Queering the Space Around Lucy Ann/Joseph Israel Lobdell

Bambi Lobdell

The life and writings of Lucy Ann/Joseph Israel Lobdell (1829-1912) queer the social spaces of nineteenth-century male and female spheres, constructions of physical spaces of civilization and wilderness, and scholarly spaces of theories concerning gender, sexed bodies, and sexuality. While the word "queer" has an archaic meaning as something that is different, unusual, or odd, I use the word in this instance as a verb in its current, theoretical sense to mean an act, display, or subjectivity that challenges, disrupts, or troubles established classifications of genders, sexed bodies, and sexualities. This form of queerness emphasizes a third space of difference that challenges heteronormative assumptions, definitions, and classifications formed around artificial and restrictive binaries of sexed bodies, genders, and male and female spheres. These heteronormative bodies of knowledge, what Foucault calls "truth regimes," anchor "truth" to genitals, privileging anatomy as the source of truth concerning identity. Lobdell's queer challenge exposes the constructedness of heteronormative assumptions and categories and opens a third space of possibilities for new understandings and subjectivities.

As a transgender man in the nineteenth century, Lobdell is a disorderly body alternatively praised and vilified for skills, acts, and strengths coded as masculine. By transgender I mean, in this instance, a female-born body that crosses traditional gender and sex boundaries to claim a male identity and life, a movement that transgresses binary boundaries and positions the subject in a third space of as-yet unnamed potential subjectivities and lifestyles. While Lobdell's contemporaries and nearly all those who have written about Lobdell in the past 120 years persistently categorize him as female because of his anatomy, I privilege Lobdell's voice, words, performance, and presentation to define him as a transgender man. Although Lobdell lived long before the term "transgender" was coined, he fits Leslie Feinberg's definition. "Transgender people traverse, bridge, or blur the boundary of the gender expression they were assigned at birth", performing a gender expression considered inappropriate for their sex (*Warrior*, x). Lobdell's transgenderism is so clearly visible because he lived within the American culture which "impose[s] regimes of gender. It is only within a system of gender oppression that transgender exists in the first place. It would be impossible to transgress gender rules without the prior imposition of those rules" (Wilchins, *Read My Lips* 67).

An examination of Lobdell's life and writing reveals an emancipatory space of freedom and possibility for definitions, styles, and enactments of gender, sex, and sexuality between and outside of established binaries. Such a study also highlights the transphobic dangers that threaten those freedoms from within a savage civilization whose fearful policing and disciplining of established categories and definitions of body attempt to reinforce the illusion of heteronormative social order. To emphasize Lobdell's resistance to fixed

classifications of sex and gender and his ability to slide from female to male, I will use the name "Lucy" and feminine pronouns when discussing Lobdell's life as a woman and when quoting others, and the name "Joseph" and masculine pronouns when discussing his life as a man.

In the nineteenth century, society was ordered in ways defined as and believed to be natural and normal. This order was built around social constructions of gender that framed men as naturally intelligent, rational, strong, and capable, the proper managers and over-seers of the unpredictable and chaotic public areas of education, politics, religion, and business. Women were defined as weak, irrational, and emotional, incapable of surviving the stress and dangers of the public world, but perfectly suited for their God-given roles as wives and mothers, performing what was considered less taxing duties within the safety of the home. A gendered social order was created by the balance implied in the division of the male public and the female domestic spheres which was further regulated by the philosophy of the Cult of True Womanhood which centered on the belief that women's natural and proper place was within the home, caring for husband and children and tending to domestic duties. Writers of newspaper and magazine articles, pamphlets, religious tracts, and sermons repeatedly reminded women how to be True Women. "The attributes of True Womanhood, by which a woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, her neighbors and society could be divided into four cardinal virtues – piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity" (Welter 152).

Women were expected to create homes of joy, rest, and comfort for men so they would not go elsewhere in search of domestic order and service. Above all, wives were repeatedly reminded by those who wrote guidelines and advice for women to follow the three golden threads that wove domestic happiness: "to repress a harsh answer, to confess a fault, and to stop (right or wrong) in the midst of self-defense, in gentle submission" (Welter 161). For the sake of order, women were not to ever disagree or argue with their husbands. Instead they were encouraged to be childlike because to tamper with the quality of submission was to tamper with the order of the universe (Welter 159).

Social order relied on women's acceptance of their subordinate position, and willing incarceration in the female sphere performing the prescribed female gender roles of wife and mother. The dominant and powerful position of men and masculinity was made possible by female submission, which was symbolized through clothing. "Women's wearing dresses signified to men that women would defer to male definitions of women" (Barker-Benfield 120). Clothing was the visible indicator of the wearer's intent, so dresses on women signified their willingness to defer to men, while pants on a woman signaled the usurpation of all male prerogatives, privileges, and opportunities. Since female submission to men bolstered the definition and power of masculinity, any female attempts at equality threatened not just order, but the construction of masculinity also. "If anyone, male or female, dared to tamper with the complex virtues which made

up the Cult of True Womanhood, he was damned immediately as an enemy of God, of civilization and of the Republic" (Welter 152).

Within this social zeitgeist of male domination and female subordination, Lucy Ann Lobdell published an autobiography in 1855 titled *The Narrative of Lucy Ann Lobdell, the Female Hunter of Delaware and Sullivan Counties, N.Y*. The experiences and situations in Lucy's autobiography make clear the constructedness and boundaries of gendered embodiment and what effect these restrictions had on her. This autobiographical focus on gender issues, with its rebellion against gendered expectations and definitions, forms the foundation of resistance performed throughout Lobdell's life.

Lucy's narrative opens with romanticized and sentimental stories of young men wooing her in her teen years, displaying an understanding of prescribed heteronormative sex roles as natural and normal, yet her focus is more on her rebellion against her father's orders to refuse male attention than on actual interactions with the young men. Her tale of defying her father to marry George Washington Slater suggests her willing placement of herself within a socially constructed lifestyle defined as normal, natural, and desired by women. This tale of romance is highly suspicious not only because it includes few details of actual romance, but also because Lobdell later told Dr. P. M. Wise that "it was after the earnest solicitation of parents and friends that she consented to marry, in her twentieth year, a man for whom, she has repeatedly stated, she had no affection and from whom she never derived a moment's pleasure, although she endeavored to be a dutiful wife" (Wise 88).

After creating the impression that she wanted to marry George, Lucy next gives a viscous tirade about married life in general, and George in particular. When George brings coworkers home from the sawmill and asks Lucy to entertain them all with her violin, she obeys at first. "But after a while I put my violin into the stove, for I had no relish for the society it was bringing. This did not suit Mr. Slater at all, and he said he would get another. I told him I would not play any more for a gang of card-players and swearers" (Lobdell 17). In no uncertain terms, Lucy makes her disapproval of such male behavior clear as well as her refusal to obey her husband, rebelling against the True Womanhood mandate to be submissive.

Lucy's narrative continues with tales of George's ignorance, unreasonable behavior, and fiscal irresponsibility, revealing the unpleasantness of her marriage while making it clear that she will not submit to such a husband or hold her tongue. At this point, Lucy openly rebels against George, and when he abandons her, she moves back into her parents' home where she gives birth to a daughter.

To contribute to the household, Lucy makes good use of a skill she learned in childhood to guard the poultry – shooting a rifle. She borrowed her brother's clothes and her father's guns to go hunting to provide food for the family. Her skill and success earned her a reputation as the best shot in the area

and she was locally known as the Female Hunter. The stories she includes in her narrative reveal her love for the wilderness and hunting. “I used often to go hunting to drive care and sorrow away; for when I was on the mountain’s brow, chasing the wild deer, it was exciting for me” (30).

To grant her shooting skills and abilities more veracity than a female voice could impart, Lucy includes a letter from Mr. Talmage, an itinerant peddler who happened upon Lucy in the woods and mistook her for a man because of her male clothing and firearms. When he realized she was a woman, he teased her into proving herself:

> Wishing to witness her skill with her hunting instruments, I commenced bantering her in regard to shooting. She smiled, and to convince me, took out her hunting-knife, and cut a ring, about four inches in diameter, on a tree, with a small spot in the center; then stepping back thirty yards, and drawing up one of her pistols, put both balls inside the ring. She then, at eighteen rods[1] from the tree, fired a ball from her rifle into the very center. (Lobdell 37)

Talmage next shares his other observations of Lucy’s behavior when they return to the Lobdell cabin:

> The maiden hunter instead of setting down to rest as most hunters do when they get home, remarked that she had got the chores to do. So, out she went, and fed, watered, and stabled a pair of young horses, a yoke of oxen, and three cows. She then went to the saw-mill, and brought back a slab on her shoulder, that I would not like to have carried, and with an axe and saw, she soon worked it up into stove-wood. Her next business was to change her dress, and get tea, which she did in a manner which would have been creditable to a more scientific cook. After ten, she finished up the usual housework, and then sat down and commenced plying her needle in the most lady-like manner. (Lobdell 37)

Talmage’s words not only grant male veracity to Lucy’s masculine skills and abilities; they also show Lobdell queering gendered space and roles as she slides from masculinity to femininity, from male sphere of hunter to female sphere of homemaker, revealing the constructedness of gendered spaces, activities, and functions, and the fluidity of gendered performance.

In contrast to the excitement of her hunting stories, Lucy juxtaposes anecdotes of real life for working class women which reveal the female sphere as a debilitating prison of constant work, misery, and poverty. George’s impending return prompts Lucy to decide to go out into the world in men’s clothes to earn

decent wages as women's earnings were not enough to survive on. With open defiance of societal expectations, Lucy makes her rejection of the female sphere and gender roles clear: "I feel that I can not submit to see all the bondage with which woman is oppressed, and listen to the voice of fashion, and repose upon the bosom of death" (43). Next she openly challenges men to step into the realm of domesticity and do a better job at women's work, and demands equal pay for women willing to work outside the home.

Lucy queers gender roles and space by refusing to perform, behave, or appear as women were expected and, instead, behaving and appearing like a man. Lobdell slides from female to male, from the domestic, feminine sphere to the male sphere, exposing gendered boundaries of identity and space as artificial and easily broken. Her enactment of "man" places masculinity within a wrongful body, that of female, which threatens the social construct of masculinity that privileges male bodies. Her rejection of traditional female roles and attributes presents an alternative pattern of behavior for women that does not contribute to the male domination of them, further challenging the gendered structure of society. While her rebellion was tolerated by her family for the sake of survival in the wilderness, her open transgendered behavior among the villagers of Long Eddy, New York was met with disapproval. No one would hire the Female Hunter, and so, in men's clothes, Lucy left family and home in 1854.

In late October of 1854[2], Joseph Israel Lobdell entered the town of Bethany, Pennsylvania[3] and opened a singing school which drew most of the town's young women as students. By the spring of 1855 Lobdell was set to marry the daughter of a prominent lumberman until his anatomy was exposed, and a tar and feather crew chased him out of town.

Lobdell next made his way to the frontier territory of Minnesota as La-Roi and worked first as a hired gun guarding land claims, and then as a jack of all trades in Manannah (Smith 101). La-Roi "was a splendid hunter and was offensive to none… was good company and a 'hale fellow well met' with all the young people in the neighborhood, committing no sins or indiscretions" (Smith 104). Unfortunately, "in the summer of 1858, by accident, "Satan, with the aid of original sin," discovered and exposed her sex.[4] The blue code of Connecticut was consulted, and the law was invoked to purge the community of the scandal" (Smith 105-106).[5]

Lobdell was arrested for impersonating a man and placed on trial in Meeker county in 1858, but the judge referred to a decision made by the Roman, Justinian, stating if a woman was capable, she could wear the pants, and exonerated Lobdell. The community took matters into their own hands and verbally abused and shunned Lobdell, making it clear that gender transgression was unacceptable even on the frontier (Smith 106).

In Bethany and Manannah the revelation of Lobdell's "true" sex makes visible his believable masculinity and his queering of gender categories, an act that exposes the fragile constructedness of the 'knowable man' as a public miss-

reading, an illusion that can be fabricated by a wrongful body – woman. Lobdell queers the category "man" by being someplace in between the polar opposites of man and woman, and outside both, which unsettles assumptions about men and women and the visible signs of apparel, behavior, and actions that were to correctly announce which was which. In refusing to participate in the continuous creative process necessary to sustain the illusion of maleness and its power by being the feminine foil to masculinity, Lobdell queers the order of gendered spaces by revealing that the subordinating order of male and female bodies is not natural, but can be manipulated, which threatens the balance of power in society. The pattern he displays of female embodied masculinity queers gender and sexed body binaries by presenting a space of possibilities outside of either/or categories and definitions.

The ungoverned, uncontainable freedom of this embodied third space generates fear in those who work to close it up, reestablish restrictive spaces for normative subjectivities, and punish the transgressor. Public rejection of Lobdell accomplishes the communal establishment of a boundary that defines normalcy by rendering him invisible through shunning and rejection and placing him outside of that boundary in a space of deviance. Expulsion from society secures the borders of sex and gender and restores the illusion of order, which requires stable – if artificial – categories. While "individuals may be able to shift gender statuses, the gender boundaries have to hold or the whole gendered social order will come crashing down" (Lorber 27).

Eventually, Lobdell was delivered to his parents' home in Long Eddy at the expense of Meeker County. Not able to recover well enough to be financially independent, Lobdell became destitute. According to an article in *The New York Times*[6] sometime after July of 1860, Lobdell "applied to the Poor authorities of Delaware County, and asked to be placed in the Poor-house". Lobdell became depressed while remaining in the Poorhouse, "always moody and sullen until [Marie] Perry came, when [Lobdell] became full of life, and was the most cheerful person in the place until she and the girl ran away" (*New York Times*, August 25, 1871, 5).

Perry and Lobdell escaped from the Poor House sometime early in 1862, and were married by a Justice of the Peace in Wayne County, Pennsylvania[7] as Marie Louise and Joseph Israel. The couple lived in the woods between Hancock, New York and Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, subsisting on game, fish, and whatever could be gathered from their surroundings.[8] Their life together was rather obscure until they were arrested for vagrancy in 1869.

Once again, Lobdell's "true" sex is revealed by authorities, this time the authorities at the Stroudsberg jail who confiscate the couple's mail, and word of the "queer sensation" spreads through the Pennsylvania newspapers.[9] Lobdell's anonymity grows into notoriety and the Female Hunter becomes fair game for legal officials who are able to arrest homeless people simply for vagrancy. By 1870, newspapers began publishing stories about Joseph Israel Lobdell and his

wife Marie, dressing the bare details of reports of Joseph's arrests (Marie, decidedly feminine in appearance and behavior, is not arrested) in sensational and judgmental descriptions of his appearance. Through characterization and interpretation of their observations of Lobdell and Perry, never direct interviews, writers of newspaper articles reinforced boundaries and definitions of heteronormative normalcy by establishing Lobdell as the dangerous, deviant Other. Descriptions focus, not on the illegality of any activities, but instead on tattered and dirty clothes and Lobdell's masculine features and behavior, depicting him as an ugly, degraded, and indecent person worthy of public disdain. Transphobia is all the more noticeable in articles that report attempts the law made to force Lobdell into female clothing, whether or not he was remaining in their jail.[10]

Community members are baffled by Marie, who is always described in newspaper accounts and local histories as attractive, lady-like, and well educated. They do not understand why she would voluntarily associate with a "crazy, filthy, diseased fellow-being" (Woodward), and believe that she has been led astray by "an insane, foul, and unsexed woman".[11] Even though Marie reinforces Joseph's claim as her husband, the people of the small towns of Pennsylvania and New York where the couple wander do not understand them as a married couple. To the people in these communities, Lobdell is merely "disguised" as a man, so the social conflict around Lobdell, as it was in Bethany and Manannah, centers more on the usurpation of a public male presentation by a wrongful body than an "inappropriate" attachment formed between two female bodies. The concept of same-sex desire between women was virtually unknown in 1865 as lesbianism was not "discovered" until after 1880. Common belief in the nineteenth-century recognized only sex between men and women, believing it so natural that no other forms of desire existed. Western society did not have the understanding developed later that divides people into heterosexuals and homosexuals.

> Back in Jefferson's day, if one did participate in a same-sex sex act, then one would be considered a transgressor of community standards – probably a sinner and even a criminal – but not as someone who had a sexual identity based on his or her conduct. (Boag 46)

Dominant nineteenth-century beliefs assumed that all people were heterosexual; anyone displaying desire for a person of their own sex was viewed as deviant and immoral, not as a person with an alternative sexuality.

Joseph and Marie practice what Judith Halberstam calls a "queer use of time and space" which develops "at least in part, in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction. They also develop according to other logics of location, movement, and identification" (*Queer Time & Place* 1).

Lobdell and Perry exchange the set boundaries and definitions that formed the female sphere of subordination for an completely unsettled, uncivilized space that grants them unlimited mobility and freedom to form an alternative domesticy for women. By inhabiting the third space of wilderness, free from traditional domestic and economic structures, Lobdell and Perry escape the mandates of socially defined bodies and behaviors.

While the community around Lobdell and Perry is oblivious to the erotic component of their relationship, what the couple clearly presents is an alternative domesticity that queers the common definition of female bodies and marriage and refuses to comply, in any aspect, with social expectations for women. At times, Lobdell and Perry settle and work at odd jobs, but more often the couple's resourcefulness and ability to survive off the land grants them unheard of mobility, and enables them to disregard the economic necessity of acquiring financial support from male husbands with traditional careers. Lobdell and Perry choose freedom, based within the wilderness, which symbolizes their abandonment of society and all its rules, choosing homelessness over the traditional female sphere.

While both Lobdell and Perry challenge established patterns for people with female bodies, Lobdell is the one frequently arrested, jailed, or harassed and taunted by newspaper writers. Judith Halberstam argues that the "[t]ransgender person who risks his life by passing in a small town" lives in a queer time and space as an anachronism because of his gender nonconformity (*Queer Time and Place* 10, 15). Lobdell's queer space is figuratively and literally outside of society, in the wilderness, a space that symbolizes the dangers of the untamed, unmanaged, unknown that threatens the safety and order of society. His life in the wilderness is a lived rejection of the structures, rules, and "truth" of society. Beyond dismissing social expectations for women, he also makes it clear he chooses a life free from any of the goals prescribed as "normal": traditional marriage, family, long life, and accumulation of wealth and property. Lobdell further queers expected norms by using the familiar social institution and language of marriage in such a creative way that others cannot understand the expansion that Lobdell and Perry give to the meaning of the term. In turning their backs on rigid social patterns, he and Marie create their own, alternative society, without boundaries, and with their own rules. "Queer subcultures produce alternative temporalities by allowing their participants to believe that futures can be imagined according to logics that lie outside of those paradigmatic markers of life experience – namely birth, marriage, reproduction, and death" (Halberstam, *Queer Time & Place* 2).

Within this third space of wilderness and unrecognizable marriage, Lobdell lives in the third space of a body that will not fit into the tidy man/woman binary. Lobdell's constant embodiment as a man first troubles sex and gender binaries by revealing the obvious constructedness of them, and then by crossing boundaries and definitions and not fitting neatly into any classifications. He is

masculine and insists that he is a man, but because the "biological body, transformed by the human mind into a cultural construct, undergoes a … metamorphosis, emerging as the symbolic representation of the social forces that created it" (Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct* 48), society sees his female body and insists he is a woman. As Halberstam notes "[a]mbiguous gender, when and where it does appear, is inevitably transformed into deviance, thirdness, or a blurred version of either male or female" (*Female Masculinity* 20). The quality of thirdness evident in Lobdell's body and life makes him an outlaw to his surrounding society, placing him on the outside, resulting in derogatory remarks such as "man-woman" and "it", created by writers intending to demean his sex and gender. Yet these same terms free him from binary constraints as they acknowledge a space between the opposing poles.

Judith Butler refers to the third place of the social Other as the "zone of inhabitability [which] constitute[s] the defining limit of the subject's domain; it will constitute that site of dreaded identification against which – and by virtue of which – the domain of the subject will circumscribe its own claim to autonomy and to life" ("Introduction to Bodies" 368). Lobdell does gain a certain degree of autonomy temporarily while living freely in the woods with the partner of his choice, outside of traditional domestic arrangements and expectations, but like Kate Bornstein, he learns that "the in-between place itself was the truth [he] was made aware of: the existence of a place that lies outside the borders of what's culturally acceptable" (94).

Lobdell was considered so dangerous as the anti-social Other that family members attempted to make him disappear all together by releasing news of the Female Hunter's death. *The New York Times* reported "Death of a Modern Diana: the Female Hunter of Long Eddy" on page two of the October 7th edition, a week before the obituary hit the hometown newspaper of Hancock, New York. Lobdell's death was also news for the October 23, 1879 edition of *Forest and Stream*, a men's journal devoted to hunting and outdoor life,[12] and the October 25, 1879 edition of *The National Police Gazette*, among many others. Lobdell had, in fact, been declared insane and incapable of self-government or managing property, mostly because "she frequently dressed in men's attire. Sometimes says she is a hunter. Sometimes claims and acts as if she was in love with another woman and says that [woman] is her wife." [13]

Lobdell was incarcerated at Willard insane Asylum in Ovid, New York in October of 1880. A young sexologist at Willard, Dr. P. M. Wise, studied him, focusing on his gendered appearance and behavior as the manifestations of deviance. As all other male authorities before him, Wise also judged and identified Lobdell on the basis of gender nonconformity, reinforcing the judgment of insanity from the position of psycho-medical authority. Using Krafft-Ebbing's theories, definitions, and descriptions as guidelines, Wise's analysis focuses on Lobdell's gendered behavior as gender inversion, a form of insanity.

Wise's 1883 article, "A Case of Sexual Perversion", is often cited as the first medical/psychiatric treatment on lesbians in the United States because of the use of the word "Lesbian". But while Wise acknowledges that Lobdell and Perry shared a life together in what he calls "the quiet monotony of Lesbian love" (89), he uses the word "Lesbian" in its archaic sense as a qualifier of female companionship, not a descriptor of sexual desire as many twentieth century writers have interpreted. While Wise does include brief discussion of Lobdell's sexual relationship with Marie, he expresses disbelief in what he hears. "The statement of the patient in the interval of quiet that followed soon after her admission to the asylum, was quite clear and coherent and she evidently had a vivid recollection of her late "married life." From this statement it *appears* that she made frequent *attempts* at sexual intercourse with her companion and *believed* them successful; that she *believed* herself to possess virility and the coaptation of a male; that she had not experienced connubial content with her husband, but with her late companion nuptial satisfaction had been complete" (89-90, emphasis mine). Wise states that *Lobdell* believes that sex occurred, yet makes his doubt clear by positioning Lobdell's statements as only believable to Lobdell. "Victorian culture believed that sex without men was inconceivable – men were essential to female desire, which was for motherhood" (Smith-Rosenberg, *Discourses* 273). He does *not* term Lobdell *a lesbian*, as that particular classification of women was not yet conceived in 1883, or define him in any way that would align with twenty-first-century definitions of lesbian identity. Rather he relies on nineteenth-century dominant discourses on gender, sex, and sexuality that privilege the genitals as the natural and normal determiner of gendered behavior, appearances, functions, and desires. Lobdell's queering of gendered definitions and spaces challenges the gendered construction of nineteenth-century reality so severely that doctors can only read his difference as insanity.

Because of the efforts of Ellen Dwyer who "rescued the nineteenth-century casebooks from the basement of the abandoned Chapin building" at the Willard Insane Asylum (xiii), Lobdell's story became fodder for academic analysis and inquiry. Theorists, historians, and essayists assumed that genitals dictate sexed identity, categorized Lobdell's difference as sexual, and resurrected Lucy Ann Lobdell as the first lesbian in American psycho-medical writing. In their efforts to build a legitimate lesbian history, they sought for examples that could be fitted to their theories rather than objectively examining difference, and categorize his difference as sexual. Using a twentieth-century hetero/homosexual binary and its attending concepts that did not exist in the nineteenth-century, they define Lobdell's nonconforming behavior as lesbianism and erase Lobdell's transgenderism. The social construction of sexed bodies as an absolute man/woman dichotomy is compounded by its coupling to the construction of sexuality as an absolute dichotomy of hetero/homosexuality.

Writers such as Jonathan Ned Katz, Lillian Faderman, and Carrol Smith-Rosenberg have written about Lucy Ann Lobdell as a nineteenth-century Passing

Woman, meaning a woman who passed as a man for the purpose of gaining mobility, freedoms, and privileges reserved for men, which often included loving women. However, Lobdell rejected a female identity and insisted publicly and to doctors at Willard that he was a man named Joe. To theorize Lobdell's male presentation as mere opportunistic transvestitism erases his gender nonconformity, containing it even more efficiently than imprisonment did in the nineteenth century. "The idea of counterfeiting [passing], then both reduces male impersonation to an economic opportunity and collapses it into the phenomenon of social climbing. In other words, if male impersonation can be safely explained in terms of economic advantage, then the gender crisis it also names can be avoided" (Halberstam, *Queer Time* 72).

Numerous web sites offer Lucy Ann Lobdell as a nineteenth-century example of a Passing Woman, cross-dressing to find greater earning potential and opportunity disguised as a man, an act that also allowed "her" to live as female husband to "her" wife. These sites list Lucy Ann Lobdell as an historical lesbian, often claiming her as the "first" woman recognized as such by medical authorities.[14] However, Lobdell queers the theoretical space constructed around him by rejecting female identification. Writers ignore Lobdell's own statements and privilege the authority of the sexologist who is analyzing Lobdell from restrictive, uninformed, and artificial constructions of knowledge and then misinterpret the use of the word "Lesbian" in historically incorrect ways in order to force him (and Perry) into lesbian classification.

When Lobdell's words, recorded in the very same article, are acknowledged and privileged as authoritative, the label of "lesbian" is completely severed from Lobdell's body, whether turn-of-the-nineteenth or twentieth-century understandings of the term are used. Lobdell introduces himself to Dr. Wise as a man named Joseph Lobdell (Wise 87), explains that he considers himself "a man in all that the name implies" (88) and that he possesses "virility and the coaptation of a male" (90). Lobdell's transgender queers the scholarly tradition that misread his difference as sexual, revealing the need for transgender as a theoretical category of classification of subjectivity to avoid eclipsing historical and living transgender subjects.

End Notes

1. According to Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. 10th ed. 1993, a rod is equal to 16.5 feet. Lucy hit her mark with a black powder pistol at a distance of 297 feet.
2. See Pike, 175 and *The Stamford Mirror*, June 23, 1885 for date of Lobdell's entry into Bethany, Pa.
3. While Woodward and Pike describe Lobdell as a professor of dance, all nineteenth-century sources list singing schools as Lobdell's profession.
4. The reference to Satan is vague, except for its connection to sin, so its meaning is hard to decipher exactly. One other similar trial that mentions Satan as the cause of deviancy was that of Catherina Margaretha Linck who dressed as a man and married a woman. The wife complained to her mother about her husband, and Linck's mother-in-law and a neighbor attacked Linck with a sword, cut her pants off to examine her, and learned that she was a woman. Linck was tried for sodomy and executed in 1721. In her defense, Linck claimed she had been deluded by Satan. See Theo van der

Meer, "Tribades on Trial: Female Same-Sex Offenders in Late Eighteenth-Century Amsterdam," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1 (January 1991): 424-45.

5. The Blue Code of Connecticut stated that any person, man or woman, found to be wearing elaborate clothing with lace, gold, silk, slashed sleeves, cutwork or embroidery who be judged as "uncomely or prejudiciall to the common good, and the party offending reforme not the same upon notice given to him, that then the nexte Assistant, being informed thereof, shall have power to bind the party soe offending to answer it at the nexte Courte, if the case so requires." http://www.quinnipiac.edu/other/abl/etext/trueblue/bluelaws.html

6. See "Extraordinary Narrative", *The New York Times* , Aug. 25, 1871. This information also appeared in *The Stamford Mirror*, September 5, 1871.

7. "Lucy Ann Lobdell Dead." *Stamford Mirror* 23 June, 1885.

8. See Pike.

9. "Joe Lobdell and Wife – Their History, &c.", *The Jeffersonian*, Aug. 17, 1871.

10. See "Lucy Ann Lobdell", *The Wayne Citizen*, Nov. 9, 1871; "The Lady in Pantaloons: She (Or He) Has Gone Away", found in the Lobdell file at Honesdale; "Romantic Paupers", *Stamford Mirror*, Sept. 5, 1871; "A Curious Career: Remarkable Adventures of Lucy Ann Lobdell, an Eccentric Female Character who Figured Successfully as Hermit, Music Teacher, Author and female-Husband." *National Police Gazette*, October 25, 1879, 7; "A Mountain Romance: Strange Life of Unhappy Women – A Singular Family History – the Female Huntress of Long Eddy – Strange Love of Two Women – An Accomplished Boston Girl, A Voluntary Outcast – An Unfortunate Daughter*". The New York Times*. April 8, 1877, 7.

11. "A Mountain Romance"

12. *Forest and Stream: A Journal of Outdoor Life, Travel, Nature Study, and Shooting*, Oct. 23, 1879; Volume 13, No. 12; pg. 751.

13. See Walter Peak's testimony in Lucy Ann Lobdell's Lunacy Testimonials.

14. See http://www.miaminewtimes.com/issues/1996-01-04/columns2_2.htm, http://www.oah.org/pubs/nl/2004aug/freedman.html, http://www.swade.net/lesbian/tribal_chant/les_hist.html, , http://niftynats.tripod.com/lesbians/, http://www.jtsears.com/histime.htm, http://www.oah.org/pubs/nl/2004aug/freedman.html, http://www.infopt.demon.co.uk/lesbians.htm. Note: this is just a partial listing.

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