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### **Disordering Lack Disorders: Asexuality and the Politics of 'Not Doing It'**

"Disordering Lack Disorders" will argue that asexuality disrupts the medicalization of women's low sexual desire. This is because it works to reconfigure understandings of sexual 'lack,' as well as undercut the expected outcome of 'distress'—both of which are integral to the cultural invention of HSDD (hypoactive sexual desire disorder). HSDD is defined by the DSM-IV-TR as "persistently or recurrently deficient (or *absent*) sexual fantasies and desire for sexual activity" with the additional clause that it needs to cause "marked *distress* or interpersonal difficulty." Asexuality, through drawing attention to the artificiality and superficiality of qualifiers such as 'lack/absence' and 'distress,' presents a challenge to the medical invention of HSDD and related disorders, as well as to broader cultural hetero-coital fixations that make the existence of such categories of disorder feasible in the first place.

This paper, then, takes as its starting point Breanne Fahs' (2010) assertion that asexuality is a 'radical refusal' which disrupts cultural beliefs that we must all be sexual, and that we must all practice this sexuality in hetero-coital terms. Through an analysis of empirical studies of asexuality, such as those of Lori Brotto et al. (2010) and Anthony Bogaert (2006, 2004), which are characterized by a tangible struggle over where to draw the line between asexuality and 'disorder,' I will argue that asexuality is threatening to the medical category of HSDD as well as to the cultural primacy of coitus. Asexuality demonstrates that sexual lack can be a site of identity, social exchange, and that it can stimulate a search for non-hetero-dominant, noncoital, and nonorgasmic pleasures and practices.

#### **Biography**

Ela Przybyło is an interdisciplinary graduate student in English and Women's Studies at the University of Alberta. Her current thesis work is on the feminist politics and possibilities of practicing asexuality. As part of this work, Ela has spent a semester at the University of Auckland's Gender and Critical Psychology Group, visiting Dr. Nicola Gavey and Dr. Virginia Braun. Also, her work on asexuality is to be published by the journal *Sexualities*. Her research interests focus on feminist considerations of the body and sexuality. *Address:* Women's Studies Program, University of Alberta, T6G 2E7, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.