



Invisible Desires: Uncovering Asexual Histories and the Erasure of Non- Sexual Identities in Historical Narratives

Yujia Zhu
Sofia University, USA

Abstract

This study explores the historical erasure of asexual identities and the invisibility of non-sexual lives in traditional narratives, addressing how such identities have been misunderstood and marginalized over time. Historically, asexuality has been pathologized and excluded from mainstream discourses on sexuality, often dismissed as a phase or condition needing correction. This marginalization is perpetuated by society's adherence to monosexual norms, which prioritize sexual attraction, thereby sidelining asexual and other non-normative identities. Employing queer theory, gender studies, and intersectional frameworks, the study examines diverse historical and cultural perspectives, challenging binary understandings of sexuality and advocating for a more inclusive representation of non-sexual identities. A systematic literature review was conducted. Thematic coding and methodological appraisal were used to extract patterns related to archival erasure, cultural representation, and intersectionality. It critically examines how asexuality has been historically overlooked in key theoretical frameworks and archival practices, while also tracing contemporary efforts, such as online activism and inclusive scholarship, that seek to validate asexuality as a legitimate and diverse orientation. By bridging historical analysis with emerging asexual perspectives, this study contributes to a more inclusive understanding of identity, intimacy, and representation, advocating for the integration of asexual narratives into broader discourses of sexuality and human experience.

Keywords: asexuality, non-sexual identities, monosexual norms, intersectionality, inclusivity

1. Introduction

This exploration aims to shed light on the historical erasure of asexual identities and the invisibility of non-sexual lives in traditional narratives, revealing the ways these identities have been marginalized and misunderstood over time. Asexuality has often been pathologized and omitted from dominant discourses on sexuality, as evidenced by its frequent misrepresentation, either as a temporary phase or as a condition needing a cure, in both historical and modern contexts (Dambrowsky, 2023; Osterwald, 2017). This erasure is exacerbated by society's emphasis on monosexual norms, which privilege sexual attraction, marginalizing non-sexual

identities like asexuality (Bollas, 2023). The concept of “non-becoming” illustrates the social pressures that inhibit the full recognition of asexual identities, where societal expectations and interactions often negate their existence (Scott et al., 2016). Asexuality’s absence from influential theoretical frameworks, such as those by Michel Foucault, has contributed to its invisibility in historical narratives, reinforcing its marginalization (Osterwald, 2017). This pattern is not unique to asexuality but extends to other non-normative sexual identities, such as bisexuality, which are often excluded from monosexual-focused narratives (Bollas, 2023). This analysis challenges traditional narratives, advocating for a broader understanding of sexual identities and recognizing the significance and validity of non-sexual lives (Dambrowsky, 2023; Osterwald, 2017).

Uncovering these historical and genetic narratives is essential for a comprehensive understanding of human diversity. Historical perspectives reveal a complex interplay between cultural, social, and biological factors that shape human experiences and identities, as demonstrated by nonbinary roles across different cultures, such as the English Mollies, Italian Femminielli, and North American two-spirit people, which question the binary gender framework (Vincent & Manzano, 2017). Complexity science supports this view by proposing that identities evolve through dynamic processes akin to ecological and social systems, highlighting the nonlinear nature of identity formation (Allen et al., 2010). Genetic studies, such as the analysis of 929 genomes, emphasize human diversity, revealing unique genetic patterns across regions and emphasizing the importance of both historical and biological contexts to appreciate identity diversity fully (Bergström et al., 2020). Integrating these perspectives fosters a nuanced understanding of human identity beyond reductionist views (Allen et al., 2010; Bergström et al. 2020; Vincent & Manzano, 2017).

Asexuality, an umbrella term encompassing identities such as demisexuality (attraction following emotional bonds) and grey-sexuality (infrequent or context-specific attraction), challenges dominant norms reliant on colonial frameworks that often erase or pathologize non-sexual identities (Cerankowski, 2022; Schneckenburger et al., 2023). The concept of “non-becoming” highlights how asexual identities diverge from conventional identity trajectories through non-awareness and communicative negation, resisting the expectation of sexual desire as a defining factor (Scott et al., 2016). This historical erasure often results from the societal imposition of compulsory sexuality, which defines identity through sexual behavior and desire (Gilman, 2023). Despite this, asexual individuals have created spaces for self-expression through cultural forms, countering prejudicial narratives (Gilman, 2023). The recognition of asexuality as a potential fourth sexual orientation is still debated, with discussions focusing on its validity as a unique orientation (Strzelczak, 2023).

The historical exploration of asexual identities involves examining periods, cultures, and sources that have often overlooked or mischaracterized asexuality. Historically, major theoretical works on sexuality by figures like Michel Foucault and Karen Horney have omitted asexual perspectives, contributing to their absence in Western narratives (Osterwald, 2017). This marginalization is compounded by the historical pathologization of asexuality, framing it as an aberration from heteronormative expectations (Dambrowsky, 2023). However, the advent of online communities, such as the Asexuality Visibility Education Network (AVEN), has fostered a more comprehensive understanding of asexual experiences, countering misconceptions and advocating for greater recognition (Osterwald, 2017). In media and cultural representation, asexuality remains largely underrepresented, with portrayals often relying on oversimplified tropes. Nonetheless, theatrical and literary analyses applying an asexual lens have begun to reveal historical characters who resist compulsory sexuality, expanding the archive of asexual representation (Seitz, 2023). This approach invites a rethinking of assumptions about universal sexual desire, contributing to a more inclusive

understanding of human sexuality (Seitz, 2023). Collectively, these efforts emphasize the importance of developing a more inclusive historical narrative that honors and acknowledges asexual identities.

2. Methodology

A systematic and rigorous approach was employed to capture the breadth and depth of scholarship on asexual and non-sexual identities. First, multiple academic databases like JSTOR, ProQuest, Web of Science, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar were searched using a combination of keywords and Boolean operators designed to encompass both historical and contemporary perspectives. Search terms included “asexuality,” “non-sexual identities,” “historical erasure,” “queer historiography,” “celibacy in history,” and “intersectionality and asexuality.” Truncation symbols (e.g., asexual*) and logical connectors (AND, OR) enabled broader or narrower search results as appropriate. To ensure that seminal works and emerging discussions were not overlooked, forward- and backward-citation tracking was performed on key publications identified in initial searches. This strategy guaranteed the inclusion of foundational scholarship, such as early theoretical writings on asexuality, and the latest empirical studies by researchers exploring social stigma, intersectionality, and identity formation.

Next, inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to narrow the field to the most pertinent and methodologically sound sources. Publications dated 1990 to 2024 were prioritized to reflect the evolution of asexuality studies over time, acknowledging that earlier conceptions of celibacy and non-sexual identities often lacked the terminology and theoretical frameworks now common in queer and gender studies. Only English-language materials were considered, given constraints on translation resources. Peer-reviewed articles, academic monographs, and doctoral dissertations were included, whereas conference proceedings or unpublished manuscripts were excluded unless they had become widely cited in later peer-reviewed literature. A strict relevance criterion was applied: Sources had to explicitly address asexuality or related non-sexual identities within historical, cultural, sociological, or psychological frameworks. Works that merely mentioned asexuality in passing were omitted. Moreover, only studies with clear methodological transparency, articulating research design, data collection, and analysis procedures, were retained, ensuring that each piece of evidence could be critically evaluated and synthesized.

Once studies were selected, a detailed data extraction process was conducted. A standardized matrix captured essential information from each source, including authorship, year of publication, disciplinary lens, research questions, methodologies, principal findings, and acknowledged limitations. This facilitated systematic comparison across studies and identified patterns in how scholars approached topics such as archival biases, pathologization of non-sexual identities, and the intersection of asexuality with race, gender, and class. To organize the intervening ideas, a two-stage thematic coding procedure was used. In the first stage, open coding: coded descriptive passages concerning documentation practices, representations in art or literature, medical discourse, and methodological approaches for uncovering hidden histories. In the second stage, axial coding: these descriptive codes were grouped into higher-order categories, such as “archival omission,” “celibacy as resistance,” “queer theoretical interventions,” and “intersectional perspectives.” These categories ultimately informed the major thematic sections of the review, guiding coherent narrative threads through complex and multidisciplinary debates.

Throughout the selection and coding process, the methodological rigor of each source was appraised using a modified quality checklist. Criteria included clarity of research design,

transparency in data collection procedures, and reflexivity regarding researcher positionality. In archival studies, special attention was paid to how authors addressed gaps in historical records or acknowledged potential biases in source material. Potential sources of bias were logged, including publication bias, wherein studies with significant or positive findings are disproportionately represented, and Western-centric perspectives that might marginalize non-Western scholarship. The heterogeneity of terminology (e.g., conflating celibacy, chastity, and asexuality in earlier works) was critically examined, and where appropriate, distinctions were made to avoid conflating distinct experiences and identities.

Despite these measures to achieve comprehensiveness, certain limitations must be acknowledged. Restricting the review to English-language sources likely omitted valuable research published in other languages, particularly scholarship emerging from non-Western contexts that could broaden the cultural scope of asexuality studies. Additionally, direct archival access was often constrained by the private or restricted nature of some collections, particularly those relating to queer or marginalized communities; this meant the review relied heavily on published accounts of archival findings rather than firsthand exploration. Finally, because asexuality research is rapidly evolving, studies published after the 2024 cutoff are not included, signaling the need for ongoing updates to capture new empirical and theoretical contributions. Nonetheless, by systematically searching, selecting, and thematically analyzing the literature, this methodology lays a robust foundation for understanding both the historical erasure of asexual identities and the diverse methodological strategies scholars have used to recover and represent those histories.

3. Conceptual Framework: Asexuality and Non-Sexual Identities

Asexuality, a sexual identity characterized by an absence or low levels of sexual attraction to individuals of any gender, encompasses a spectrum of identities, including gray-asexuality and demisexuality. Gray-asexual individuals experience sexual attraction infrequently or under specific circumstances, while demisexual individuals experience sexual attraction only after forming strong emotional bonds (Schneckenburger et al., 2023; Winer, 2024). This spectrum, often referred to as the ACE spectrum, challenges traditional notions of sexuality by emphasizing the fluidity and diversity of sexual experiences and desires (Winer, 2024). Research suggests that while asexual individuals may still engage in sexual activities and experience romantic attraction, their motivations and experiences differ from those of allosexual individuals (Schneckenburger et al., 2023). Unique patterns of sexual desire and fantasy exist within the ACE spectrum; asexual individuals report lower levels of sexual desire and fantasy compared to gray-asexual and demisexual individuals, who may experience these aspects more frequently (Nimbi et al., 2024). Despite increasing visibility, individuals on the asexual spectrum often face prejudice and misunderstanding, resulting in negative experiences such as sexual violence victimization (Chan & Hung, 2024). This emphasizes the need for public awareness and a nuanced understanding of asexuality and its spectrum, advocating for the integration of asexual perspectives into prevention and intervention efforts (Chan & Hung, 2024; Hille, 2022). Overall, the asexual spectrum presents a complex range of identities that challenge normative assumptions about sexuality, enriching broader sociological discussions on identity and intimacy (Winer, 2024).

Historically, narratives have often prioritized sexual and romantic lives, implicitly constructing “sexual normativity” by framing certain sexual behaviors as natural or deviant, thereby shaping societal perceptions and reinforcing power structures. For instance, in colonial Kenya, British authorities constructed a narrative of “primitive normativity,” portraying African sexuality as less deviant compared to European sexual practices, which were seen as corrupted by neuroses

like hysteria and homosexuality. This portrayal was used to justify colonial control and uphold white supremacy by suggesting that Africans needed protection from Western influences that could introduce sexual deviance (Williams, 2023). Similarly, in China, the shift from “amorous histories” to “sexual histories” marked a changing perception of same-sex desire. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, male love was celebrated within moral frameworks, but in the late Qing and early Republican periods, Western-influenced narratives pathologized same-sex desire, reflecting a more restrictive sexual normativity (Hee, 2023). In early modern England, ambiguous terms like “buggery” and “sodomy” were employed in dictionaries to construct same-sex intercourse as an incoherent and unlawful act, reinforcing a procreative, marital, and monogamous sexual model (Turton, 2019). These narratives illustrate how sexual normativity is constructed through language and historical discourse, influencing societal norms and marginalizing non-normative sexualities (Motschenbacher, 2022).

Queer theory and gender studies provide critical frameworks for challenging heteronormative and allonormative biases in historical analysis, promoting a fluid and inclusive approach to understanding sexualities and gender identities. Sébastien Tremblay (2024) highlights the importance of queerness as a tool for writing a global history of sexualities, advocating for a departure from Eurocentric and colonial biases by embracing fluid concepts that resist rigid norms. Similarly, Barbara L. Voss and colleagues emphasize that queer and feminist theories expand archaeological interpretations of past sexualities, offering new methodological directions that challenge traditional narratives (Voss et al., 2021). Needham Yancey Gulley (2022) illustrates queer theory’s value in both academic and activist contexts, where it serves as a tool for social justice by questioning power dynamics related to gender and sexuality. Jorge N. Reitter (2022) critiques heteronormative biases in Freudian and Lacanian theories, drawing on queer and feminist frameworks to dismantle normalizing devices that regulate sexuality. Additionally, Niels Nyegaard (2021) discusses how queer theory has shaped Danish gender and sexuality history by adopting an anti-essentialist stance that resists normative constructs, steering historical studies in new directions. Collectively, these perspectives demonstrate that queer theory and gender studies are instrumental in deconstructing traditional biases, fostering a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of historical narratives.

The historical erasure of asexual identities has significantly impacted present-day asexual visibility and identity validation, perpetuating misconceptions and limiting positive representation. Historically, asexuality has been omitted from influential theoretical discourses on sexuality, as seen in its absence from seminal works like Michel Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality* and Karen Horney’s *Feminine Psychology* (Osterwald, 2017). This omission has fostered misunderstandings, leading to asexuality being pathologized or misinterpreted as a condition to be cured or a temporary phase (Osterwald, 2017). Media representations often reinforce “denial narratives” that invalidate asexual identities by suggesting that sexuality is an essential part of human existence (Simelane, 2018). This lack of representation can alienate those who identify as asexual, placing them in a society that marginalizes their experiences (Simelane, 2018). Nevertheless, the rise of online communities and networks like the Asexual Visibility and Education Network (AVEN) has provided a vital platform for asexual individuals to share their experiences and resist dominant narratives (Chasin, 2015; Dambrowsky, 2023). These communities play a crucial role in demystifying asexuality, fostering a sense of belonging and validation (Chasin, 2015). Furthermore, the inclusion of asexual characters in contemporary young adult fantasy novels offers counter-narratives that challenge misconceptions and promote the normalization of asexual identities (Simelane, 2018). Addressing the historical erasure of asexuality is essential for improving visibility and validating asexual identities in contemporary society.

4. Historical Erasure of Asexual Identities

Historically, societal structures that prioritize marriage and reproduction have marginalized non-sexual identities by reinforcing heteronormative and binary gender norms. For example, in Chile, everyday language and discursive practices ridicule gender and sexual minorities, often equating non-normative males with women. This serves to reinforce heteronormative beliefs that ostracize individuals who deviate from traditional gender and sexual roles (Balder, 2005). Such marginalization is further intensified within the realm of international development, where LGBTQ+ individuals are frequently excluded from essential resources like employment, healthcare, and education. This exclusion is often a result of their invisibility in data and the influence of political ideologies that systematically neglect their needs (Schwenke, 2022). The cultural idealization of marriage further entrenches these norms, though resistance movements using online platforms are emerging to challenge heteronormativity and advocate for alternative sexual politics (Renninger, 2016).

Economic conditions and traditional family structures also play a role, as research shows that factors such as lower income and larger family size are negatively correlated with nonbinary gender identification. This highlights how these socio-economic pressures can inhibit the expression of diverse gender identities (Whyte et al., 2018). Despite these constraints, queer communities have developed resilient social reproduction practices that sustain their identities and resist normative pressures, suggesting that alternative social structures can indeed flourish (Lewis, 2017). Collectively, these societal factors contribute to the historical marginalization of non-sexual identities by upholding rigid norms that prioritize heterosexual and binary gender roles.

Non-sexual identities have also been systematically erased from historical records through biased documentation, dismissive attitudes toward celibate lifestyles, and deliberate omissions. Such biases often stem from political and cultural agendas, limitations in available evidence, and historians' perspectives, which together exclude non-normative identities from historical narratives (Bhat et al., 2023). For instance, colonial records, such as those from British India, often relegated non-normative gender and sexual identities, like the *hijra* community, to the margins by labeling them as "perverse" or criminal (Hinchy, 2017). The exclusion of these communities is further perpetuated by the gender data gap, where marginalized groups, including those with non-normative sexual or gender identities, are often unrecorded due to the lack of recognition by those in power (Recker & Perry, 2024). Deliberate omission by state actors highlights how non-sexual identities are denied legal recognition and documentation, effectively erasing them from historical records (Cheong, 2023). Additionally, archival practices frequently favor certain identities, resulting in the absence of non-normative identities from historical records. This bias in documentation mirrors broader societal prejudices, where criticism of those deviating from binary norms takes precedence over questioning the systems that enforce them (Main, 2012). The challenge of documenting queer histories is further compounded by the evasive nature of archives, where fragments of relevant information are often lost or overlooked, reinforcing the exclusion of non-sexual identities from historical narratives (Marshall et al., 2015).

Throughout history, evidence of asexual or non-sexual individuals has been ignored or misinterpreted, largely due to societal norms and misconceptions about sexuality. In early modern literature, characters exhibiting asexual traits were often portrayed through tropes of chastity and virginity, reflecting a disinterest in sexual activity that was not recognized as a legitimate orientation but rather as a deviation from normative sexual expectations (Chess, 2018). The absence of asexuality in foundational texts on sexuality, such as those by Michel Foucault and Karen Horney, emphasizes the historical oversight of asexuality as a distinct

category (Osterwald, 2017). In more recent times, asexuality has been pathologized, with individuals subjected to conversion therapies intended to “correct” their orientation, reflecting a broader societal failure to accept asexuality as a valid identity. The narrative surrounding asexuality has historically positioned it as deviant, separating individuals from heteronormative societies (Dambrowsky, 2023). In scientific discourse, skepticism about the existence of ancient asexual organisms, such as bdelloid rotifers, persists despite substantial evidence, mirroring societal reluctance to validate asexuality as a legitimate orientation and often conflating it with celibacy or reduced libido (Birky, 2010; Rao, 2010). The concept of asexual erotics challenges Freudian assumptions that all eroticism is inherently sexual, suggesting that asexuality redefines the relationship between eroticism and sexuality (Derrick, 2023).

These historical and contemporary examples reveal a persistent pattern of misunderstanding and marginalization of asexual identities, emphasizing the need for greater recognition and validation of these identities across different contexts and time periods.

5. Non-Sexual Lives in Historical Contexts

Throughout history, celibacy and non-sexual life choices have played significant roles among diverse figures and movements, frequently intersecting with religious, social, and political narratives. In early 19th-century America, groups such as the Shakers, Roman Catholic nuns and priests, and followers of Sylvester Graham practiced celibacy as an expression of religious devotion, challenging the heteronormative and patriarchal structures of their time. These practices, often met with suspicion and hostility, disrupted assumptions about the necessity of sex within marriage and posed a challenge to traditional gender norms (Wilson, 2022). In recent years, asexual communities have reclaimed these historical instances of celibacy, reinterpreting them through a lens that critiques compulsory sexuality and affirms asexuality as a legitimate sexual orientation. This reclamation effort contributes to broader resistance against pathologizing non-normative sexualities (Dambrowsky, 2023; Seitz, 2023). Through platforms like the Asexuality Visibility and Education Network (AVEN), the asexual community seeks to educate and validate asexual identities, addressing misconceptions that label asexuality as either a phase or a malady (Osterwald, 2017).

Additionally, celibacy has been redefined as a distinct sexual orientation with its own practices, as evidenced by modern figures like Andy Warhol and the suffragettes, who embraced celibacy as a mode of political protest and artistic exploration (Kahan, 2013). This evolving discourse emphasizes the intricate relationship between celibacy, asexuality, and societal norms, offering fresh insights into the diversity of human sexual expression. Close friendships and platonic bonds hold particular importance for many asexual individuals, supporting intimate connections that are not reliant on sexual interaction. These relationships align with contemporary understandings of asexual partnerships by providing alternative frameworks for intimacy, as asexual individuals often adapt and negotiate the forms of physical and emotional connection that fulfill their need for closeness without sexual involvement (Dawson et al., 2016). In exploring asexual identities within the contexts of polyamory and non-monogamy, the potential for relationships centered around emotional bonds rather than sexual ones emerges, challenging traditional views of intimacy and expanding relational paradigms (Scherrer, 2010).

Moreover, the integration of asexual perspectives into queer theory challenges the heteronormative assumption that intimacy must involve sex, proposing that non-sexual relationships can be equally meaningful and expansive (Dambrowsky, 2022). This inquiry into friendship and romantic love further questions the binary distinction between the two, suggesting that such categorizations are socially constructed rather than inherently distinct, and

that dissolving this binary may enrich both friendships and romantic partnerships (Hänel & Jenkins, 2024). Critiques of allonormative discourses, which often depict asexual and aromantic individuals as lacking emotional depth, emphasize the need to acknowledge and value the unique ways in which asexual individuals cultivate intimate bonds (Brandley & Dehnert, 2023). Together, these perspectives illustrate how close friendships and platonic connections serve as fulfilling and legitimate partnerships for asexual individuals, inviting a reconsideration of conventional relationship models.

Cultural frameworks further shape the conceptualization of desire, intimacy, and personal relationships outside sexual contexts, reflecting a rich diversity of values and norms. Robin Goodwin's research demonstrates that cultural values significantly influence perceptions of relationships, showing variations in attitudes toward love, marriage, and friendship across societies shaped by historical and political forces (Goodwin, 1999). Victor Karandashev (2019) emphasizes the impact of cultural dimensions, such as individualism versus collectivism, in shaping expressions of intimacy, highlighting that self-disclosure and communication practices vary widely between Western and Eastern cultures. Charles T. Hill's (2019) comparative studies add depth by exploring how cultural expectations dictate appropriate behaviors within intimate relationships, reflecting broader psychological domains of thoughts and desires. The "Archaeology of Love" (Jankowiak & Nelson, 2023) provides an anthropological perspective, suggesting that love embodies both a psychological essence and a cultural experience, revealing universal themes such as the fusion of love with pragmatic interests and the role of technology in contemporary love practices. Finally, "Swaying: Essays on Intercultural Love" offers insights into the real-life complexities of intercultural relationships, where individuals navigate and integrate diverse spiritual beliefs, lifestyles, and cultural differences to create harmonious expressions of love (Grearson & Smith, 1995). Collectively, these studies highlight that while the essence of desire and intimacy may be universal, their expressions are profoundly shaped by cultural contexts, reflecting the intricate interplay between societal norms, personal values, and global influences.

6. Misinterpretation and Pathologization of Asexuality in History

The medicalization of non-sexual identities as deviant or pathological has historically served as a potent mechanism for social control, expanding over time to encompass various behaviors and identities. The medical profession has played a crucial role in reframing behaviors once seen as morally or socially deviant as medical conditions, thereby shifting authority from religious and legal institutions to the medical domain (Schneider, 2015). This process, known as medicalization, has been critiqued for its propensity to pathologize a wide array of human differences, transforming them into medical conditions that warrant treatment (Conrad, 2018). For instance, the medicalization of sexual deviance, encompassing conditions like frigidity and celibacy, illustrates how medicine has increasingly monopolized discourse on sexuality, often categorizing non-normative sexual behaviors as pathological (Cacchioni, 2015). This shift has both positive and negative consequences; while it can reduce moral stigma by framing such behaviors as medical issues, it also subjects individuals to medical scrutiny and intervention, potentially restricting personal autonomy (Schneider, 2015; Svetlichnaya & Smirnova, 2022). Furthermore, the medicalization of gender identities, particularly for trans* individuals, emphasizes the regulatory power of medical institutions in enforcing normative standards, often compelling individuals to conform to prescribed narratives to access care (Nuffer-Rodriguez, 2021). Overall, the medicalization of non-sexual identities exemplifies a complex interplay between social control, medical authority, and individual identity, raising critical questions about the boundaries of medical intervention and the pathologization of diversity.

Historically, asexual figures and characters have frequently been misrepresented as repressed, socially awkward, or incomplete due to their non-sexuality, a portrayal that has contributed to the marginalization and misunderstanding of asexuality. Such depictions are grounded in pathologizing narratives that have traditionally positioned asexual individuals as anomalies within a sexualized culture (Dambrowsky, 2023). The absence of asexuality from foundational works on sexuality, such as those by Karen Horney and Michel Foucault, emphasizes the historical invisibility and misunderstanding of asexuality as a legitimate identity (Osterwald, 2017). In literature and media, asexual characters are often depicted through “denial narratives” that invalidate their identities, reinforcing the notion that sexuality is intrinsic to human experience (Simelane, 2018). This lack of positive representation can alienate those who identify as asexual (Simelane, 2018). Nonetheless, recent scholarly efforts are challenging these narratives by applying an asexual critical lens to cultural texts, thereby identifying historical figures who resist compulsory sexuality and offering new perspectives on their representation (Seitz, 2023). Despite these strides, asexuality remains among the lesser-known identities within the LGBTQ+ spectrum, with mainstream media continuing to struggle to provide diverse and accurate portrayals (Reed, 2022). The asexual community, through platforms like the Asexuality Visibility Education Network (AVEN), advocates for a better understanding of asexuality, emphasizing that a lack of sexual attraction does not signify abnormality (Osterwald, 2017).

The persistence of historical misinterpretations of asexuality significantly shapes contemporary stereotypes and stigmas, as illustrated by numerous studies. A central issue is the belief in the inevitability of sexual attraction, which frames asexuality as a deviation from typical human development. This belief fosters stereotypes of asexual individuals as immature or socially avoidant, as evidenced by research showing that individuals who endorse this assumption are more likely to view asexual people negatively and are less inclined to form friendships with them (Zivony & Reggev, 2022). Additionally, socio-cultural factors such as religiosity and adherence to normative social values further exacerbate anti-asexual bias, as these contexts often support sexually normative perspectives that marginalize asexual individuals (Iraklis, 2023). The development of tools like the Asexual Stigma Inventory highlights the stigmatizing experiences of asexual individuals, focusing on stigma related to belongingness and dismissiveness, which are prevalent in societal interactions (Boot-Haury, 2023). Historical narratives around asexuality have often been employed to pathologize and socially isolate asexual individuals, though these narratives are increasingly challenged and reshaped by online communities that empower asexual individuals to resist dominant sexual norms and reduce marginalization (Dambrowsky, 2023). Collectively, these studies reveal the intricate interactions between historical misconceptions, socio-cultural influences, and the power of narrative in perpetuating stereotypes and stigmas surrounding asexuality today.

7. Recovering Asexual Histories: Methodological Approaches

Reinterpreting historical records to uncover non-sexual identities involves a range of innovative methodologies drawn from diverse academic perspectives. One such approach is the biographical narrative method, enabling individuals to retrospectively identify non-heterosexual clues in their past, such as specific childhood behaviors or interests, in order to construct a coherent narrative of identity that challenges heterosexual norms (Kislitsyna, 2023). This method emphasizes the value of personal narratives and subjective experiences in understanding historical identities. Additionally, transgender auto-historiography offers a framework where individuals can act as their own historians, providing insights into historical trends and personal reflections that shape transgender identities (Wang, 2024). This approach emphasizes the importance of personal narratives in framing historical understanding.

Furthermore, examining personal sources like letters and diaries offers unique, subjective insights into individual experiences of sexuality while accounting for the influence of societal norms and authoritative discourses (Freedman, 1998). This method highlights the complexity of interpreting sexual identity through historical records. Queer theory critiques essentialist views of identity as stable and immutable, advocating instead for a non-normative historical perspective that recognizes the fluid and contextual nature of sexual behaviors and relationships (Szcześniak, 2012). Finally, a nonbinary historical methodology enables a more nuanced understanding of gender as a historically contingent category, exploring alternative logics of embodiment and selfhood (Moulton, 2023). Together, these approaches form a comprehensive framework for reinterpreting historical records, emphasizing the importance of personal narratives, subjective experiences, and the fluidity of identity.

Re-examining historical relationships through a modern asexual lens offers a transformative perspective that challenges entrenched sexual norms and assumptions. Asexuality, often misunderstood and marginalized, provides a critical framework for questioning compulsory sexuality—the assumption that sexual desire is universal and inherent in human experience (Derrick, 2023; Seitz, 2023). By applying an asexual critical lens, scholars can reinterpret cultural artifacts and historical narratives, identifying figures and stories that resist or subvert compulsory sexuality without necessarily labeling them as asexual in contemporary terms (Seitz, 2023). This approach not only deepens our understanding of historical texts but also contributes to an asexual performance archive, suggesting that asexuality has always been a possible facet of human identity (Seitz, 2023). Furthermore, the narrative potential of asexuality offers a means of resistance against dominant sexual norms, as seen in the formation of online communities that connect and empower asexual individuals, reducing isolation and marginalization (Dambrowsky, 2023). Integrating asexual perspectives into queer theory further disrupts heteronormative ideologies, questioning the necessity of sexual intimacy in defining relationships and expanding critiques of societal norms (Dambrowsky, 2022). This reinterpretation of historical relationships not only validates asexual identities but also invites broader reflection on the diversity of human experiences and the potential for intimacy beyond sexual frameworks (Dambrowsky, 2022; Derrick, 2023).

Oral histories and traditions provide essential alternative sources for uncovering asexual or non-sexual life choices, offering insights often missing from mainstream documentation. As a qualitative research method, oral history captures the lived experiences and memories of individuals, providing a platform for voices that might otherwise remain unheard (Stratford, 2019). This method is particularly effective for exploring asexuality, allowing for the collection of personal narratives that challenge dominant heteronormative narratives and alleviate the isolation often felt by asexual individuals (Dambrowsky, 2023). Oral traditions, which rely on memory and story transmission across generations, are especially valuable in societies without written records, offering unique perspectives on historical and cultural contexts that might otherwise be overlooked (Vansina et al., 2006). These traditions can reveal the everyday lives of asexual individuals, highlighting dimensions such as education, occupation, and community involvement—often overshadowed by the focus on sexual and romantic relationships (Rothblum et al., 2019). Oral-historical methodologies, through both structured and unstructured interviews, enrich historical interpretations by juxtaposing oral evidence with other sources (Smith, 2014). By applying these methods, researchers can uncover the extraordinary within the everyday, empowering asexual individuals and validating their experiences as integral parts of broader historical narratives (Smith, 2014; Stratford, 2019).

The need for intersectional methodologies that account for cultural, gender, and class dynamics in exploring non-sexual identities is emphasized by the complex interplay of various social identity markers and systemic inequities. Intersectionality provides a framework to understand

how forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, and classism, intersect to shape unique experiences, which cannot be fully understood when these factors are considered in isolation. In educational settings, incorporating intersectionality into research and practice is essential for addressing the diverse needs of learners and fostering a more equitable environment, necessitating a reevaluation of learning theories and methodologies to incorporate a social justice-oriented praxis (Freire, 2000). In the sociology of art and culture, intersectional approaches reveal how class, gender, and race intersect to produce specific social configurations, offering insights that transcend individual inequalities (Collins, 1990). In moral theology, intersectionality serves as a critical lens for understanding how various forms of difference influence theological reasoning and moral discourse, emphasizing the value of inclusive dialogue (Cone, 1975). Furthermore, innovative mixed-methods approaches, such as experience sampling, capture the dynamic nature of intersectional experiences and their impact on health outcomes, particularly among underrepresented groups. These methodologies not only deepen our understanding of intersectional identities but also inform practices that foster inclusivity and equity across various fields.

8. Implications for Modern Understanding and Representation

Incorporating asexual histories into contemporary discourse is essential for advancing asexual visibility and supporting identity formation, as it disrupts dominant narratives and fosters a more inclusive understanding of sexuality. Historically, asexuality has often been pathologized, a stance that has contributed to the marginalization and isolation of asexual individuals. By amplifying asexual narratives, however, these individuals can resist heteronormative norms, finding connection with others who share similar experiences and thereby reducing social isolation (Dambrowsky, 2023). Recent research in psychology and sexology has further facilitated this shift, moving asexuality from a medicalized condition to a recognized and valid identity, broadening public understanding and acceptance. This change not only affirms asexual identities but also provides a foundation for critical perspectives that challenge conventional norms of gender and sexuality (Gressgård, 2013). Despite some emerging representation in mainstream media, asexuality remains underrecognized within the LGBTQ+ spectrum, highlighting the need for nuanced portrayals that transcend reductive characterizations (Reed, 2022). Understanding asexuality within its historical and socio-cultural context also dispels myths, clarifies misconceptions, and distinguishes it from celibacy and other sexual orientations (Haefner & Plante, 2015). Through the creation of a “queerly asexual” archive, scholars can challenge both queer and asexual frameworks, emphasizing the pervasive nature of asexuality and promoting a broader understanding that moves beyond traditional identity categories (Przybylo & Cooper, 2014). Thus, the inclusion of asexual histories not only bolsters visibility but also enriches discussions on identity, fostering a more inclusive perspective on human sexuality.

Recognizing non-sexual histories also challenges conventional assumptions about desire, partnership, and fulfillment by expanding the understanding of intimacy beyond traditional sexual frameworks. As examined by Mitchell and Hunnicutt (2019), asexual narratives reveal a complex identity encompassing unique forms of relationships and community engagement that disrupt normative scripts of sexuality and romance. Flore (2024) critiques the medicalization of asexuality and advocates for its recognition beyond pathological frameworks, opening new avenues for understanding diverse sexual identities. Further, Hammack et al. (2019) propose a queer paradigm that embraces relational diversity, encompassing asexual and aromantic identities and challenging the notion that intimate relationships require sexual or romantic desire. Dambrowsky’s (2022) research integrates asexual perspectives into queer theory, critiquing heteronormative ideologies and suggesting

that intimacy can exist independently of sexual interaction, thus redefining the purpose and essence of relationships. Collectively, these perspectives challenge traditional views tying fulfillment and partnership to sexual desire, advocating for a more inclusive understanding of human connection.

The findings from these studies intersect with broader LGBTQ+ historical recovery efforts by emphasizing the importance of inclusive and intersectional approaches in documenting and preserving queer history. Wagner's (2024) research emphasizes the role of ICT-based content creators, who use embodied knowledge to curate queer histories, fostering community accountability and enriching historical narratives with diverse perspectives. Mullan's (2024) exploration of queer theatre illustrates its role in reclaiming marginalized histories, disrupting linear progress narratives, and envisioning alternative futures, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of queer history. Graves and Dubrow (2019) emphasize intersectionality in historic preservation, arguing that single-community studies often overlook the complexities of identity, and suggest that LGBTQ heritage initiatives can inspire more inclusive preservation practices. Freeman's (2023) examination of institutional archives highlights the difficulties in accessing queer records due to limited metadata, emphasizing the need for enhanced archival practices to improve the visibility and accessibility of queer histories. Finally, community oral history projects demonstrate how recording queer pasts can bridge generational divides and offer political insights, reflecting the diversity of queer cultures across cities and emphasizing the significance of protecting historical achievements (Cook & Orem, 2022). Collectively, these studies advocate for diverse methodologies, intersectional perspectives, and active LGBTQ+ community participation in historical recovery, thereby advancing a more inclusive and representative queer history.

9. Conclusion

The historical erasure and reinterpretation of asexuality, alongside the importance of visibility for the asexual community, are critical themes in contemporary scholarship. Historically, asexuality has been notably absent from major discourses on sexuality, as exemplified by its exclusion from foundational works like Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* and Karen Horney's *Feminine Psychology* (Osterwald, 2017). This lack of representation has fueled misconceptions that frame asexuality as either a curable condition or a temporary phase, thereby exposing asexual individuals to risks of physical and emotional harm (Osterwald, 2017). In response, the asexual community has made significant strides toward visibility, particularly through platforms such as the Asexual Visibility and Education Network (AVEN), which serves as a key resource for public education and community discourse (Chasin, 2015; Osterwald, 2017). Despite these advancements, media portrayals often rely on reductive tropes that fail to capture the diversity of asexual experiences, emphasizing the need for more nuanced representations (Reed, 2022). Furthermore, the community utilizes folklore and cultural expressions to navigate and articulate their identities, creating spaces for empowerment amid prevailing prejudices (Gilman, 2023). This ongoing struggle for visibility and accurate representation highlights the importance of recognizing asexuality as a legitimate sexual orientation and emphasizes the need for continued advocacy and education to address erasure and foster understanding (Profus, 2016).

Reconstructing asexual histories, however, presents several challenges due to the inherent complexities of genetic and historical data. One key obstacle is the absence of computational tools specifically designed to detect historical asexuality in diploid organisms, as noted by Lam et al. (2011), who developed algorithms to test for asexual genealogies under the infinite-sites mutation model. This limitation is further complicated by difficulties in distinguishing genuine

asexual lineages from those that may have undergone undetected sexual reproduction or recombination events, as evidenced by homoplasy events that surpass expected thresholds for asexual organisms (Lam et al., 2011). Studies on ancient asexual lineages, such as bdelloid rotifers and Darwinulid ostracods, reveal genomic signatures, such as elevated mutation rates and gene decay associated with sexual reproduction, that complicate evolutionary history reconstruction (Normark et al., 2003). Sociologically, reconstructing histories such as those of lesbian communities encounters similar challenges, with evidence often remaining partial or concealed due to societal prejudice (Cottingham, 1996). This broader issue in historical research, where primary sources are frequently scarce, emphasizes the need for innovative, interdisciplinary approaches to effectively reconstruct asexual histories and their evolutionary implications (Zhuge, 2016).

Future research on asexuality should adopt an interdisciplinary approach, integrating perspectives from history, sociology, psychology, and gender studies to deepen understanding and address existing gaps. Asexuality challenges normative assumptions about sexuality, intersecting with broader themes such as identity, intimacy, and community, thereby advocating for intersectional analyses and methodological diversity to capture the range of asexual experiences (Winer, 2024). Expanding research to include intersectional perspectives on ace-spectrum identities, including gray-sexual and demisexual orientations, is essential for a comprehensive understanding of asexuality (Fennis & Rucker, 2022; Hille, 2022). Historical and gender studies perspectives on the intersections between aromantic asexuality and feminist discourse can provide new insights into resisting “sexual hegemony” and advancing gender equality, though practical applications remain underexplored (Chen, 2024). Psychological perspectives further enrich this field, enhancing understanding of asexual identity formation and its implications for romantic relationships (Fennis & Rucker, 2022; Hille, 2022). Overall, future research should emphasize interdisciplinary collaboration, center asexual voices, and address ethical considerations to foster an inclusive and nuanced discourse on asexuality and its societal impact (Chen, 2024; Winer, 2024).

Uncovering and validating invisible desires and non-sexual identities within historical and cultural narratives holds transformative potential, challenging prevailing paradigms and fostering inclusivity. The concept of possibility studies advocates for embracing non-dualistic perspectives and engaging in collaborative diversity as a means to catalyze political change and hope, suggesting that recognizing diverse identities can drive societal transformation (Ross, 2023). Historical narratives, such as women’s roles in movements like Gandhi’s Civil Disobedience, emphasize the importance of reclaiming and validating marginalized identities to achieve a fuller historical understanding and inform contemporary policy (Shrivastava, 2017). Additionally, methods such as literary *métissage* in education demonstrate how integrating diverse voices fosters relational learning and social change, emphasizing the value of incorporating varied identities into collective narratives (Giguère et al., 2019). In cultural production, queer cinema exemplifies how authentic representation of marginalized identities challenges dominant narratives and can reshape societal norms by making the invisible visible (Södergren & Vallström, 2021). Narratives, therefore, emerge as powerful tools for both personal and collective transformation, offering frameworks that support sustainable and inclusive societal shifts (Kawai et al., 2022). Collectively, these insights emphasize the transformative impact of recognizing and validating invisible desires and non-sexual identities, enriching historical and cultural narratives and paving the way toward equitable and inclusive futures.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful for the academic tools and research that have inspired this study. My profound gratitude extends to my family for their steadfast support and encouragement during this journey. Your confidence in my work has been a wellspring of strength and motivation.

References

- Allen, P., Strathern, M., & Varga, L. (2010). *Complexity: The evolution of identity and diversity*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-9187-1_3
- Balder, S. R. (2005). Marginalization of alternative gender and sexual identities: The role of normative discursive practices in Chilean society. *Colorado Research in Linguistics*, 18. <https://doi.org/10.25810/j1vk-ck75>
- Bergström, A., McCarthy, S. A., Hui, R., Almarri, M. A., Ayub, Q., Danecek, P., Chen, Y., Felkel, S., Hallast, P., Kamm, J., Blanché, H., Deleuze, J. F., Cann, H., Mallick, S., Reich, D., Sandhu, M. S., Skoglund, P., Scally, A., Xue, Y., Durbin, R., ... Tyler-Smith, C. (2020). Insights into human genetic variation and population history from 929 diverse genomes. *Science*, 367(6484), eaay5012. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aay5012>
- Bhat, R. M., Rajan, P. C., & Gamage, L. A. (2023). Redressing historical bias: Exploring the path to an accurate representation of the past. *Journal of Social Science*, 4(3). <https://doi.org/10.46799/jss.v4i3.573>
- Birky, W. (2010). Positively negative evidence for asexuality. *Journal of Heredity*, 101(suppl_1, March-April 2010), S42–S45. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhered/esq014>
- Bollas, A. (2023). Hegemonic monosexuality. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 23(4), 441–455. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2023.2248126>
- Boot-Haury, J. W. (2023). Development of the Asexual Stigma Inventory. *Journal of LGBTQ Issues in Counseling*, 17(3), 187–201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26924951.2023.2202354>
- Brandley, B., & Dehnert, M. (2023). “I am not a robot, I am asexual”: A qualitative critique of allonormative discourses of ACE and ARO folks as robots, aliens, monsters. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 71(6), 1560–1583. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2023.2185092>
- Cacchioni, T. (2015). The medicalization of sexual deviance, reproduction, and functioning. In J. DeLamater & R. Plante (Eds.), *Handbook of the sociology of sexualities. Handbooks of sociology and social research* (pp. 435–452). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-17341-2_24
- Cerankowski, K. J. (2022). Making nothing out of something. In J. Rhodes & J. Alexander, *The Routledge handbook of queer rhetoric* (chap. 28). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003144809>
- Chan, R. C. H., & Hung, F. N. (2024). Sexual violence victimization and substance use among individuals identifying on the asexual spectrum: Differences between asexuality, graysexuality, and demisexuality. *Journal of Sex Research*, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2024.2351423>
- Chasin, C. D. (2015). Making sense in and of the asexual community: Navigating relationships and identities in a context of resistance. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 25(2), 167–180. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2203>

- Chen, G. (2024). Research on the development path of feminism from an aromantic asexual perspective. *Journal of Gender, Culture and Society*, 4(2), 34–38. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-023-00884-2>
- Cheong, A. R. (2023). Theorizing omission: State strategies for withholding official recognition of personhood. *Sociological Theory*, 41(4), 377–402. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07352751231206838>
- Chess, S. (2018). Asexuality, queer chastity, and adolescence in early modern literature. In J. Higginbotham & M. A. Johnston (Eds.), *Queering childhood in early modern English drama and culture* (pp. 31–55). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-72769-1_2
- Clark, M. J., Perkins, A. K., & Reimer-Barry, E. (2023). Intersectional methods and moral theology—front matter. *Journal of Moral Theology*, 12 (Special Issue 1, Intersectional Methods and Moral Theology), i–v. <https://doi.org/10.55476/001c.74892>
- Conrad, P. (2018). Medicalization. In M. Ryan (Ed.), *Core concepts in sociology* (pp. 187–189). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781394260331.ch52>
- Cook, M., & Oram, A. (2022). Making histories, memories and communities. In *Queer beyond London* (pp. 186–213). Manchester University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526145871.00018>
- Cottingham, L. (1996). Notes on lesbian. *Art Journal*, 55(4), 72–77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.1996.10791789>
- Dambrowsky, H. (2022). The asexual perspective: Intimacy without the intimate. *Crossings An Undergraduate Arts Journal*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.29173/crossings87>
- Dawson, M., McDonnell, L., & Scott, S. (2016). Negotiating the boundaries of intimacy: The personal lives of asexual people. *The Sociological Review*, 64(2), 349–365. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12362>
- Delaporte, C., Flores Espínola, A., Guittet, E-P., Harchi, K., Sonnette-Manouguian, M., & Talbot, C. (2022). For an intersectional approach in the sociology of art and culture. *Biens Symboliques / Symbolic Goods*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.4000/bssg.1112>
- Derrick, K. (2023). Book review: “Asexual erotics: Intimate readings of compulsory sexuality.” By Ela Przybylo. *QED: A Journal of GLBTQ Worldmaking*, 10(2), 203–205. <https://doi.org/10.14321/qed.10.2.0203>
- Fennis, B. M., & Rucker, D. D. (2023). The coin of consumption: Understanding the bright and dark sides. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 49(101518). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2022.101518>
- Flore, J. (2024). Asexual desires? Mismeasures in the sexual sciences. In K. Cerankowski & M. Milks (Eds.), *Asexualities: Feminist and queer perspectives, revised and expanded ten-year anniversary edition* (1st ed., chap. 1208). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003178798>
- Freedman, E. B. (1998). “The burning of letters continues”: Elusive identities and the historical construction of sexuality. *Journal of Women’s History*, 9(4), 181–200. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jowh.2010.0237>
- Freeman, E. (2023). Defying description: Searching for queer history in institutional archives. *Archival Science*, 23, 447–470. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-023-09415-9>
- Giguère, L., MacLeod, L., & McBride, J. (2019). The transformative possibility of literary métissage: An action research report. *ALAR Journal*, 25(1), 31–64. www.alarassociation.org

- Gilman, L. (2023). Cake is better than sex: Pride and prejudice in the folklore of and about asexuality. *Journal of Folklore Research*, 60(2), 196–228. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2979/jfr.2023.a912094>.
- Goodwin, R. (1999). *Personal relationships across cultures*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203434161>
- Graves, D., & Dubrow, G. L. (2019). Taking intersectionality seriously: Learning from LGBTQ heritage initiatives for historic preservation. *The Public Historian*, 41(2), 290–316. <https://doi.org/10.1525/tph.2019.41.2.290>
- Grearson, J. C., & Smith, L. B. (Eds.). (1995). *Swaying: Essays on intercultural love*. University of Iowa Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt20h6twj>
- Gressgård, R. (2013). Asexuality: From pathology to identity and beyond. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 4(2), 179–192. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2013.774166>
- Gulley, N. Y. (2022). LGBT and queer theories: Sexuality and gender as emancipatory activism. In C. W. Johnson & D. C. Parry (Eds.), *Fostering social justice through qualitative inquiry* (chap. 6). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003216575>
- Haefner, C., & Plante, R. F. (2015). *Asexualities: Socio-cultural perspectives*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.13240>
- Hammack, P. L., Frost, D. M., & Hughes, S. D. (2018). Queer intimacies: A new paradigm for the study of relationship diversity. *Journal of Sex Research*, 56(4–5), 556–592. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2018.1531281>
- Hänel, H. C., & Jenkins, K. (2024). On relationships. *ZEMO*, 7, 459–486. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42048-024-00192-3>
- Hee, W. S. (2023). From amorous histories to sexual histories: Rethinking male love narrative in Ming and Qing dynasties and the discourse on homosexuality in modern China. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 24(6), 958–978. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649373.2023.2265684>
- Hill, C. T. (2019). *Intimate relationships across cultures: A comparative study*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108164832>
- Hille, J. J. (2023). Beyond sex: A review of recent literature on asexuality. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 49, 101516. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2022.101516>
- Hinchy, J. (2017). The eunuch archive: Colonial records of non-normative gender and sexuality in India. *Culture, Theory and Critique*, 58(2), 127–146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14735784.2017.1279555>
- Iraklis, G. Examining the social tabooisation of asexuality: The underpinnings of anti-asexual bias. *Sexual Research and Social Policy*, 21, 1432–1445). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-023-00884-2>
- Jackson, S. D., Mohr, J. J., & Kindahl, A. M. (2021). Intersectional experiences: A mixed methods experience sampling approach to studying an elusive phenomenon. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 68(3), 299–315. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000537>
- Jankowiak, W., & Nelson, A. J. (2023). Archaeology of love: A review of the ethnographic exploration of love around the world. In D. M. Buss (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of human mating* (pp. 447–465). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197536438.013.29>

- Joseph, Schneider. (2015). The medicalization of deviance – From badness to sickness. In E. Goode (Ed.), *The handbook of deviance* (chap. 8). <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118701386.ch8>
- Kahan, B. (2013). *Celibacies: American modernism and sexual life*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822377184>
- Karandashev, V. (2019). Love as intimacy. In *Cross-cultural perspectives on the experience and expression of love* (pp. 187–202). https://doi.org/10.11007/978-3-030-15020-4_12
- Kawai, T., Fahlbusch, J., Dienel, H. L., Renn, O., & Renn, R. (2022). Narratives for personal and collective transformations. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 36(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2022.2137108>
- Kislitsyna, P. (2023). Non-heterosexual clues: Investigating one’s sexuality in biographical narratives. *Antropologičeskij forum*, 19(56), 93–119. <https://doi.org/10.31250/1815-8870-2023-19-56-93-119>
- Lam, F., Langley, C. H., & Song, Y. S. (2011). On the genealogy of asexual diploids. *Journal of computational biology: A journal of computational molecular cell biology*, 18(3), 415–428. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cmb.2010.0270>
- Main, J. C. (2012). *(Women's) archival spaces and trans voices? A (re)search and proposal* (Master's thesis, 725, Loyola University Chicago). https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/725
- Mitchell, H., & Hunnicutt, G. (2019). Challenging accepted scripts of sexual “normality”: Asexual narratives of non-normative identity and experience. *Sexuality & Culture*, 23, 507–524. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-018-9567-6>
- Motschenbacher, H. (2022). *Linguistic dimensions of sexual normativity: Corpus-based evidence*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003190257>
- Moulton, M. (2023). “Both your sexes”: A non-binary approach to gender history, trans studies and the making of the self in modern Britain. *History Workshop Journal*, 95, 75–100. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbac033>
- Mullan, S. J. (2024). Queer theatre: Reclaiming histories, historicising, and hope. In J. Harvie & D. Rebellato (Eds.), *The Cambridge companion to British theatre since 1945* (pp. 185–206). Cambridge University Press.
- Lewis, N. M. (2017). *Queer social reproduction: Co-opted, hollowed out, and resilient*. <https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/queer-social-reproduction-co-opted-hollowed-out-and-resilient>
- Nimbi, F.M., Appia, C., Tanzilli, A., Giovanardi, G., & Lingiardi, V. Deepening sexual desire and erotic fantasies research in the ACE spectrum: Comparing the experiences of asexual, demisexual, gray-asexual, and questioning people. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 53, 1031–1045 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-023-02784-3>
- Normark, B. B., Judson, O. P., & Moran, N. A. (2003). Genomic signatures of ancient asexual lineages. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*, 79(1), 69–84. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1095-8312.2003.00182.x>
- Nuffer-Rodriguez, U. M. (2021). *Gender deviants: Subverting regulatory power in medical institutions* (University Honors Theses, paper 1148). <https://doi.org/10.15760/honors.1186>
- Nyegaard, N. (2021). At skrive queer historie. *Slagmark - Tidsskrift for Idéhistorie*, 83, 157–176. <https://doi.org/doi.10.7146/slagmark.vi83.144217>

- Osterwald, G. (2017). Contradictions in the representation of asexuality: Fiction and reality. *IAFOR Journal of Arts & Humanities*, 4(1), 36–43. <https://doi.org/10.22492/IJAH.4.1.04>
- Profus, A. (2016). Unsichtbares sichtbarmachen. Asexualität als sexuelle orientierung. In M. Katzer & H.-J. Voß (Eds.), *Geschlechtliche, sexuelle und reproduktive selbstbestimmung: Praxisorientierte Zugänge* (pp. 22–242). Psychosozial-Verlag. <http://dx.doi.org/10.23668/psycharchives.3418>
- Przybylo, E., & Cooper, D. (2014). Asexual resonances tracing a queerly asexual archive. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 20(3), 297–318. <https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-2422683>
- Rao, T. R. (2010). Ancient asexuals. *Resonance*, 15(1), 45–50. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S12045-010-0005-9>
- Recker, J., & Perry, A. (2024) Data on the margins – Data from LGBTIQ+ populations in European Social Science Data archives. *Data Science Journal*, 23(1), 39. <https://doi.org/10.5334/dsj-2024-039>
- Reed, K. (2022). *Erasing invisibility: Asexuality in the media*. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-5568-5.ch002>
- Reitter, J. N. (2022). *Heteronormativity and psychoanalysis: Oedipus Gay*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003252160doi:10.4324/9781003252160>
- Renninger, B. J. (2016). *Resisting marriage-as-ideal online: Non-normative sexual politics and the internet*. Rutgers University-Graduate School-New Brunswick. <https://doi.org/10.7282/T34B33GF>
- Ross, W. (2023). Embracing difference and cultivating hope: The transformative potential of Possibility Studies. *Possibility Studies & Society*, 1(1-2), 243–259. <https://doi.org/10.1177/27538699231172436>
- Rothblum, E. D., Heimann, K., & Carpenter, K. (2018). The lives of asexual individuals outside of sexual and romantic relationships: education, occupation, religion and community. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 10(1), 83–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2018.1552186>
- Scherrer, K. S. (2010). Asexual relationships: What does asexuality have to do with polyamory? In M. Barker & D. Langdrige (Eds.), *Understanding non-monogamies*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203869802-23>
- Scheurich, J. J., & Mason, M. (2024). An intersectionality-based research framework and methodology that emphasizes systemic inequities in public schooling, including racism, sexism, and classism. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 24(5), 319–330. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15327086241254815>
- Schneckenburger, S. A., Tam, M. W. Y., & Ross, L. E. (2023). Asexuality. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 195(47), E1627. <https://doi.org/doi.10.1503/cmaj.231003>
- Schwenke, C. (2022). Social inclusion. In P. L. Doan & L. Johnston (Eds.), *Rethinking transgender identities: Reflections from around the globe* (pp. 61–75). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315613703>
- Scott, S., McDonnell, L., & Dawson, M. (2016). Stories of non-becoming: Non-issues, non-events and non-identities in asexual lives. *Symbolic Interaction*, 39(2), 268–286. <https://doi.org/10.1002/symb.215>

- Seitz, S. (2023). *Asexual dramaturgies: Reading for asexuality in the Western theatrical canon* (Doctoral dissertation, LSU, 6001). https://doi.org/doi.10.31390/gradschool_dissertations.6001
- Shrivastava, M. (2016). Invisible women in history and global studies: Reflections from an archival research project. *Globalizations*, 14(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2016.1158905>
- Simelane, S. (2018). Positive representations of asexuality in contemporary young adult. *WritingThreeSixty*, 4(1), 77. <https://doi.org/10.14426/writing360.v1.327>
- Smith, P. J. (2014). Una guía de fuentes históricas orales (A guide to oral-historical evidence). *Complutum*, 24(2), 163–171. https://doi.org/doi.10.5209/REV_CMPL.2013.V24.N2.43377
- Södergren, J., & Vallström, N. (2021). Seeing the invisible: Brand authenticity and the cultural production of queer imagination. *Arts and the Market*, 11(3), 275–297. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AAM-12-2020-0053>
- Stratford, E. (2019). Oral history and narrative. In *International Encyclopedia of Geography* (pp. 1–7). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118786352.wbieg1038.pub2>
- Strzelczak, A. (2023). 5. Asexuality — an attempt to critically review the concept of a fourth sexual orientation. *Journal of Sexual and Mental Health*, 21, 21–27. <https://doi.org/10.5603/jsmh.93068>
- Svetlichnaya, T. G., & Smirnova, E. (2022). Medicalization of deviations as a tool of social control. *Logos et Praxis*, 21(2), 91–103. <https://doi.org/10.15688/lp.jvolvu.2022.2.10>
- Szczęśniak, M. (2012). Queerowanie historii, czyli dlaczego współcześni geje nie są niczymi dziećmi (Queering history, or why contemporary gays are nobody's children). *Teksty Drugie*, 5(137).
- Tarkhnishvili, D., Yanchukov, A., & Böhne, A. (2023). Editorial: Advantages, limitations, and evolutionary constraints of asexual reproduction: An empirical approach. *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*, 11, 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fevo.2023.1184306>
- Tremblay, S. (2024). Queerness—What would the queers do? *Cromohs. Cyber Review of Modern Historiography*, 26. <https://doi.org/10.36253/cromohs-14502>
- Turton, S. (2019). Unlawful entries: Buggery, sodomy, and the construction of sexual normativity in early English dictionaries. *Journal of the Dictionary Society of North America*, 40(1), 81–112 <https://doi.org/10.1353/dic.2019.0009>
- Vansina, J., Wright, H. M., Leydesdorff, S., & Tonkin, E. (2006). *Oral tradition: A study in historical methodology*. Aldine Transaction.
- Vincent, B., & Manzano, A. (2017). History and cultural diversity. In C. Richards, W. Bouman, & M. J. Barker (Eds.), *Genderqueer and non-binary genders. critical and applied approaches in sexuality, gender and identity* (pp. 11–30). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-51053-2_2
- Voss, B. L., dos Santos Ferreira de Freitas, L., & Azevedo de Moraes Wichers, C. (2021). Feminisms, queer theories and the archaeological study of past sexualities. *Journal of Public Archaeology*, 16(1), 285–304. <https://doi.org/10.20396/rap.v16e1.8666176>
- Wagner, T. L. (2024). “We are openly, proudly Subjective ... This history is important to our contemporary survival”: Queer embodied knowledge and the curatorial work of ICT-based LGBTQIA+ history content creators. *Journal of Documentation*, 80(6), 1367–1383. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-01-2024-0025>

- Wang, Y. (2024). Between inevitability and surprise. *Pacific Historical Review*, 93(3), 485–494. <https://doi.org/10.1525/phr.2024.93.3.485>
- Whyte, S., Brooks, R. C., & Torgler, B. (2018). Man, woman, “other”: Factors associated with nonbinary gender identification. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 47, 2397–2406. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-018-1307-3>
- Williams, E. W. (2023). *Primitive normativity*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478027621>
- Wilson, B. C. (2022). Review: Against sex: Identities of sexual restraint in early America, by Kara M. French. *Nova Religio*, 25(3), 146–149. <https://doi.org/10.1525/nr.2022.25.3.146>
- Winer, C. (2024). Understanding asexuality: A sociological review. *Sociology Compass*, 18(6). <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.13240>
- Zhang, A. Y., & Gao, G. (2024). Intersectionality in educational psychology and curriculum studies: A critical review. *Extensive Reviews*, 4, 1–14. <https://doi.org/21467/exr.4.1.5387>
- Zivony, A., & Reggev, N. (2022). *Beliefs about the inevitability of sexual attraction predict stereotypes about asexuality*. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/fpwgm>