing asexual archives, we believe a queerly asexual approach to reading history, cultural representations, and theory is necessary.[25] Such a method for reading and archiving brings together queer and asexual perspectives to find asexuality in unexpected and diverse places. Also, such a method involves querying queer and feminist exclusions of asexuality and applying a particular attention to asexuality. A queerly asexual method is also founded on a desire to look for asexuality outside of its current definitional parameters of unchangeability, inherentness, nonchoice, self-identification, heteronormativity, and maleness, focusing instead on archiving asexual resonances, moments, touches, or textures.

Queerly Asexual Reading and Archiving Strategies

Starting from, yet expanding, the existing asexual archive calls not only for a more flexible theorizing of asexuality but also for creative methods of finding, interpreting, and assembling a queerly asexual archive. Drawing on queer historiography, queer writing on the archive, and an asexual sensibility, this section provides a methodological framework for pursuing a more expansive and heterogeneous approach to asexuality studies. We confront the absence of queer attention to asexuality and apply methods of queerly asexual reading and archiving to rethink the current confines and occlusions present within both asexuality and queerness.

Our queerly asexual methodology, then, consists of three components: (1) reading history, cultural representation, and theory expressly for asexuality and queerness; (2) finding and interpreting sources of asexual "touch" between asexuality today and asexual resonances of other contexts, past and present; and (3) assembling an asexual archive that is multiple and contradictory, that is prone to expansion and revision, and that challenges traditional notions of an archive as a physical, static, and complete historical resource. Our approach draws inspiration from asexual blogs, forums, and other online spaces, where asexually identified individuals "discover" and discuss meaningful historical and contemporary sites of asexuality, in the forms of literary characters and historical figures.

Researching queerly and asexually first requires particular approaches to reading. Such a strategy starts with the assertion that whenever sexuality is at the heart of literary, historical, and theoretical analysis, so is *asexuality*. While entirely neglected as a sexual identity and cultural trope, both historically and contemporarily, asexuality *can* be found in history, in literature, and in the everyday—if we search for it queerly. This requires that we have a genuinely queer and expansive understanding of asexuality, that we envision it beyond the dominant,

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exacting definitions and manifestations it has acquired in the present as a sexual identity of "no sexual attraction."[26] We will be hard-pressed to find asexuality in many places, especially historically speaking, if we are bound to its contemporary definitions as a more or less stable, inherent, biologically determined absence of sexual interest. If, on the other hand, we imagine asexuality expansively, we can work toward seeing asexuality everywhere, assembling dynamic asexual historiographies and archives.[27] In this sense, reading *queerly* can effectively mobilize asexuality toward unpredictable literary, historical, and theoretical readings.

While reading *queerly* can effectively dishevel what "counts" or "passes" as asexuality, and thus expand the asexual archive, reading *asexually* can provide queer theory with previously unrecognized and unexplored modes of analysis. Only through reading asexually can we expand and newly trouble queer understandings of intimacy, polyamory, partnership, kinship, and singleness and also trace asexuality in unexpected, and perhaps even undesirable, locations. It is, in other words, fascinating to ask, what would happen if queer theorists found asexuality *everywhere* and if queerness was reworked from the perspectives of asexuality?

Unearthing or "discovering" figures who perfectly inhabit the *true asexual* figure—who, in other words, are unchanging in their asexuality, are self-identified, and whose asexuality is biologically determined—is a next-to-impossible, and certainly a limiting task. Also, such a cataloguing of "true asexuals" would function to reinscribe the "truth" of asexuality, establishing new parameters for asexual belonging and inclusion. Instead, finding and interpreting asexuality through broader and more flexible terms that exceed current definitional parameters of asexuality helps refrain from projecting current understandings of asexuality onto past specters. A queerly asexual approach to interpretation is attuned instead to asexual "resonances"—what we understand as a certain texture, sensibility, or implication of asexuality that shifts the focus from asexual *identities* to asexual traces, touches, instances.

Queer historiography, "in the face of institutional neglect, along with erased and invisible histories . . . [of] gay and lesbian cultures," provides the precedent for relying instead on "ephemeral and unusual traces," touches, and resonances.[28] As José Esteban Muñoz argues, "The historian of queer experience" needs to deploy "queer evidence: an evidence that has been queered in relation to the laws of what counts as proof" to challenge how evidence has been routinely used in the disservice of queerness, as proof of "deviancy," and as a call for discipline and modification. In contrast, queering evidence means being attuned to "ephemera as trace, the remains, the things that are left, hanging in the air

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like a rumor."[29] But while searching for asexuality requires us to keep watch for ephemera, asexual resonances are even more elusive because they are not easily recognized by the sorts of examples of queerness that Muñoz tracks, namely, the "communicative physical gestures such as the cool look of the street cruise, a lingering handshake between recent acquaintances, or the mannish strut of a particularly confident woman."[30] Considering that asexual relations, for example, do not rely on queer sexual mainstays such as cruising, we wonder what distinctly queerly asexual traces may look and feel like.

From queer historiography we also adapt an investment in troubling our relationship to the past and to seeking queerness in history. Love writes that "as queer readers we tend to see ourselves as reaching back towards isolated figures in the queer past in order to rescue or save them," in an effort "to forge communities between the living and the dead."[31] A methodological shift from identity locating to resonance attunement changes the terms of this discourse, emphasizing the ephemeral traces of asexuality as opposed to the cataloguing of "true" asexuals. Medievalist Carolyn Dinshaw, finding queer instances in late fourteenth-century and early fifteenth-century England, describes a "queer historical impulse" as a desire to "touch" between "lives, texts and other cultural phenomenon left out of sexual categories back then, and, on the other hand, those left out of current sexual categories now."[32] An attention to touch, therefore, likewise enables us to examine *moments* of asexuality as opposed to becoming fixed on locating historical or literary figures that might "pass" as asexual by today's standards. Such an attention to asexual touch, paradoxical as this term may seem, references a queer historical impulse that has a distinctly affective dimension and that leads to unpredictable and even undesirable literary, historical, and cultural readings. For example, Love discusses how certain tragic and isolated queer literary figures can be understood as "backward" when viewed through a happy, affirmative, and mainstream Western LGBT agenda. As discussed in the previous section, a queerly asexual reading may have a similar "backward" feel in relation to the contemporary mainstream asexuality movement, which aims at creating a nonthreatening, "normative" image of asexuals and asexuality that is all too often heteronormative, biologically determined, and identity driven. Interestingly, one reason asexuality might be neglected by queer theory and feminist theory is that it can all too easily be interpreted as "backward" or "prudish," as antithetical to a "pro-sex" and sex radical thinking.

Following much recent work in queer theory, we understand our process of gathering asexual resonances as a form of metaphorical *archiving*, and the written space of this project as an archive in itself.[33] Our project, like many queer

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projects, confronts the problem raised by Ann Cvetkovich in *An Archive of Feelings*: in the absence of institutionally recorded and documented pasts and histories, how—and with the use of what tools and methods—can a queer archive be assembled?[34] Jacques Derrida famously commented that "nothing is less clear today than the word 'archive,'" reflecting the "archival turn."[35] This involves destabilizing archives by attending to what Diana Taylor characterizes as their "myths," for example, that the archive is a complete, cohesive, unmediated, and static source of knowledge.[36]

The archival turn presents opportunities not only for deconstructing archives but also for constructing new archives. For instance, Cvetkovich argues that her project, which examines trauma in lesbian public cultures, necessitates an "unusual archive."[37] As a result, she suggests that "the individual chapters of [her] book should be understood as working as much to produce an archive as to analyze one," claiming space and commanding attention for previously untold narratives of queerness.[38]

Cvetkovich's queer archiving strategy is notable for utilizing a declarative statement to render her work an archive. In *The Archive and the Repertoire*, Taylor notes and problematizes the tension between "the archive of supposedly enduring materials" and "the so-called ephemeral repertoire of embodied practice/knowledge."[39] By relying on a performative gesture, Cvetkovich is also blurring the supposed binary between archive and repertoire and offering a method for archiving supposedly nonenduring materials.

Building on the work of queer archiving, including that of Cvetkovich, Love, Muñoz, and Halberstam, our article itself constitutes a queerly *asexual* archive.[40] As such, it is a contribution to the proliferating genre of queer metaphorical archives, arguing against traditional understandings of the archive as a static, singular, and physical entity that is indexical of "truth." Fundamentally, our method of reading and archiving in queerly asexual ways could lead us to a plurality of asexual examples in history, theory, and cultural representation. In the following section, we reflect on only two possible sites of asexual resonance that trouble and expand both current definitions of asexuality and trajectories of queerness.

Asexuality-in-Theory: Moments of Political Asexuality in the Texts of the Women's Liberation Movement

Some of the sole articulations of asexuality, before the rise of AVEN and the sexual identity category of asexuality, took place in the context of the women's

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liberation movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Feminists such as Dana Densmore and Valerie Solanas imagined asexuality as a radical and political response—a "radical refusal," as Breanne Fahs has recently framed it—of a cultural context of "sexual liberation" that promoted women's sexual availability and circumscribed women's bodily autonomy.[41] This "permissive turn" of the 1960s onward was characterized by a "shift toward a more libertarian ethic [of sex]" in which "women lost not only the right to expect traditional forms of exchange for sex (love, commitment, marriage), but also the 'morally based' grounds on which to refuse sex they did not want."[42] Responding to the so-called sexual revolution and permissive sexual turn, political asexuality and political celibacy were articulated as theoretically and politically viable feminist strategies for challenging the institution of heterosexuality, asserting women's independence, and ending women's oppression.

Crucially, theoretical moments of asexuality are not center stage in the writings of Densmore and Solanas, and they are certainly not abundant in the writings of the women's liberation movement, let alone in feminist and queer debates on sexuality since then.[43] Fahs, in "Radical Refusals: On the Anarchist Politics of Women Choosing Asexuality," comments that asexuality tends to be left out of the "master narrative of the sexual revolution" and lost in feminist debates.[44] In this sense, moments of asexuality, political or otherwise, might be understood as a sort of "shadow feminism," "long haunt[ing] the more acceptable forms of feminism that are oriented to positivity, reform, and accommodation rather than negativity, rejection, transformation."[45] As an "alternative feminist project," and perhaps even "an antisocial feminism," asexuality and celibacy have both fallen through the cracks of feminist and queer theorizing.[46]

As discussed above, the asexuality community commonly disarticulates celibacy and asexuality from each other, on the grounds that celibacy is a "choice" and asexuality is not, since it is a sexual orientation rooted in the body.[47] On the other hand, political asexuality of the 1960s and 1970s, if welcomed into an asexual archive, suggests that celibacy and asexuality may *both* be imagined as politically motivated "choices" that nonetheless need to be understood in the context of broader cultural constraints such as a cultural prioritizing of sex as "healthy" and central to modern notions of self-making, relationships, and social participation. In other words, blurring the distinction between celibacy and asexuality may be integral to expanding notions of what and who might "count" as asexual, dismantling the definitional parameters of asexuality, and effectively queering the asexual archive. This is especially the case for feminists of the late 1960s and early 1970s, who were not tangibly concerned with differentiating celibacy from

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asexuality, articulating both as socially and politically motivated strategies for challenging heteronormativity.

Densmore, a member of the Boston feminist group Cell 16, provides us with several theoretical moments of radical celibacy in "Independence from the Sexual Revolution" and "On Celibacy."[48] Densmore's reflections on celibacy are integral to the assembling of asexual archives today because she unflinchingly undermines naturalizations of sex as necessary to survival, equated with "freedom," and privileged over other activities—all three arguments being central to a distinctly asexual critique of culture. In "On Celibacy," for instance, she challenges sex as fundamental to survival: "Sex is not essential to life, as eating is. Some people go through their whole lives without engaging in it at all, including fine, warm, happy people. It is a myth that this makes one bitter, shriveled up, twisted."[49] Or, in "Independence from the Sexual Revolution," Densmore opines that "people seem to believe that sexual freedom . . . is freedom . . . this sexual freedom . . . includes no freedom to decline sex," disrupting modern tendencies to understand sex *as* freedom.[50] She also took up an argument often raised by today's asexual activists, namely, that sex is disproportionately valued above other modes of relating and pleasure. Densmore writes: "A lot of things are pleasurable without our getting the idea that we can't live without them. . . . I can think of certain foods, certain music, certain drugs, whose physical pleasurableness compares favorably even to good sex."[51] Celibacy, then, enters as a genuinely asexual critique of the misogyny within the permissive cultural turn and of social fixations on sex, as well as a political strategy for interrupting women's sexual, social, and emotional reliance on men.

Solanas, a radical anti-establishment figure and author of the inventive and "disruptively nonassimilable" "SCUM (Society for Cutting Up Men) Manifesto," also deployed asexuality as a political critique of state and patriarchy. Unlike Densmore, with her hopeful feminist optimism and belief that celibacy can amount to women's liberation, Solanas was critical of the women's liberation movement and projected a killjoy spirit of nihilism that consisted of women's complete system overthrow made possible by asexuality.[52] First, Solanas, like Densmore, provided a critique of the cultural centrality of sex, describing it as excessive, "a solitary experience, noncreative, a gross waste of time" as well as "animalistic" and "the refuge of the mindless."[53] Next, asexuality is proposed as a vital tool to be used by SCUM women—the "self-confident, swinging, thrill-seeking females"—for overthrowing patriarchy and creating "a female society [. . . of] funky females grooving on each other."[54] For Solanas, political asexuality serves the role of ending systems of inequality and patriarchy through curtailing the

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reproduction of men, and in a final nihilistic turn, completely terminating species reproduction: "Why produce even females? Why should there be future generations? What is their purpose?" she asks.[55] Solanas proposes asexuality in the context of the late 1960s to critique the permissive sexual turn and the women's liberation movement, and as a theoretically rigorous tool for thinking different world systems.

Together, the moments of political asexuality and celibacy that surface in Densmore's and Solanas's writings offer possibilities for expanding an asexual archive and rethinking what could "count" as asexuality, de-emphasizing the celibacy-asexuality distinction as well as the importance of the nonchoice criterion. Also, these asexual resonances present moments of writing when feminist politics are rethought *through* the deployment of asexuality, suggesting that such theorizations are needed in both feminist and queer writing, so as to radically renegotiate the constraining effects of a cultural preoccupation with sex.

Asexuality-in-Practice: Reclaiming Agnes Martin's Moments of (A)sexual Abstraction

Around the same time that Solanas and Densmore theorized their respective "radical refusals" of sex, abstract expressionist artist Agnes Martin publicly disavowed sex, leading a reclusive life in the New Mexico desert. Martin's artistic practice and aesthetics are an important contribution to the queerly asexual archive because she troubles what constitutes queerness by demonstrating that asexuality is a constitutive, if overlooked, element of a queer life. Asexuality is at the core of Martin's artistic persona: known as the "art nun," Martin publicly rejected passion and lust as "not real" and as "exhaustible emotions."[56] Rejecting sex, Martin was also interested in a more nuanced understanding of love; discussing recurrent themes in her work, she explained, "real love is when you're not making love and you still love each other. Innocent love is what I paint about."[57] At the same time, Martin's strict grid-based aesthetic also provides a compelling queer *and* asexual counterpoint to the often-characterized "virile" abstract expressionism, the dominant approach to abstract art during her era.[58]

Reading Martin *asexually*, and reclaiming her into a queerly asexual archive, complicates queer scholarship, which has tended to emphasize her "sexual difference" solely through lesbian desire. For instance, the queer art historian Jonathan Katz included Martin in his recent exhibit of gay portraiture at the Smithsonian, titled *Hide and Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture*—the show's title alone demonstrating how "desire" is often assumed when discuss-

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ing sexual "difference."[59] Katz further reinforced a sex-centric interpretation of Martin's work when he argued that "we may consider [Martin's] erotics as a practice, and with it in mind, reread her art, writings, and interviews in an attempt to make sense of that transformative period in New York that set her on the path she would follow for the rest of her life."[60] This path, according to Katz, involved "palliative" strategies such as adopting Zen Buddhism, as a way to come to terms with a sexuality that could not be publicly acknowledged during the repressive Cold War era.[61]

Crucially, Katz emphasizes Martin's artistic agency *through* her sexual desires in order to challenge conservative tendencies within art history, a discipline that has systemically closeted and desexualized "sexually different" artists. Yet emphasizing Martin's difference through sexuality without acknowledging her asexual difference merely closets asexuality within queer contexts. Similarly, even a more "asexual-friendly" reading of Martin from Michael Cobb's recently published book *Single: Arguments for the Uncoupled* fails to acknowledge asexuality as a viable framework for understanding Martin's lifestyle and art. While Cobb's book appears to follow an asexual methodology, since he characterizes his book as "uninterested in sex" and aims to "think beyond the potentials of sex and sexuality . . . [and] question what it means to be in any kind of close, intimate contact," Cobb does not consider asexuality in any capacity during his reading of Martin.[62] In fact, when discussing Martin's work, Cobb draws extensively on Terry Castle, who characterizes Martin's work as "oddly sexual" and "erotic."[63] Cobb's lack of engagement with asexuality reinforces the recurring insistence on reading Martin from a sexual and sexualized queer standpoint, neglecting her demonstrated disinterest in sex and sexuality.

Martin expands how we understand queerness and asexuality because her life choices complicate conventional narratives of both the queer and the asexual. While it would be impossible to locate Martin as asexual based on self-identification (indeed, she came from an era when such self-definitions did not yet exist), her sexual history suggests that she might have chosen an asexual lifestyle and that this choice was deeply informed by her artistic practice as opposed to being an extension of her underlying orientation. Martin's statements about love and her solitary life in the desert likewise present a queer alternative to normative definitions of asexuality, which tend to emphasize the healthful, positive, and social aspects of asexuality.[64] Also, Martin's work can arguably be considered reflective of her queer asexuality in the same way Katz argues her work reflects her queer sexuality. Katz argues that failing to read Martin's art "between the lines" of her grids by not including her sexuality into an analysis of her art is a

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trap.[65] These very lines, however, also demonstrate that a queerly asexual sensibility can be manifested in art.[66] While Cobb suggests that Martin's work demonstrates the unique perspective and potential of the uncoupled, pushing Cobb's argument further, it is also an example of the unique perspective and potential of those who radically refuse sex as part of their creative process. As Martin's lifestyle and work demonstrate, asexuality and queerness often go together: not only is Martin queer because she had same-sex relationships at a certain point in her life, but also because she later chose to live a nonnormative, asexual life.

Conclusions

We began this piece with two moments of reflection attuned to asexuality. These moments speak to creative ways in which asexuality might be archived in the everyday, sticking to the skin in a particular way. Both moments suggest the possible effects of locating asexuality in one's life: a rethinking of the life narrative, stable identity, declarative self-making, and relationship formation. The first moment, Przybylo's meditation on friendship, reflects on the alternative forms of relationality that asexuality might inspire, in this way dialoguing with the radical political asexualities theorized by Solanas and Densmore, who likewise imagined alternative modes of being with others. The second moment, Cooper's questions about the role of romantic attraction to cis-men in her life, demonstrates how queer life narratives can and do resonate asexually. In the same way that claims that Agnes Martin is queer dismiss her asexual experiences as inauthentic or irrelevant, Cooper distanced herself from her heterosexual past to bolster her queer, sexual present. Yet both authors' moments of reflection demonstrate that asexuality enriches and expands queer possibilities.

Assembling such personal asexual archives encourages us to think through public and personal disinterest in asexuality and leads to broader questions: What has it meant that asexuality, in its diverse possible manifestations, has been curtailed as a site of political inhabitability and of experience navigation? Crucially, what has it meant for feminist and queer thought to partake in foreclosures of asexuality? How would an attentiveness to asexuality alter the coordinates of lived and theorized sex-worlds? We have been arguing throughout that to archive asexually is not to append asexuality onto other feminist and queer projects but to think with a new attention to asexuality.

The examples we have proposed to include in this queerly asexual archive—Solanas, Densmore, Martin—suggest how far afield asexuality can be found when we question common assumptions about the dominant, narrowing definitions of

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asexuality. These roughly contemporaneous examples from the 1960s and 1970s resonate with contemporary concerns pertaining to asexuality and queerness, as all three women sought radical, asexual strategies to challenge the status quo and through moments in their lives, writings, and artistic pursuits articulated forms of queer asexuality. Crucially, their insistence on asexuality as a politically salient tactic reflects how queerness and asexuality often coincide.

Yet our examples are not intended to suggest that either Solanas, Densmore, or Martin was strictly "asexual" but that asexuality was a recurring motive, theory, and practice in their work and lives, as characterized by the asexual moments that come to the surface and might be read *asexually* from the vantage point of the present day. And just as it is impossible to unambivalently assert that Solanas, Densmore, and Martin were indeed asexual, our archive is likewise not definitive. The queerly asexual moments we have archived are just one possibility for where a practice of queerly asexual reading might take us. While it has led us to track asexual moments and resonances in the theories, lives, and practices of Solanas, Densmore, and Martin, these moments continue to replicate a rather white and American—even if queer and feminist—asexuality. The asexual resonances we have here engaged with are thus not attuned to the intersections of asexuality with disability, heterosexuality, race, spirituality, nationalism, and age or to asexuality in non-Western, premodern, or nonsecular contexts. For instance, we wonder how an analysis of asexuality *transnationally* would engage with and radically disrupt the queerly asexual methodology we put forward in this article.[67] Tracing the asexual resonances we have here included, we hope that future work will engage with our queerly asexual archiving strategies, challenging and reformulating them so as to expand, and of course trouble, feminist and queer archives of asexuality.

Notes

The authors would like to thank Shannon Bell for supporting this collaborative project. Special thanks also to Sara Rodrigues, Ariel Leutheusser, and two anonymous reviewers for critically engaging with our work.

1. This reflection is motivated, in part, by Michel Foucault's articulations on friendship. See Foucault, "Friendship as a Way of Life," in *Foucault Live (Interviews, 1966–1984)*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext[e], 1989), 203–9.
2. Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 8.
3. For "science," see especially Anthony Bogaert, "Asexuality: Prevalence and Associated Factors in a National Probability Sample," *Journal of Sex Research* 41, no. 3

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(2004): 279–87. On AVEN, see *AVEN: Asexual Visibility and Education Network*, 2008, www.asexuality.org. For recent feminist engagements with asexuality, see Karli June Cerankowski and Megan Milks, "New Orientations: Asexuality and Its Implications for Theory and Practice," *Feminist Studies* 36, no. 3 (2010): 650–64; Ela Przybylo, "Crisis and Safety: The Asexual in Sexusociety," *Sexualities* 14, no. 4 (2011): 444–61; Przybylo, "Producing Facts: Empirical Asexuality and the Scientific Study of Sex," *Feminism and Psychology* 23, no. 2 (2013): 224–42; Eunjung Kim, "How Much Sex Is Healthy? The Pleasures of Asexuality," in *Against Health: How Health Became the New Morality*, ed. Jonathan M. Metzl and Anna Kirkland (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 157–69; Kim, "Asexuality in Disability Narratives," *Sexualities* 14, no. 4 (2011): 479–93; Breanne Fahs, "Radical Refusals: On the Anarchist Politics of Women Choosing," *Sexualities* 13, no. 4 (2010): 445–61; Esther D. Rothblum and Kathleen A. Brehony, eds., *Boston Marriages: Romantic but Asexual Relationships among Contemporary Lesbians* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993); Kristina Gupta. "Picturing Space for Lesbian Nonsexualities: Rethinking Sex-Normative Commitments through The Kids Are All Right (2010)," *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 17, no. 1 (2013): 103–18; Karli June Cerankowski, "Queer Dandy Style: The Cultural Politics of Tim Gunn's Asexuality," *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1&2 (2013): 226–44.

4. Ellen Carol DuBois and Linda Gordon argue that feminist approaches to sexuality tend to oscillate between two extremes: pleasure and danger. See DuBois and Gordon, "Seeking Ecstasy on the Battlefield: Danger and Pleasure in Nineteenth-Century Feminist Sexual Thought," in *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, ed. Carole S. Vance (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 32. See also the remainder of *Pleasure and Danger*, which resulted from the 1982 conference at Barnard College titled "The Scholar and the Feminist." For an analysis of the pleasure and danger debate, see Jane Gerhard, *Desiring Revolution: Second Wave Feminism and the Rewriting of American Sexual Thought, 1920 to 1982* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). Cerankowski and Milks also reflect on the polarization of prosex and antisex feminism in "New Orientations," 655–59.
5. See, for instance, those imagined by Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feelings;* Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place* (New York: New York University Press, 2005); Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).
6. Cerankowski and Milks, "New Orientations," 659.
7. Love, *Feeling Backward*, 40.
8. See Przybylo, "Producing Facts."
9. Przybylo, "Producing Facts," 230.

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10. Bogaert's best-known first article, published in 2004, is "Asexuality: Prevalence and Associated Factors." See also his other article on asexuality, "Toward a Conceptual Understanding of Asexuality," *Review of General Psychology* 10, no. 3 (2006): 241–50; his book chapters "Asexuality: Dysfunction or Variation?," in *Psychological Sexual Dysfunctions*, ed. Jayson M. Caroll and Marta K. Alena (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2008), 9–13, and "The Demography of Asexuality," in *International Handbooks of Population, Volume 5, International Handbook on the Demography of Sexuality* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013), 275–88; and his book on asexuality, *Understanding Asexuality* (Toronto: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012). For further work, see Nicole Prause and Cynthia Graham, "Asexuality: Classification and Characterization," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 36, no. 3 (2007): 341–56; Lori A. Brotto, Gail Knudson, Jess Inskip, Katherine Rhodes, and Yvonne Erskine, "Asexuality: A Mixed-Methods Approach," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 39, no. 3 (2010): 599–618; Brotto and Morag A. Yule, "Physiological and Subjective Sexual Arousal in Self-Identified Asexual Women," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 40, no. 4 (2011): 699–712. Yule Brotto and Boris Gorzalka, "Mental Health and Interpersonal Functioning in Self-Identified Asexual Men and Women," *Psychology and Sexuality* 4, no. 2 (2013): 136–51; Yule Brotto and Gorzalka, "Biological Markers of Asexuality: Handedness, Birth Order, and Finger Length Ratios in Self-Identified Asexual Men and Women," *Archives of Sexual Behavior,* Published Online First. September 18, 2013, 1–12. It is worthwhile to note, however, that a recent issue of *Psychology & Sexuality* cultivates an interdisciplinary approach to asexuality, combining scientific and nonscientific approaches. See Mark Carrigan, Kristina Gupta, and Todd G. Morrison, "Asexuality Special Theme Issue," *Psychology & Sexuality* 4, no. 2 (2013).
11. *Fox News*, "Asexuality a Sexual Orientation?," 2012, video.foxnews.com/v/1797282177001/asexuality-a-sexual-orientation/.
12. Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in Vance, *Pleasure and Danger*, 275.
13. Bogaert, *Understanding Asexuality*, 5.
14. Kristin Scherrer, "Coming to an Asexual Identity: Negotiating Identity, Negotiating Desire," *Sexualities* 11, no. 5 (2008): 632.
15. "Overview," *AVEN: Asexual Visibility and Education Network*, 2008, www.asexuality.org/home/overview.html. There are ample online discussions that challenge this quality of asexuality as unchanging. For instance, even AVEN contradicts itself: "Sexuality can be fluid, and it can change over a period of time for some people. If you find that you have little or no sexual attraction to other people now, then you can choose to identify as asexual. Many asexual people were more sexually active during puberty or another period of their lives. However, at this moment they do not experience sexual attraction to others and identify as asexual" ("General FAQ," *AVEN: Asexual Visibility and Education Network*, 2008, www.asexuality.org/home/general.html).

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16. "Overview," *AVEN*. See also Scherrer, "Coming to an Asexual Identity," 631.
17. This distinction between celibacy as a choice and asexuality as a nonchoice is not unique to writing on asexuality but likewise appears in literature on celibacy. See, for instance, Sandra Bell and Elisa J. Sobo, "Celibacy in Cross-Cultural Perspective: An Overview," in *Celibacy, Culture, and Society: The Anthropology of Sexual Abstinence*, ed. Elisa J. Sobo and Sandra Bell (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 12.
18. Bogaert, *Understanding Asexuality*, 5.
19. Keri Hulme, *The Bone People* (London: Picador, 1985); "Asexuality," *Wikipedia*, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asexuality (accessed September 22, 2012).
20. S. E. Smith, "Asexuality Always Existed, You Just Didn't Notice It," *Guardian*, August 21, 2012, www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/aug/21/asexuality-always-existed-asexual.
21. Representations of asexuality in *House* were severely (and aptly) criticized by the asexual online community for drawing asexuality back into the folds of medicalization. See, for instance, Tracy Clark-Flory, "'House' Gets Asexuality Wrong," *Salon*, January 31, 2012, www.salon.com/2012/01/31/house_gets_asexuality_wrong/. See also the petition against *House*'s portrayal of asexuality: "Petitioning Vice President of Broadcast Operations at Fox," www.change.org/petitions/vice-president-of-broadcast-operations-at-fox-reconsider-your-portrayals-of-asexual-characters (accessed September 16, 2012). In this sense, then, the *House* example is expunged from the archive for its problematic, disingenuous, and antiasexual portrayal of asexuality as a medical condition. Cara C. MacInnis and Gordon Hodson begin their important article on discriminatory attitudes toward asexuality with a dialogue from *The Big Bang Theory*. See Cara C. MacInnis and Gordon Hodson, "Intergroup Bias towards 'Group X': Evidence of Prejudice, Dehumanization, Avoidance, and Discrimination against Asexuals," *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, Published Online First, April 24, 2012, 1–19.
22. Genevieve Roberts, "Asexuals—the Fourth Sexual Orientation?," *iOL Lifestyle*, August 22, 2012, www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/love-sex/sex/asexuals-the-fourth-sexual-orientation-1.1367470#.UFJFzBwkh_q. For a discussion of Tim Gunn's asexuality, and how it functions as part of his public dandy persona, see Cerankowski, "Queer Dandy Style." Cerankowski problematizes Tim Gunn's self-declarations as "kind of asexual" (235), demonstrating that he inhabits asexuality ambivalently.
23. "New Zealand: Advanced Society," *Asexy Beast Blog*, July 28, 2008, theonepercentclub.blogspot.com/2008_07_01_archive.html.
24. Keri Hulme, *The Bone People* (London: Picador, 1985), 265.
25. There are already instances, both in the online asexual community and in some nonscientific work on asexuality, of adding queerer and less rule-abiding examples of asexuality to the archive. For instance, Rothblum and Brehony in *Boston Marriages*, an exploration of asexuality among lesbians, employ a lesbian-based asexuality model to draw out examples of historical asexuality. More recently, Kim, in "Asexuality

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in Disability Narratives," employs critical disability theory to engage in a broader understanding of asexuality, discussing the film *Snow-Cake* as an example of asexuality that effectively troubles the medicalization and desexualization of people with disabilities. Also, Nathan Erro considers possible asexual tropes in Willa Cather's *O Pioneers!* in "Asexy Pioneer: Asexuality versus Eroticism in Willa Cather's *O Pioneers!*," *Inquire: Journal of Comparative Literature* 1, no. 1 (2011), inquire.streetmag.org/articles/12. For creative examples of asexual archiving online, see "Nonsexual Intimacies," *The Wordsmith's Forge*, October 24, 2011, ysabetwordsmith.dreamwidth.org/2035800.html; "Media Imagery of Asexuality," *Tumblr*, May 4, 2012, thatneedstogo.tumblr.com/post/22396436838/media-imagery-of-asexuality.

26. On AVEN, "asexual" is described in bold letters as "a person who does not experience sexual attraction" (*AVEN*, www.asexuality.org).
27. Our approach echoes Claire Hemmings's argument that bisexual identity and meaning could be "located anywhere." Hemmings uses what she terms is an "eclectic" method of "cultural theft," while conducting research in queer archives that are geared more toward lesbian and gay records than bisexual records, as is evinced, for instance, by the then-termed Lesbian and Gay Historical Society of Northern California. See Claire Hemmings, *Bisexual Spaces: A Geography of Sexuality and Gender* (London: Routledge, 2002), 50. The method outlined in our paper is, like Hemmings's, similarily eclectic; however, Hemmings exclusively conducts research in physical archives whereas the archives invoked in our work are entirely metaphorical.
28. Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feelings*, 8.
29. José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 65.
30. Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 65.
31. Love, *Feeling Backward*, 8, 31.
32. Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 1.
33. Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feelings;* Love, *Feeling Backward*; Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place*; Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*; Gopinath, *Impossible Desires*.
34. Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feelings*.
35. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 90.
36. Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 19.
37. Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feelings*, 8.
38. Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feelings*, 8.
39. Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire*, 19.
40. Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feelings*; Love, *Feeling Backward*; Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*; Halberstam, *Queer Art of Failure*.

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41. Fahs, "Radical Refusals," 445–61.
42. Nicola Gavey, *Just Sex? The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 108.
43. In addition to Solanas and Densmore, several other feminists gestured toward a theorizing of asexuality; see, for example, Jessie Bernard, "Women, Marriage, and the Future," in *Intimate Life Styles: Marriage and Its Alternatives*, ed. Jack R. DeLora and Joann S. DeLora, 2nd ed. (Pacific Palisades, CA: Goodyear, 1975), 381–85; Myra T. Johnson, "Asexual and Autoerotic Women: Two Invisible Groups," in *The Sexually Oppressed*, ed. Harvey L. Gochros and Jean S. Gochros (New York: Association Press, 1977), 96–109; Candace Watson, "Celibacy and Its Implications for Autonomy," *Hypatia* 2, no. 2 (1987): 157–58; and Andrea Dworkin, *Intercourse* (New York: Free Press, 1987).
44. Fahs, "Radical Refusals," 446. See also Cerankowski and Milks, "New Orientations," 655–59.
45. Halberstam, *Queer Art of Failure*, 4.
46. Halberstam, *Queer Art of Failure*, 124.
47. Fahs argues for "asexuality as a viable and politically significant choice" ("Radical Refusals," 458). While she differentiates between asexuality and celibacy (framing the former as lifelong and the latter as temporary), she ascribes asexuality an element of choice so as to make it a ground for political feminist action.
48. Dana Densmore, "Independence from the Sexual Revolution (1971)," *Notes from the Third Year: Women's Liberation* (New York: New York Radical Feminists, 1972), 56–61; Densmore, "On Celibacy (1968)," in *Voices from Women's Liberation*, ed. Leslie B. Tanner (Toronto: New American Library, 1971), 264–68.
49. Densmore, "On Celibacy," 264.
50. Densmore, "Independence from the Sexual Revolution," 58.
51. Densmore, "Independence from the Sexual Revolution," 59.
52. "Disruptively unassimilable," James M. Harding, "The Simplest Surrealist Act: Valerie Solanas and the (Re)Assertion of Avantgarde Priorities," *Drama Review* 45, no. 4 (2001): 148; Valerie Solanas, "SCUM (Society for Cutting Up Men) Manifesto (1967)," in *Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader*, ed. Barbara A. Crow (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 201–22. On killjoys, see Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010). On nihilism, see Breanne Fahs, "The Radical Possibilities of Valerie Solanas," *Feminist Studies* 34, no. 3 (2008): 591–617.
53. Solanas, "SCUM," 213. Solanas says of herself in a 1967 interview: "I'm no lesbian. I haven't got time for sex of any kind. That's a hang-up" (quoted in Fahs, "Radical Possibilities of Valerie Solanas," 598).
54. Solanas, "SCUM," 211.
55. Solanas, "SCUM," 217.

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56. Julie L. Belcove, "The Age of Agnes," *W* 32, no. 7 (2003): 99; Agnes Martin, quoted in Ann C. Chave, "Agnes Martin: On and Off the Grid" (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 2004).
57. Martin, quoted in Chave, "Agnes Martin," 157–69.
58. Gavin Butt, "How New York Queered the Idea of Modern Art," in *Varieties of Modernism*, ed. Paul Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 320.
59. Jonathan D. Katz, David C. Ward, and Jennifer Sichel, eds., *Hide and Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture*, exhibition catalog (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2010).
60. Jonathan Katz, "Agnes Martin and the Sexuality of Abstraction," in *Agnes Martin*, ed. Lynne Cooke and Karen Kelly (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 176.
61. Katz, "Agnes Martin and the Sexuality of Abstraction," 179.
62. Michael Cobb, *Single: Arguments for the Uncoupled* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 24, 22.
63. Terry Castle, quoted in Cobb, *Single*, 184–85.
64. Kim, "How Much Sex Is Healthy?," 157–69.
65. Katz, "Agnes Martin and the Sexuality of Abstraction," 172.
66. An extension of this argument could be that any abstract art created under the auspices of formalism could be discussed through asexuality, since formalism focuses on the nonreferential and what could be, by extension, understood as the "asexual" visual properties in art (i.e., color, line, composition).
67. For instance, Megan J. Sinnott's *Toms and Dees: Transgender Identity and Female Same-Sex Relationships in Thailand* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004) includes a brief discussion on "female asexuality" or the desexualization of women in Thai discourses, wherein "women are held to be devoid of sexual needs, and their moral integrity depends on proper distance from or relations to male sexuality, which is perceived as natural and in need of expression" (115–16). Sinnott's discussion suggests that asexuality can be found cross-culturally, though not always with the same meanings or with the same effects.

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