

NOT EVERY MAN WAS MALE
GENDER PASSING IN NINETEENTH CENTURY
BRITAIN

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Abstract

Not Every Man was Male: Gender Passing in Nineteenth Century Britain uses the nineteenth-century press to create microbiographies about the lives of twenty-five working-class female to male gender passing individuals. These microbiographies have been developed using newspapers, census material, and trade directories. By using a combination of microhistory (Carlo Ginzburg and Levi Magnusson) and record linkage this thesis recovers the life stories of gender passing individuals who have, until now, largely remained obscured in history. This thesis demonstrates how individuals attempted to live their lives in a way that was not bound to their biological identity. It also highlights how nineteenth-century society understood gender passing individuals and marked their ability to practice their masculinity in a recognisable manner.

At the core of this thesis is the assertion that gender was performative, malleable, and unstable. Consequently, this thesis builds on Judith Butler's idea of gender being a 'free-floating artifice' and like Don Zimmerman and Candace West, recognises that gender is something to be 'done'. To fully examine these assertions, I have developed new terminology and a conceptual framework to understand 'gender passing individuals' in a historical context. The concept of 'gender passing' has been coined by me and builds on the work of Elaine Ginsberg and Irving Goffman, who both argue that 'passing' is used to understand how people moved beyond race, class and gender. Gender passing individuals performed aspects of nineteenth-century masculinity in a way that was recognisable by others. Similarly, this thesis develops the '4 C's of Passing' framework to consider how gender passing individuals were *confident*, *consistent*, and *committed* to their gender performativity and reflects on how they *concealed* their biological bodies.

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Post Viva: These last few months have been a struggle for my family, particularly for my mum. This thesis is dedicated to her because she is a superstar, and she is my best friend. I am so proud of what she has overcome and achieved and she is my inspiration. This is for you and I will *hopefully* keep making you proud for the rest of my life. I love you.

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Introduction

In October 1859, a body was found in the River Irwell in Manchester. It was believed that the person was around sixty years of age and had committed suicide. According to newspaper reports, the person ‘had kept beerhouses and served customers at the tap as a “jolly landlord”’.¹ They were also described as a ‘master bricklayer’ and had earned ‘the reputation of being the most skilful “chimney doctor” in the neighbourhood’.² The *Liverpool Mercury*, *Ashton Weekly*, *Daily News* and *Bell’s Weekly Messenger* all ran articles on the ‘jolly landlord’ and ‘master bricklayer’ whose name was Harry Stokes.³ These articles described the deceased individual as a ‘man-woman’ and a ‘female husband’, a woman who had in fact lived as a man for at least forty years.⁴

Harry Stokes was born biologically female but lived most of his life identifying as male. He engaged in typically masculine employment including as a bricklayer, a public house landlord and as a special constable. He was handsome and caught the attention of local girls in the community. He was also engaged in several committed relationships throughout his adult life with at least one resulting in a church-solemnized marriage that lasted for twenty-one years. Although the press exposed Harry’s biological identity, they also recognised his industriousness and acknowledged his gender identity. When reporting on Harry’s death, the *Liverpool Mercury* wrote, ‘From this point forward we must drop the feminine appellation and speak of “Harry Stokes” as a boy who has worked his way to the dignity of a journeyman bricksetter [sic]’.⁵ The impact that Harry made during his lifetime and in his community was

¹ “‘Harry Stokes’, The Man-Woman.” *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

² “The Female Husband in Manchester.” *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.; “‘Harry Stokes’, The Man-Woman.” *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

³ “Extraordinary Case.-A Woman Passing As A Man For Forty Years.” *Daily News*, (London: England), October 20, 1859.; “Woman Passing as a Man for Forty Years.” *Ashton Weekly Reporter*, (Stalybridge: England), October 22, 1859.; “‘Harry Stokes’, The Man-Woman.” *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.; “A Romance in Real Life.” *Bell’s Weekly Messenger*, (London: England), October 29, 1859.; “Harry’ Stokes – The Man Woman.” *Sacramento Daily Union*, (Sacramento: California), December 15, 1859.

⁴ “The Female Husband in Manchester.” *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.; “Extraordinary Case.-A Woman Passing As A Man For Forty Years.” *Daily News*, (London: England), October 20, 1859.; “Woman Passing as a Man for Forty Years.” *Ashton Weekly Reporter*, (Stalybridge: England), October 22, 1859.; “A Woman Passing as a Man for Forty Years.” *Bell’s Weekly Messenger*, (London: England), October 22, 1859, 6.; “‘Harry Stokes’, The Man-Woman.” *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.; “Harry’ Stokes – The Man Woman.” *Sacramento Daily Union*, (Sacramento: California), December 15, 1859.

⁵ “‘Harry’ Stokes, The Man-Woman”, *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

clear from the newspaper coverage. He was recognised as a hardworking man and not as a masquerading 'man-woman' despite the suggestive headline.

This thesis explores the lives of individuals like Harry Stokes, who were biologically female but lived their lives as a gender contrary to their biological identity. Through the creation of microbiographies, this thesis examines the malleability and unstable quality of gender amongst the working classes in nineteenth-century Britain. The microbiographies that have been created to explore the lives of gender passing individuals use a combination of microhistory and life writing to examine an aspect of an individual's life in detail. Gender passing individuals have largely remained obscured throughout history, therefore, these microbiographies finally offer us a tangibility to their existence and an opportunity to see how they lived as men and challenged binary ideals of gender in the nineteenth century.

At the centre of this thesis are two research questions. The first considers if gender can be described as a performative identity in the nineteenth century and reflects on the different aspects of performative gender. The second considers how gender was embodied by individuals at that time. It will also address several investigative research questions, including what gender passing individuals did to gender their bodies, largely focussing on their appearance, and how they trained themselves to embody a more masculine appearance. This thesis examines the types of employment that gender passing individuals had and how they embodied the roles of husbands and fathers within their family units. Discussion also centres around how individuals were described after their exposure in the press and the impact that this had on them in their local communities. These research questions have been investigated by employing Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity and her argument of gender being a series of repeated acts that people are expected to adhere to.⁶ At the crux of this thesis lies a definition of what it meant to be a working-class man in Britain in the nineteenth century and how gender passing individuals fulfilled this expectation. It considers the gender slippages that occurred for some gender passing individuals and how they challenged the normative notion of gender identity during their lives.

⁶ Judith Butler, "Performative Acts of Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 40 (1988): 519-531.; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990).; Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (London: Routledge, 2004).; Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter* (London: Routledge, 2015).

Twenty-five different gender passing cases make up the basis of this research. I have coined the term 'gender passing' as a concept to refer to historic individuals whose gender identity did not correspond to their biological identity. 'Gender passing' offers an alternative term to modern identities such as trans, non-binary or genderfluid. I have consciously used appropriate language throughout this research and have sought to be respectful of the people in this sample. Lisa Hager reflects on the problems with labelling gender nonconforming people and states that it is 'linguistic gender violence' to use incorrect terminology.⁷ Therefore, I have been conscious to use terminology to refer to gender passing individuals that is respectful with specific language including the use of appropriate pronouns ('him' and 'they') and the traditionally male names that individuals adopted. Although we do not know for certain how individuals self-identified or why, we do know that many gender passing individuals labelled themselves as 'male', particularly in census material and on marriage registrations. Therefore, using male pronouns to refer to these individuals has been the most suitable way of exploring their lives. For other individuals, whose biology and gender identity remained ambiguous, a gender-neutral language of 'they' and 'them' has been adopted.

Across five chapters, this thesis explores the intellectual conversations that has been central to the framing of this research. *Chapter One: An Intellectual Discussion* highlights both the historiography and methodology that will be used throughout this thesis. *Chapter Two: What Makes a Man?* examines how the physical body was manipulated by gender passing individuals to aid their gender performance. *Chapter Three: Queer Intimacies* investigates the relationships that gender passing individuals fostered in their marriages and other committed relationships. *Chapter Four: Conforming in the Unsuspecting Community* reflects on the impact that gender passing individuals had within their own working-class communities and the families that they made as they moved into adulthood. Finally, *Chapter Five: After Lives* investigates the legacy of gender passing individuals following their deaths.

Specific Terminology Used

The terminology used throughout this thesis is unfamiliar to most and therefore requires more discussion. Harry Stokes appeared at least twice in newspaper articles during his

⁷ Lisa Hager, "A Case for a Trans Studies Turn in Victorian Studies: "Female Husbands" of the nineteenth century," *Victorian Review* 44, no. 1 (2018): 41.

lifetime. His first appearance was in 1838 when his then wife, Ann Hants, exposed his biological identity due to him not giving her the regular weekly housekeeping.⁸ Newspaper reports referred to Harry as 'The Female Husband of Manchester' and later, in headlines after his death, he was labelled as a 'Man-Woman'.⁹ The term 'female husband' was used frequently in cases of gender passing throughout the nineteenth century, such as that of James Allen, who appeared in the press after his death in 1829 and Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson, who first appeared in 1869 and later in 1893.¹⁰ Although this term was used by journalists in the nineteenth century, there was no specific definition accredited to it. We can, however, trace the origin of the term 'female husband' to Henry Fielding who first coined it in the eighteenth century.

In 1746, Fielding published a fictional pamphlet about a gender passing individual named Mary/George Hamilton.¹¹ The pamphlet was loosely based on the life of Charles Hamilton who had lived as a man, despite his biological identity being female, for most of his adult life, and was engaged in several marriages with different women.¹² Fielding described a 'female husband' as a biological woman who assumed all the roles of a man including as a husband and provider as well as physically adopting a masculine appearance. Fielding's pamphlet drew attention to 'female husbands' who took advantage of vulnerable women and reflected on how they were detrimental to the natural order of men and women in society. Fielding's definition of a 'female husband' was also adopted by journalists when writing about nineteenth-century gender passing individuals. Fielding argued that 'there is nothing monstrous and unnatural which they [female husbands] are not capable of inventing, nothing so brutal and shocking which they have not actually committed'.¹³ For Fielding, female husbands were an abomination and met their fate in death and in the judgement of God.

Although the term 'female husband' was used by journalists in the nineteenth century, for the purposes of this thesis it is too restrictive in that it makes an explicit link to

⁸ "The Female Husband in Manchester." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.

⁹ "'Harry Stokes', The Man-Woman." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

¹⁰ "The Female Husband." *The Times*, (London: England), January 17, 1829, 3.; "The Female Husband." *South Wales Echo*, (Wales), December 30, 1893, 2.

¹¹ Henry Fielding, *The Female Husband: Or, the Surprising History of Mrs Mary, alias Mr. George Hamilton*, (London: M. Cooper, at the Globe in Paternoster Row, 1746), 1-23.

¹² Fielding, *The Female Husband*, 1-23.

¹³ Fielding, *The Female Husband*, 1.

heterociscentric ideals and normative notions of gender identity. Susan Clayton has reflected on how 'female husbands' were an extension of 'female masculinity'.¹⁴ The oxymoronic quality of 'female' and 'husband', she argues, can be used as a way to 'articulate the queering of gender' and challenge heterociscentricity in a way that remains relevant today.¹⁵ Indeed, the term 'female husband' was problematic as it inferred that the binary practices of 'husband' and 'female' were the norm. Nonetheless, queering gender in this instance is used throughout this thesis to disable heterociscentric notions of gender and biological roles. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has reflected on the 'binary logic' of society which includes male/female, man/woman or heterosexual/homosexual and notes that they are used to neatly organise and label society.¹⁶ Yet, by queering the binary, we can uncover stories of gender passing individuals or reveal same-sex marital unions that go against normative expectations. This 'binary logic', to use Kosofsky Sedgwick's term, confirms the natural order and the preferred ideal, however, slippages occur, and it is these slippages that are of most interest.

In the nineteenth century, the roles of a husband did not correlate to those of a female. As a result, I have coined the term 'gender passing individual' which is more appropriate as it is neutral and focusses specifically on how individuals passed from female to male. Indeed, 'gender passing' will be used to describe an individual who transcended the social, cultural, and legal status of a woman and was accepted as something other than their biological identity. In Jen Manion's book, *Female Husbands: A Trans History*, she uses 'trans' as an adjective to examine the lives of female husbands and historic gender nonconforming people. Manion argues that 'To say someone 'transed' or was 'transing' gender signifies a process or practice without claiming to understand what it meant to that person or asserting any kind of fixed identity on them'.¹⁷ The issue with this terminology is the connotation surrounding 'trans' as the reader automatically interprets this from a modern understanding. I argue that it is problematic to make assumptions about historic gender nonconformity based on modern interpretations of gender identity. Instead, by using the concept of 'gender

¹⁴ Susan Clayton, "Can Two and a Half Centuries of Female Husbands Inform (Trans)Gender History?," *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 14, no. 4 (2010): 288-302.

¹⁵ Clayton, "Can Two and a Half Centuries," 300.

¹⁶ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

¹⁷ Jen Manion, *Female Husbands: A Trans History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 11.

I would like to thank Jen for kindly sharing the Introduction of *Female Husbands* ahead of its April 2020 publication. I have also been commissioned to review the book for the *Journal of Victorian Culture*.

passing' and the term 'gender passing individual' there are no preconceived ideas from readers, and the term focusses on the movement from biological predetermination to gender presentation.

Gender passing considers the importance of time specifically with reference to an individual's gender passing being temporary or permanent; this often determined how an individual was responded to by the press. Irving Goffman and Daniel Renfrow have both recognised the importance of passing in everyday life as a means of being socially compatible in society.¹⁸ Renfrow has highlighted that 'proactive passing' is reliant on the individual concealing any revealing identities to better conform to society, usually with reference to sexual orientation and gender identity.¹⁹ Alternatively 'reactive passing', according to Renfrow, highlights the impact of society and culture in shaping identity performance.²⁰ Gender passing individuals passed both reactively and actively in how they concealed their biological bodies, but also in how they responded to their environment and fulfilled the social expectations of men. The believability of the performance and the demonstration of certain male characteristics were required for the identity being embodied by the individual to be accepted.

The identities that were available to gender passing individuals were universally understood through the prism of binary gender roles and therefore conformed to a heterociscentric model. I have developed the term 'heterociscentric' as a means of combining the essence of nineteenth-century binary gender roles including reference to heterosexuality (hetero) and cisgender (cis) identity that became central (centric) to exploring the lives of individuals. Gender passing individuals largely fulfilled a heterociscentric lifestyle in their gender roles and relationships. However, they also challenged these notions simply by performing a gender contrary to their biological identity. Therefore, the use of the term 'gender passing' showcases the malleability of gender and highlights how it can be moulded to coincide with an individual's definition of their identity as understood through societal norms of gender.

¹⁸ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (London: Penguin Books, 1969).; Daniel Renfrow, "A Cartography of Passing in Everyday Life," *Symbolic Interaction* 27, no. 4 (2004): 485-506.

¹⁹ Renfrow, "A Cartography of Passing," 492.

²⁰ Ibid.

Society has certain expectations that individuals are expected to adhere to in relation to their biological bodies. Indeed, Butler has argued that, 'One is not simply a body, but in some very key sense, one does one's body, and indeed, one does one's body differently from one's contemporaries and from one's embodied predecessors and successors as well'.²¹ Butler highlights the performative quality of gender and how each person is unique in understanding, performing and projecting their gender through their bodies. It follows that gender is a social construction that has been developed to demonstrate the different expectations of men and women. Like Butler, Homi Bhabha, Candace West and Don Zimmerman have also recognised the performative quality of gender identity in their work.²² For instance, Bhabha has investigated the art of mimicry defining it as 'the desire for a reformed, recognisable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite'.²³ Society mirrors the rules and social etiquette of the previous generation to maintain a level of comfort in tradition and familiarity. Thus, we 'mimic', to use Bhabha's definition, the world around us which focusses on binary ideals as being normative.

Gender passing individuals may have based themselves on the men in their families or their friends to aid their embodiment of masculinity. Although gender passing individuals challenged the biological expectations that were attached to them as women, they must have found the qualities of a mother, a housewife and a nurturer desirable given that many committed themselves to relationships with women. Through their confident performances, their consistent performativity of masculinity and the concealment of their biological bodies, gender passing individuals conformed to contemporary expectations of men in a recognisable manner, thus lessening their chance of being exposed as biologically female.

The term 'gender passing' engages with how people transcended gender boundaries in their everyday lives, which is reflected through the literal understanding of 'passing' meaning to 'move beyond'.²⁴ As an extension of 'gender passing' I have created the 4 C's of

²¹ Butler, "Performative Acts," 521.

²² Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October*, (1984): 125-133.; Candace West and Don Zimmerman, "Doing Gender," *Gender and Society* 1, no. 2 (1987): 125-151.; Candace West and Don Zimmerman, "Accounting for 'Doing Gender'," *Gender and Society* 23, no. 1 (2009): 112-122.

²³ Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man," 126.

²⁴ Samuel M. Davidson, "Mouths Wide Shut: Gender-Quiet Teenage Males on Gender-Bending, Gender-Passing and Masculinities," *International Review of Education* 55, no. 5 (2009): 615-631.; Lori Hope Lefkowitz, "Passing as a man: Narratives of Jewish Gender Performance," *Narrative* 10, no. 1 (2002): 91-103.

Passing framework which includes the characteristics of 'confidence', 'commitment', 'consistency' and 'concealment'. These categories will be used to assess how effective gender passing individuals were in presenting as men, how they lived in society and will be weaved into each chapter. Chapter two will consider how gender passing individuals were confident in their gendered performances everyday through their presentation and clothing. Chapter three will highlight how individuals were not only committed to their gender identity but also to their role as a husband and provider for the home. Chapter four examines how consistency in performativity was paramount in the community with regards to how gender passing individuals were recognised as male and accepted in their communities. Chapter five investigates the lengths that gender passing individuals went in order to conceal their biological bodies and how these were revealed after death. These characteristics have been taken from nineteenth century newspaper articles in terms of how the reports commented on individuals and their lives. By combining these ideals, gender passing individuals were viewed as men and therefore treated as such in society.

To explore this in more detail, the first 'C' in the framework is confidence and gender passing individuals demonstrated their confidence in how they presented themselves aesthetically as men and navigated society. This included the relationships that they were engaged in, the friendships that they fostered, and how they were viewed by others. Their confidence stemmed from their believability as men. Second, gender passing individuals were committed to their gender identity largely through the permanence of their performances. Some gender passing individuals such as John Murphy, John Smith and Harry Stokes identified as men from a young age and thus showed their commitment through the longevity of their performance.²⁵ Gender passing individuals also committed themselves to others through marriage or cohabitation. Through their faithfulness to each other, individuals and their partners personified heterociscentric values of the husband being the provider and the wife being the nurturer. Third, consistency, like commitment, centres on the importance of steadiness and regularity. Again, consistency was measurable by the longevity of an individual's gender performativity. Inconsistencies were difficult for the public to accept. For

²⁵ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; "The Female Husband in Manchester." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848.

instance, John/Elizabeth Hayward identified as both male and female during their lifetime.²⁶ This resulted in the contemporary public needing a definitive label of 'man' or 'woman' to avoid the individual from being ostracised. Fourth, and finally, concealment suggests a hidden nature, perhaps the truth being obscured in some way. Because of its connotation with obscuring, 'concealment' was a challenge for me to include as it gave an unwanted devious undertone to cases of gender passing. However, it later became apparent that this term needed to be included because newspapers used it to refer to other gender passing cases including John Smith in 1848 and Thomas Green in 1861 whose cases were described as ones of 'Concealment of Sex'.²⁷ Similarly, gender passing individuals packed and padded their bodies and clothes to offer a more masculine silhouette and literally concealed their biological bodies whilst they were alive. Therefore, it became necessary to include this characteristic in the 4 C's of Passing framework.

Community

Community has become central to this thesis and is the basis for chapter four. Community enabled gender passing individuals to be successful as themselves and to fit into society which ultimately enabled them to be accepted by others. The geographical area and where a gender passing individual came from is important in understanding their role in wider society. Anne Cooper has highlighted that the strength of the geographical community has been examined 'by analysing kinship and marriage networks and numbers of community organisations'.²⁸ It is this understanding that has encouraged me to reflect on where the individual resided, what the area was known for and what community organisations were available to people, such as benefit clubs or societies.²⁹ Several gender passing individuals including John Murphy and Anna Maria Wilkins began their lives as men working as farmhands and lived in rural areas. Perhaps gender passing individuals felt safer in these rural communities as they could work in manual jobs, build up their skills, resilience, and their body to fulfil typically male roles before moving to the city. Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson, for instance, who lived in County

²⁶ "Another Female Husband," *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), January 30, 1829.

²⁷ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848.; "Extraordinary Case of Concealment of Sex." *York Herald*, (York: England), May 11, 1861.

²⁸ Anne Cooper, "Burnage, 1880-1905, the making of a middle-class community," *Family & Community History*, (1998): 38.

²⁹ Christopher French, "The Good Life in Victorian and Edwardian Surbiton: Creating a Suburban Community before 1914," *Family & Community History* 14, no. 2 (2011): 105-120.

Durham, was 'renowned as the fastest shearer in the district', so much so that in the summer months, he was inundated with requests to work during harvest time.³⁰ He could evidently keep up with the pace of a busy summer of hard work in the fields.

Metropolitan cities, on the other hand, were vast and busy; therefore, community closeness was harder to achieve. Frederick 'Scratchem' Mitchell, for instance, died alone in a lodging house in Westminster and had no family or friends to care for him.³¹ James Vernon has argued that 'the rise of individualism, mobility, and urbanisation created a modern society of strangers characterized by anonymity'.³² Vernon has recognised that by the middle of the nineteenth century there was movement away from the familiarity of rural life and into the unknown of the city. We see this in Frederick's case as he was swallowed up in the hustle and bustle of the city. Yet, his anonymity might have offered him the chance for greater freedom as a gender passing individual as it meant that he was largely unknown in society.

It was the community that could make or break a person, resulting in gender passing individuals being at risk every day. In close working-class village communities, there was little privacy as local gossips, neighbours and supposed friends regularly talked about people and their problems.³³ Due to limited local resources, which were heightened following the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, parishes could prohibit welfare and local relief from being offered to undeserving women who became pregnant outside of marriage.³⁴ This resulted in some women becoming the sole providers for their children or they had to prove the paternity of their children to receive support. This was near impossible for some, resulting in many single women with illegitimate children living in poverty.³⁵ Ultimately, the communities that gender passing individuals belonged to were instrumental in the tolerance of their gender

³⁰ "A Real 'Female Husband.'" *Northern Echo*, (Darlington: England), January 3, 1894.

³¹ "Concealment of Sex for Fifteen Years." *London Daily News*, (London: England), August 23, 1867, 6.; "Concealment of Sex for Fifteen Years." *Liverpool Daily Post*, (Liverpool: England), August 24, 1867, 7.; "A Romantic Case." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), August 24, 1867.

³² James Vernon, *Distant Strangers: How Britain Became Modern* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 34-35.

³³ Andrew August, *The British Working-Class 1832-1940* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2007), 20.; Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working-Class* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, 27.

³⁴ Anna Clark, "The Rhetoric of Chartist Domesticity: Gender, Language, and Class in the 1830s and 40s," *Journal of British Studies* 31, no. 1 (1992): 66.; Leonore Davidoff, "The Family in Britain," in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950: Volume 2: People and Their Environment*, ed. F. M. L. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 95.; Jane Humphries, "Class Struggles and the Persistence of the Working-Class family," *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, (1977): 250.

³⁵ R. Sauer, "Infanticide and Abortion in Nineteenth Century Britain," *Population Studies* 32, no. 1 (1978): 89.

identity and relationship status, including the decision for some to raise children that were not biologically their own.

There are several different ways of understanding the community, with historians largely approaching it from a thematic perspective to suit their area of research. This means that the definition of community becomes unstable allowing individual responses to it.³⁶ For instance, community can be explored through built structures within the hierarchy, or through a criterion that determined membership such as gender or class.³⁷ French goes beyond these parameters to consider how people were accepted in different ways 'some by choice, others by accident'.³⁸ This approach becomes particularly interesting when it is applied to gender passing individuals. Individuals were members of their own working-class communities due to their social status. They were part of an occupational community and members of a privileged gender community as men. Yet, they were also a part of another community that was largely unknown to them, that being the gender passing community.

Community is used in this thesis to consider how gender passing individuals fitted into society, how they committed themselves to their work and provided for their family. My understanding of community also reflects on the possibility of a gender passing community in that only through investigating their lives can we begin to see a sense of commonality amongst individuals through the application of the 4 C's of Passing framework, something which will be explored in more detail in chapter four.

Methodology and Research Processes

Exploring the process of how we have reached a certain end point is particularly important as it allows others to follow, critique or compare their research journeys. In his article, Tim Hitchcock has highlighted that historians have typically failed to fully commit to exploring their methodological approaches when completing their research. With a specific focus on eighteenth and nineteenth century digitised newspapers, Hitchcock argues that historians

³⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (2006).; Andrew August, *The British Working-Class 1832-1940* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2007).; Joanna Bourke, *Working Class Culture in Britain 1890-1960* (London: Routledge, 1994).; Denis Mills, "Defining Community: A Critical Review of 'Community' in Family & Community History," *Family & Community History* 7, no. 1 (2004): 5-12.

³⁷ Christopher French, "The Good Life in Victorian and Edwardian Surbiton: Creating a Suburban Community before 1914," *Family & Community History* 14, no. 2 (2011): 110.

³⁸ Ibid.

cite 'hard-copy references' of newspapers in their work despite them using digitised material.³⁹ In doing so, they 'actively misrepresent the limitation within which [they] are working', and this causes problems for others in locating cited material or conducting their own research on certain primary sources.⁴⁰ To avoid doing this, I will now explore the processes that I have engaged in to uncover gender passing articles from seventy-nine different newspapers that make up this sample using online and offline sources and archives.

Female to male gender passing individuals did not appear regularly in press reports, instead they were written about sporadically throughout the nineteenth century. This suggests that individuals were successful in living undetected as men and it was only due to unforeseen circumstances including death, accidental discovery, self-exposure, or criminal convictions that they were revealed as biologically female. Although they were not published regularly throughout the nineteenth century, newspaper reports that wrote about gender passing have been the most valuable primary material available and has thus formed the basis of this research. Owing to the specific nature of gender passing and the infrequent nature of articles that featured cases of gender passing, it has not been feasible to search through every available newspaper looking for cases. Instead, digitised newspapers have been instrumental in allowing me to locate individuals on a wider geographic scale.

After reading Sarah Waters's novel *Tipping the Velvet* I became interested in the performativity of gender and how male impersonators presented themselves onstage, therefore, one of the first key words that I searched for on digital newspaper archives was 'male impersonation'.⁴¹ I was struck by just how many of the articles referred to upcoming theatre shows, reviews and advertisements. One of the earliest articles taken from this search was from the *Champion Weekly Herald* in 1839 that commented, 'we confess that we do not quite approve of ladies undertaking the impersonation of male characters'.⁴² The journalist concluded that 'its juvenility is such as to render robust masculine impersonation unnatural and inappropriate'.⁴³ Exploring more of these one hundred and sixty-four 'male impersonation' results revealed that there were not only advertisements and reviews for

³⁹ Tim Hitchcock, "Confronting the Digital," *Cultural and Social History* 10, no. 1 (2013): 12.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Sarah Waters, *Tipping the Velvet* (London: Virago, 1998).

⁴² "The Play-Goer." *Champion and Weekly Herald*, (London: England), September 8, 1839.

⁴³ Ibid.

upcoming performances, but cases of biological women who identified themselves as men. For instance, the *Belfast News-Letter* published 'The Extraordinary Male Impersonation Case' in 1829 and the *Nottingham Evening Post* ran an article titled 'A Woman in Male Attire in Liverpool' in 1884.⁴⁴ There were also 'gossip' columns that wrote about global gossip and local interest stories, many of which focussed on biological women who identified as men.⁴⁵ Evidently there was more to 'male impersonation' than simply the music hall.

After exploring this idea of biological females identifying as men, I read Alison Oram's book *Her Husband Was A Woman!* and became aware of the term 'female husband'. In chapter two Oram examines what she describes as 'gender-crossing female husbands'.⁴⁶ I chose not to use this term as 'gender crossing' implies that there was a temporality to the individual's gender passing and for most of the cases in this sample, they identified as male for the majority of their adult lives. Oram highlights the popularity of female husband cases in the twentieth century and notes that the 'love between women was portrayed as both passionate and honourable'.⁴⁷ Although I have not explored gender passing individuals' relationships through the prism of same-sex desire, it is impossible not to see them as being 'passionate and honourable', as Oram argued, in how they supported their families and identified as men in a binary society. The reason for not exploring their relationships through a prism of same-sex desire is because gender passing individuals identified themselves as men in all aspects of their lives. Therefore, it is unlikely they would have seen themselves as being in a same-sex relationship, since they actively rejected their biological predetermination in favour of living as and presenting as men.

Accessing digital archives was necessary at the beginning of my research due to the specific nature of the stories I wanted to locate. Using newspaper databases such as *The British Newspaper Archive* and *The Times* returned lots of related results that were searchable. The term that was used predominantly by journalists to describe gender passing

⁴⁴ "A Woman in Male Attire in Liverpool." *Nottingham Evening Post*, (Nottingham: England), January 29, 1884, 3.; "The Extraordinary Male Impersonation Case." *Belfast News-Letter*, (Belfast: Ireland), January 22, 1829.

⁴⁵ "Gossip about Interesting People." *Manchester Times*, (Manchester: England), September 15, 1893.; "A Young Woman's Escapade." *Hull Daily Mail*, (Hull: England), June 28, 1895, 3.; "Male Impersonation." *Yorkshire Telegraph and Star*, (Sheffield: England), March 2, 1901, 3.

⁴⁶ Alison Oram, *Her Husband was a Woman! Women's Gender-Crossing in Modern British Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

⁴⁷ Oram, *Her Husband*, 40.

individuals was 'female husband' and it was using this term that returned the most results. For instance, *The British Newspaper Archive* returned 837,228 results for 'female husband' between 1800 and 1899. Yet, when working with digitised material false positives will inevitably be included in large data searches, as Joanna Guldi has recognised.⁴⁸ For instance, 'female husband' results also returned articles that included the phrases 'female' and 'husband' appearing separately in the article.⁴⁹ Therefore, refining searches geographically, searching by decade and focussing on specific newspapers was essential to make the data more manageable.

The British Newspaper Archive digitises thousands of newspapers daily. For example, in October 2019 they digitised 34,156,597 articles and in September 2020 this number had increased to 38,418,080 articles.⁵⁰ It would have been unrealistic to attempt to read all of these results and keep up with the pace of digitisation. As such I have located twenty-five different gender passing cases, each of which generated multiple articles, which has enabled me to create a detailed set of microbiographies. This sample is not comprehensive and there are likely to have been more gender passing individuals who did not appear in the press during their lifetime. However, this thesis highlights the rich history and longevity of some of these people, and in doing so, explores what it meant to be a working-class man in nineteenth century Britain.

After locating several gender passing articles it was easier to identify any similarities in the language that was used to describe individuals. For instance, when Harry Stokes died in 1859, the *Birmingham Daily Post* published an article entitled the 'Curious Case of Prolonged Concealment of Sex'.⁵¹ Using 'Concealment of Sex' as a term resulted in the discovery of John Murphy of Wigan (1860), Thomas Green (1891), Frederick 'Scratchem' Mitchell (1867), Henry Clarke (1874), James Watson (1880) and Mrs Andrew-Bird (1898).⁵²

⁴⁸ Joanna Guldi, "The History of Walking and the Digital Turn: Stride and Lounge in London, 1808-1851," *The Journal of Modern History* 84, no. 1 (2012): 119.

⁴⁹ Guldi, "The History of Walking and the Digital Turn," 119.

⁵⁰ The British Newspaper Archive, accessed October 9, 2019 and September 9, 2020, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>

⁵¹ "Curious Case of Prolonged Concealment of Sex." *Birmingham Daily Post*, (Birmingham: England), October 20, 1859.

⁵² "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex," *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.; "Extraordinary Case of Concealment of Sex." *York Herald*, (York: England), May 11, 1861.; "Concealment of Sex for Fifteen Years." *London Daily News*, (London: England), August 23, 1867, 6.; "Concealment of Sex." *South Wales Daily News*, (Wales), November 14, 1874.; "Remarkable Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier*

This term tended to appear in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It also inspired the fourth characteristic of ‘concealment’ in the 4 C’s of Passing framework.

One of the earliest gender passing individuals that I uncovered was James Allen, and the *Newcastle Courant* labelled the case as an ‘Extraordinary Investigation’ in 1829.⁵³ Using the word ‘extraordinary’ digital databases revealed the cases of Harry Stokes (1838), Charles Wilkins (1846), Anna Maria Wilkins (1850), Thomas Green (1861), Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson (1869), William Seymour (1875) and John Coulter (1884).⁵⁴ The word ‘extraordinary’ appeared in all of the articles and its repeated use indicates how press coverage emphasised both the uniqueness of each individual and the shock generated by their discovery, something which Manion has also explored in her own research on female husbands.⁵⁵

As has been discussed, the term ‘female husband’ was used in nineteenth century newspaper articles to refer to gender passing individuals. Using the *British Library Newspapers* database, nine hundred and thirty-five ‘female husband’ results were returned between the 1 January 1800 and the 31 December 1899. These results were a combination of working-class and middle-class cases. Specific gender passing cases such as those of James Allen (1829) or Charles Wilkins (1848) as well as unrelated cases where the words ‘female’ and ‘husband’ were used in the headline were also included. Several gender passing individuals including John Murphy (1825), James Allen (1829), Captain Kennington (1834), Harry Stokes (1838), Albert Guelph (1853) and William Cullener (1893) were labelled by the press as ‘female husbands’.⁵⁶ Their stories were initially located using this term and then

and *General Advertiser*, (Manchester: England), December 23, 1880.; “Concealment of Sex.” *Cheltenham Chronicle*, (Gloucestershire: England), February 2, 1898.

⁵³ “Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband.” *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.

⁵⁴ “Extraordinary Case-A Woman Passing as A Man for Forty Years.” *Daily News*, (London: England), October 20, 1859.; “Marriage Extraordinary.” *Bradford Observer*, (Bradford: England), August 20, 1846.; “Extraordinary Case of Bigamy,” *New Devon Journal*, (Barnstaple: England), March 28, 1850.; “Extraordinary Case of Concealment of Sex,” *York Herald*, (York: England), May 11, 1861.; “Extraordinary Concealment of Sex,” *Reynolds’s News*, (London: England), December 05, 1869.; “A Female ‘Cabman’, Extraordinary Freak.” *Edinburgh Evening News*, (Edinburgh: Scotland), February 13, 1875.; “The Extraordinary Male Impersonation Case,” *Belfast News-Letter*, (Belfast: Ireland), January 22, 1884.

⁵⁵ Manion, *Female Husbands*, 1.

⁵⁶ “The Female Husband.” *Bell’s Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825; “The Female Husband.” *The Times*, (London: England), January 17, 1829, 3.; “Another Female Husband.” *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), January 30, 1829.; “The Late Husband at Kennington,” *Bells Weekly Messenger*, (London: England), December 21, 1834.; “The Female Husband in Manchester,” *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.; “A

name specific searches were created. The term 'female husband' was coined in 1746 by Fielding and was still used in the nineteenth century press demonstrating its longevity. Evidently, journalists expected their readers to have some knowledge of Fielding's term and for them to make the connection between what they were reading, and the title that individuals were given.

This thesis investigates working-class gender passing individuals who committed their lives to living as men. Middle-class gender passing individuals such as Dr James Miranda Barry, Captain Kennington or Albert Guelph have not been explored in detail in this thesis due to its specific focus on the working classes, although there is scope to engage with middle-class individuals in a future research project.⁵⁷ Similarly when searching for gender passing individuals, examples of challenging gender boundaries have not been included such as the case of 'The Female Diver' or 'The Female Builder' that were also flagged in the results.⁵⁸ This is largely because in these cases the women remained identifiable as women and pushed contemporary gendered boundaries and did not present as male. Nonetheless, it is impossible not to make a link between these stories of extraordinary women and gender passing individuals who committed their lives to living as men. Throughout this thesis searches have relied upon British individuals which has meant stories like those of Count Sandor Vay from Hungary and the Chevalier d'Eon from France have also remained unexplored despite being written about in the British press.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, these examples of gender passing highlight that there was a wider audience for gender passing and an understanding of how gender passing individuals were framed by the press.

The Language of Nineteenth Century Newspapers

Female Husband." *Banbury Guardian*, (Oxfordshire: England), October 20, 1853.; "The Female Husband Romance: Judgement." *South Wales Daily News*, (Wales), January 11, 1893.

⁵⁷ "The Late Husband at Kennington." *Bells Weekly Messenger*, (London: England), December 21, 1834.; "A Female Husband," *Banbury Guardian*, (Oxfordshire: England), October 20, 1853.

Ann Hielmann, *Neo/Victorian Biographilia and James Miranda Barry: A Study in Transgender and Transgenre* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).; Michael du Preez and Jeremy Dronfield. *Dr James Barry: A Woman Ahead of Her Time* (London: Oneworld Productions, 2016).

⁵⁸ "A Female Builder." *Evening Express*, (Wales), September 27, 1894, 3.; "A Female Diver." *Flintshire Observer Mining Journal and General Advertiser for the Counties of Flint Denbigh*, (Wales), January 23, 1896, 3.

⁵⁹ "An Interesting Case: The Countess Sarolta Vay's Marriage to a Pretty Young Maiden." *London Daily News*, (London: England), November 20, 1890.; Simon Burrows, Jonathan Conlin, Russell Goulbourne and Valerie Mainz, ed., *The Chevalier d'Eon and his Worlds: Gender, Espionage and Politics in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Continuum UK, 2010).

Newspapers in the nineteenth century were essential in informing the public of political developments, local news stories, births, deaths, baptisms, or marriages, as well as gossip, advertisements, theatre and literature reviews and business commerce. Lucy Brown's definition of newspapers is necessary to quote in full as it highlights how newspapers were 'packages' that delivered local news to readers. She notes:

The news as we understand it is a nineteenth century creation. It is a package of information on diverse subjects, some appearing for the first time, some the most recent developments of long-running stories: the package is delivered at the same time to the great body of people and from the subject-matter of public debate.⁶⁰

Indeed, newspapers and periodicals throughout the nineteenth century 'became a ubiquitous feature of daily life, serving as vehicles of entertainment, political discourse, historical retrospection, popular education and countless other modes of thoughts', according to Andrew King, Alexis Easley and John Morton.⁶¹ Therefore, it is unsurprising that the extraordinary cases of gender passing individuals also appeared on this platform.

There was an explosion in newspaper production and journalism in the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the century there were fifty-two London based newspapers and hundreds of smaller local titles such as the *Liverpool Mercury* (1811), the *Wigan Observer* (1853) and the *Newcastle-Courant* (1711), all of which had their own agenda and target audience. Yet, newspapers were expensive and a luxury for working-class people, a luxury that many were unable to invest in. As a result, people visited their local library to access newspapers or went to a public house to hear the newspaper being read aloud.⁶²

The redaction of the Stamp Tax in 1855 made newspapers cheaper and therefore more accessible. For instance, the *Manchester Guardian* reduced its price to one penny in 1858 which saw its circulation nearly double (23,000-43,000) by the end of the century.⁶³ The reduction in price also meant that the newspaper reading experience 'became a more private

⁶⁰ Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 1.

⁶¹ Andrew King, Alexis Easley and John Morton, ed., *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth Century Periodicals and Newspapers* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 1.

⁶² Aled Jones, 'The Press and the Printed Word' in Chris Williams ed., *A Companion to Nineteenth Century Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing LTD, 2004), 371.

⁶³ Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers*, 32.

and domestic affair', with people no longer needing to go to libraries and public houses to access a copy.⁶⁴ Similarly, the improvement in print quality meant that there was a higher demand for newspapers and more people purchased their own copies. This demand also coincided with technological advancements with printing presses such as the *Walter Press* or *Marinoni* moving away from hand fed machines to web rotary machines. This 'represented an unequivocal improvement' for the newspaper industry.⁶⁵

It is fair to say that without digitised newspapers, this research would not have been as successful as it has been. For instance, the eighteenth-century term of 'female husband' that was used to describe historic gender passing individuals revealed thirty-two percent of gender passing cases in this sample. However, to locate 'female husband' cases, I initially began using the term 'male impersonation' to search on *The British Newspaper Archive* and *Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals*. It was after reading some of the articles relating to 'male impersonation' that the term 'female husband' appeared, and this led me to individuals such as James Allen and Harry Stokes. Similarly, owing to the specific nature of this research, being creative in search terms and techniques has been paramount. Bob Nicholson has written extensively about the perils and possibilities of digital history and digitised material including newspapers. Nicholson argues that finding appropriate 'keywords is often a lengthy business which requires perseverance and creativity, as well as an intimate knowledge of the culture and texts that are being studied'.⁶⁶ Indeed, this creative and nuanced approach has been central to this research and most notably the use of the terms 'female husband', 'concealment of sex' and 'extraordinary investigation' has been appropriated to identify gender passing cases.

Having used one hundred and twenty-one different newspaper articles based on twenty-five female to male gender passing individuals across the nineteenth century, I was struck by the amount of scissors-and-paste journalism that occurred. Newspapers used scissors-and-paste journalism to publish both foreign and domestic intelligence around the country. Melodee Beals has concluded that scissors-and-paste journalism was the result of 'one newspaper copying, in part or whole, textual material from another, creating a highly

⁶⁴ Jones, "The Press and the Printed Word," 374.

⁶⁵ Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers*, 9.

⁶⁶ Nicholson, "The Digital Turn," 67.

decentralised global news network of virtual correspondents'.⁶⁷ This was evident in many of the newspaper articles that discussed gender passing. Newspaper editors who followed the idea of scissors-and-paste journalism kept up with the pace of printed national news. This type of journalism enabled a geographical spread of news stories and current affairs around the country.

Scissors-and-paste journalism was distinguishable when journalists wrote where they had located the original source at the end of the article. In figures 1 and 2 we can see an example of scissors-and-paste journalism in the case of Frederick 'Scratchem' Mitchell'. The article on the left was taken from the *Liverpool Albion* and the article on the right was taken from the *Dundee Courier*. The text in both articles had been literally copied and pasted with neither article crediting the original newspaper it came from. Although, the date that it was published suggests that it was the *Liverpool Albion* who printed it first.

⁶⁷ Melodee Beals, creator of the 'Scissors-and-Paste-O-Meter' developed a tool in 2017 that was used to identify any examples of scissors-and-paste journalism in newspaper articles published between 1800 and 1900. Scissors and Paste: A Collection of Newspaper Transcriptions and Connections by Beals, accessed October 30, 2019 <http://scissorsandpaste.net/>; Beals personal blog, accessed October 30, 2019. <http://mhbeals.com/scissors-and-paste-o-meter-officially-launched-for-1800-1900/>

A ROMANTIC CASE.

CONCEALMENT OF SEX FOR FIFTEEN YEARS.

An investigation of a very extraordinary character took place on Wednesday evening before Mr. Bedford, the Westminster coroner, at the Prince of Orange Tavern, Brewers-green, relative to the death of a woman unknown, the supposed illegitimate daughter of a Scotch nobleman, who after having dressed as a man for the last 15 years, her true sex was discovered while dying at a common lodging-house, No. 5, Perkin's-lane.

William Gillard, superintendent of the lodging-house, said he had known the deceased for the last eight or nine months by the name of Frederick Mitchell or "Scratchem," the latter being a nickname owing to a fidgetty disposition. The deceased had dressed as a male, which he believed her to be until he accidentally discovered her true sex. She slept in a separate bed in a room in which 22 men also slept, but not the slightest suspicion was created as to her being a woman. Her habits were very strange, and her mode of obtaining her livelihood a mystery. She was exceedingly well educated, and drank nothing stronger than tea. She would bring in her food in a newspaper and eat it privately. There was not the slightest sign of insanity about her. Shortly before twelve o'clock on Friday night last she retired to bed apparently in good spirits, and at half-past ten the following morning had not risen. About one o'clock she appeared to be insensible, and foaming at the mouth. Medical attendance was called in, and while carrying out the doctor's orders he found to his surprise that "Scratchem" was a woman. She died at a quarter-past eight in the evening. He found some letters in her coat pocket, which he turned over to Mr. Fitzgerald, the proprietor of the house.

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Figure 2 "Concealment of Sex For Fifteen Years." Dundee Courier, (Dundee: Scotland), August 29, 1867. Permission to reproduce this newspaper has been granted by The British Library.

Figure 1 "Romantic Case." Liverpool Albion, (Liverpool: England), August 24, 1867. Permission to reproduce this newspaper has been granted by The British Library.

Although this type of journalism has been useful in gauging the geographical impact and longevity of gender passing cases around the country, it has limited the amount of information that can be gleaned about the lives of gender passing individuals. For instance, in the case of Charles Wilkins, five newspapers including the *Bradford Observer*, *Glasgow Herald*, *Canterbury Journal*, *Globe* and *Morning Advertiser* all published the same article about him in 1846 using scissors-and-paste journalism.⁶⁸ Only the *Liverpool Mail* published a different story, meaning that there were just two articles that narrated Charles's life.⁶⁹ This highlights how we are at the mercy of the sources available to us and we can only speculate on gender passing individuals and their lives. It is necessary to note that not all nineteenth century newspapers have been digitised, therefore, it is possible that more articles may become available in the future and we can gain a better understanding of Charles's life.

Through scissors-and-paste journalism, stories travelled and were recycled around the country, highlighting not only the mass circulation of newspapers, but also demonstrating that the press itself acted as one united newspaper that spread information across England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Scissors-and-paste journalism has been useful in exploring which types of newspapers published articles about gender passing individuals. For instance, *The Morning Chronicle* published articles about James Allen (1829), Elizabeth/John Hayward (1806 and 1829) and John Smith (1848) perhaps demonstrating their interest in this type of story.⁷⁰ The *Manchester Courier* published articles on John Smith (1848), John Murphy (1860), James Watson (1880) and in 1901, published an article titled 'Educated Women Who Passed as Men'.⁷¹ Similarly, there were links made between historic and modern gender passing cases within some newspaper articles. These examples in popularity highlight that there was, perhaps, an audience for gender passing cases throughout the nineteenth century.

⁶⁸ "Marriage Extraordinary." *Bradford Observer*, (Bradford: England), August 20, 1846.; "Marriage Extraordinary." *Glasgow Herald*, (Glasgow: Scotland), August 21, 1846.; "Marriage Extraordinary." *Canterbury Journal*, (Kent: England), August 22, 1846, 4.; "Marriage Extraordinary." *Globe*, (London: England), August 22, 1846, 4.; "Marriage Extraordinary." *Morning Advertiser*, (London: England), August 24, 1846, 3.

⁶⁹ "Marriage at Smethwick," *Liverpool Mail*, (Liverpool: England), August 8, 1846, 3.

⁷⁰ "The Late Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), January 17, 1829, 3.; "Another Female Husband." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), January 30, 1829.; "[From the *Macclesfield Courier* of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.

⁷¹ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, (Manchester: England), January 5, 1861.; "Remarkable Case of Concealment of Sex," *Manchester Courier and General Advertiser*, (Manchester: England), December 23, 1880.; "Educated Women Who Passed as Men." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, (Manchester: England), March 16, 1901.

Newspapers are not only objects of the past. Instead, they represent more in terms of both readership and circulation. Newspapers offer a tangibility to the past and a link to the lives of other people. Similarly, newspapers made an impact on society and offer an insight into how journalists wrote about contemporary issues. Adrian Bingham has highlighted that 'Different papers catered for different sections of society and strands of opinion'.⁷² However, one of the most significant things for newspapers was that they needed to form a 'connection with their audience if they were to survive in a competitive manner'.⁷³ This connection ensured a continued readership and showcased demand for that particular title.

Digital History

Using digital history has been essential in locating as many cases of gender passing as possible. After locating an individual or gender passing case, I have been able to delve further into their lives through census material, trade directories, criminal records, street literature and accessing their death and marriage certificates. Murray Phillips, Gary Osmond and Stephen Townsend's article on digital and sport history argues that digital history comes into its own when exploring under-researched areas.⁷⁴ This is because it allows for 'the occurrence and frequency of words, terms and phrases to facilitate qualitative culture and linguistic analysis'.⁷⁵ In other words, digital history facilitates searches across large datasets using key words, phrases or terms. Thus, historians can gain better access to and knowledge about their topics and the contemporary context in which they are based.

There is a freedom with digital history that is not acknowledged in library and archive work which is that historians can sift through vast amounts of data at one time.⁷⁶ This enables researchers to highlight details about a specific person, community, area or event that can

⁷² Adrian Bingham, *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life and the British Popular Press, 1918-1978* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 6.

⁷³ Bingham, *Family Newspapers?*, 6.

⁷⁴ Murray Phillips, Gary Osmond, and Stephen Townsend, "A Bird's-Eye View of the Past: Digital History, Distant Reading and Sport History," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 15 (2015): 1725-1740.

⁷⁵ Phillips, Osmond and Townsend, "A Bird-Eye View," 1732.

⁷⁶ Laurel Brake, "Half Full and Half Empty," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 17, no. 2 (2012): 222-229.; Bob Nicholson, "Counting Culture: or, How to Read Victorian Newspapers from a Distance," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 17, no. 2 (2012): 238-246.

often be overlooked, lost or forgotten altogether.⁷⁷ Julia Laite has reflected on the rigidity of archives and has praised the freeing nature of digital history, writing:

The boundlessness of the past has always been kept in check not only by the boundedness of the archive and library but also by our own cognitive and physical abilities to identify, search, collect, and connect records.⁷⁸

Through digital history, historians have taken themselves away from the restrictions of the archive and are more open to researching in a creative manner.

Gender passing individuals have been a challenge to locate in the archive. Therefore, it has been necessary to conduct both creative searches and category specific searches to locate as many appropriate articles as possible. Only when there is a name of a gender passing individual can the searches become more specific with relation to smaller biographical pieces of information that can be gleaned from a newspaper article. These may include information about where the individual lived, their employment, their wife's name, or the names of any partners they had as well as any potential children.

As with most historical methodologies, problems will inevitably arise. In using newspapers, and more specifically digitised newspapers as a primary source base, the challenges are numerous. One of the most obvious concerns has been the inability to touch, read or explore the original documents. Instead, my primary source base has been harvested largely via online newspaper databases such as *The British Newspaper Archive*, *Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals*, *Welsh Newspapers Online*, specific databases of single newspapers such as *The Times* and *The Observer* or microfiche film held in local libraries where a gender passing individual lived. Over the last decade digitisation has increased exponentially in a way that has aimed to preserve the fragility of the material culture itself. However, Johan Jarlbrink and Pelle Snickars have both highlighted that 'In most cases preservation of cultural material is the opposite of destruction. But for newspapers digitisation, preservation and destruction goes hand in hand'.⁷⁹ This is because of the alterations made to the original material when they go through the digitisation process.

⁷⁷ Julia Laite, "The Emmet's Inch: Small History in a Digital Age," *Journal of Social History* (2019): 8.

⁷⁸ Laite, "The Emmet's Inch," 5.

⁷⁹ Johan Jarlbrink and Pelle Snickars, "Cultural Heritage as Digital Noise: Nineteenth Century Newspapers in the Digital Archive," *Journal of Documentation* 73, no. 6 (2017): 1229.

Many digital historians such as Bob Nicholson, Tim Hitchcock, Jussi Parikka and Patrick Leary have highlighted the inaccuracies associated with optical character recognition within the digitisation process.⁸⁰ Jarlbrink and Snickars have argued that ‘the process of digitisation, optical character recognition, article segmentation, modes of presentation are all infrastructural settings that transform old newspapers into new objects with a media specifically different from original paper prints’.⁸¹ Information is not always transcribed completely or coherently from original material to digital databases. Another issue is that the literary value of a text is lost and digitised materials are reduced simply to ‘millions of words’.⁸² Similarly, Hitchcock has recognised that by searching digitised newspapers, ‘we are actually searching markedly inaccurate representations of text hidden behind a poor-quality image’ because they have been altered and enhanced so dramatically.⁸³ In turn, this means new, repurposed material poses as original primary documentation which is being fashioned simply for ease and accessibility. The original newspaper as a source therefore loses its ‘newspaper-y-ness’ by being viewed on screen or on microfiche.⁸⁴

As the primary material used in this thesis has been collected through digitised platforms, there are issues to consider. James Mussell has argued that by digitising material it allows ‘anyone with a web browser (and more often than not, the necessary subscription) to access material from where they are, whenever they want’.⁸⁵ Although this highlights the freedom that digital history offers, Leary has recognised that, ‘The eureka moments in the life of today’s questing scholar-adventurer are much more likely to take place in the form of a computer screen’, rather than in a traditional library or archive.⁸⁶ As a result, the outputs of digitised historical research can be overshadowed by the ease of simply ‘Googling the

⁸⁰ Hitchcock, “Confronting the Digital,” 9-23.; Patrick Leary, “Googling the Victorians,” *Journal of Victorian Culture* 10, no. 1 (2005): 72-86.; Nicholson, “Counting Culture,” 238-246.; Bob Nicholson, “The Digital Turn,” *Media History* 19, no. 1 (2013): 59-73.; Bob Nicholson, “Tweeting the Victorians,” *The Research Society for Victorian Periodicals*, (2015), 254-260.; Jussi Parikka, *What is Media Archaeology?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012).

⁸¹ Jarlbrink and Snickars, “Cultural Heritage,” 1229.

⁸² Jarlbrink and Snickars, “Cultural Heritage,” 1235.

⁸³ Hitchcock, “Confronting the Digital,” 14.

⁸⁴ The term ‘newspaper-y-ness’ has been coined by me to refer to the physical qualities of newspapers such as their touch, smell, written text, images, advertisements layout and style.

⁸⁵ James Mussell, ‘Digitization’, in Andrew King, Alexis Easley and John Morton’s ed., *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth Century Periodicals and Newspapers* (Oxon; Routledge, 2016), 17.

⁸⁶ Leary, “Googling the Victorians,” 73.

Victorians', to use Leary's term, rather than going out and searching through archives and records.⁸⁷

Another concern is that not all newspapers are available online and only specific local and national titles in full runs have been made available on *The British Newspaper Archive*. Therefore, there will inevitably be gender passing individuals who have been missed because of this. Similarly, many local newspapers have not yet been digitised within institutes which means some local coverage may have also been missed. Nonetheless, I have discovered a considerable sample, and, in this sense, the digitisation of material has allowed for a better understanding of the lives of gender passing individuals, the areas where they lived and how their stories were published.

Digital history does not always mean digitised archives or material, instead it can include blogging and social media engagement. The rise in popularity in social media platforms in the last decade has been instrumental in making an impact on people outside of the academy. It has also enabled me to share my work with other academics and has encouraged conversations to begin and continue, as well as invitations to speak at events such as *Queer Histories* at The University of Leeds in February 2020. My aim, by actively sharing information and research on social media, has been to make more people aware of the history of gender passing and inspire others to include historic gender nonconforming people in their own research. Helen Rogers has recognised the community that digital history fosters, particularly on social media and how it can be used to connect with other people.⁸⁸ Similarly, Nicholson's article 'Tweeting the Victorians' has highlighted the importance of Twitter, which 'has emerged as a powerful tool for disseminating ideas, kickstarting discussions, and leading new readers to our research'.⁸⁹ Digital history facilitates a 'continuous online conversation' and is a way to connect with academics and non-academics with similar interests.⁹⁰ Nicholson argues that we see similarities between nineteenth century newspapers and the frivolity and joviality of sharing research today on social media platforms and through 'retweeting'. He argues that Victorian print culture is being rejuvenated in this

⁸⁷ Leary, "Googling the Victorians," 72-86.

⁸⁸ Helen Rogers, "Blogging Our Criminal Past: Publish History, Social Media, and Creative History," *Law, Crime and History* 5, no. 1 (2015): 54-76.

⁸⁹ Nicholson, "Tweeting the Victorians," 256.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

way and being used 'not as an ossified object of scholarly research or a trail of genealogical breadcrumbs, but as a form of entertainment' and as a means of dissemination.⁹¹

Historians can utilise and access the increasing amount of digitised material in a way that is not as restrictive as a physical archive or library can be. Laurel Brake for instance, has argued that the increased digital material available allows 'ingenious search structures and unexpected sources' to be discovered.⁹² However, Brake also maintains that analysis of material culture should not be lost in favour of digital material and that there needs to be a balance between the two. It is important to remember that through digitised material 'we do not have more information – the gone is still gone – but we have more access to that information and thus more potential to have knowledge', as Laite has recognised.⁹³ Indeed, digitised history provides a means of taking a more intimate and private approach to under-researched areas.

It is important to remember that digital history and specifically, accessing under-researched digitised newspapers, is not the only way of collating material, although it has been prominent in this research. Parikka has argued that accessing digitised material or doing digital history 'is the implicit starting point for something much more'.⁹⁴ Using digital newspapers has acted as a spring board to the examination of the lives of other gender passing individuals, and has allowed me to explore their occupations, visit the places where they lived and worked as well as broadening my research to explore street literature and other related print culture.

The rise in popularity within the field of digital history highlights how it has become easier to construct the narratives of individuals being that they are open to interpretation. Both Hitchcock and Shoemaker have argued that the 'non-academic historians with internet access have at their fingertips more real data than can be found in any single archive or hard-copy library'.⁹⁵ It goes without saying that there is a huge amount of digitised material available with the universal understanding of 'big size is what matters'.⁹⁶ Big data is useful to

⁹¹ Nicholson, "Tweeting the Victorians," 257.

⁹² Brake, "Half Full and Half Empty," 223.

⁹³ Laite, "The Emmet's Inch," 8.

⁹⁴ Parikka, *What is Media Archaeology?*, 113.

⁹⁵ Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, "Making History Online," *Transaction of the RHS* (2015): 78.

⁹⁶ Jarlbrink and Snickars, "Cultural Heritage as Digital Noise," 1235.

highlight trends in material or draw statistics that relate to datasets, however, it loses the 'little people', according to Richard Tristano, and it is these people that are at the centre of this thesis.⁹⁷

Data Analysis and Record Linkage

Databases are used by most historians for bibliographical organisation. Through databases historians can store and organise both primary and secondary material in a manageable way. The Institute of Historical Research has noted that historians have typically used databases for data management, record linkage or aggregate analysis.⁹⁸ I have used databases as a way of organising my primary data and to assist record linkage. By using this record linkage to find relatable data sets in different data sources, I have developed a thorough and nuanced approach to digital searching. Through record linkage I have completed extensive searches on the *Old Bailey Online* and *Ancestry.com* to access supporting material. Similarly, visiting local archives specific to where an individual lived, and their towns and cities, has been instrumental in creating microbiographies about them.

As part of my methodological process, I created three databases that organised primary material into three thematic sheets. These sheets focussed on the biographical information of gender passing individuals, their clothing and appearance and their deaths. The creation of these sheets was largely because it was no longer feasible to have annotated print outs in a folder that I had to search through to find a reference. Biographical information about Charles Hamilton (the original 'female husband'), John Taylor (Mary Ann Talbot), an early gender passing soldier, and James Howe (Mary East) who, although dead by the nineteenth century, appeared twice in the nineteenth century press, were also included in these databases to highlight similarities in cross-century cases.⁹⁹

The first sheet, called *Biographical Information*, that can be seen in figure 3, focusses on the background of the individual. To populate this, I took information from press reports,

⁹⁷ Richard Tristano, "Microhistory and Holy Family Parish: Some Methodological Considerations," *US Catholic Historian* (1996): 30.

⁹⁸ The Institute of Historical Research: Blog, accessed October 25, 2019 <https://blog.history.ac.uk/2013/02/designing-databases-for-historical-research/> published February 2013; The Institute of Historical Research: Digital History, accessed October 22, 2019 <https://www.history.ac.uk/research/digital-history>

⁹⁹ Fielding, *The Female Husband*, 1-23.; "Mary East, The Female Husband." *The Odd Fellow*, (London: England), May 2, 1840.; "A Female Husband." *North Eastern Gazette*, (Middlesbrough: England), July 2, 1891.

pamphlets, census material, criminal registrations (where applicable) as well as birth, death, and marriage registrations. This database captured the most information and comprises of sixteen subheadings which include:

1. Unique identifier number
2. Year
3. Month
4. Male name
5. Female name (if known)
6. Primary source (newspaper article, pamphlet, ballad, census entry, trade directory for example)
7. Age
8. Class
9. Area where they lived / frequented
10. Status (married, single, divorced)
11. Employment
12. Classification of employment (agriculture, manual, military, public service)
13. Personal attributes (looks, personality, clothing)
14. Leisure activities
15. Crimes (if applicable)
16. Exposure (death, self, wife exposure or criminal)

These categories offered a clear summary of the lives of individuals and enabled links to be made between cases. For instance, this database revealed that thirty-two percent of gender passing individuals were employed in agricultural work at some point during their lives. Similarly, sixty percent of individuals were married, and twenty percent were described as cohabiting as man and wife. All the statistics generated by this database have been used throughout this thesis as a way of making connections between people in the sample.

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Biographical Information																
No.	Year	Month	Male Name	Female Name	Primary Source	Age	Class	Area	Status	Employment	Classification	Personal Attributes	Leisure	Crimes	Exposure	
1	1746		Charles Hamilton	Mary Hamilton	Pamphlet Cruikshank Cartoon		W	Dublin Bristol Dartmouth Glastonbury Somerset	Married	3 Dr of Physic	Military Civil Service	Adventurer Lothario	Fighter	Fraud	Wives Self	
2	1808		Mary Anne Talbot		Books Pamphlet		W			Sailor					Death	
3	1825	July	John Murphy	Harriet Moore	Bel's Life Leeds Intelligencer	20	W	Derby Shardlow Nottinghamshire	Married S/S	Drover's lad (cattle) Groom / Footboy Salt Works Bricklayer	Agricultural Domestic Industrial Manual / Skilled labour	Down trodden	Unknown	Unknown	Self	
4	1829	January	James Allen		Newcastle Courant Morning Post The Observer Bel's Life Leeds Intelligencer Truman's Exceter Flying Post Chester Chronicle Globe Authentic Narrative, 1829 The Female Husband, Ballad c. 1834	42	W	Camberwell Blackheath Baldock Rotherhithe Yarmouth	Married 21 years S/S	Groom Shipyard Worker Dock Public House Landlord Seaman?	Domestic Manual / Skilled labour Public Service Military	Smart Ill-tempered Jealous Kind (pam) Industrious	Drinker Smoker	Unknown	Death	
5	1829	January c. 1800	John Hayward	Elizabeth Hayward	Morning Chronicle Court of Requests, 1806	32	W	Birmingham	Married S/S			Lothario	Smoker Drinker Fighter	Debt	Criminal	
6	1834	December	Captain Wright	Eliza Wright	Bristol Mercury Butch Heroes, 2017 The Bell's New Weekly Messenger		M	Kennington	Married S/S	Inheritance		Jealous Lothario Eccentric	Rabbit breeder Drinker Smoker	Unknown	Death	
7	1834	April	Harry Stokes	Harriet Stokes	Manchester Guardian Morning Post Morning Chronicle Freeman's Journal The Observer John Bull The Leicestershire Mercury The Odd Fellow Butch Heroes, 2017		W	Doncaster Bawtry Sheffield Manchester	Married Separated Cohabiting S/S	Farmhand Bricklayer Special Constable Public House Landlord	Agricultural Manual / Skilled labour Civil Service Public Service	Ill-tempered Unkind Humble Skilled worker Successful	Drinker	Wife		
8	1840	May c. 1730	James How	Mary East		16	W	Epping Poplar	Cohabiting S/S	Public House Landlord Parish Officer Constable Churchwarden	Public Service Religious Civil Service Religious	Good credit (q) Esteemed (q)	Unknown	Blackmail Revisited		

Figure 3 Screenshot taken of the 'Biographical Information' database. Captured October 1, 2019.

The second database titled *Gendering the Body* can be seen in figure 4. The development and concealment of the body remains a constant theme throughout this thesis, therefore this sheet captured the physical appearance of gender passing individuals. The subcategories included:

1. Unique identifier number
2. Year
3. Name
4. Clothing
5. Hairstyle
6. Facial hair
7. Face
8. Voice
9. Hands
10. Body / stature

This sheet also included words or phrases with a '(q)' next to them which represented a 'quote' taken from the article. The reason for this was that there were some words and phrases that were used repeatedly to describe the physical appearance of different gender passing individuals. By using this code, I could easily identify any linguistic similarities between cases and explore them further. For instance, both John Murphy (1825) and Charles Wilkins (1846) were described as 'stout' in their respective newspaper articles.¹⁰⁰ By having a visible code that denoted the word 'stout (q)' had been taken directly from the article, I was able to reflect of the significance of the word. I concluded that 'stout' in these instances referred to the muscularity of the individual, something which is explored further in *Chapter Two: What Makes a Man?*

¹⁰⁰ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; "Smethwick: Romantic Affair." *Birmingham Journal*, (Birmingham: England), August 1, 1846.

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No.	Year	Name	Clothing	Hairstyle	Facial hair	Face	Voice	Hands	Body / Stature						
1	1746	Charles Hamilton	Shirt	Short	No beard	Pretty	Feminine	Small	Lean						
2			Breeches			Beautiful	Squal (q)	Feminine							
3			Stockings			Youthful									
4			Waistcoat												
5			Coat												
6			Shoes												
7															
8	1825	John Murphy	Male Dress						Short (q)						
9			Dress						Stout (q)						
10			Feminine Habillments												
11															
12	1829	James Allen	Sailor style clothing	Cropped	No beard (q)	Handsome	Weakly (q)	Hard	Strong physique						
13			Long waistcoats			Clear and ruddy (q)		Shrivelled	Muscular						
14						Yellowish			Clean						
15						Weather beaten			Purest white						
16									Bound						
17									Large breasts						
18									Moderate Size (q)						
19	1829	John Hayward	Male Dress		No beard (q)	Firm countenance (q)			Hempahrodite (q)						
20						Tolerable handsome (q)			Elegant (q)						
21															
22			Male Dress						Grotesque (q)						
23		1834	Captain Wright						Unique						
24									Waddled (q)						
25	1838	Harry Stokes	Male Dress		Beardless cheeks (q)	Handsome	Shrill		Little						
26						Fair			Large breasts						
27						Unique			Broadset						
28									Prepossessing appearance						
29															
30	1840	James How	Male Dress	Cropped					Stout (q)						
31	c. 1730														
32	1846	Charles Wilkins													
33															
34	1848	John Smith	Male Dress	Black Glossy	No beard	Fair	Womanly	Small	Slender						
35				Glossy		Swarthy complexion		Feminine							
36				Curled		Gipsy									
37	1850	Anna Maria Wilkins	Male Dress			Handsome									
38															
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Figure 4 Screenshot of 'Gendering the Body' spreadsheet that I have created. Captured October 1, 2019.

The third database related specifically to death and can be seen in figure 5. Death was the most common reason that led to the exposure of gender passing individuals as biologically female, with thirty-nine percent of cases ending in this manner. This database focussed specifically on what information was available about an individual's death including where they were buried and the date they died. The subcategories for this sheet included:

1. Unique identifier number
2. Year
3. Name
4. Female name
5. Primary source
6. Age
7. Class
8. Death
9. Burial information
10. Certificate / registration

The gathering of this initial information prompted closer research about the individuals. For instance, locating death certificates, burial registrations, church records and grave records also gave further insight into an individual's final resting place. For instance, changes had been made to John Murphy's death certificate by the registrar in relation to his biological identity a week after his burial at All Saints Church in Wigan.¹⁰¹ Using websites such as *Ancestry.com* and *findagrave.com* I located John Coulter's grave in Belfast City Cemetery. Using the General Registry Office of Northern Ireland, I purchased a copy of John's burial record which confirmed that he was buried as male in Belfast City Cemetery several days after he died in January 1884.¹⁰² These databases have offered a means of understanding the biographical parameters of the lives of gender passing individuals.

¹⁰¹ Certificate of Death obtained from General Register Office, July 12, 2018. (DAZ 096056) Year 1860, Qtr D Vol. 08C Page 36.

¹⁰² Certificate of Death obtained from General Registry Office of Northern Ireland. John Coulter buried in Belfast Cemetery January 11, 1884 no. 13512 grave section NK NK.

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
	No.	Year	Male Name	Female Name	Primary Source	Age	Class	Death	Burial	Certificate/Registration				
1	1	1829	James Allen		Newspapers	42 W		Work accident	St John's, Horseleydown	Death registration				
2					Pamphlet			Head injury	Private vault					
3					Death registration			Instant death						
4								St Thomas's Hospital						
5	2	1834	Captain Wright	Eliza Wright	Newspapers	M		Specific death not discussed	POTENTIALLY	Death registration				
6								Horseleydown, Surrey						
7														
8	3	1848	John Smith	Sophia Locke	Newspapers	48 W		Dysentery	Unknown					
9						60								
10	4	1859	Harry Stokes	Harriett	Newspaper	c. 60 W		Suicide	Unknown	Death registration				
11					Death registration			River Irwell		Civil Register Index				
12					Civil Register Index			intoxicated		Quarter Sessions				
13	5	1860	John Murphy	Betty Lavin	Newspapers	97 W		Natural Decay	All Saints Church, Wigan	Death Registration - B.Lavin				
14					Death registration			Old age		Death certificate - J. Murphy				
15					Certificate					Church records - J. Murphy				
16	6	1867	Frederick Mitchell		Newspapers	W		Apoplexy	Unknown					
17			Scratchem					Overdose						
18	7	1869	Joseph Josiah Charles Stevenson		Newspapers									
19		1894			Death registration	89 W		Softening of the brain	Toft Hill	Death certificate				
20					Certificate	78		5 years certified	Aukland, Durham	Burial Notice				
21	8	1874	Henry Clarke		Newspapers	35-40 W		Workhouse death	Unknown					
22					Newspapers	24-25 W		Death by horse	Unknown					
23	9	1880	James Watson					Kicked in the head						
24	10	1884	John Coulter		Newspapers	55 W		Fall	Belfast City Cemetary					
25								Intoxicated	20/01/1884					
26								Possible alcoholic						
27	11	1910	Frederick Wilson		Newspaper	W		Found unresponsive	Australia					
28														
29														
30														
31														

Ready

Death
Gendering the Body
Biographical Info

Type here to search

16:27 01/10/2019

Figure 5 Screenshot of 'Death' spreadsheet that I have created. Captured October 1, 2019.

This thesis has required many hours of sitting, reading, and writing. As a result, a lot of time has been spent on my own at my desk. This solitary experience of research is something that we are reminded about in Lucinda Matthews-Jones's blog post 'The Walking Historian'.¹⁰³ Matthews-Jones encourages researchers to go out and explore the surroundings of their subjects. Similarly, in his article 'Building Biographies', Larry R. Ford encourages us to be involved in our research in a way that brings us away from the desk to become 'aerobic academi[cs]'.¹⁰⁴ I have followed this advice and visited the cities and towns where gender passing individuals lived and worked. For instance, in Baldock, Hertfordshire James and Abigail Allen leased a pub called *The Sun Inn*, which is now called *The Victoria*. By visiting and sitting in that space and watching the locals interact with one another, it struck me that the community of a public house might have been what drew James and Abigail, and later Harry Stokes and Frances Collins, in to being public house landlords.¹⁰⁵ I also visited Wigan, where John Murphy plied his trade as a hawker and cadger. Although the cemetery was no longer there, visiting All Saints Parish Church was useful because it allowed me to see where John's body was eventually laid to rest. As the morning progressed in Wigan Town Centre it became busier with market traders and locals. The sights and sounds of traders speaking to their customers was reminiscent of John Murphy who was a popular hawker and cadger according to the *Wigan Observer*.¹⁰⁶ Spending time being immersed in the landscape and culture of the places that gender passing individuals lived enabled a deeper reflection on their lives and also inspired *Chapter Four: Conforming in the Unsuspecting Community*.

Chapter Breakdown

This thesis is split into five chapters which includes historiographical conversations, the body, the community, relationships, and death. Running throughout these chapters are the 4 C's of Passing framework with chapters two to five focussing on specific elements of that framework. *Chapter One: An Intellectual Discussion* brings together the important historiography that has supported and informed this research. The underpinning argument

¹⁰³ Lucinda Matthews-Jones, "The Walking Historian," (2014). Accessed June 11, 2019 <https://lucindamatthewsjones.com/2014/08/10/a-walking-historian/>

¹⁰⁴ Larry R. Ford, "Building Biographies: To Know Cities from the Inside Out," *The Geographical Review* (2001): 381.

¹⁰⁵ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 1, 1829.

¹⁰⁶ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.

throughout this thesis is that gender is an active, performative identity.¹⁰⁷ This conversation discusses how gender is something that has to be ‘done’ and consequently how it can be undone.¹⁰⁸ It also reflects on the influence of women’s history and the history of masculinity in exploring the different roles that were expected of gender passing individuals and how they navigated those different roles. *Conversations* examines the difficulties that are encountered in undertaking research of this kind, particularly in relation to the rise of trans history and communities wanting to reclaim gender passing individuals as their own. For instance, Christine Burns argues that in cases like Dr James Miranda Barry and Harry Stokes, ‘there is sometimes dispute’ in how the individual is labelled and people become preoccupied with the labelling process.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, due to the rise in gender critical views and increased transphobia it is necessary to reflect on the treatment of gender passing individuals in the press. This is largely because journalists seemingly admired gender passing individuals and it is difficult to identify where the current toxicity about gender nonconformity has stemmed from given that the nineteenth century prescribed more rigid gender codes than we see today.

Chapter Two: What Makes a Man? focuses on the confidence that gender passing individuals had in terms of their gender presentation and how they embodied their masculinity. Using Jack Migdalek and Beatrice Allegranti’s exploration of ‘embodying gender’, this chapter considers how gender passing individuals ‘did’ gender in a way that was socially acknowledged.¹¹⁰ Drawing upon Joanne Begiato’s work on the ‘unregulated manly body’, this chapter considers the qualities of working-class male bodies and how gender passing individuals manipulated themselves through passing and binding to portray a more masculine physique.¹¹¹ Butler’s notion of gender being a series of repeated acts is central to this chapter

¹⁰⁷ Henry Bial ed., *The Performance Studies Reader*, (Routledge: London, 2004).; Anastacia Seregina, ‘Undoing Gender Through Performing the Other’, *Consumption, Markets and Culture* 22, no. 4 (2019): 454-473.

¹⁰⁸ West and Zimmerman, “Doing Gender,” (1987): 125-151.; West and Zimmerman, “Accounting for ‘Doing Gender’,” 112-122.; Don Zimmerman, “They Were All Doing Gender, but they Weren’t All Passing: Comment on Rogers,” *Gender and Society* (1992): 192-198.

¹⁰⁹ Christine Burns ed., *Trans Britain: Our Journey from the Shadows* (London: Unbound, 2018), 11.

¹¹⁰ Beatrice Allegranti, *Embodied Performances: Sexuality, Gender, Bodies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015).; Jack Migdalek, *The Embodied Performance of Gender* (Oxen: Routledge, 2015).

¹¹¹ Joanne Begiato, “Punishing the Unregulated Manly Body and Emotions in Early Victorian England” in Joanne Ella Parsons and Ruth Heholt ed., *The Victorian Male Body* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 46-64.; Joanne Begiato, *Manliness in Britain, 1760-1900: Bodies, Emotion, and Material Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020)

¹¹¹ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 140.

in considering how the construction of a gendered ideal became a social norm and an expectation. It concludes with a discussion about the importance of clothing, muscularity and facial hair for gender passing individuals.¹¹²

Chapter Three: Queer Intimacies explores how many gender passing individuals were committed to not only their gender identity, but also to their wives and partners through marriage or cohabitation. Although marriage referred to a heterosexual man and woman committing themselves faithfully to each other in the eyes of God, gender passing individuals queered this notion by engaging in same-sex relationships that emulated heteronormativity.¹¹³ In some cases gender passing individuals and their partners engaged in marriages of convenience that were used as a foil for darker secrets such as illegitimate children, as was the case for John Murphy and Matilda Lacy.¹¹⁴

Chapter Four: Conforming in the Unsuspecting Community considers the level of consistency that gender passing individuals needed. Drawing on the definition of community as a group of people with shared interests, this chapter explores the roles of neighbours and the neighbourhood. Neighbours and friends employed gender passing individuals, rented accommodation to them and drank in their public houses. Yet, perhaps more importantly, neighbours had the ability to expose individuals if they became suspicious.¹¹⁵ This chapter includes a case study on the public house as a means of demonstrating how it represented leisure, employment and stability in the community.¹¹⁶ This chapter investigates how gender

¹¹² Roland Altenburger, "Is it Clothes that Make the Man? Cross-dressing, Gender and Sex in Pre-Twentieth Century Zhu Yingtai Lore," *Asian Folklore Studies* (2005): 165-205.; Amy Miller, "Clothes Make the Man: Naval Uniform and Masculinity in the early Nineteenth Century," *Journal for Maritime Research* 17, no. 2 (2015): 147-154.; Vivienne Richmond, *Clothing the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).; Rachel Worth, *Clothing and Landscape in Victorian England: Working Class Dress and Rural Life* (London: I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd, 2018).; Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Healthier and Better Clothes for Men' – Men's Dress Reform in Interwar Britain", in Erika Rappaport, Sandra Trudgen-Dawson and Mark J. Crowley ed., *Consuming Behaviours: Identity, Politics and Pleasure in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015): 21-37.

¹¹³ Ginger S. Frost, *Living in Sin: Cohabiting as Husband and Wife in Nineteenth Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).; John R. Gillis, *For Better, For Worse, British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).; Rebecca Probert, *Marriage, Law and Practice in the Long Eighteenth Century: A Reassessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹¹⁴ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; "The Female Husband in Manchester." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.

¹¹⁵ Joanna Bourke, *Working Class Culture in Britain 1890-1960* (London: Routledge, 1994).; Emily Cockayne, *Cheek by Jowl: A History of Neighbours*, (London: Vintage, 2013).; E. P. Thompson. *The Making of the English Working-Class* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1980).

¹¹⁶ David W. Gutzke, "Progressivism and the History of the Public House, 1850-1950," *Cultural and Social History* 4, no. 2 (2007): 235-259.; James Kneale, "A Problem of Supervision": Moral Geographies of the Nineteenth-

passing individuals navigated the spaces that they inhabited. For example, many developed a skill in one area of work before moving on to another and tended to live mobile lives in both rural and urban landscapes.¹¹⁷ Using street literature and the press this chapter will highlight how they were used to tell a story and create meaning on the street. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the unsuspecting community of gender passing individuals. Indeed, many individuals would not have been aware of the existence of others like them, but they would have been in receipt of gossip and stories that were published in the press. This created an unknowing community that ultimately linked them together.

Chapter Five: After Lives demonstrates the lengths that gender passing individuals went to in order to conceal their biological bodies whilst they were alive. Death was the most common way that gender passing individuals were exposed, which, to an extent, revealed the successful nature of their passing. Pat Jalland's work on 'good death' and 'bad death' features in this chapter as a means of exploring the deaths of several individuals and discusses how they were marked, but also how they were challenged by the public in some cases.¹¹⁸ Concluding this chapter is a study on the death of James Allen and his legacy throughout the nineteenth century.¹¹⁹ Death marked the end of gender performance and rendered gender passing individuals simply as female, thus confirming the importance of biological identity in nineteenth century Britain, but also highlighting that gender is an active identity that needed to be maintained and performed.

Century British Public House," *Journal of Historical Geography* (1999): 333-348.; Ian Pritchard, "Beer and Britannia': Public-House Culture and the Construction of Nineteenth Century British-Welsh Industrial Identity," *Nations and Nationalism* 18, no. 2 (2012): 326-345.

¹¹⁷ R. Dennis. and S. Daniels. "'Community' and the social geography of Victorian Cities," *Urban History Yearbook*, (1981): 7-22.; Jane Humphries, "Class Struggle and the Persistence of the Working-Class Family," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 1, no. 3 (1977): 241-258.

¹¹⁸ Steve Conway, "Death working-class culture and social distinction," *Health Sociology Review* 21, no. 4 (2012): 441-449.; Elizabeth Hallam, Jenny Hockey and Glennys Howarth ed., *Beyond the Body: Death and Social Identity*, (London: Routledge, 1999).; Pat Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).; Julie-Marie Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

¹¹⁹ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *The Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), April 4, 1829.; "A Hundred Years Ago: Extraordinary Investigation or the Female Husband." *The Observer*, (London: England), January 20, 1929.

An Intellectual Discussion

Gender passing individuals, like Harry Stokes, have remained under-researched because of the difficulty of locating their extended lives due to name changes as well as different spellings of their names (for example 'Harry Stokes' became 'Henry Stoake') and full documentation of where they lived and worked has not been available. Apart from examples of street literature that appear in the work of Charles Hindley, Alison Oram and Annmarie Turnbull, gender passing individuals have largely been explored through same-sex relationships.¹ Emma Donoghue's book, *Passions Between Women*, explores the lives of some gender passing individuals who were in same-sex relationships in eighteenth century Britain.² Similarly, Oram's book, *Her Husband was a Woman!*, explores gender passing and more specifically cross-dressing in the twentieth century.³ Oram examines gender passing individuals through a framework of lesbian desire and has focussed specifically on attraction and intimate relationships. Martha Vicinus and Sharon Marcus have also focussed on same-sex desire when exploring intimate female friendships amongst the middle classes in Britain.⁴ Neither Vicinus nor Marcus's research considers the possibility that some individuals may have engaged in female friendships to facilitate their masculine gender identity. This thesis, therefore, fills the gap in gender passing lives in the nineteenth century. It examines the lives of individuals in relation to their social status as men, husbands, and fathers and how they lived as a gender contrary to their biological identity. If gender passing individuals identified as men, like I have understood them to have been, then they would not have viewed themselves as being in a same-sex partnership. Instead, it is necessary to consider gender

¹ Charles Hindley, *Curiosities of Street Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).; Alison Oram and Annmarie Turnbull, *The Lesbian History Sourcebook: Love and Sex between women in Britain from 1780-1970* (London: Routledge, 2001).

² Emma Donoghue, *Passions Between Women*, (London: Pan Macmillan, 2014).

³ Alison Oram, *Her Husband was a Woman! Women's gender-crossing in modern British popular culture*, (New York: Routledge, 2007).

⁴ Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire and Marriage in Victorian England*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007).; Martha Vicinus, *Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women 1778-1928*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004).

passing individuals as men who engaged in heterosexual and normative relationships, something that will be explored in more detail in *Chapter Three: Queer Intimacies*.

Twenty-five working-class female to male gender passing individuals make up the core of this thesis. By creating microbiographies about their lives I have developed a narrative that examines their successes as men, with a focus on the jobs that they were employed in, the relationships that they engaged in and how they were viewed as men in society. As previously stated, gender passing individuals have often been viewed through the lens of same-sex desire or onstage male impersonation. However, this thesis moves away from both interpretations and considers how gender passing individuals lived as men. It explores how they embodied their understanding of masculinity and performed it in a way that was recognisable to others. Gender passing individuals lived in plain sight; they worked with their colleagues, had wives and families and their gender identity was not questioned or challenged as far as we are aware. It was only due to unforeseen circumstances such as death, accidental exposure, or unrelated criminal convictions that they were revealed as biologically female, typically in press reports, gossip, and street literature.

A Historiographical Discussion

Historians have encouraged us to 'broaden our remit' and to move away from well-known areas of history to challenge ourselves.⁵ June Purvis argues that "History' ha[s] been professionalised as a discipline by white, heterosexual, middle-class men who taught the subject in British universities and shaped it in particular ways'.⁶ Indeed, we are still contending with this notion today. However, this thesis incorporates an exploration of historic gender nonconformity, working-class masculinity, and queer notions of the nineteenth century to respond to Purvis's point. As an extension, Peter Andersson argues that 'It is only through a constant attention to peripheries, deviances, and misbehaviours that a historical diversity can be acquired'.⁷ Therefore, this thesis uses well known themes including gender history, separate spheres ideology, breadwinner ideology, respectability and working-class identity, to explore the lives of unknown and under-researched gender passing individuals.

⁵ Peter K. Andersson, "How Civilised were the Victorians?," *Journal of Victorian Culture*, (2015): 439-452.; Susie Steinbach, "Who Owns the Victorians?," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 22, no. 1 (2017): 89-98.

⁶ June Purvis, ed., *Women's History: Britain 1850-1945: An Introduction*, (Routledge: London, 1998): 5.

⁷ Andersson. "How Civilised were the Victorians?," 450.

Nineteenth Century Values

Working-class values are at the centre of this thesis as most of the gender passing individuals in this sample were part of the working-class community. E. P. Thompson's definition of class being linked with similar values within human relationships is important when considering the community impact on gender passing individuals and their interactions with others. Thompson goes on to highlight that class happens 'as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared)'.⁸ This means that groups of individuals came together to create the working classes through a shared sense of experience and relationships. Through these shared experiences individuals recognised that there was an 'us' and 'them' divide between those who had the same values and those who did not. For instance, separate spheres ideology dictated that women should remain in the domestic sphere of the home whereas men should work in the public sphere. However, for the working classes, this was not always attainable, and men and women had to work equally to maintain some quality of life. It was these divisions that demonstrated the differences in lived experiences that enabled the class system to develop in Britain.

The gender passing individuals that are explored in this thesis were working-class people. They provided for their families through regular and (mostly) legal work. They dedicated themselves to being active members of their communities and fulfilled the social expectations placed upon working-class men to an acceptable level. It is the intricacies of everyday life that has inspired this research, from considering how a gender passing individual presented themselves on the street, to the work they engaged in and the relationships that they fostered. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the gender passing individuals in this sample were not as popular as other gender nonconforming people in the nineteenth century such as Dr James Miranda Barry, Anne Lister or Chevalier d'Eon.⁹ Anne Lister, for example, is one of the most well-known gender nonconforming individuals of the nineteenth century. There has been an increase in her popularity following the successful BBC One drama *Gentleman*

⁸ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, (London: Penguin Books, 1963), 8-9.

⁹ Simon Burrows, Jonathan Conlin, Russell Goulbourne and Valerie Mainz, ed. *The Chevalier d'Eon and his Worlds: Gender, Espionage and Politics in the Eighteenth Century*, (London: Continuum UK, 2010).; Anne Lister, *The Secret Diaries of Miss Anne Lister*. Translated by Helen Whitbred. (London: Brown Book Company, 2010).; Michael du Preez and Jeremy Dronfield, *Dr James Barry: A Woman Ahead of Her Time*, (London: Oneworld Productions, 2016).

Jack with Suranne Jones as Anne Lister herself.¹⁰ Lister was part of the aristocracy and her family held status and local reputation in Halifax. Lister challenged the social expectations of women by taking on Shibden Hall and rebuilding it to be successful with the creation of a mine and loyal tenants. This success allowed her to live freely and enabled her to travel and have time away from Halifax.

Although Lister represented the antithesis of femininity and womanhood in the nineteenth century, she did acknowledge the importance of binary roles and nodded to separate spheres ideology within her own relationships. This was clear through her tumultuous marriage with Ann Walker in that Lister recognised herself as a provider and protector of her wife. This notion of providing and supporting the family was also instilled in gender passing relationships. Like Anne, gender passing individuals identified that there needed to be a head of the home who supported and provided for the family. In recognising the importance of this, gender passing individuals also highlighted the relevance of a gendered society at that time, with roles being reserved for men and women and there being one breadwinner or supporter of the home. Although Lister remains one of the most popular gender nonconforming individuals in the nineteenth century, it is the unknown quality of gender performativity in the public sphere that is most interesting to explore. Indeed, gender passing individuals including Harry Stokes, James Allen and William Seymour were only brought to the attention of newspapers due to unforeseen circumstances such as death or criminal convictions, suggesting that they were successful at embodying the social expectations and roles of men prior to their exposure.¹¹

Most gender passing individuals began their male lives in working-class rural communities before settling in the larger industrial towns and cities as they developed their confidence and skills as workers. Martin Hewitt has recognised that 'Class can be used largely for descriptive purposes as the basis for the definition of a series of economic classifications

¹⁰ "Gentleman Jack," BBC One, last modified May 15, 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00059m9>

¹¹ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *The Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 1, 1829.; "The Woman Husband." *Manchester Guardian*, (Manchester: England), April 14, 1838, 2.; "A Woman as a Cabdriver for ten years, A Romance of the Rank." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), February 13, 1875.

or strata'.¹² In this sense, class becomes an identity marker and offers them a sense of belonging to another group.

Many gender passing individuals sought to achieve a sense of belonging and left their family home at an early age or escaped from abusive heterosexual marriages. They moved to new cities or towns and identified themselves as male to embody their new gender identity. Andrew August has explored the notion of class being used to signify a sense of belonging and how it imbues meaning to the lives of people. He argues that 'Identities develop out of the stories we tell (and hear) that help place us in the world'.¹³ He continues, 'Narratives tell us who we are, and they define boundaries and identify who we are not'.¹⁴ Gender passing individuals fitted into their communities in how they performed their roles as men which in turn enabled them to conform. For the working classes, their identities and expectations differed to other people around them. Their focus was on the mundanity and 'routines of everyday life' that, as Joanna Bourke has argued, became a 'metaphor for defining oneself and other people'.¹⁵ Indeed, it was this experience of the everyday and performing social expectations of gender identity that enabled gender passing individuals to pass confidently, consistently and in a committed manner.

The theme of respectability was an important concept in the nineteenth century with most people aiming to live a respectable life irrespective of class. However, respectability is a difficult concept to define as it lacks a clear definition. Mike Huggins has argued that respectability has largely been defined by historians unique to their understanding of it which further demonstrates the complexities of the term.¹⁶ For some historians, respectability was viewed as 'a key component of their complex identities' by workers.¹⁷ Indeed, for working-class men according to August, 'respectable virtues encompassed self-discipline and improvement, industry and thrift, independence and proper personal behaviour'.¹⁸ In relation

¹² Martin Hewitt, "Class and the Classes," in *A Companion to Nineteenth Century Britain*, ed. Chris Williams (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing LTD, 2004), 306.

¹³ Andrew August. *The British Working-Class 1832-1940* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2007), 2.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Joanna Bourke. *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity* (Routledge: London, 1994), 4 and 25.

¹⁶ Mike Huggins. "Exploring the backstage of Victorian Respectability," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 22, no. 1 (2017): 81-88.

¹⁷ August. *The British Working-Class*, 68.

¹⁸ Ibid.

to gender passing individuals, respectability has been defined through how they were described in newspaper reports. For instance, reporters commented on their abilities to support their families, present themselves in a smart and clean manner and show commitment to their wives and communities. Similarly, newspapers explored the lives of gender passing individuals through their own position and influence. For instance, journalists used their middle-class status to write about gender passing individuals in their newspaper articles. Indeed, the concept of separate spheres ideology and being a stable provider was discussed frequently in newspaper reports. In this sense we see journalists putting their own views onto gender passing narratives to make sense of their lives to their readers.

Respectability was a universal and translational term that was understood across different classes. Peter Bailey argues that ‘respectability primarily enjoined moral rectitude, but in addition, it also demanded economic continence and self-sufficiency’.¹⁹ Indeed respectability was a term that was altered to fit different social understandings and different types of people. However, it is important to acknowledge that working-class respectability differed to middle-class respectability. Similarly, working-class people did not ‘see themselves as monolithically unrespectable’ because of these differences.²⁰ Instead, the working classes altered the definition of respectability for it to be practiced within their own remits and communities.²¹ Gender passing individuals embodied qualities that were typically described positively by the press. As there was not a definitive definition of respectability, it was understood by how somebody was socially acceptable, had a stable home, was a good family man, avoided excessive smoking and drinking and had regular employment. Gender passing individuals largely embodied these qualities, with some exceptions.

Gender

Gender is arguably an inclusive concept which can incorporate various gendered groups such as men, women, gender nonconforming people, transgender people, and non-binary people.

¹⁹ Peter Bailey, ““Will the Real Bill Bank Please Stand Up?” Towards a Role Analysis of Mid-Victorian Working-Class Respectability,” *Journal of Social History* 12, no. 3 (1979): 338.

²⁰ Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 93.

²¹ Mike Huggins, “More Sinful Pleasure? Leisure, Respectability and the Male Middle Classes in Victorian England,” *Journal of Social History* (2000): 585-600.; Mike Huggins, *Vice and the Victorians*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).; Lynda Nead *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).; Susan Walton, “From Squalid Impropriety to Manly Respectability: The Revival of Beard, Moustaches and Martial Values in the 1850s in England,” *Nineteenth Century Contexts: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 30, no. 3 (2008): 229-245.

Consequently, gender history should explore all types of gender identities. However, this has not always been the case, largely because gender has tended to be used to describe the experiences of women and, as Gerda Lerner has noted, gender has been used in contemporary society 'interchangeable with 'sex'' because 'it sounded more 'refined' than the plain word 'sex' with its 'nasty' connotations'.²² At the same time Lerner made these observations Joan Scott was proposing that gender should be understood as a useful category of analysis.²³ In her article, Scott argued that gender is imposed on the body and although it is generally considered to be a fixed identity, it is, in actual fact, unstable. Indeed, we see this unstable quality in the lives of gender passing individuals in how they manipulated their bodies and performed in a masculine way to be accepted as men in society. Scott recognised that gender history was not required to understand the social and political construction of what gender meant. Rather she, along with Judith Butler, challenged academics to think about gender as a set of cultural expectations.²⁴ Moreover, and perhaps crucially, Scott noted that gender should not be used as a substitute for 'women' or female experience.²⁵ Despite this, gender history has typically remained focussed on women and their lives which has led some historians, such as Julie-Marie Strange, to argue that the lives of working-class men have largely been neglected.²⁶ Throughout this thesis, I will use the notion of gender to explore not only the lives of gender passing individuals and their working-class identities, but also to consider how they challenged traditional gender roles in the nineteenth century.

Although gender passing individuals were gendered as men, it is important to recognise how they defied biological predetermination as female through their abilities to perform, identify and live as men. Contemporary social expectations that outlined acceptable codes of behaviour for working-class women did not translate into being strong, hardworking, and independent providers as gender passing individuals were. Instead, women were viewed as self-sacrificing, mothers, wives, and keepers of the home. Nonetheless, gender passing

²² Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 238.

²³ Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-1075.

²⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

²⁵ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, (1990); Scott. "A Useful Category," 1067.

²⁶ Julie-Marie Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working-Class, 1865-1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

individuals remained committed to living their lives as men and being respectable, responsible providers despite their biology conditioning them to be mothers and wives.

Gender is a performative identity, and it is this concept of 'performativity' that has become a central theme throughout this thesis. Butler's description of performativity focusses on the 'reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and contains'.²⁷ Gender passing individuals gendered themselves through how they performed their roles, their consistent appearance as men, the relationships they had and the employment that they were engaged in. The idea of gender as a social construction has also inspired other works on gender performativity such as that of Candace West and Don Zimmerman who have noted that 'gender [is] a routine, methodical and recurring accomplishment' and something to be 'done'.²⁸ Indeed, this is evident in how gender passing individuals 'did' gender in a way that was recognisable to others and therefore acceptable to wider society. These understandings of gender have been used in relation to gender performativity and recognise how gender is a social construction.

Gender is a challenging concept to define as factors such as lived experience and gender nonconformity must also be taken into consideration. Anastacia Seregina, like Butler, has argued that 'gender emerges as it is performed, existing and gaining power in our repetition of norms'.²⁹ It was through performing social expectations of gender that gender passing individuals were successful in identifying as men. Ultimately, 'no "true" gender exists', according to Seregina, instead, 'gender is real only to the extent that it is learned, repeated and behaved'.³⁰ This argument gives momentum to the interpretation of gender as a social construct. Indeed, gender is something that needs to be actively maintained and performed for it to be recognisable in society. Gender passing individuals were no different in how they performed their gender in a confident and consistent manner and in how they were accepted by their communities.

²⁷ Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, (London: Psychology Press, 1993), xii.

²⁸ Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman, "Doing Gender," *Gender and Society* 1, no. 2 (1987): 126.

²⁹ Anastacia Seregina, "Undoing Gender Through Performing the Other," *Consumption, Markets and Culture* 22, no. 4 (2019): 458.

³⁰ Ibid.

Given that gender is a performative identity, we can also see it as a routine and something that needs to be practiced and maintained. Butler has highlighted that:

If one 'is' a woman, that is surely not all she is; the term fails to be exhaustive, not because a 'pregendered' person transcends the specific paraphernalia of its gender, but because gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts.³¹

Indeed, gender must be 'done' for it to be considered acceptable by others.³² Yet, people's lives can also be predetermined to follow a route. Throughout history, gender has been viewed inconsistently with different expectations for men and women. For instance, working-class women typically supported their families financially and contributed to the household income through employment. Indeed, they were expected to engage in work, paid or unpaid, before, during and after their marriage. In doing so, this gave them value not only as a worker but as a woman as well. This was despite contemporary understandings, through separate spheres ideology, that a man was the sole provider for the home. In this sense, and as I will go on to explore, the separate spheres ideology was, for the working classes, less an attainable lifestyle and more of an aspirational model.

Gender passing individuals typically performed in an overtly masculine way to be viewed as men. Their performances were rich and complex; thought had to be given to their appearance, their employment, their social interactions and their relationships and moral values. The 'carnival theory' by Mikhail Bakhtain is useful when examining how gender passing individuals performed their gender in this masculine manner. Bakhtain concluded that the carnivalesque was separate from 'real life' and 'unbound and free from rules and structures'.³³ The carnivalesque demonstrates the importance of social conformity, as well as representing freedom. In other words, although gender passing individuals ultimately challenged the idea of binary gender through their embodiment of masculinity, they actively performed it in a recognisable and heterociscentric manner.

³¹ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 4.

³² West and Zimmerman, "Doing Gender," 126.

³³ Mikhail Bakhtain, *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Hene Iswolsky. (Bloomington; Indiana University Press, 1984).; Seregina. "Undoing Gender," (2019), 456.

Heterociscentricity, as previously discussed in the *Introduction*, refers to heteronormative cisgender individuals being the accepted norm in society. This has led Seregina to conclude that:

The carnivalesque suspends everyday life and its problems, showing the potentiality of a different world. The potentiality often becomes too scary for individuals in its unstructured and outrageous form, with the carnivalesque thus reinforcing existing norms.³⁴

Through this, we can see a link between gender passing individuals and the carnivalesque in how the individuals rejected socially accepted expectations concerning their predetermined lives as women. The idea of the carnivalesque echoes Homi Bhabha's exploration of the art of mimicry in how people based their gendered expectations on generations before them.³⁵ The carnivalesque represents 'a safe space, in which individuals can challenge, ridicule, and play around with gender norms', according to Seregina.³⁶ It can be argued that gender passing individuals used spaces such as the public house or their workplace to explore the extremities of their masculine identities, something which will be explored in *Chapter Four: Conforming in the Unsuspecting Society*. Indeed, there was a lot at stake for gender passing individuals including their livelihood, their families, and their wives. Therefore, it was crucial for them to survive in any way possible, including acknowledging and performing their gender in an overtly masculine manner.

There was a hierarchy of masculinity in nineteenth-century Britain with a dominant language being used for certain types of men. For instance, men who were white, cisgender, heterosexual and middle class may have been considered the epitome of masculine identity.³⁷ This ideal man can be explored through Raewyn Connell's definition of hegemonic masculinity. She defines it as:

The configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answers to the problem of the legitimation of patriarchy, which guarantees

³⁴ Seregina, "Undoing Gender," 456.

³⁵ Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October*, (1984): 125-133.

³⁶ Seregina. "Undoing Gender," 456.

³⁷ Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992).

(or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.³⁸

This notion of hierarchy can be linked to both hegemonic masculinity and working-class breadwinner ideology when considering the status of men in the home. Evidently there was a gendered order and a spectrum of masculinities and these have been developed throughout history, through different cultures and individuals.³⁹

Hegemonic masculinity, according to Connell, legitimises the superiority of heterosexual and cisgender men in society by placing them in dominant positions.⁴⁰ Jen Manion has also recognised the hierarchy of masculinity in the cases of ‘female husbands’ writing, ‘Because most people assigned female at birth had so little access to economic advancement, education development, or legal autonomy, no one was surprised when they [‘female husbands’] claimed the rights and privileges reserved for men – especially white men’.⁴¹ This thesis will demonstrate how gender passing individuals elevated their social position by embodying men and in turn, were recognised as male by the British press. Harry Stokes, for instance, elevated his own social position throughout his career as a ‘master bricklayer’ and as an employer of ‘several hands’ to assist with building projects.⁴² He was also well-known, according to newspaper reports, and had completed various building projects throughout Manchester to a high standard. However, Ben Griffin has argued that ‘hegemonic masculinity is an ideal that does not necessarily describe any actual men’.⁴³ As a result it is difficult to define the understanding of masculinity with certainty.

As this thesis will demonstrate, gender passing individuals were not a uniform group of men in a hegemonic or homogenous sense. They were engaged in a variety of different careers, some were stepfathers and husbands, some were petty criminals whilst others remained single. Some, including Harry Stokes and James Allen, were publicans and were not simply working with familiar colleagues and friends. Instead, they worked under the scrutiny of the public eye and alongside different people throughout their working day. This made

³⁸ Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 77.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Connell, *Masculinities*, 77-79.

⁴¹ Jen Manion, *Female Husbands: A Trans History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 6.

⁴² “The Female Husband in Manchester.” *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.; “The Woman Husband.” *Manchester Guardian*, (Manchester: England), April 14, 1838, 2.

⁴³ Ben Griffin, “Hegemonic Masculinity as a Historical Problem,” *Gender and History* 30, no. 2 (2018): 387.

them more vulnerable to detection because their customers would have altered on a daily basis. Despite this potential detection, gender passing individuals were praised by the press for being ambitious and hardworking. They challenged the notion of rigid gender roles through their performativity and embodiment of masculinity and most were successful in doing so.

Throughout their adult lives, most gender passing individuals lived a normative lifestyle through a heterociscentric lens. They supported their families, provided a home and were successful in maintaining regular employment. The notion of them being a provider for their families and going out to work links to the concept of separate spheres ideology. Separate spheres ideology provides an analytical tool for historians to explore the differences between men, women, and the classes throughout the nineteenth century. In their notable book Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall recognised that society was divided into 'public' and 'private' spheres with men and women populating either sphere.⁴⁴ The public sphere was largely reserved for men and dealt with government, politics or business. In contrast, the private sphere was typically associated with women and dealt with the domestic space of the home. The private sphere, according to Susie Steinbach, was identified as feminine because women were 'naturally more religious and more nurturing than men, and suited to caring for their children, husbands, and the home – but they were not fit for the rough and tumble world of politics and commerce'.⁴⁵ Yet, as mentioned previously, women were expected to engage in some form of work, paid or otherwise, in order to help support the family unit.

It can be argued that separate spheres ideology was, for most working-class people, unattainable. Anna Clark contends that separate spheres ideology was a 'class privilege denied to working men and women'.⁴⁶ The reality of working-class life meant that many men needed their wives and children to work in order to help their family survive. However, men were threatened with 'having their wages undercut' when their employers hired cheaper labour in the form of women and children who typically took part in 'mechanised or sweated

⁴⁴ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, ed. *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, (London: Hutchinson, 1987).

⁴⁵ Susie Steinbach, "Can We Still Use Separate Spheres"? British History 25 Years After Family Fortunes," *History Compass* (2012): 826.

⁴⁶ Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working-Class*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 2.

processes'.⁴⁷ Gender passing individuals were committed to providing for their families and were engaged in various types of employment to maintain their status as a breadwinner, but it is likely that they were also supported by their wives and children. Little is known about the wives of gender passing individuals, and even less about their children. Yet, we know that Harry Stokes's first wife was employed as his accountant in his successful building business and Abigail Allen had to support herself after James disappeared for several months.⁴⁸ It is likely that the wives of gender passing individuals worked in feminine occupations; this may have included jobs such as washing or mending clothes, caring for their neighbour's children or making something to sell, like the bonnets that Abigail Allen made and sold when James deserted her. Indeed, it was imperative that both working-class men and women engaged in some form of paid employment to maintain a stable quality of life.

Classes interpreted separate spheres ideology in different ways in the nineteenth century. Indeed, as Dror Wahrman has recognised, each class had their own language and interpretation of how to live their lives.⁴⁹ Working-class people typically interpreted separate spheres ideology as meaning that a household had a respectable breadwinner. The role of the breadwinner contributed to the creation of the working classes because it demonstrated the importance of the family unit and having one person, a man, responsible for the rest of the family.⁵⁰ This understanding, that there was one head of the household, was also acknowledged in gender passing relationships. The press recognised how gender passing individuals understood the qualities and expectations of their status as the patriarchal breadwinner, which they fulfilled by engaging in regular employment and maintaining a steady income.

Many gender passing individuals fulfilled the idea of a working-class breadwinner. For instance, John Smith provided and cared for his wife and her eleven children from a previous

⁴⁷ Clark. *The Struggle for the Breeches*, 13.

⁴⁸ "Extraordinary Investigation: or the Female Husband." *The Observer*, (London: England), January 18, 1829.; Anonymous. *An Authentic Narrative of the Extraordinary Career of James Allen, The Female Husband*, (J.S Thomas; Covent Garden, 1829), 1-40.

⁴⁹ Drohr Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: A Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1780-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁵⁰ Colin Creighton, "The Rise of the Male Breadwinner Family: A Reappraisal," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38, no. 2 (1996): 310-337.

marriage whilst he was alive and took on the breadwinner role in their relationship.⁵¹ Wally Seccombe's article on breadwinner ideology reflected on the qualities attributed to a good husband and father in the nineteenth century. Seccombe argued that a breadwinner was a person who 'did not abuse his patriarchal prerogative' and was 'a man who held his job on a steady basis, brought his pay home reliably and did not beat his wife and kids'.⁵² The breadwinner was always under pressure to provide, be dependable and dominant in the family. Breadwinners typically remained in manual jobs such as dockyard work or construction because this type of 'employment validate[d] their manhood by allowing them to perform the provider role'.⁵³ For gender passing individuals, undertaking manual work demonstrated their strength and ability to keep up with their workmates. Indeed, there are many examples of gender passing individuals being employed in manual jobs including Harry Stokes, James Allen, Charles Wilkins, John Murphy, and John Smith.

Being a breadwinner was not always about providing financially. It was also about planning and being prepared for every eventuality. In 1873, Thomas Wright developed the concept of being a 'representative artisan' as a way of highlighting how men ought to behave and how they might become providers for the home.⁵⁴ Some of the qualities of being a 'representative artisan' included having regular employment, being reliable, providing and maintaining a stable home and being prepared if someone in the family became ill or unable to work. As *Chapter Five: After Lives* will illustrate, using benefit clubs and friendly societies was one way of preparing for this, something which James Allen did whilst he was alive. These regular contributions to benefit clubs meant that James's wife was supported after his death.

Breadwinner ideology and being a 'representative artisan' largely focussed on earning money and obtaining employment, which for many working-class people, including some of the gender passing individuals who make up this study, was difficult to maintain. Liberty Smith

⁵¹ "[From the *Macclesfield Courier* of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848.

⁵² Wally Seccombe, "Patriarchy Stabilize: The Construction of the Male Breadwinner Wage Norm in C.19 Britain," *Social History* 11, no. 1 (1986): 62.

⁵³ Zuo Jiping and Tang Shengming, "Breadwinner Status and Gender Ideologies of Men and Women Regarding Family Roles," *Sociological Perspectives* 43, no. 1 (2000): 30.

⁵⁴ Keith McClelland, 'Masculinity and the 'Representative Artisan' in Britain, 1850-1880', in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, edited by M. Roper and J. Tosh, (London: Routledge, 1991), 74.; Thomas Wright, 'The Journeyman Engineer', *Our New Masters*, (London, 1873), 2.

and Emma Donoghue have both argued that some working-class women in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries assumed a male identity for increased monetary rewards and employment opportunities.⁵⁵ Identifying as men was a way for them to obtain a better wage and support themselves without being reliant on a male breadwinner.⁵⁶ Smith argues that, 'the possibility of partnerships forming between a female husband and a normatively gendered woman would have offered even further opportunities subverting the patriarchal nature of this economy, offering benefits to the cross-dresser as well as to her wife'.⁵⁷ However, this idea of economic benefit cannot be the sole explanation for female to male gender passing. Rather, my sample shows that many gender passing individuals managed to maintain a home and settled as men in their communities. They became breadwinners, husbands and in some cases, stepfathers. Evidently the reason for their gender passing went beyond simply accessing higher wages.

Gender passing individuals outwardly presented as male in public and therefore fulfilled the necessary expectations associated with working-class masculinity. However, there are examples of people throughout the nineteenth century who challenged social norms, expectations, and performative roles. For instance, Caroline Bressey's work has explored the presence of people of colour in the nineteenth century in relation to their employment. She argues that 'the world of entertainment provided employment for black men and women as actors, singers and stage 'novelties''.⁵⁸ Like Bakhtain's concept of the 'carnavalesque', people of colour represented something different to a dominant understanding of British society in the nineteenth century. Bressey has reflected that some people of colour were viewed as a 'spectacle' in their employment and people to be watched almost for entertainment purposes.⁵⁹

Although not referring to race specifically, this idea of someone becoming a 'spectacle' can be extended to include gender passing individuals who worked in the public domain. In

⁵⁵ Liberty Smith, "Listen to the "Wives" of the "Female Husbands"," *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, (2008): 105-120.; Emma Donoghue, *Passions Between Women*, (London: Pan Macmillan, 2014).

⁵⁶ Sara Horrell and Jane Humphries, "The Origins and Expansion of the Male Breadwinner Family: The Case of Nineteenth Century Britain," *International Review of Social History*, (1997): 25-64.; Smith. 'Listen to the "Wives",' 105-120.

⁵⁷ Smith, 'Listen to the "Wives",' 108-109.

⁵⁸ Caroline Bressey. 'Looking for Work: The Black Presence in Britain 1850-1920', *Immigrants and Minorities*, (2010): 172.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

such contexts, it was up to the audience to decide if an individual presented successfully as male or not. Similarly, the public had the authority to challenge individuals if their passing was unsuccessful. The public, in this sense, were paramount to the acceptance of gender passing individuals and, by extension, the success of their work and their businesses. Although newspaper articles commented about how gender passing individuals did not necessarily raise the suspicion of the public as to their biological identity, we cannot know this for certain. Therefore, it is possible that some gender passing individuals were not always successful in passing and slippages in their gender performativity may have risked their exposure whilst they were alive.

During this period, the emergence of the ideology of domesticity was perceived to be a haven and free from the troubles of the world outside. Joanne Hollows has explored the significance of the private sphere of the home and comments, 'home signifies comfort, security, warmth, privacy, intimacy and family; an escape from the harsh and calculating world of work, and from a chaotic and impersonal urban life'.⁶⁰ Much of this rests on a middle-class understanding of home. Consequently, home may not have represented these things for working-class gender passing individuals. Indeed, gender passing individuals may have found themselves living in overcrowded houses and sharing facilities with neighbours and the wider community. Some of the wives of gender passing individuals denied having any prior awareness of their husband's biological identity for at least some of their time together. If this was the case, then gender passing individuals would have needed to maintain their embodied masculinity even whilst in the privacy of their own home. From the evidence that has been amassed, it is likely that gender passing individuals saw themselves as men and therefore, their consistent gender performativity was not a concern or threat to heteronormative society. However, it is also possible that the pressure to perform as men was what caused some individuals, like James Allen and John Murphy, to desert their wives several times throughout their marriages.

Privacy for working-class people was difficult to obtain. This was largely because of overcrowding and poor living conditions. It is interesting that Hollows assumes that all families had access to a secure and private home. Indeed, it was unlikely that working-class

⁶⁰ Joanne Hollows, "Domesticity," in *International Encyclopaedia of Housing and Home* S. J. Smith ed. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2012), 405.

families had single dwelling homes and more likely that they would have shared houses and rooms with others. This again highlights not only the lack of privacy but also the pressure for gender passing individuals to be committed and consistent in their gender performance to avoid suspicion from unknowing wives. Elsewhere, it demonstrates how gender performativity was not tied to sexed bodies but to how intimate and external audiences understood the male identity of gender passing individuals. After all, gender passing individuals needed to be confident, brave, and vibrant in their gender performativity in public for them to be accepted by their workmates and wider communities.

Working-class people largely relied on the support of neighbours as a means of ensuring the survival of their families. Indeed, working classes supported each other in a way that brought them together. Elizabeth Roberts has recognised that there were strong bonds made between neighbours as they were a constant in working-class life. They minded each other's children, 'the sick and dying were fed and nursed', funeral teas were prepared and 'companionship and friendship [was] provided for all ages'.⁶¹ Indeed, this close connection was evident in gender passing cases when neighbours and landladies for example vouched for an individual's ability to provide for their dependents.⁶² It is fair to say that gender passing individuals were committed to not only their gender identity but also to their roles in society.

To the viewing public, most gender passing individuals lived their lives in a seemingly heterociscentric manner. They were respectable, provided for their families, were head of the household and were good husbands and fathers. Essentially, they fulfilled the role of an ideal working-class man. However, within their own relationships, they queered 'sex stereotypical ways', to use Purvis's definition, and privately challenged heteronormative expectations in the nineteenth century by living as a gender contrary to their biology. Helen Berry explores the notion of queer marriage through castrated husbands in the eighteenth century and examines these 'pretended marriages' which raise questions about what traditional marriage represented.⁶³ For instance, marriage required consummation with the potential for

⁶¹ Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working-Class Women* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publishers Limited, 1984), 187.

⁶² Anonymous. *An Authentic Narrative*, 1-40.; "Smethwick: Romantic Affair." *Birmingham Journal*, (Birmingham: England), August 1, 1846.

⁶³ Helen Berry, "Queering the History of Marriage: The Social Recognition of a Castrato Husband in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *History Workshop Journal* 74, (2012): 27-48.; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, (New York: Berkley, 1990).

reproduction. Those women who knowingly married a castrato, like Dorothea Maunsell for instance, actively rejected the traditional understanding of marriage. Berry, along with Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, also challenges the usefulness of binaries and questions how homosexual relationships and, by extension, gender passing individuals challenged the natural order of things through their relationships. In this thesis, 'queer' is used as a way of understanding how gender passing individuals challenged the heterociscentric notion of normative society in the nineteenth century.

The gender passing individuals detailed in this thesis all hailed from a working-class background and consequently fulfilled social expectations of working-class men such as being industrious and providing for their families. Newspaper articles focussed on their ability to maintain manual employment. *Reynolds's News*, for instance, commented upon Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson's popularity in his community and noted that he was the most admired harvester in Durham.⁶⁴ Similarly, *The Morning Chronicle* wrote about James Allen after his death and focussed on his different careers including as a sawyer, docker, groom and publican.⁶⁵ Newspaper articles typically commented on James's ability to support and provide for his wife Abigail throughout their twenty-one year marriage. It was this need to be the provider and head of the household that enabled gender passing individuals to be recognised and accepted as men in their communities.

The Body

As an extension of understanding gender identity and gender performativity, the body is an important component in considering how individuals manipulated and altered their bodies to fit the expectations of contemporary men. The bodies of gender passing individuals were largely built through their employment in manual labour and consequently their bodies transformed.⁶⁶ The body was a valuable tool for gender passing individuals as it allowed them to maintain their preferred gender identity. The concept of gender embodiment is an emerging theme in historical research. Jack Midgalek has defined gender embodiment as 'the manner of physical deportment in which a physical practice is performed and with concepts

⁶⁴ "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Reynolds's News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.; "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *The Dundee Courier and Argus*, (Dundee: Scotland), November 29, 1869, 3.

⁶⁵ "The Late Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), January 17, 1829, 3.

⁶⁶ Joanne Begiato, "Punishing the Unregulated Manly Body and Emotions in Early Victorian England," in *The Victorian Male Body*, ed. Joanne Ella Parsons and Ruth Heholt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 46-47.

of gender as social constructs of femininity and masculinity'.⁶⁷ In other words, gender embodiment focuses specifically on how social expectations are performed in ways that are recognisable. Gender passing individuals performed their masculine gender in a way that was confident and consistent and that in turn granted them the social status of men.

Confidence was needed by gender passing individuals to highlight their commitment and understanding of gender performativity. Through the embodiment of gender, manliness was flagged as an ideal representation of masculinity in the nineteenth century. Both Phillip Carter and Sonya Rose have recognised the complexity of manliness and what it meant in the nineteenth century.⁶⁸ Rose highlights that 'Manliness often meant honourable' and differed from man to man perhaps through his ability to support the family or his position as an employer.⁶⁹ Gender passing individuals embodied a gender that was manly in its character. This was demonstrated by how they choreographed and performed their identity.

Gender is an unstable and malleable identity with the physical body also being developed, manipulated, and altered to fit an ideal. Butler has argued that 'the body is figured as a mere instrument or medium for which a set of cultural meanings are only externally related', meaning that there is a social etiquette around how people are expected to behave and present themselves.⁷⁰ Similarly, Bourke has noted that 'The body is a site for the cultural production and staging of the self'.⁷¹ Gender passing individuals staged and presented themselves through the concealment of their biological bodies in favour of styling their outward appearance as overtly male.

Gender passing individuals disordered their understanding of gender through the manipulation of their bodies whether through clothing or binding their breasts. James Allen had a perfectly formed female body, having been swathed in bandages throughout his adulthood, according to his post-mortem examination.⁷² Only his exposed face, arms and hands, which were calloused as a result of manual labour, revealed his manliness.

⁶⁷ Jack Migdalek, *The Embodied Performance of Gender*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 1.

⁶⁸ Phillip Carter, "James Boswell's Manliness," in *English Masculinities, 1660-1800*, ed. Tim Hitchcock and Michelle Cohen, (Oxon: Routledge, 1999): 111-130; Sonya O. Rose, *Limited Livelihoods: Gender Class in Nineteenth Century England*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), pg. 15.

⁶⁹ Rose. *Limited Livelihoods*, 15.

⁷⁰ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, (Oxon: Routledge, 1996), pg. 12.

⁷¹ Joanne Bourke, "The History of Hair" as part of the *Exploring the Body* lecture series given October 31, 2019 at Barnard's Hall Inn, Gresham College. <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/series/exploring-the-body/>

⁷² Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 1-40.

‘Genderfucking’, as Barry Reay has labelled it, is a post-modern representation of the naked form with the body having breasts and a penis.⁷³ This challenges the binary norm of biological identity as being male or female. Gender passing individuals also fell into this category as they restricted and manipulated their bodies in a ferocious manner to conform to societal expectations of what it was to be male. Yet, once they were dead, gender passing individuals were at the mercy of those around them. This ‘genderfucking’ of the biological body suggests that not only is gender unstable, but more importantly that it is an identity to be crafted, practiced, and maintained. The most important thing that enabled gender passing individuals to successfully pass was the permanency in their appearance which was evidenced by the longevity of their gender passing.

For most of their lives, gender passing individuals challenged the equilibrium of heterociscentric society in how they questioned what it meant to be a man. John Tosh has argued that ‘Women were ‘carriers’ of gender, because their reproductive role was held to define their place in society’.⁷⁴ Masculinity, he argues, ‘remained largely out of sight since men as a sex were not confined to this or any other way’.⁷⁵ Yet, gender passing individuals actively rejected the expectations placed upon them from their biology in favour of performing as men. Men were not confined by their gender, yet they were expected to behave respectably and to provide for their families. In this sense, gender passing individuals embodied understandings of nineteenth century ideals as they related to working-class heterosexual men.

Gender performativity is context and time specific, as gender roles differ today from those in the nineteenth century. Both Rose and Mary Holmes have examined how the environment and society can influence how gender is performed daily.⁷⁶ Although gender passing individuals challenged the predetermined notion of gender identity, they adhered to heteronormative ideals of masculinity. Perhaps it was for this reason that they were so

⁷³ Barry Reay, *Watching Hannah: Sexuality, Horror and Bodily De-Formation in Victorian England*, (London: Reakton Books LTD., 2002), 91-124.

⁷⁴ John Tosh, “What Should Historians do with Masculinity?: Reflections on nineteenth century Britain,” *History Workshop Journal*, (1994), 180.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Mary Holmes, “Introduction” in *What is Gender? Sociological Approaches*, (London: SAGE Productions, 2007), 1-18.; Sonya O. Rose, *What is Gender?* (Cambridge; Polity Press, 2010).

successful at 'evading the prying curiosity of the world' as the *Liverpool Mercury* commented after the death of Harry Stokes in 1859.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ "'Harry' Stokes, The Man-Woman," *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

A Methodological Discussion

Microhistory

One methodological approach that has been instrumental to this research is microhistory. I have uncovered twenty-five gender passing individuals across the whole of the nineteenth century and have consequently created microbiographies about their lives. While twenty-five cases may not be a comprehensive sample, and it is possible that many gender passing individuals were not exposed by the press or revealed as biologically female at all during their lifetimes, these cases demonstrate that gender nonconforming people existed and their narratives deserve to be heard.

By examining this small sample in detail, I have explored the intricate lives of these individuals and can offer a more detailed and nuanced discussion about their lives. Microhistory has been developed by many historians, most notably was by Carlo Ginzburg who explored the concept in his book *The Cheese and the Worms*.⁷⁸ The aim of microhistory was to create an intense historical study that engaged in the life of one individual, a single community or an event in the minutest of details. This thesis uses microhistory to not only explore the lives of gender passing individuals, but to also reflect on the unknown gender passing community around them.⁷⁹

There are two different types of historical research according to John Brewer; historians that engage in 'prospect history' (distant history) and those who engage in 'refuge history' (close up analysis).⁸⁰ This line of thought is similar to that of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie who labelled historians as either 'parachutists' or 'truffle hunters'.⁸¹ Those who search for the smallest pieces of information (truffle hunters) can sometimes have more fruitful results compared with those who use large data sets (parachutists) as generalisations can often occur. By using microhistory, this research is an example of 'refuge history' and as Brewer

⁷⁸ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller*, trans. John Tedeschi and Anne Tedeschi (London: Routledge, 1976).; Carlo Ginzburg, "Microhistory: Two or Three Things that I know about it," trans. John Tedeschi and Anne Tedeschi, *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (1993): 10-35.; Levi Giovanni, "On Microhistory," in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* ed. Peter Burke, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 93-113.

⁷⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London: Verso, 2006).

⁸⁰ John Brewer, "Microhistory and the Histories of Everyday Life," *Cultural and Social History* 7, no. 1 (2010): 88.

⁸¹ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Times of Feast, Times of Famine: A History of Climate since the Year 1000* (New York, 1988).

argues, 'The pleasures of refuge history derive not from a sense of control of history but from a sense of belonging, of connectedness – to both persons and details – in the past'.⁸² It is this connectedness to gender passing individuals and gender passing history that has encouraged me to explore their lives in more detail.

For some micro-historians such as Sigurdur Gylfi Magnusson, microhistory is the only type of history of value as it delves into the minutiae of life.⁸³ This level of detail has also been recognised by Levi Giovanni who has focussed on the literal meaning of 'micro' being linked to 'microscopic', and therefore, microhistory is an approach that gets the most out of a topic, an individual or a community.⁸⁴ Giovanni has also highlighted that microhistory has links with the wider community and thus demands a conversation between the public and the private lives of individuals under scrutiny.

One of the challenges of microhistory is to decide how far to delve into the topic and how to confirm if a topic is 'micro' enough, according to Jill Lepore.⁸⁵ Both Julia Laite and Richard Tristano have posed the question of how researchers can quantify microhistory and how to avoid irrelevant discussions.⁸⁶ The individuals in this sample have not appeared as regularly as other popular cases and consequently there is not a large amount of material available about their lives. Yet, Tristano concludes his article by stating that less popular people are more important in history and that they were not lost, 'it is just that no one has bothered to look for them'.⁸⁷ This suggests that small groups of people that did not conform to society's expectations have always existed, but they have been more discreet in living their lives. Gender passing individuals appeared in the press and were recognised for their ability to identify as men. Yet, they have only ever appeared fleetingly in oddity books such as Eric

⁸² Brewer, "Microhistory," 89.

⁸³ Sigurdur Gylfi Magnusson, "Views into the fragments: An Approach from Microhistorical Perspective," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, (2016): 182-206.

⁸⁴ Giovanni, "On Microhistory," 98.

⁸⁵ Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 1 (2001): 129-144.; Lara Putnam, 'To Study the Fragments/Whole: Microhistory and the Atlantic World', *Journal of Social History*, (2006): 615- 630.

⁸⁶ Julia Laite, "The Emmet's Inch: Small History in a Digital Age," *Journal of Social History*, (2019): 3.; Richard M. Tristano, "Microhistory and Holy Family Parish: Some Methodological Considerations," *US Catholic Historian*, (1996): 26-27.

⁸⁷ Tristano, "Microhistory and Holy Family Parish," 30.

Dingwall's *Human Oddities* or in ballads published in Oram and Turnbull's *The Lesbian History Sourcebook* and Hindley's *Curiosities of Street Literature* for example.⁸⁸

Microhistory encourages us to engage with the lives of gender passing individuals in detail to identify how they performed and crafted their masculinity to obtain employment, engage in romantic relationships, become fathers and breadwinners. It has also encouraged me to engage with how an individual's private life related to their wider influence in society. By contextualising the nineteenth century and examining how men and women performed socially acceptable roles, this thesis reflects on the politics of identity and considers how gender passing individuals challenged the heterociscentric ideals of the time.

Trans history

Trans theory and the historicisation of transgender identity has been explored in social, medical, and legal contexts. According to Susan Stryker and Aren Aizura, trans theory is a critical framework that has been used 'to re-evaluate prior understandings of gender, sex, sexuality, embodiment, and identity'.⁸⁹ Yet, literature relating to trans lives has typically involved life writing and personal experience which can, at times, remove the significance of historicisation. Although I have consciously chosen not to explore or label gender passing individuals as 'trans', it is impossible not to see a link between the two identities. Indeed, this link is evident in Stryker's definition of transgender identity when she states that, "transgender' [is] the *movement across a social[ly] imposed boundary away from an unchosen starting place*' (Stryker's emphasis).⁹⁰ Similar to Stryker's definition, gender passing individuals in the nineteenth century transcended the rigid expectations of gender to identify in a way that did not correlate to their biological identity.

The term 'transgender' has been used since the 1990s and has gone through various stages of transformation. In her 2008 book, *Transgender History*, Stryker argued that transgender as a term was 'still under construction'.⁹¹ Although Stryker argued this some

⁸⁸ Eric J. Dingwall, *Some Human Oddities: Studies in the Queer, the Uncanny and the Fanatical* (London: Hame and Val Thal., 1947).; Charles Hindley, *Curiosities of Street Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).; Alison Oram and Annmarie Turnbull ed., *The Lesbian History Sourcebook: Love and Sex between women in Britain from 1780-1970* (London: Routledge, 2001).

⁸⁹ Susan Stryker and Aren Aizura ed., *The Transgender Studies Reader 2*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 3.

⁹⁰ Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2008), 1.

⁹¹ Ibid.

twelve years ago, it is still the case. Indeed, in their recent doctoral thesis, Emma Hutson has argued that there is 'still [an] evolving nature of terminology in trans theory and culture', demonstrating that as a term and a theoretical concept, it is still under development.⁹² Trans history lacks a concrete starting point and only in recent years has it began to be explored by historians and academics as a field of its own. Yet, trans people are not a new phenomenon and have existed throughout history and on a global platform, from India's hijra caste to the Inuit's Itijjuaq people.⁹³

Leland Spencer and Jamie Capuzza have provided a chronology of the usage of the term 'transgender'. The terms 'transgender' and 'transsexual' were largely used in the 1950s as medical terms that identified the differences between those who had undergone gender reassignment surgery (or the equivalent) and those who had not.⁹⁴ The 1970s saw a need for a single term that encompassed a variety of gender nonconforming identities. The 1980s saw a focus on the universality of the term 'transgender' and this was used throughout the 1990s. Mary Alice Adams has argued that 'the key to the appeal of the transgender label was its applicability to more people by focussing generally on gender variation or nonconformity'.⁹⁵ As more trans pioneers became active, new terminology was developed. For instance, Virginia Prince created the term 'transgenderist' as a noun to refer to someone who embodied their gender permanently but did not undergo gender reassignment surgery.⁹⁶ This example highlights the significance of self-identification and considers the importance of gender identity to an individual. In the 1990s, the term 'trans*' was adopted, in particular by the academic community, as an umbrella term for a wide range of trans identities.⁹⁷ Yet, because of this inclusivity, communities did not feel well-represented and temporary gender identities such as drag and cross-dressing were included within the umbrella term of 'trans*'.

⁹² Emma Hutson, "Lived Experiences and Literature: Trans Authors, Trans Fiction and Trans Theory" (PhD diss., Sheffield Hallam University, 2019), 11.

⁹³ Christine Burns ed., *Trans Britain: Our Journey from the Shadows*, (London: Unbound, 2018), 8.

⁹⁴ Oram. *Her Husband was a Woman!*, 61-109.

⁹⁵ Leland G. Spencer and Jamie C. Capuzza ed., *Transgender Communication Studies: Histories, Trends and Trajectories*, (London: Lexington Books, 2015), 174.

⁹⁶ Virginia Prince, "Sex vs. Gender," *International Journal of Transgenderism* 8, no. 4 (2005): 29-32.; Virginia Prince. "Homosexuality, Transvestism and Transsexuality: Reflections on their Etiology and Differentiation," *International Journal of Transgenderism* 8, no. 4 (2005): 17-20.

⁹⁷ Mary Alice Adams, "Traversing the Transcape: A Brief Historical Etymology of Trans* Terminology," in *Transgender Communication Studies: Histories, Trends and Trajectories*, ed. Leland G. Spencer and Jamie C. Capuzza (London: Lexington Books, 2015), 170-180.

A recurring theme that has been examined by scholars is that labelling historic cases of people who were gender nonconforming with modern terminology is problematic. Indeed, it is both unprofessional and disrespectful to label historic people with terms that they would not have been familiar with. As Clark has highlighted, 'we cannot assume the present day understanding of sexual and gender identity as gay, lesbian, transgender, or even gender fluid can be applied to how people thought of themselves in the past'.⁹⁸ This is because there was no awareness of terms other than 'man' or 'woman', 'male' or 'female'. Furthermore, Christine Burns has also argued that to label 'figures from antiquity' with modern terminology is 'a dangerous thing'.⁹⁹ Society feels the need to define people and label certain groups because of how they present themselves, and therefore those who do not receive a label or fit into a category can become invisible. Hutson has argued that being "invisible" 'means being unlabelled' and goes on to say that 'revealing the inherent constructs behind this means contesting the power of those considered to be the 'norm''.¹⁰⁰ This notion links to gender passing individuals in this sample because they too wanted to be labelled, particularly as men, workers, husbands and fathers as opposed to their predetermined biological identity as female. Indeed, they were successful in gaining these labels in many instances and were categorised according to society's expectations of men. This highlights the need to be labelled in an appropriate manner and, by extension, having a role in society that correlated with that label.

Another difficulty with the historicisation of trans identity is that gender and sexuality are often grouped together and discussed in a similar way. Spencer and Capuzza have highlighted that 'The 'T' is too often tacked onto the end of 'LGBT'', and thus needs more explicit discussion.¹⁰¹ They argue that it is necessary to 'recognise a *relationship between* rather than an *amalgamation of* sexual orientation and gender identity'.¹⁰² However, the issue with this, I argue, is that there is no relationship between gender and sexual orientation and as such they should be dealt with separately. In this thesis, therefore, gender performativity and the embodiment of gender is discussed independently of marriages and

⁹⁸ Anna Clark, *Alternative Histories of the Self: A Cultural History of Sexuality and Secrets, 1762-1917*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017), 3.

⁹⁹ Burns, *Trans Britain*, 7.

¹⁰⁰ Hutson, "Lived Experiences," 12.

¹⁰¹ Spencer and Capuzza, *Transgender Communication Studies*, 8.

¹⁰² Spencer and Capuzza, *Transgender Communication Studies*, 17.

relationships. To an extent, this freedom of gender performativity has been expressed in Clark's book *Alternative Histories of the Self*, in which she argues that historical 'people would be free to moderate their own behaviours and act as they saw fit, as long as they depended on themselves and did not harm others'.¹⁰³ We see this in several gender passing cases including that of Thomas Green, who was released from prison following the exposure of his biological identity in 1861 and William Seymour whose gender passing identity was not taken into consideration when he was sentenced for theft in 1875.¹⁰⁴ This implies that people had the ability to identify as alternative genders providing that they were committed and consistent in their identities.

Gender Passing

Owing to the modern nature of the term 'transgender' or 'trans' and the unavailability of the term to people living in the nineteenth century, this thesis uses 'passing' to highlight the movement between gender identities and performativity. Stryker has argued that 'transgender' means 'people who cross over (trans-) the boundaries constructed by their culture to define and contain that gender'.¹⁰⁵ In this sense, we can see how gender passing individuals 'transed' the gender boundary in how they performed as men and were recognisably male in society. Similarly, the term 'passing' refers specifically to the movement from one gender identity to another with a focus on the performativity of gender roles and expectations contemporary to the period. The term 'passing' was taken from several nineteenth century newspaper reports about gender passing individuals. For instance, the headline for Harry Stokes's death in the *Ashton Weekly Reporter* was 'A Woman Passing as a Man for Forty Years'.¹⁰⁶ Similarly to Stryker's 'transing' the gender boundaries, passing in this instance, suggests that there was movement within Harry's identity and thus is the most appropriate term to use.

Although this research focuses on gender passing, Elaine Ginsberg has reflected on the significance of racial passing. In her book *Passing and the Fictions of Identity*, Ginsberg has explored how some light-skinned African Americans passed as white in Antebellum America

¹⁰³ Clark, *Alternative Histories of the Self*, 19.

¹⁰⁴ "Extraordinary Case of Concealment of Sex." *York Herald*, (York; England), May 11, 1861.; "A Woman as a Cabdriver for ten years, A Romance of the Rank." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), February 13, 1875.

¹⁰⁵ Stryker, *Transgender History*, 1.

¹⁰⁶ "A Woman Passing as a Man for Forty Years." *Ashton Weekly Reporter*, (Ashton: England), October 22, 1859.

in order to have access to improved living conditions and a better quality of life.¹⁰⁷ However, white Americans found this problematic as they believed that light-skinned African Americans were shirking their subordination.¹⁰⁸ Ginsberg has noted how passing between race and gender is particularly difficult because they are both 'bound by social and legal constraints leading to the physical body'.¹⁰⁹ Like Stryker, Ginsberg highlights that 'passing is also about the boundaries established between identity categories and about the individual and cultural anxieties induced by boundary crossing'.¹¹⁰ Therefore, there is a focus on moving across culturally acceptable boundaries and identifying as something other than a person's predetermined life. In this sense there is a clear link between Ginsberg's definition of 'passing' and Stryker's definition of 'transgender'. Yet, it is essential to recognise that many transgender people today do not accept 'passing' as an appropriate way to describe their lives because of the assumption that passing facilitates the normality of binary gender expectations as either 'male' or 'female', 'man' or 'woman', 'masculine' or 'feminine'.

Passing represented safety and security for gender passing individuals in the nineteenth century and facilitated their acceptance within their communities. In *Transgender Warriors*, Leslie Feinberg argued that, 'Passing means having to hide your identity in fear, in order to live. Being forced to pass is a recent historical development. It is *passing* that is a product of oppression'.¹¹¹ However, I do not agree with Feinberg's definition of 'passing'. Because I have been unsuccessful in locating emotional responses from gender passing individuals themselves, I have relied upon how journalists, members of the public and writers have described them, and I argue that gender passing individuals were brave in their identity. Indeed, we could say that gender passing individuals did not 'hide in fear', to use Feinberg's expression, because they actively engaged and committed themselves to community life. Arguably, passing offered a level of safety and support for individuals.

Being recognised as the gender that they presented as was essential for gender passing individuals. Stryker has argued that 'most people have great difficulty in recognising the humanity of another person if they cannot recognise a person's gender'.¹¹² Stryker

¹⁰⁷ Elaine K. Ginsberg, *Passing and the Fictions of Identity*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).

¹⁰⁸ Ginsberg, *Passing*, 1.

¹⁰⁹ Ginsberg, *Passing*, 2.

¹¹⁰ Stryker, *Transgender History*, 1.

¹¹¹ Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 89.

¹¹² Stryker, *Transgender History*, 6.

continues by noting that ‘the gender-changing person can evoke in others a primordial fear of monstrosity, or loss of humanness’.¹¹³ If individuals had been unsuccessful in passing as men then more would have been exposed because of this ‘primordial fear’, surely in a dehumanising and violent way. Therefore, the public must have been tolerant of gender passing individuals for them to be recognised as men in their communities and for them to live as men for most of their adult lives, as was the case for Harry Stokes who remained living in the same area for over twenty years even after his initial exposure. However, as previously discussed, we do not have emotional responses from the individuals themselves, instead we have official documentation, newspapers and street literature that have been written about the individuals and this raises issues in understanding how they identified themselves.

Passing means conforming to the social expectations of heterociscentric lives, which is problematic. Sandy Stone has recognised the difficulties of passing in her essay ‘The Empire Strikes Back’ written as a response to Janice Raymond’s book *The Transsexual Empire*.¹¹⁴ Stone argues that ‘The highest purpose of the transsexual is to erase him/herself, to fade into the “normal” population as soon as possible’.¹¹⁵ Although Stone sees this as being problematic, it is fair to say that most people do this in order to fit in to society. Stone continues by arguing that ‘it is culture speaking with the voice of an individual’ that forces people to conform to a heterociscentric notion of society.¹¹⁶ In other words, culture dictates how the world is organised and it is the people who conform to this notion that perpetuates the need for binary gender roles and expectations. Stone concludes by highlighting that ‘The most critical thing a transsexual can do, the things that constitutes success, is to “pass”’, but to pass, ‘means the denial of mixture’.¹¹⁷ Mixture in this sense refers to a denial of diversity in population. This is because passing maintains the social equilibrium of heterociscentricity. Gender passing individuals actively maintained the social equilibrium of gender binaries because there were no other gender identities that they could identify as. By passing, individuals obtained regular employment, they were accepted by their workmates, their

¹¹³ Stryker, *Transgender History*, 6.

¹¹⁴ Janice Raymond, *The Transsexual Empire*, (London: The Women’s Press, 1979).; Sandy Stone, “The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto,” in *Body Guards: Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. Kristina Straub and Julia Epstein (London: Routledge, 1992), 221-235.

¹¹⁵ Stone, “The Empire Strikes Back,” 230.

¹¹⁶ Stone, “The Empire Strikes Back,” 229.

¹¹⁷ Stone, “The Empire Strikes Back,” 231.

partners, their families, and their neighbours and therefore, passing was a necessity rather than a choice.

Chapter Two

What Makes a Man?

Even on his death bed Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson remained committed to his male identity. Joseph was from Etherley in County Durham and worked in a colliery as well as supporting local farmers as a harvester during the summer months of the year. *Reynolds's News* reported on his death and subsequent discovery in 1869 and noted that:

He had lain in a bed of sickness, and [has] been dependent upon some kind neighbours, whom, however, she always prevented coming too near her, and latterly she persisted in wearing trousers in bed.¹

Evidently his trousers represented more than a piece of clothing for Joseph, as they were symbolic of his masculinity and his manliness, which in turn concealed his sexed body. His refusal to remove them can be understood twofold. Firstly, this decision displayed his commitment to his gender and his confidence in performing as a man. Secondly, it suggested that there was a level of fear in Joseph not wanting to expose himself whilst he was still alive. This chapter explores the themes of embodiment and manliness as evidenced through the ways in which gender passing individuals presented and clothed themselves to pass in society.

Gender is a 'stylized repetition of acts' according to Judith Butler or, as Candace West and Don Zimmerman put it, something that has to be 'done'.² For gender to be recognised it has to be embodied and to embody something is to become it. Gender passing individuals became gendered by fulfilling the acceptable roles attributed to men as well as by physically altering their outward presentation to pass as male. Using Jack Migdalek's work on performance and embodiment, this chapter considers how gender passing individuals 'choreographed' and 'performed' their masculinity in ways that were recognisable as masculine by their contemporaries.³

¹ "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Reynolds's News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.

² Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal*, (1988): 520.

³ Jack Migdalek, *The Embodied Performance of Gender* (Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 10.

To examine how both masculinities and femininities are embodied, we must uncover the social conventions by which an individual is expected to behave. Migdalek has likened the body to a bonsai tree in the ways it is trained, manipulated and physically configured to remain a perfect miniature.⁴ Much like the analogy of the bonsai tree, this chapter argues that gender is an identity that can be moulded and is unstable. It highlights how gender passing individuals manipulated and altered their biological bodies to coincide and adhere to the expectations of working-class masculinity in nineteenth-century Britain. Throughout this chapter we also begin to see the extent of the 4 C's of Passing framework in how the characteristics of consistency and concealment were entwined within different gender passing cases. Indeed, the nineteenth century contemporary public required consistency in gender performativity to acknowledge and tolerate gender passing individuals. In turn, gender passing individuals needed to conceal their biological bodies and present themselves as men in a confident manner to fulfil societal expectations of masculinity.

The first theme explored in this chapter is the role of language in describing gender passing individuals in the press. It considers how the press focussed on the gestures used by gender passing individuals to convey their masculinity. It considers the importance of gestures in how individuals were described and how the press responded to them, focussing on their manliness and how they regulated their emotions. According to Joanne Begiato 'to be 'manly' was an ideal and an inspiration for men of all social ranks in the nineteenth century'.⁵ The term 'manly' can be defined by how a person appears. This has led John Tosh to argue that a man's virility and ruggedness qualified their manliness in this period.⁶ However, we can extend this definition to include other qualities specific to gender passing individuals such as their ability to provide, their passability in appearance and their performance of masculine gender roles appropriate to their class and profession in society.

The chapter's second theme focuses on how the body became gendered through clothing and the importance of appearance for gender passing individuals. Diana Crane for instance writes that, 'Clothing as a form of symbolic communication was enormously

⁴ Migdalek, *The Embodied Performance of Gender*, 107.

⁵ Joanne Begiato, "Punishing the Unregulated Manly Body and Emotions in Early Victorian England," in *The Victorian Male Body*, ed. Joanne Ella Parsons and Ruth Heholt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 46.

⁶ John Tosh, "What Should Historians do with Masculinity? Reflections on nineteenth century Britain," *History Workshop Journal*, (1994): 180.

important in the nineteenth century as a means of conveying information about the wearers' social role, social standing and personal character'.⁷ Trousers became a symbol of masculinity for many gender passing individuals with both John Murphy and Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson being noted in press reports for refusing to remove them even when they were ill.⁸ Beverley Lemire has recognised that 'Trousers crossed social and cultural categories, reflecting the power of imperial agendas, global trade and institutional transformations'.⁹ Indeed, trousers became a universal signifier of masculinity and it is likely that this was the reason that gender passing individuals committed themselves to wearing trousers to enhance their gender performance, even towards the end of their lives.

This chapter concludes with an exploration of gender slippages including voice, hands, and the cultivation of beards in the nineteenth century. Kathryn Hughes and Lucinda Hawksley have suggested that beards became an intrinsic signifier of working-class masculinity.¹⁰ Hawksley has commented that, although beards did not come into fashion until the second half of the nineteenth century, 'those men who did not, or could not grow a beard, or at least substantial whiskers, were viewed with something akin to suspicion'.¹¹ Indeed, according to newspaper reports it was this lack of facial hair that became an obvious signifier of an individual's gender passing identity. Physical appearance and presentation were instrumental in how gender passing individuals were responded to in society and the extent to which they passed in their communities.

⁷ Diana Crane, "Clothing Behaviour as Non-Verbal Resistance: Marginal Women and Alternative Dress in the Nineteenth Century," *Fashion Theory* 3, no. 2 (1999): 242.

⁸ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.; "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Reynolds's News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.

⁹ Beverley Lemire, "A Question of Trousers: Seafarers, Masculinity and Empire in the Shaping of British Male Dress, c. 1600-1800," *Cultural and Social History* 13, no. 1 (2016): 1.

¹⁰ Lucinda Hawksley, *Moustaches, Whiskers and Beards* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2014).; Kathryn Hughes, *Victorians Undone* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2017).

¹¹ Hawksley. *Moustaches*, 66.

Gendered Performances

It has long been assumed that biology, in all its manifestations including hormonal, chromosomal and gonadal have shaped an individual's gender identity. Children have been labelled as 'boy' or 'girl' even before they are born in most instances and expected to live as 'male' or 'female' according to their anatomy and genitalia.¹² However, mothers in the nineteenth century would not have been aware of their child's biological identity until they were born. They could guess or hope for a boy or girl but there was only a fifty percent chance of having the biological child that they wanted. Similarly, the odds alter again when we consider that gender is independent of biology and not every child's biology is the same as their gender, as gender passing individuals proved. Gender is singularly unique; a 'free-floating artifice', and it is open to interpretation and presentation.¹³ This section explores how gender passing individuals were described in newspaper articles with reference to how they embodied their masculinity. It focuses on how individuals were recognised as 'manly' and what this meant for them in their embodiment of gender.

The concept of embodying gender is a new and emerging theoretical concept that has gained momentum in recent years.¹⁴ An extensive discussion on modern heterosexual and cisgender 'normative' gender embodiment comes from Jack Migdalek. Migdalek has defined embodiment as a 'physical deportment' which examines the social constructions of gendered femininity and gendered masculinity.¹⁵ Migdalek uses the terms 'choreography' and 'performance' to explore how gender is embodied. The 'choreography' of the body refers to

¹² Virginia Prince, "Sex vs. Gender," *International Journal of Transgenderism* 8, no. 4 (2005): 29-32.; Virginia Prince, "Homosexuality, Transvestism and Transsexuality: Reflections on their Etiology and Differentiation," *International Journal of Transgenderism* 8, no. 4 (2005): 17-20.; Mary Louise Roberts, "Beyond 'Crisis' in Understanding Gender Transformation," *Gender and History*, (2016): 358-366.

¹³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 9.

¹⁴ Beatrice Allegranti, *Embodied Performances: Sexuality, Gender, Bodies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015).; Ava Baron, "Masculinity, the Embodied Male Worker and the Historians Gaze," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, (2006): 143-160.; Joanne Begiato, "Between Poise and Power: Embodied Manliness in Eighteenth Century and Nineteenth Century British Culture," *Transactions of the RHS*, (2016): 125-147.; Begiato, "Punishing the Unregulated Manly Body," 46-64.; Alexandra Howson, *Embodying Gender* (London: Sage Publications, 2005).

¹⁵ Migdalek, *The Embodied Performance*, 1.

bodily movements and gestures suggesting that there is a conscious effort by the individual to present themselves in a specific way. 'Performance', for Migdalek, refers to how the choreography is delivered by the person.¹⁶ For gender passing individuals, their choreography also included their clothing and their physical appearance, components that enabled them to live socially as men. Brenda Farnell has also explored bodily movements and gestures describing them as 'highly deliberate' and 'choreographed' that encourage people to perform to a social ideal.¹⁷ Gender passing individuals strategically choreographed their bodily movements and performed acceptable traits of masculinity that were contemporary to the period in order to demonstrate their commitment, consistency and confidence in their gender identity. By outwardly demonstrating this, many were successful in gender passing for long periods of time and thus were viewed as men by their communities.

The gender traits that gender passing individuals chose to embody, their choreography, and how they performed this embodiment was essential to how they were viewed in society. For instance, articles about John/Elizabeth Hayward focussed on their ability to 'swear with tolerable grace, get drunk, smoke tobacco [and] make love to the girls'.¹⁸ Charles Wilkins was also praised for being able to 'smoke, drink, tell her story and sing her song with any of the workmen'.¹⁹ It was as if journalists had certain male characteristics that they felt ought to be addressed in order for individuals to be accepted as men. Gender passing individuals seemingly learned from those around them; from their workmates, their fathers, and brothers (as was the case for John Smith) and their friends and conscious chose how to perform as men.²⁰

Men aspired to be strong, responsible, and dominant in their community.²¹ Manliness was used throughout the nineteenth century and meant various things to different men. John Tosh has argued that 'manliness has to be earned by mastering the circumstances of life and

¹⁶ Migdalek, *The Embodied Performance*, 10.

¹⁷ Brenda Farnell, "Gesture and Movement" in *Encyclopaedia of Cultural Anthropology*, ed. David Levinson and Melvin Ember (New York: Henry Holt and Co, 1996), 536.

¹⁸ "Another Female Husband." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), January 30, 1829.

¹⁹ "Smethwick: Romantic Affair." *Birmingham Journal*, (Birmingham: England), August 1, 1846.

²⁰ "[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.

²¹ Sonya O. Rose. *Limited Livelihoods: Gender Class in Nineteenth Century England* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 139-141.

thus securing the respect of one's peers'.²² Tosh recognised that there were different qualities of manliness which urged men 'to work, to pray, to stand up for their rights, to turn the other cheek, to sow wild oats, to be chaste and so on'.²³ Although Tosh has focussed on 'manliness' and 'gentlemanliness' being typically middle-class ideals, gender passing individuals also possessed some of these qualities to a degree. For instance, James Allen and Harry Stokes were recognised for their working abilities and dedication to providing for their families.²⁴ Although, both John Murphy and Frederick 'Scratchem' Mitchell lived isolated lives and did not engage in any intimate relationships towards the latter part of their lives, as far as we are aware.²⁵ In all of these gender passing cases, individuals were undoubtedly confident in the embodiment of masculinity and stood up for their rights, to use Tosh's words, to live as men irrespective of their biological identity.

Manliness was not only a transferable quality but it was also attainable for all men irrespective of class distinction, according to Joanne Begiato.²⁶ Indeed, Begiato has also noted how men 'fashioned their bodies and hair as external markers of sex, virility, civility and masculinity'.²⁷ Gender passing individuals had control of their bodies. They controlled their physical strength and their external appearance and thereby showcased their masculinity to others. They exuded their manliness through their outward body and how they performed and personified their gender identity. Newspaper articles that commented on individuals who gender passed typically referred to the handsomeness of the person or highlighted how they had a distinctive appearance. Likewise, they all recognised how the individual looked visibly masculine and was therefore passable as a man. This can be seen in cases including that of Charles Wilkins and Anna Maria Wilkins who were both described as being of 'masculine character'.²⁸ One person who was not able to pass, however, was John/Elizabeth Hayward. Hayward appeared in the *Court of Requests* around 1806 and their story returned to the press

²² John Tosh, "Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, (2002): 458.

²³ Tosh, "Gentlemanly Politeness," 462.

²⁴ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *The Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 1, 1829.; "The Female Husband in Manchester." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.

²⁵ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.; "Concealment of Sex for Fifteen Years." *Liverpool Daily Post*, (Liverpool: England), August 24, 1867, 7.

²⁶ Begiato, "Punishing the Unregulated Manly Body," 46.

²⁷ Begiato, "Between Poise and Power," 128.

²⁸ "Smethwick: Romantic Affair." *Birmingham Journal*, (Birmingham: England), August 1, 1846.; "Extraordinary Case of Bigamy." *New Devon Journal*, (Barnstaple: England), March 28, 1850.

following the discovery of James Allen in 1829.²⁹ As a result of the public and the courts not definitively knowing the biological identity of John/Elizabeth Hayward, they became known as ‘Betty John’ both in court and in press coverage of the case in 1806.³⁰

Hayward appeared in court charged with accruing debt and failing to repay it. At the time, the prosecution was unaware of Hayward’s gender or biological identity as Hayward presented themselves as both Elizabeth and John throughout the trial. When presenting as Elizabeth, they were described in the following way by a journalist writing for the *Morning Post*, a description which captures the contemporary confusion about how to name and identify such individuals:

Whatever the gender, the animal appeared before the Court in a female habit, was rather elegant, of a moderate size, tolerabl[y] handsome, about thirty-two, had a firm countenance and manly step, no beard, susceptible of love, a voice tending to the masculine, with engaging manners and was rather sensible.³¹

Elizabeth Hayward was later described as ‘it’ in the *Court of Requests*.³² Evidently, Hayward did not display overtly manly qualities through their appearance, and they dressed outwardly as female. Similarly, they possessed what was considered a more masculine voice and their gait was described as ‘manly’, but they did not have any facial hair to identify them as being biologically male. For Hayward, there was an androgynous quality to them, and it was this lack of clarity that seemingly challenged their legitimacy.

Some gender passing individuals passed temporarily or permanently, some for financial reasons and others for independence. Liberty Smith has argued that it is simpler to imagine that female to male gender passing individuals who adopted a male identity did so for the valuable economic opportunities associated with men.³³ This is something that

²⁹ “Extraordinary Investigation.” *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.; “Another Female Husband.” *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), January 30, 1829.; William Hutton F.A.S.S. *Courts of Requests: Their Nature, Utility and Powers described with a Variety of Cases determined in that of Birmingham*, (Birmingham: Knott and Lloyd, 1806), 419-430.

³⁰ As a result of the contemporary confusion about gendering John/Elizabeth Hayward, I have chosen to refer to them using gender-neutral pronouns of ‘they’ and ‘them’ as I do not want to mis-gender them throughout the discussion of their case.

³¹ “Extraordinary Investigation.” *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.

³² Hutton *Courts of Requests*, 419-430.

³³ Liberty Smith, “Listen to the “Wives” of the “Female Husbands”,” *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, (2008): 108.

Christine Burns has also recognised when trying to label and categorise gender nonconforming historic individuals. Burns argues that ‘there is sometimes dispute over whether the individual should be claimed as a feminist icon (switching gender to access professions and benefits closed to women), or a lesbian heroine (switching to legitimise a same-sex relationship), or indeed a transgender pioneer’.³⁴ The problem with this explicit labelling is that modern communities try to reclaim historic individuals by using labels that were not accessible to individuals whilst they were alive. Similarly, labelling individuals in this way, as Burns and Smith have tried to do, suggests that the life of the individual has not been accepted in the way that they wanted to be seen, which, in the cases of gender passing individuals, was as men. Despite this, the example of Hayward highlights that both the contemporary public and the court sought permanence in gender performance for them to acknowledge the individual as their outward gender identity. Although the court was unable to identify with absolute certainty the biological sex of Hayward, it was concluded that they were obviously male because they could ‘kick a bully’, as well as swear, smoke and drink like their male companions in the local public house.³⁵ No medical examination was undertaken initially, and it was simply due to the appearance of Hayward’s manly characteristics that labelled them as a man.

Two days after Hayward was sentenced, a marriage registration was produced revealing that Hayward was in fact a biological woman who had assumed the dress, appearance and identity of a man following a difficult marriage. When Hayward appeared to be a biological female assuming a male gender, they were admired for their manliness and performative masculinity. However, when appearing as Elizabeth, the court labelled them as a degenerate. The contemporary public required consistency in gender performance for individuals to be accepted as the gender that they presented themselves as.

The strong and muscular body was something to be admired in the nineteenth century particularly as the body denoted manliness. Ava Baron has explored the concept of ‘muscular masculinity’ in her work and has argued that ‘muscularity was not simply a physical

³⁴ Christine Burns (ed.), *Trans Britain: Our Journey from the Shadows* (London: Unbound, 2018), 11.

³⁵ “Extraordinary Investigation.” *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.; “Another Female Husband.” *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), January 30, 1829.

component of gender, it was part of a ritualised enactment'.³⁶ In this sense, the muscular body was a signifier of masculinity and it became ritualised in terms of how people understood it as performative.³⁷ Peta Tait has shown how travelling trapeze artists in the nineteenth century showcased their arms in their acts to highlight their strength and abilities.³⁸ Female trapeze artists, as much as male artists, demonstrated their muscularity in their performances. This interest in muscular women was further explored within the relationship of Arthur Munby and Hannah Cullwick.³⁹ Munby was appreciative of working women's bodies and married his servant Cullwick, regularly taking pictures of her engaging in manual labour and domestic chores. In these muscular performances, women showed how their bodies could be manipulated just as easily as men's.

This focus on the muscular body is further shown in Ford Madox Brown's painting *Work*, that can be seen in figure 6.⁴⁰ *Work* aims to highlight all people and Victorian social systems at once, with characters representing the poor, the working classes, the middle and upper classes as well as men, women, children and animals. The viewer is first struck by the central male figures who are laying water pipes in Hampstead. Joanne Begiato highlights that workers were sometimes represented as violent womanisers in society, 'they were, however, also represented in art and print as rough men with tender feelings and magnificent physiques'.⁴¹ Indeed, this physicality and strength is clearly displayed by the workers in the middle of the painting. Tim Barringer has argued that 'this group [of workers] in the throes of labour, brilliantly lit, casts the rest of the society into the shade'.⁴² On the outskirts of the painting there is a bare-footed flower seller, urchin children, middle-class women and horse riders. However, it is the male workers that dominate the scene. Although the title suggests

³⁶ Ava Baron, "Masculinity, the Embodied Male Worker and the Historians Gaze," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, (2006): 149.

³⁷ Joanne Begiato, *Manliness in Britain, 1760-1900: Bodies, Emotion, and Material Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

³⁸ Peta Tait, "Female Pleasure and Muscular Arms in Touring Trapeze Acts," in *Victorian Traffic: Identity, Exchange and Performance* by Sue Thomas (London: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 189.

³⁹ Diedre D'Albertis, "Beyond the Bronte Myth: Jane Eyre, Hannah Cullwick and Subjectivity in Servitude," *Bronte Studies* 39, no. 4 (2014): 267-278.; Leonore Davidoff, "Class and Gender in Victorian England: The Diaries of Arthur J. Munby and Hannah Cullwick," *Feminist Studies* 5, no. 1 (1979), 86-141.

⁴⁰ Ford Madox Brown, *Work*, 1852-1865, Oil on Canvas, held at Manchester Art Gallery. Special exhibition dedicated to Madox Brown's work in 2012. Accessed March 19, 2020. <https://manchesterartgallery.org/exhibitions-and-events/exhibition/ford-madox-brown-pre-raphaelite-pioneer/> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Work_\(painting\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Work_(painting))

⁴¹ Begiato, *Manliness in Britain*, 175.

⁴² Tim Barringer, *Men At Work: Art and Labour in Victorian Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 22.

Madox Brown's focus was on 'work', it is impossible not to notice the painter's focus on the worker's arms specifically. Barringer highlights that the 'muscular forearms, [with] sleeves rolled up, punctuate the great pentagonal mass formed by their bodies'.⁴³ There is an obvious focus on the stress and strain of the body in this painting. Indeed, the men are displaying their strength in lifting boxes, carrying bricks, shovelling mud, and stone, and holding their tools, all of which creates a feeling of movement. The physical strength being displayed in Madox Brown's painting is reminiscent of the discussions of gender passing individuals in newspaper reports. In that many articles referred to the physicality of individuals and their strength. Interestingly, it was a gender passing individuals' delicate hands that seemingly exposed their identity.

⁴³ Barringer, *Men At Work*, 22.



Figure 6 F. Madox Brown, 'Work', 1852-1865

137cm X 198cm

Oil on Canvas

Held at Manchester Art Gallery, England.

Although newspaper reports that explored the lives of gender passing individuals did not describe them as being ‘muscular’, they did refer to individuals as being ‘well made’, ‘stout’ or of ‘masculine character’, as Anna Maria Wilkins was described in 1850 in the *New Devon Journal*.⁴⁴ The choice to refer to an individual’s ‘masculine character’ highlighted their stature and physicality. This theme of strength was developed throughout gender passing cases and was referenced in James Allen’s case in 1829. The *Newcastle Courant* commented that, ‘the labour she was employed in could not have been performed, except by a person of uncommon strength of body, which the deceased possessed to an extraordinary degree for one of her sex’.⁴⁵ The reference to strength links to the idea of gender passing individuals having muscular bodies that had been trained and developed through manual labour in order for them to complete work attributed to men.

For some gender passing individuals, it was through an early initiation into the world of work that their bodies were trained. Michael Anton Budd has explored how the worker’s body became almost like a machine by the time of the Industrial Revolution. By the 1820s, he writes, ‘the body of the common worker had become enormously more profitable as an input in industrial capitalism’.⁴⁶ It was the workers that made profits and increased production due to their dedication and need for employment. However, ‘machines were having a huge bodily impact on society and sometimes a murderous one’, writes Budd, and this was particularly evident in industrial accidents.⁴⁷ Even without the worry of industrial accidents, gender passing individuals had to keep themselves safe and well in the workplace. This was because an accident would have likely exposed their biological identity.

The commitment to their employment shown by gender passing individuals highlighted that they wanted to be taken seriously as men and be recognised as breadwinners. When John Murphy exposed himself as biologically female after living as a man and being a husband for two years, he was described as a ‘short, stout, good-looking woman’

⁴⁴ “The Female Husband.” *Bell’s Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; “Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband.” *The Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne; England), January 4, 1829.; “Extraordinary Case of Bigamy.” *New Devon Journal*, (Barnstaple: England), March 28, 1850.

⁴⁵ “Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband.” *The Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.

⁴⁶ Michael Anton Budd, *The Sculpture Machine: Physical Culture and Body Politics*, (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 2.

⁴⁷ Budd, *The Sculpture Machine*, 5.

by *Bell's Life* in 1825.⁴⁸ The reference to John Murphy being 'stout' suggests strength, especially as he had been working as a bricklayer to support his family. John Murphy was initiated into the world of work as a 'drover's lad' where his day was predominantly spent driving cattle.⁴⁹ He then traded this position in and became an apprentice bricklayer in Derbyshire.

Bricklaying was, and still is, a physically demanding and arduous job. *Bell's Life* commented on John Murphy's employment in 1825, writing that 'At Chilwell, she entered into the service of a bricklayer, and first learned to carry the hod, which she has since been accustomed to do with much dexterity and alertness'.⁵⁰ To 'carry the hod', as the journalist described, was a physically demanding job. A 'hod', which can be seen in figure 7 and also in the background of Madox Brown's painting *Work* in figure 6, is a three-sided box with a long pole attached to it.⁵¹ This tool is predominantly used to carry and transport bricks to bricklayers. The hod typically holds between eleven and twelve bricks if stacked correctly in a chevron style. Hod carriers, or 'hoddies', are still employed today on building sites. A recent job advertisement for a hoddie recognised that the candidate needed 'physical strength to mix, pack and carry bricks, stones, mortar and other construction materials'.⁵² Evidently hod carrying required a strong, able-bodied person with a lot of physical strength which, in the nineteenth century, was largely reserved for a man.

⁴⁸ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ *The British Workman*, no. 12, 1856. Accessed in *The Working-Class Movement Library* in April 2018. Reproduced with permission from Lynette Cawthra Library Manager at the Working-Class Movement Library.

⁵² Information taken from Career Match website. Accessed March 19, 2020, <https://www.careermatch.com/job-prep/career-insights/profiles/hod-carrier/>



Figure 7 The British Workman and Friends of the Sons of Toil, no. 12, 1856. Permission to reproduce this image has been granted by the Working-Class Movement Library.

According to *Bell's Life*, John Murphy completed the job of a hod carrier with 'alertness' and 'dexterity'.⁵³ Sonya Rose has reflected on the idea of working-class manliness and has recognised that 'to be manly was to be honourable and respectable which meant being brave, strong and independent'.⁵⁴ John Murphy displayed his strength in his ability to commit to a physically demanding job. Similarly, newspaper reports identified that 'she [John] obtained the goodwill of her master and fellow workmen'.⁵⁵ John's abilities were transferable, irrespective of his biological identity: he was recognisable as a man, he was a confident and committed bricklayer, and he was also a fellow hod carrier. By demonstrating his ability to perform the same amount of work as other men, he showed that his physical strength was on par with that of his colleagues.

Being employed in manual labour was a way for gender passing individuals to confirm their gender identity and demonstrate their commitment to fulfilling the roles of a man. By performing the same roles as fellow colleagues, some gender passing individuals were not challenged or questioned by their peers, according to newspaper reports. Similarly, their ability to fulfil gendered roles that were contrary to biological expectation highlighted their nuanced understanding of masculinity. Harry Stokes was recognised by the press for his financial independence and industriously focussed attitude. In 1838 *The Morning Chronicle* wrote,

this builder became remarkable, indeed almost a celebrity, for skill and success in the erection of flues and ovens; and we believe is at this moment in very good business, employing several hands, and giving very general satisfaction to those for whom any work has been executed.⁵⁶

Press reports commented on Harry Stokes being responsible for several other workers and, using Cooney's classifications, he fell into the category of Type 1 Master Craftsman.⁵⁷ This role included being a 'Carpenter, mason, bricklayer undertaking work only in his trade and usually

⁵³ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; "Female Husband." *Leeds Intelligencer*, (West Yorkshire: England), July 14, 1825.

⁵⁴ Sonya O. Rose. *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth Century England* (California: University of California, 1992), 15.

⁵⁵ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; "Female Husband." *Leeds Intelligencer*, (West Yorkshire: England), July 14, 1825.

⁵⁶ "The Female Husband in Manchester." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.

⁵⁷ E. W. Cooney. "The Origins of the Victorian Master Builders," *The Economic History Review*, (1955): 167-168.

employing only small numbers of journeymen and apprentices'.⁵⁸ This classification not only demonstrated Harry's success at completing his own work but also his responsibility for other workers under his guidance.

One of the most prominent examples of gender passing individuals in the nineteenth century was James Allen, and his case is undoubtedly the most significant of all the case studies that form this research.⁵⁹ James's case went on to influence the coverage of later gender passing individuals who were discovered and James was referred to using scissors-and-paste journalism at least one hundred and eighteen times across the UK in 1829.⁶⁰ His story was published in several national newspapers including the *Morning Post* and *The Standard*, as well as being revisited in other similar cases and being remembered a century later in a special edition of *The Observer*.⁶¹ A pamphlet was published after his death called, *An Authentic Narrative of the Extraordinary Career of James Allen, The Female Husband*, which included a portrait of him and his wife, Abigail. Two ballads were also published about James: one was called 'The Female Husband' and the other 'The Female Husband, who had been married to another female for twenty-one years'.⁶² There was a longevity to James's story and it created a legacy amongst other gender passing cases that were revealed as the nineteenth century progressed and more individuals were discovered.

In the pamphlet, *An Authentic Narrative*, there was a portrait depicting James and his wife Abigail on the opening page.⁶³ A colour version was also published separately for two shillings according to the *Morning Advertiser*.⁶⁴ The portraits of James and Abigail were

⁵⁸ Cooney, "The Origins," 167-168.

⁵⁹ Caroline Gonda, "'An Extraordinary Subject for Dissection': The Strange Case of James Allen and Lavinia Edwards," in *Developments in the Histories of Sexualities: In Search of the Normal, 1600-1800*, edited by Chris Mounsey. (Pennsylvania: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 213-228.

⁶⁰ On 13 March 2017 there were forty-eight returns under 'James Allen' on *The British Newspaper Archive*. Yet, on 30 December 2019 there were one-hundred and eighteen returns for the same keyword search. This demonstrates the rate of digitisation across two years and suggests there is a possibility that more gender passing cases will be revealed in the future.

⁶¹ "Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.; "Extraordinary Investigation: or the Female Husband." *The Observer*, (London: England), January 18, 1829.; "A Hundred Years Ago: Extraordinary Investigation or the Female Husband," *The Observer*, (London: England), January 10, 1829.

⁶² Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 1-40.; Alison Oram and Annmarie Turnball, "The Female Husband," in *The Lesbian History Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 21-23.; Charles Hindley, 'The Female Husband, who had been married to another female for twenty-one years' in *Curiosities of Street Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 119.

⁶³ Anonymous. *An Authentic Narrative*, 1-40.

⁶⁴ "The Female Husband." *Morning Advertiser*, (London: England), January 21, 1829.

published on opposite sides of the paper and can be seen in figure 8.⁶⁵ These portraits are vital sources as they provide one of the only images of the time that depict a gender passing individual and their wife. Julie Codell has argued that portraits were ‘heavily coded’ in the nineteenth century and the idealised portrait contained ‘in one image all ‘essential’ information that defines the sitter’s character through the material markers of identity’.⁶⁶ In this sense, it is necessary to look at the portrait of James and Abigail in more detail.

⁶⁵ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 1-40.

⁶⁶ Julie F. Codell, “Victorian Portraits: Re-Tailoring Identities,” *Nineteenth Century Contexts* 34, no. 5 (2012): 493.

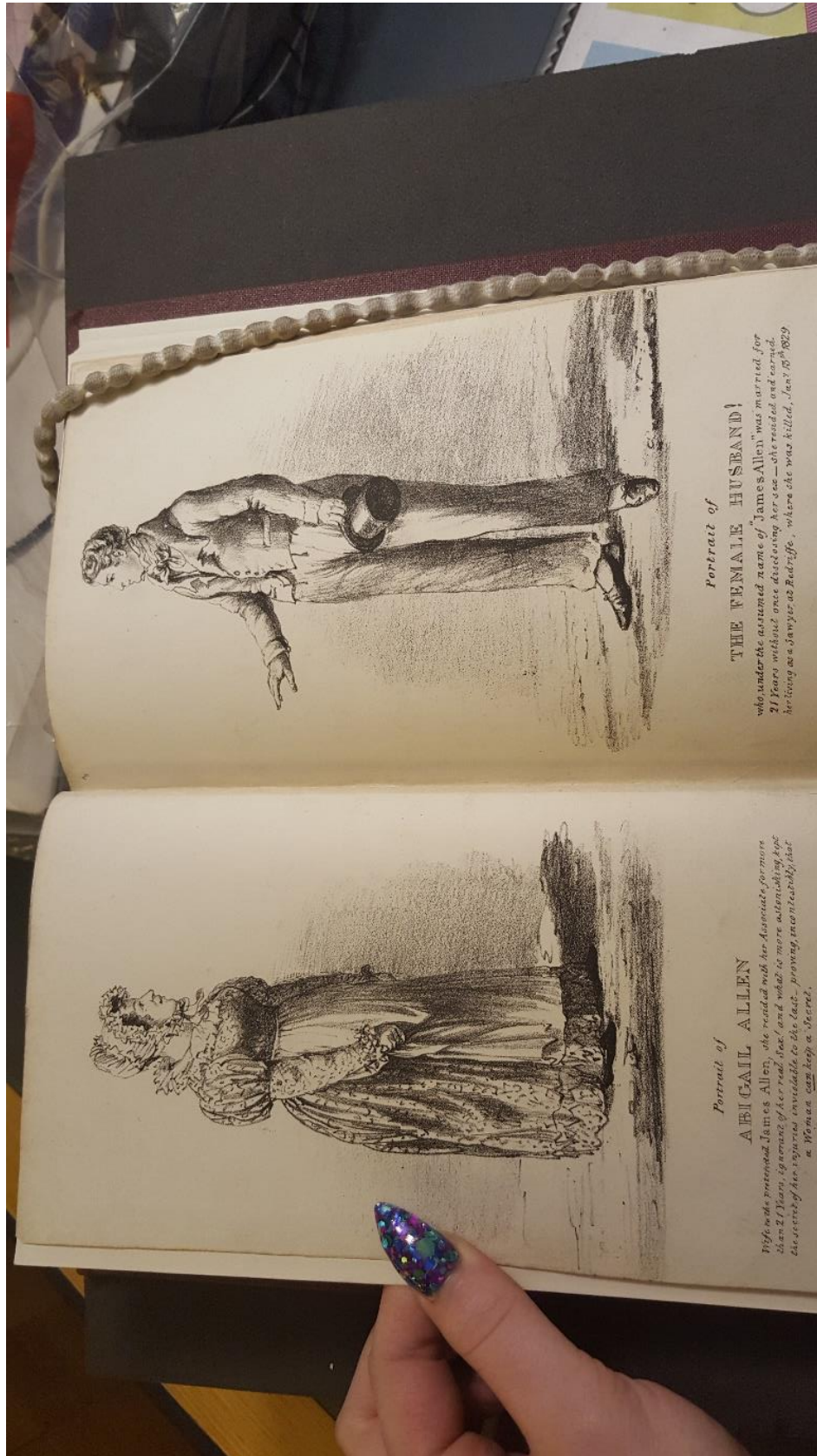


Figure 8 Portrait of James and Abigail Allen published in 'An Authentic Narrative of the Extraordinary Career of James Allen', 1829. Permission to reproduce this image has been granted by The British Library.

Firstly, the overall image is out of proportion, with James having long legs, a short torso, a long neck obscured by shirt ruffles and a small head.⁶⁷ His stature seemingly dwarfs that of his wife on the opposite page. The pamphlet described James 'at about five feet six inches and a half in height, slender, but well made, his dress, when cleaned was that of a British sailor, blue jacket and white trowsers [sic]'.⁶⁸ Indeed, Manion's chapter 'The Sailors and Soldiers' demonstrates the popularity with sailor style clothing amongst gender passing individuals, or female husbands, and highlights how some used it almost as a uniform to present their masculinity to the public.⁶⁹ Yet, it was James's height that was clearly focussed on by the artist and although he was just slightly above the average of five foot five inches in the nineteenth century, there is a significant difference between himself and Abigail in the portrait.⁷⁰ The over-emphasized height may have been a stylistic embellishment to highlight James's masculinity.⁷¹ It is possible that James Allen was painted significantly taller than Abigail to demonstrate his superiority as a man and to highlight how his body was different to that of a woman.

James's body language is also important in this portrait and can be interpreted in two ways. Ray Birdwhistell coined the term 'kinesics' in 1952 and argued that non-verbal communication is a grammar that can be analysed, noting that body movements and gestures are just as important as spoken words.⁷² James's raised hand to Abigail suggests that he is silencing her and Abigail's scrunched hands, which are curled into fists, seem to corroborate that there was tension between them. Indeed, a witness came forward and commented on James's jealousy towards his wife and overall bad temper in an article published by the *Newcastle Courant*.⁷³ As James's hand faces the floor and his gaze is directed towards Abigail, we can assume that it displays a level of male dominance on James's part. Similarly, although

⁶⁷ Anonymous. *An Authentic Narrative*, 1-40.

⁶⁸ Anonymous. *An Authentic Narrative*, 39.; Jen Manion, "The Sailors and Soldiers," in *Female Husbands: A Trans History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020): 68-103.

⁶⁹ Jen Manion, 'The Sailors and Soldiers' in *Female Husbands: A Trans History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 68-103.

⁷⁰ Caroline Parkinson, "Men's Average Height up 11cm since 1870s," BBC News Website: Health, (2013). Accessed July 21, 2020. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-23896855>; "High and Lows of an Englishman's Average Height over 2000 years," University of Oxford Website: News, (April 2017). Accessed July 21, 2020. <http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2017-04-18-highs-and-lows-englishman's-average-height-over-2000-years-0>

⁷¹ Matthew McCormack, "Tall Histories and Georgian Masculinities," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, (2016), 84.

⁷² Ray Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1970).

⁷³ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *The Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.

Abigail was pictured as being a sturdy looking woman, she is shorter than James on the opposite page. Again, this emphasis on height may have been for dramatic effect to show the domination of men and the subordination of women at that time. Alternatively, this image can be viewed through a lens of love and longing. James's out-stretched hand towards Abigail could be interpreted as a sign of endearment, almost as if James is reaching out to her across the page. The unbroken gaze between the couple may be one of love and adoration and not simply one of dominance.

The Standard referred to how James was 'beautifully shaped and his legs and feet particularly well made, but stuffed with flannel from top to toe, to fill up his boots and male attire'.⁷⁴ The inference that James stuffed his clothing demonstrates the lengths that he went to in order to conceal his biological body. This 'body stuffing' confirmed how important it was for an individual to pass successfully through their outward appearance. In the portrait James's legs lack definition which may have been because of the 'body stuffing' that *The Standard* commented upon. Nonetheless, this cosmetic alteration of the body gave the illusion of a stronger and more masculine shape. Carrie Paetcher and Raewyn Connell have both explored the notion of 'hypermasculinity' in their work and have reflected on how men sought to fulfil the most hegemonic expectations of masculinity in order to be accepted in society.⁷⁵ Perhaps the artist wanted to 'hyper-masculinise' James in the pamphlet for dramatic affect.

James and Abigail Allen also appeared in another portrait that was created by Thomas Howell-Jones, which can be seen in figure 9.⁷⁶ Howell-Jones was active from 1823-1848 and largely created satirical and political cartoons. Typically, a character's physical appearance was emphasised to bring humour to his pieces. Howell-Jones's portfolio was peppered with satire that commented on contemporary political debates such as Ireland and Catholicism. From the collection of etchings by Howell-Jones held at the National Portrait Gallery, there was a slight shift in 1828 that saw him create more natural etchings and portraits of aristocrats

⁷⁴ "The Female Husband." *The Standard*, (London: England), February 4, 1829.

⁷⁵ R. W. Connell. *Masculinities*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 77.; Carrie Paetcher, "Masculine Femininities / Feminine Masculinities: Power, Identities and Gender," *Gender and Education* 18, no. 3 (2006): 253-263.

⁷⁶ Thomas Howell-Jones, "Abigail Mary Allen (nee Naylor); James Allen," c. 1829, © National Portrait Gallery, London. Print held at the National Portrait Gallery and reprinted with permission using Academic License, purchased November 28, 2019 at 6:57pm, <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp57285/thomas-howell-jones>

including Elizabeth Hughes and William Crockford.⁷⁷ The image of James and Abigail Allen also fell into this category of portraiture when it was produced after James's death in 1829.

When comparing Howell-Jones's etching of James and Abigail and the portraits that were printed at the beginning of *An Authentic Narrative*, it is impossible not to see the likeness between the two. This is particularly evident in the stance of both Abigail and James. The main differences are expressed in the shape of James Allen himself. In both images James is pictured with long legs. However, in Howell-Jones's etching, James's legs are muscular and manly in shape, particularly at the thighs, and are visible through his trousers. Perhaps this relates to press reports that commented on James's 'body stuffing' and padding that gave him a more masculine silhouette. Although James's legs were visibly masculine in the etching, he was described as being womanly in the pamphlet with the 'arms, legs, hips exhibiting the truest female proportions'.⁷⁸ Indeed this feminine or womanly body that was described in the pamphlet is also evident in the etching, with James having a large and rounded bottom. It is unclear if this print was created before or after the publication of the pamphlet, however, there are clear links and correlations between the two and they can be read alongside one another.

⁷⁷ Thomas Howell-Jones, "William Crockford," c. 1828, © National Portrait Gallery, London. Accessed July 21, 2020. <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw67604/William-Crockford?LinkID=mp57733&role=sit&rNo=1>

Thomas Howell-Jones, "Elizabeth Hughes," c. 1828, © National Portrait Gallery, London. Accessed July, 21, 2020. <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw37298/Elizabeth-Hughes?LinkID=mp57285&role=art&rNo=5>

⁷⁸ Anonymous. *An Authentic Narrative*, 36.



Figure 9 T. Howell Jones. 'Abigail Mary Allen (nee Naylor); James Allen', c. 1829, © National Portrait Gallery, London. Permission to reproduce this image has been granted by National Portrait Gallery under an Academic License. .

The background also offers information about the dynamic between James and Abigail. The sparsely decorated background highlights the pair's humble beginnings as working-class people. The nod to James's employment as a sawyer is evidenced by the inclusion of a saw and mallet hanging behind him. These items also taint the image because James died at work after being hit on the head by a piece of falling timber in a saw pit. The inclusion of the two wash basins and a chair behind Abigail symbolises her position as an obedient wife that completes the household chores. It is interesting however, that Abigail was labelled at the 'Pretended Wife of James Allen', which implied that she was perhaps being deceitful as James's wife. This is a different interpretation to the pamphlet whereby Abigail was described as the person being deceived by James and the reader sympathised with her. Nonetheless, the etching by Howell-Jones offered an alternative presentation of James that further demonstrated the interest in his story at the time and the different interpretations of him by artists, the press, publishers, and the community.

Gestures and choreography of the body were just as important for gender passing individuals as clothing and body shape, as we will see in the following section. Manliness was a central virtue that was expected of all men and could be interpreted individually. For gender passing individuals, manliness meant being strong and able to display their strength. Similarly, they looked visibly masculine as demonstrated by their outward gender performativity, their clothing, physicality, and appearance. Manliness also meant being a good husband, a solid worker and member of the community, qualities that will also be discussed throughout this thesis.

Clothing the Masculine Body

The naked body is a sexed body, and it is clothing that offers some insight into how a person wants to be seen by the world. Crane has noted that clothing, in the nineteenth century, was a form of ‘symbolic communication’, allowing people to respond to others by how they were dressed.⁷⁹ Joanne Ella Parsons and Ruth Heholt have argued that ‘the male body in the nineteenth century was bound, constricted and limited in how it could express itself’ in terms of clothing, ‘bodily acts that were not allowed to be performed’ especially in explorations of their sexuality.⁸⁰ Yet, ultimately male privilege in society gave men relative freedom in the public sphere. Gender passing individuals, however, were unique in that they were both bound and free at the same time. Their biological bodies were literally bound under their clothing to offer a more masculine silhouette, yet, they expressed themselves as men and were recognised as male in society, typically engaging in male privileges such as visiting public houses, going out to work and being responsible for their families.

People have more than one body and are not simply constricted by the physical body that they have, according to John Field. Field has argued that the first body people have is the one that is touchable and ‘the material flesh [is] weighed and examined as it is’ usually by ourselves.⁸¹ Then there is the imagined body or ‘the one we would like to have, the self-portrait against which we judge the alien in the mirror’.⁸² Gender passing individuals fashioned, manipulated and clothed their own ‘material flesh’ in order for them to pass in their communities, their relationships, their working environments and in their homes. Individuals may have modelled their own style and gender identity on the men that were around them, for instance their fathers, brothers, or fellow workers. The third body that Field discussed is the body that we will have in the future. This body may be an older version of the

⁷⁹ Crane, “Clothing Behaviour,” 242.

⁸⁰ Joanne Ella Parsons and Ruth Heholt, *The Victorian Manly Body* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 1.

⁸¹ John Field, *Working Men’s Bodies: Work Camps in Britain, 1880-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 4.

⁸² Ibid.

one we currently have, or the imagined and ideal body if we get ourselves thinner and healthier.⁸³ Through repetitive strain in manual labour, gender passing individuals enhanced their physicality which aided their transition into masculine society. They also clothed their bodies in a way that was overtly male and were viewed by others as men.

When investigating the lives of gender passing individuals, it is necessary to acknowledge that they constructed their sense of masculinity by the people and the culture around them and mimicry aided their transition into masculine life. Clothing or bodily décor has been described as 'the social skin' by Terence Turner.⁸⁴ Turner highlights that 'the social skin' is 'directly and concretely concerned with the construction of the individual as a social actor or cultural 'subject''.⁸⁵ A gender passing individual's 'social skin' also supported their performance and their vision of how they wanted to be seen. Indeed, clothes became 'a symbolic stage upon which drama of the socialisation is enacted' for Turner.⁸⁶ This understanding has also been explored by Joanne Entwistle who has argued that 'The body forms the envelope of our being in the world'.⁸⁷ Dress then becomes a protector and a symbol of how the individual wants to be treated by others. This is evident in how clothes connected the individual to civility and respectability as well as linking them to a certain social group or class.

Gender passing individuals manipulated their bodies, and this can be explored in several different ways, most obviously through movement, control, or influence. Bodily control in the nineteenth century has largely been viewed through the prism of the female body with the use of the corset. The corseted female body was trained to fulfil the ideal shape of the woman. Being biologically female, gender passing individuals would have been aware of the importance of corsetry at an early age. Perhaps it was for this reason that Harry Stokes and James Allen used a style of corsetry to bind their breasts rather than enhance their female form. The corseted body was not a natural body as it was controlled and altered through tight-lacing and the creation of a small waist with large hips and an enhanced bosom. Valerie Steele has argued that there was a diverse culture surrounding how women used corsetry: some

⁸³ Field, *Working Men's Bodies*, 4.

⁸⁴ Terence S. Turner, "The Social Skin," reprinted in the *Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2, no. 2 (2012): 486-504.

⁸⁵ Turner, "The Social Skin," 501.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Joanne Entwistle, "Fashion and the Fleshy Body: Dress as Embodied Practice," *Fashion Theory* 4, no. 2 (2000): 334.

wore them to explore their own sexuality, whilst for others, it was a convenience and social expectation.⁸⁸ Leigh Summers, on the other hand, has noted that the corset was ‘heavily pregnant with feminine metaphors and associations, unavoidably steeped in and expressive of Victorian female sexuality and its subordination’.⁸⁹ Indeed, the controlled and rounded shape of the corseted body denoted good breeding and was designed to be attractive to men. Some men also wore corsets and it was the Dandies that brought them into fashion from as early as the 1790s largely because it offered a different silhouette. As a fashion statement, this remained until the 1840s.⁹⁰ By 1850 the male corset was typically used as a way of offering a solution to back pain.⁹¹ Therefore, ‘gender technology’ through corsetry and bodily manipulation was already being used across the sexes throughout the nineteenth century, although it was typically reserved for middle-class women and to a lesser extent, men.⁹²

Both James Allen and Harry Stokes manipulated their bodies in such a ferocious manner that they permanently disfigured their torsos, a fact that was only revealed after their deaths. The pamphlet about James’s life claimed to have ‘the “Post-Mortem” Examination of the Body; with a variety of other interesting and exclusive facts’.⁹³ Caroline Gonda notes how James ‘was dissected in an attempt to find some physical cause for her extraordinary imposture’ rather than for his cause of death, as a post-mortem is supposed to do.⁹⁴ The fascination and interest with James and his body was clear and writers wanted in on the action. The pamphlet retold James’s tumultuous life over forty pages including the exclusive post-mortem results. It is difficult to differentiate between fact and fiction in the pamphlet, but it claimed to reveal details of James’s physical body following the coroner’s report and wrote:

The first view of the body excited very general admiration as to the symmetrical proportions of the entire subject. As fine a formed woman was

⁸⁸ Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2003).

⁸⁹ Leigh Summers, *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset* (New York: Berg, 2001), 2.

⁹⁰ Dominic Janes, *Oscar Wilde Prefigured: Queer Fashioning and British Caricature, 1750-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).; Norah Waugh, *Corsets and Crinolines* (London: Routledge, 1990).

⁹¹ Steele. *The Corset*, 4-5.

⁹² Lisa Hager, “A Case for a Trans Studies Turn in Victorian Studies: “Female Husbands” of the Nineteenth Century,” *Victorian Review* 44, no. 1 (2018): 45.

⁹³ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 1.

⁹⁴ Caroline Gonda, ““An Extraordinary Subject for Dissection”: The Strange Case of James Allen and Lavinia Edwards,” in *Developments in the Histories of Sexualities: In Search of the Normal, 1600-1800*, edited by Chris Mounsey. (Pennsylvania: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 213.

presented to their eyes as ever was looked upon. The skin, having been swathed in bandages and other thick coverings, was of the purest white, intersected with veins of fine blue.⁹⁵

There is both an admiration for James's physical body, but also a sense of irony as he was described as a perfect example of the female form. In this sense, the body became a specimen to be praised and admired as a flawless female. James's body was also described as finely formed, suggesting that he was healthy and able to work. As an alternative understanding, the body can also be read as being childlike in how it was 'swathed in bandages'.⁹⁶ Just as some babies were wrapped up in a blanket to protect them from the cold or illnesses, this swathing implied that James needed to protect himself from being exposed as biologically female. Emblematically the body also became infantilised in how it was protected and concealed through the bandaging of the chest. The swathing could be a contemporary symbol of a female's body in that it too needed to be protected from men and other potential sins.

James's body was 'of the purest white' with a delicate maze of 'veins of fine blue' according to the pamphlet.⁹⁷ The implication of James's body being 'pure' highlights that it was deemed to be natural even though it was a product of bodily manipulation. Parsons and Heholt have argued that the white, male body, was something to be adored and argued that 'building a white body was meant to be looked at'.⁹⁸ The body was something to be viewed and this was clear in James Allen's post-mortem as his body became something of a spectacle. However, 'undressing the cross-dresser is not enough' according to Gonda, instead, 'you have to get inside his or her body as well, to reveal the underlying truth, and then attempt to penetrate still further into the unknowable space of the mind'.⁹⁹ Indeed, those who examined James noted his perfectly formed body and investigated it intimately noting that:

The internal parts of the body exhibited the most sound appearance, and every promise of long life; had nature run out its fair course this might very justly have been expected, from the abstemious life of the deceased,

⁹⁵ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 36.

⁹⁶ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 36-37.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Parsons and Heholt, *The Victorian Manly Body*, 5.

⁹⁹ Gonda, "The Strange Case of James Allen," 225.

particularly her total aversion to that vital curse to humanity, spirituous liquors.¹⁰⁰

James was admired by the medical examiners for his rejection of alcohol and how he had kept his body in good shape. Nonetheless, the interference by the medical staff to delve further into James's body, without his permission, was deemed necessary for them to come up with a concrete answer for his gender passing and something which newspapers could write about.

The use of the colour white by the journalist to describe James's body symbolised the virginal qualities of his biological form that had been concealed under bandages for most of his adult life. More importantly, in terms of gender presentation, it highlighted that the white male body was something to be admired. This delicate beauty was in direct contrast to how the rest of James's body was described by the report:

The features having lost in death all the ruddy appearance of health, left only the yellow tinge acquired by continual exposure to all weathors [sic] and the rough pursuit of the deceased when living, which was not a little heightened by the habit of chewing tobacco, while the hands were hard and shrivelled.¹⁰¹

This 'yellow tinge' that James Allen possessed was acquired through smoking and outdoor work according to the pamphlet and this highlighted the effects of manual labour and the elements on the visible body compared to his concealed body.

James concealed his feminine characteristics through bandaging, which contrasted with his hands, face and arms, body parts that were constantly exposed to the elements while he worked on the dock. Likewise, James's 'hard and shrivelled' hands which were caused by his habit of chewing tobacco identified him as male. His shrivelled hands were therefore in complete contrast to the dainty and soft hands that were the ideal for women as well as the pure white upper body that James had concealed throughout his adulthood.¹⁰² Yet, Gonda has argued that the repeated emphasis on James's hands, not only by newspaper reporters but also by Abigail herself, are used as a symbol of his masculinity and virility. Unlike other

¹⁰⁰ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 37.

¹⁰¹ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 36-37.

¹⁰² Anne McClintock. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

gender passing individuals, such as Charles Hamilton, James was not described as having or using a prosthetic phallus. Gonda, therefore, argues that ‘the hand becomes a sign of Allen’s masculinity’ and by extension sexuality instead of the ‘fake phallus’ that is alluded to in other cases.¹⁰³ Indeed, James’s ability to ‘turn her hand to anything’ according to Abigail demonstrates his versatility as not only a worker but perhaps as a lover as well.¹⁰⁴

Newspaper reports commented on James’s body as being curvaceous. It was also described as voluptuous in feminine terms with ‘the arms, legs, hips exhibiting the truest female proportions’.¹⁰⁵ The hips were a part of the body that James, and other gender passing individuals, were unable to completely manipulate through padding or clothing alone. Thus, proving difficult to conceal. While hips and a waistline may have been different between men and women, these were not necessarily read as ‘naturally’ aligned to either. There were parts of James’s female anatomy that he manipulated to offer him a more masculine appearance, most notably his breasts. The *Newcastle Courant* reported that James’s breasts:

...were found to be like those of other women. In order to more effectually conceal them, she also wrapped a bandage of linen over her chest for the sham purpose of protecting her lungs from the cold.¹⁰⁶

By binding his breasts, James concealed his female body to maintain a masculine vision of himself. James’s ‘imagined body’ as male, to use Field’s words, was something that he put into practice when he actively concealed, to use one of the 4 C’s of Passing characteristics, his anatomy to aid his social transition to a man. Furthermore, the pamphlet noted that ‘the breasts which were moderately full, were forced by the compression of the bandages under the armpits’.¹⁰⁷ Evidently this demonstrates the lengths that James Allen went to in order to conceal his biological body.

Just as the case of James Allen was reported throughout the country, so too was that of Harry Stokes. The first time that Harry appeared in the newspapers was in 1838 after his wife of twenty-one years exposed his biological identity. He then reappeared in the press

¹⁰³ Gonda, “The Strange Case of James Allen,” 215.

¹⁰⁴ “Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband.” *The Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.

¹⁰⁵ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 36-37

¹⁰⁶ “Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband.” *The Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.

¹⁰⁷ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 36-37.

following his suicide in 1859.¹⁰⁸ The newspaper article from the *Liverpool Mercury* that was published after Harry's death focussed on his biological body. The article described Harry as a 'good steady workman' and stated that he was 'stoutly built, had a capacious depth of chest and a pair of hips which gave him an unusual pre-fit to his tailor'.¹⁰⁹ Again, the reference to Harry's hips is similar to that of James Allen's and would have been something that Harry could not have concealed easily. Harry, however, sought out the services of a tailor to produce his clothing and this may have meant that he had more money to spend on enhancing his presented self. Amy Miller has recognised that 'clothing created a portable identity that was specifically constructed for public consumption'.¹¹⁰ By purchasing bespoke outfits and clothing, Harry demonstrated to the world how he wanted to live and how people ought to treat him.

The focus on breasts in gender passing cases seemed to be an obvious sign of the individual's biological identity according to newspapers. This is likely to be because breasts were a noticeable symbol of womanhood. If we consider the image of the idealised female body as altered by the corset, the waist and breasts were exaggerated in their display.¹¹¹ These characteristics helped to support the ideal vision of the female body. As gender passing individuals concealed their breasts through binding, they actively challenged social conventions about how the female body ought to be displayed and viewed. Yet, they also acknowledged the need for altering the natural body and replaced the over-emphasized corset shape with the tight binding of their breasts to give a flatter chest. In this sense, the 'material flesh' was manipulated to create the ideal performative male body that gender passing individuals could feel confident in. Indeed, the article about Harry written by the *Liverpool Mercury* focused on his bodily manipulation and wrote:

The body in the man's clothing was that of a perfect woman, and no man.
She was very full breasted but the shape of her womanly make was distorted
by a broad strap which was buckled around her body under the arms.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ "The Female Husband of Manchester." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.; "'Harry Stokes", The Man-Woman." *Manchester Guardian*, (Manchester: England), October 24, 1859.

¹⁰⁹ "'Harry" Stokes, The Man-Woman." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

¹¹⁰ Amy Miller, "Clothes make the man: naval uniform and masculinity in the early nineteenth century," *Journal for Maritime Research* 17, no. 2 (2015): 147.

¹¹¹ Steele. *The Corset*, 15.

¹¹² "'Harry" Stokes, The Man-Woman." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

Harry's body was physically changed by the strapping that had concealed his breasts. From this example, we see that the body was not a fixed identity, instead it was altered by gender passing individuals to fulfil their 'imagined body' or ideal view of themselves.¹¹³ We can therefore understand the working body as a canvas, something that is transformative and changeable in its aesthetic.

A large proportion of newspaper reports noted how gender passing individuals had 'assumed male attire' or were 'disguised in male apparel', without revealing the particulars of their clothing.¹¹⁴ John Murphy appeared in reports in 1825 after moving to Derbyshire from Sligo in Ireland and was described by *Leeds Intelligencer* as 'A young woman, named Harriet Moore, a native of Sligo [who] about six years ago assumed the dress of a boy, on the death of her parents'.¹¹⁵ Likewise, John Coulter, who was found dead due to an intoxicated fall in 1884, was described by newspapers in the following way: 'As far as could be traced, the deceased had always worn male attire, and had been engaged in work peculiar to men'.¹¹⁶ In these two examples, along with several others including John Smith in 1848 and Anna Maria Wilkins in 1850, the authors of the articles did not acknowledge any specific details surrounding an individual's outward appearance or clothing.¹¹⁷

In sixty-four percent of gender passing cases, journalists used the term 'male dress', 'male garb' or 'male attire' to describe the types of clothing that gender passing individuals wore but gave no further elaboration. Clearly, there was a shared understanding of what male 'social skin' entailed and what ought to be worn by a man of their social status. Indeed, Beverley Lemire has argued that from 1800 trousers and jackets became a universal signifier of masculinity and as such we can deduce that this was what the articles meant by 'male dress' in their discussion of a gender passing individual's physical appearance.¹¹⁸

Gender passing individuals needed to have a level of confidence in gender performativity for them to be recognised as men. They needed to embody their masculinity

¹¹³ Field. *Working Men's Bodies*, 10.

¹¹⁴ "Startling Discovery as Mid-Calder, a Female Husband." *Grantham Journal*, (Grantham: England), November 8, 1870.; "Anonymous." *Lloyd's*, (London: England), November 29, 1897.

¹¹⁵ "Female Husband." *Leeds Intelligencer*, (West Yorkshire: England), July 14, 1825.

¹¹⁶ "A Female Husband." *York Herald*, (York: England), January 26, 1884.

¹¹⁷ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848.; "Extraordinary Case of Bigamy." *New Devon Journal*, (Barnstaple: England), March 28, 1850.

¹¹⁸ Beverley Lemire, "A Question of Trousers: Seafarers, Masculinity and Empire in the Shaping of British Male Dress, c. 1600-1800," *Cultural and Social History* 13, no. 1 (2016): 8.

and display their manliness in society for them to pass well enough and not to raise suspicion. John Tosh has argued that a man 'must prove himself – his masculinity – among his peers': he must perform his masculinity with gusto to be recognised as male.¹¹⁹ As Miller writes clothing became 'an expression of individuality' that allowed people to perform in a contemporarily acceptable manner.¹²⁰

Clothing also enabled individuals to be categorised by their class and social status according to Turner, who argues that the 'conventionalised modifications of skin and hair that comprise the 'social skin' define, not individuals, but categories or classes of individuals'.¹²¹ John Murphy from Wigan for instance, exhibited his confidence and commitment to his gender identity for 'about fifty years' according to the *Wigan Observer* and was reportedly ninety-seven years old when he died in 1860.¹²² John Murphy had 'appropriated the garb and assumed the habits of a man, in so complete a fashion that as far as we can at present learn, none have discovered the cheat or even had their suspicion aroused' wrote the *Wigan Observer*.¹²³ The focus on John's appropriate male garb and his manly habits suggest that these qualities were key facets to his passing. If the public could see an individual as male, then they were accepted by their communities.

Clothing was symbolic of how an individual wanted to be identified, as well as being representative of how the individual expressed themselves. How the body was adorned is particularly important. Entwistle has argued that dress has a functionality, and writes,

Dress does not merely serve to protect our modesty and does not simply *reflect* a natural body or, for that matter, a given identity; it *embellishes* the body, the materials commonly used adding a whole array of meanings to the body that would otherwise not be there. (Entwistle's emphasis).¹²⁴

More specifically, clothing denotes how a person wants to be treated. John Smith was revealed to be biologically female after his death in 1848. However, prior to his exposure, his gender presentation was considered male by the people around him, including his landlady

¹¹⁹ Josh Tosh, "What Should Historians do with Masculinity? Reflections on nineteenth century Britain," *History Workshop Journal*, (1994): 184.

¹²⁰ Miller, "Clothes make the man," 147.

¹²¹ Turner, "The Social Skin," 503.

¹²² "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Entwistle, "Fashion and the Fleishy Body," 324.

and the local medical surgeon. On being asked whether John was a man or woman, his landlady replied, 'All I can tell you is, that he and his wife have lodged here nine weeks, and he has always dressed as a man, and followed his occupation as a knife grinder and spoon maker'.¹²⁵ It was clear from this remark that the landlady believed that clothing as well as employment were important signifiers of how an individual was identified in society.

James Allen's clothing was particularly central to descriptions of him. Reports referred to James wearing a sailor style uniform, as has been discussed. Miller highlights that after the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, the naval uniform began to symbolise 'idealised masculine virtues including duty and sacrifice'.¹²⁶ Clothing also connected people to certain organisations or institutions. Indeed, James's clothing not only expressed his gender identity, but also connected him to his profession as a dockyard worker and as a shipwright. James's decision to wear a sailor uniform was another way of outwardly symbolising his masculinity and his ability to provide for his wife Abigail. The *Newcastle Courant* wrote, 'In her lifetime, the deceased generally dressed in sailor's clothes, like a shipwright's, and always wore thick flannel waistcoats which extended from the neck down to the hips'.¹²⁷ The length of the garment was important as it meant that James's upper torso was always concealed. For James, his waistcoat concealed his biological body which in turn helped to accentuate his masculinity and confidence in presenting as a man.

In the colour portrait that was produced of James Allen and the portrait taken from the pamphlet, there were slight differences between them, as can be seen in figure 10.¹²⁸ For instance, the colour portrait seems to be more proportional to James's body as it is not as large or as intrusive as the pamphlet portrait. However, despite the pamphlet and press reports commenting on his preferred style of clothing, neither portraits depicted James dressing in 'sailor's clothes' of a 'blue jacket and white trowsers [sic]'.¹²⁹ Instead, he was well-

¹²⁵ "[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848.

¹²⁶ Miller, "Clothes make the man," 147.

¹²⁷ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.

¹²⁸ Black and white portrait taken from, *An Authentic Narrative of the Extraordinary Career of James Allen, The Female Husband*, 1-40.; Colour Portrait of James Allen. Original image held at The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University Library. Also accessible on Digital Transgender Archive, accessed July 21, 2020. <https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/files/tt44pn04x>

¹²⁹ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 39.

presented with a top hat, a scarf, blue jacket and beige trousers. He looks almost Dandy-esque in the portrait, perhaps a nod to his biological identity being female and a link with the Dandy's being more effeminate in their presentation. James's head was in proportion with his body and his torso is not as long in the colour portrait. In the nineteenth century 'portraits revealed the sitter's character, a union of external and internal articulated in Victorian phrenology and physiognomy', according to Codell.¹³⁰ The portraits gave a likeness to James that would have otherwise been lost. However, it is necessary to highlight that the portraits, newspaper reports and pamphlet seemed contradictory in their descriptions and depictions of James, particularly in how he dressed. Similarly, the portraits were produced after James's death, therefore the artist may well have used a generically styled male figure with atypical male clothing to symbolise how James might have looked.

¹³⁰ Codell, "Victorian Portraits," 494.

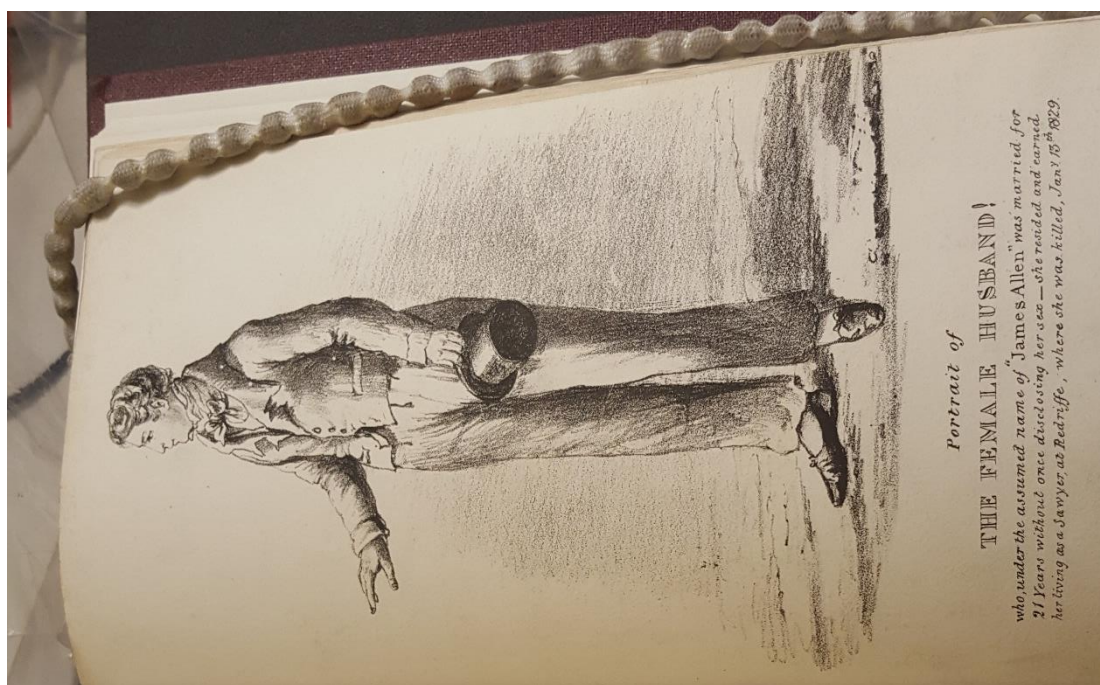


Figure 10 Top: Colour portrait of James Allen. Permission to reproduce this image has been granted courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

Below: Black and white portrait taken from 'An Authentic Narrative' pamphlet, 1829. Image taken by me accessed in the British Library, March 2018. Permission to reproduce this image has been granted by The British Library, image taken by me.

For gender passing individuals, clothing played a crucial role in their self-identity. Clothing helped individuals pass within their communities and allowed them to be viewed as men. Clothing enabled individuals to feel confident in their presentation and aided their consistent performativity. It also gave them control in how they wanted other people to see them. James Allen dressed his body in oversized clothing and long waistcoats that concealed his feminine shape according to newspaper reports. Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson saw trousers as a symbol of his masculinity and consistently wore them refusing to remove them even as he approached the end of his life. Therefore, clothing represented more than simply a covering of the body. Instead, clothes represented how gender passing individuals understood the importance and need for consistency in gender performativity and how they identified as men.

Gender Slippages

Gender slippages often occurred in cases of gender passing and individuals were publicly challenged in the press for them. Although reports were generally supportive of a person's ability to provide for his family through typically masculine employment, they were also questioned when they did not fulfil stereotypical male ideals. For instance, James Allen was challenged for not wanting to visit the public house after work with his colleagues; this singled him out as being effeminate and thus he was attacked.¹³¹ Such concerns however, only tended to be raised after an individual was exposed as biologically female. Two of the most common characteristics that singled an individual out was their lack of facial hair and their high-pitched or 'shrill voice'.¹³² There seemed to a 'grading' system in nineteenth-century Britain that meant men needed to be tall, muscular, strong, have a deep voice and facial hair to qualify as a manly man. As gender passing individuals did not have all these characteristics they were labelled as being different in newspaper reports.

The beard was a fashion statement that went through various stages of popularity throughout the nineteenth century. Beards represented an example of new wave masculinity according to Christopher Oldstone-Moore, who argues that the beard served as an 'emblem of modern masculinity' for men in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹³³ Wearing a beard meant protection for the face, mouth and throat for working-class men and they 'served as the true and natural mark of manly independence and virtue'.¹³⁴ Therefore, men who did not have any facial hair, including gender passing individuals, were singled out as being different.

Henry Fielding's pamphlet that was published in 1746 recalled the life of one of the earliest examples of gender passing individuals, or 'Female Husbands' as he labelled them.

¹³¹ "Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.; "The Female Husband." *The Times*, (London: England), January 17, 1829, 3.

¹³² "The *Manchester Guardian* has the following sequel to the history which we last week related of the "*Female Husband*." *John Bull*, (London: England), April 22, 1838.

¹³³ Christopher Oldstone-Moore, "The Beard Movement in Victorian Britain," *Victorian Studies*, (2005): 11.

¹³⁴ Oldstone-Moore, "The Beard Movement," 21.

This individual was called Charles Hamilton, although for the purposes of the fictionalised pamphlet, Fielding named him 'George Hamilton'.¹³⁵ In this pamphlet Hamilton's life was retold from when he first fell in love with Mrs Johnson, during which time he presented as female, to when he married an older woman named Mrs Rutherford in Dublin and became her husband. When the couple married, there were suggestions made by friends and family that Hamilton was more effeminate than masculine. Indeed, it was Hamilton's lack of facial hair that seemed to have been problematic for many, Fielding wrote:

[Mrs Rutherford's] great grandson, a pretty and smart lad, who, when somebody jested on the bridegroom because he had no beard, answered smartly: There should never be a beard on both sides: For indeed the old lady's chin was pretty well stocked with bristles.¹³⁶

The inclusion of the comment about facial hair in this example, although discussed in a jovial manner, implied that whiskers and beards were an important identity marker for men only. It suggested that it was unacceptable for a woman to have facial hair or a beard at that time, as its implication was old age. This focus on facial hair became a theme in gender passing cases that were narrated by the press.

In the early nineteenth century, the growth of facial hair was explicitly explored through class division. The assumption was that working-class men were generally untidy and unkempt and therefore facial hair was expected. Alternatively, beards, similar to clothing, may have indicated that an individual was part of a particular 'radial political affiliation', and were therefore unpopular for men wanting to be respectable, suggests Oldstone-Moore.¹³⁷ Yet in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the beard was used as a symbol of intelligence and heroism following the Crimean War (1854-1856), as returning soldiers had grown beards to shield themselves from the cold on the front line.¹³⁸ Jacob Middleton highlights how the beard was seen as having health benefits as it was used as a 'natural respirator' to filter bad air from being ingested.¹³⁹ Therefore, the politics of facial hair and its rise and fall in popularity

¹³⁵ Henry Fielding, *The Female Husband: Or, the Surprising History of Mrs Mary, alias Mr. George Hamilton*, (London: M. Cooper, at the Globe in Paternoster Row, 1746), 1-23.

¹³⁶ Fielding. *The Female Husband*, 10.

¹³⁷ Oldstone-Moore, "The Beard Movement," 7.

¹³⁸ Hawksley, *Moustaches*, 63-67.

¹³⁹ Jacob Middleton, "Bearded Patriarchs," *History Today*, (2006): 26-28.

was a constant throughout the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, the lack of facial hair for working-class men seemingly raised suspicions about their masculinity.

Newspaper articles that reported on gender passing cases identified and labelled individuals as being 'handsome'. John Hayward was described as having a 'firm countenance' but was 'tolerabl[y] handsome'.¹⁴⁰ Likewise Anna Maria Wilkins (male name unknown) was noted as being an attractive and physically masculine looking individual despite the revelation of their biological identity and a return to their female identity after the deterioration of their marriage.¹⁴¹ Gender passing individuals were described as being attractive and appealing to women, but tellingly, journalists noted that something was disingenuous about them. For instance, Harry Stokes was described as 'tolerab[ly] handsome' in press reports being likened to that of a 'ladies' man', yet his 'beardless cheeks' raised suspicions in the community.¹⁴² Therefore, it was an individual's lack of facial hair, their biological bodies and sometimes their overall appearance that were explored in the press as being problematic.

Although there were several different cases of gender passing individuals explicitly being described as not having facial hair, one case did mention the growth of a beard. Frederick 'Scratchem' Mitchell resided in a lodging house at number 6 Perkins Lane, Westminster for a few months before he was discovered as biologically female.¹⁴³ The *Liverpool Mercury* ran an article on him after he was found dead in his lodging room in 1867.¹⁴⁴ No foul play was thought to have occurred. The journalists noted that because Frederick looked so visibly and obviously male, an alternative gender identity was not suspected by those who found him dead in his room.¹⁴⁵ Frederick shared his lodging room with twenty-two other men, according to the article, with them all living communally in a dormitory style layout.¹⁴⁶ They too had been convinced that Frederick was a biological man, although they noted that he was a quiet and private individual. The medical surgeon, Mr Hunt, found Frederick's body 'lying on her back, apparently labouring under the effects of some

¹⁴⁰ "Another Female Husband." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), January 30, 1829.

¹⁴¹ "Extraordinary Case of Bigamy." *New Devon Journal*, (Barnstaple: England), March 28, 1850.

¹⁴² "The Female Husband in Manchester." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.; "The Woman Husband." *Manchester Guardian*, (Manchester: England), April 14, 1838, 2.

¹⁴³ "Concealment of Sex for Fifteen Years." *London Daily News*, (London: England), August 23, 1867, 6.

¹⁴⁴ "A Romantic Case." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), August 24, 1867.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

narcotic poison or apoplexy'.¹⁴⁷ The article hinted at a possible suicide attempt because of the consumption of narcotics which had resulted in Frederick having a stroke, (or an 'apoplexy', to use the contemporary term).¹⁴⁸ The post-mortem revealed that Frederick Mitchell had a 'masculine face, with a slight beard' and 'there was no development of breasts'.¹⁴⁹ The *Durham County Advisor* reported that Frederick had lived as a man for at least fifteen years before his death.¹⁵⁰ The facial hair, masculine features and face, as well as the absence of breast tissue, may have been as a result of a hormonal imbalance. It is possible that Frederick may have passed more successfully as male than as female. It is equally probable that Frederick presented himself as male because he identified himself as a man throughout his life.

Gender passing individuals having 'weakly' or feminine voices were discussed in correlation to facial hair. It was only after the individual was revealed to be biologically female that reporters deemed their gender passing as obvious due their hairless faces, high pitched voices, and delicate hands. For instance, when Harry Stokes first appeared in *John Bull* in 1838, the newspaper declared:

The habits of the [husband], we believe, are much more in accordance with those of her assumed sex and occupation than that of a woman; and no one except per chance, from her beardless cheeks and a certain shrillness of voice, could for a moment suspect that the little broadset bricklayer was of the softer sex.¹⁵¹

Although the journalist identified Harry's working abilities, his shrill voice and 'beardless cheeks' were obvious signs that he was not biologically male. However, just as an individual's body was altered through clothing, their voices may also have been altered and it is possible that gender passing individuals assumed a gruffer or deeper voice to aid their gender performance.

¹⁴⁷ "A Romantic Case." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), August 24, 1867.

¹⁴⁸ "Concealment of Sex for Fifteen Years." *Liverpool Daily Post*, (Liverpool: England), August 24, 1867, 7.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ "Concealment of Sex for Fifteen Years." *Durham Country Advertiser*, (Durham: England), August 30, 1867, 3.

¹⁵¹ "The *Manchester Guardian* has the following sequel to the history which we last week related of the "*Female Husband*." *John Bull*, (London: England), April 22, 1838.

As far as we know from the available sources, tell-tale signs regarding gender identity were raised after the individual was confirmed to be biologically female. Mr Thomas Shelton was the coroner for James Allen's case following his death in 1829.¹⁵² Shelton stated in his report, as published in *The Morning Post*, that 'the deceased had a weakly voice, with no beard or whiskers'.¹⁵³ By noting these in his report, Shelton recognised that it was unusual for a man to not have facial hair. The two characteristics of the 'weakly voice' and the lack of whiskers were highlighted as a sign of James Allen's biological identity. Both the *Newcastle Courant* and *The Morning Post* along with *The Observer* and the *Chester Chronicle* all highlighted that James Allen was pronounced dead upon arrival at St Thomas's Hospital in London.¹⁵⁴ It is, therefore, unclear as to how Mr Shelton knew about James's 'weakly voice'.¹⁵⁵ Perhaps Mr Shelton's view on the case relied on other people's understanding of James. Alternatively, his 'weakly voice' may have been assumed in order to emphasise James's biological identity to the reader.¹⁵⁶ It was only after articles were published and individuals were exposed publicly as biologically female that journalists, coroners, reporters and the police commonly reported on such supposed 'tell-tale' signs of the individual not performing in acceptably masculine ways.

Many gender passing individuals worked in manual employment during their lives and often it was their workmates that first raised their suspicions. Charles Wilkins, for example, began working in an iron foundry near Smethwick in Birmingham. According to one newspaper article published in 1846, 'this however was too hard work for him, and he betook himself to that of a navigator'.¹⁵⁷ It is possible that Charles was unable to keep up with the work in the iron foundry. This resulted in him obtaining factory-based work, with his daily duties centring around 'the packing room of W. Chance ESQ. at the Plate Glass Works'.¹⁵⁸ William Chance, was a founder of *Chance Brothers and Company* that was originally

¹⁵² "Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.; "Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.; "Extraordinary Investigation: or the Female Husband." *The Observer*, (London: England), January 18, 1829.; "The Female Husband." *Chester Chronicle and Cheshire and North Wales General Advertiser*, (Chester: England), January 23, 1829.

¹⁵⁵ "Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ "Smethwick: Romantic Affair." *Birmingham Journal*, (Birmingham: England), August 1, 1846.; "Marriage Extraordinary." *Glasgow Herald*, (Glasgow: Scotland), August 21, 1846.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

established in the 1820s and later occupied a factory in Spon Lane in Smethwick. The company became known as Britain's first glass technology pioneers and was responsible for the glazing of The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations in 1851 and for glazing the Houses of Parliament.

It was the 'shrill' voice of Charles Wilkins that ultimately exposed his biological identity. Charles was described as a lothario in newspaper reports before he married his wife. He was of 'singular appearance' according to the *Glasgow Herald* and they commented that:

She is by no means an unprepossessing person, although, from her short cut hair and semi-male attire, she presents a rather singular appearance. She is scarcely thirty years of age, about the average height of [a] woman, with regular though not very feminine features. In short, she was a rather stout looking fellow; and, although her voice was shrill for a man, her sex was never suspected.¹⁵⁹

Like in the case of Elizabeth/John Hayward, Charles was described as androgynous in that he had feminine features and a 'shrill' voice but was a 'stout looking fellow'.¹⁶⁰ It is possible that these inconsistencies may have been why fellow workers questioned his masculinity by calling him 'Suke'. In the Edo period of Japan (1603-1868), the term 'Suke' translated as 'woman'. Similarly, it was pronounced like the female name of 'Sukie'.¹⁶¹ By taunting Charles with a female name, it is likely that his fellow workers were referring to his higher pitched voice and highlighting that something was disingenuous about him. Alternatively, they may have been trying to insinuate that Charles was not necessarily a female but a homosexual or an effeminate man.¹⁶² Despite Charles Wilkins's outward identity suggesting that he was a man, it was inconsistencies such as his height and 'shrill' voice that raised questions about his gender identity from his fellow workers.

¹⁵⁹ "Smethwick: Romantic Affair." *Birmingham Journal*, (Birmingham: England), August 1, 1846.; "Marriage Extraordinary." *Glasgow Herald*, (Glasgow: Scotland), August 21, 1846.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ "Suke" as a phrase I have only been able to locate it with reference to the Japanese language. The term "Suke" meaning a slang term for woman. Accessed July 21, 2020. <https://www.quora.com/What-does-suke-mean-in-Japanese>

¹⁶² Andrew Forrester. *Passing English of the Victorian Era: A dictionary of Heterodox English, Slang and Phrase*, (London, 1909). Accessed July 21, 2020. <https://archive.org/details/passingenglishof00wareuoft>

Voice, facial hair, and hands seemingly highlighted the slippages in masculinity in gender passing cases. Indeed, workmates and members of the community seemed to recognise inconsistencies within an individual's gender performance typically after they had been exposed as biologically female. The lack of facial hair for gender passing individuals became a marker of their biological identity in most cases. Facial hair differed in significance throughout the nineteenth century. Some contemporary thinkers argued that beards obscured the individual whilst others believed that beards represented heroism. Therefore, beards were as much as a personal choice as the clothes that gender passing individuals wore. It seemed that only after their biological identity was revealed the press used their lack of facial hair and their weakly voices as a way of confirming a gender passing individual's biological identity as female.

Conclusion

Nineteenth century gender identity has long been assumed to be tied to the sexed body, with anatomy usually determining the life a person led. However, as I have shown, gender is a performative identity and one that needs to be actively embodied. Indeed, Migdalek's understanding of gender embodiment has been developed throughout this chapter in exploring how gender passing individuals maintained a level of consistency in their gender presentation. Furthermore, we have seen how individuals were confident in their performance and how the concealment of their biological bodies through clothing was central for others to accept them as men. Individuals embodied their gender through their own personal understanding of contemporary masculinity. This chapter has discussed how it was a combination of clothing, physical appearance, gestures, and manly characteristics that aided an individual's transition in masculine society. Ultimately it was how the individual choreographed their masculinity that demonstrated their manliness.

Body manipulation was an active way in which gender passing individuals altered the aesthetics of their physical body to obtain their 'imagined body', as Field has argued.¹⁶³ This was shown in how James Allen and Harry Stokes physically changed their biological bodies to conceal their breasts to offer a more masculine silhouette that was considered passable by their contemporaries. Bodies were described in relation to their strength and 'muscular masculinity', to use Baron's words.¹⁶⁴ An individual's muscularity and manliness showcased their understanding of how they ought to present themselves in their communities. Individuals, therefore, choreographed and performed their gender in the same way as other men so that they could be treated in an appropriate way.¹⁶⁵

Although many reports of gender passing cases did not divulge into the particulars of masculine clothing, Crane has recognised that clothing conveyed to others an individual's social status and character.¹⁶⁶ Therefore, for gender passing individuals, clothing was symbolic of their masculinity. Their commitment to maintaining masculinity was evident in

¹⁶³ Field, *Working Men's Bodies*, 4.

¹⁶⁴ Baron, "Masculinity," 149.

¹⁶⁵ Migdalek, *The Embodied Performance*, 10.

¹⁶⁶ Crane, "Clothing Behaviour," 242.

the cases of Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson and John Murphy who used their trousers as a way of displaying their masculinity, even in death.¹⁶⁷ Gender passing individuals did not possess the ability to grow facial hair but this was viewed as a signifier of masculinity by the press only after the revelation of their biological identity. Therefore, the beard was a sign of masculinity for some people and not for others, thus leading to the conclusion that a beard was a personal choice for working-class men rather than a requirement, as some newspaper articles implied.

Outward presentation was essential for gender passing individuals to be recognised as male. It was a way of confirming their gender identity and a way of being known as male to others. As Begiato has highlighted, manliness was attainable for all men at any social level and was an expected characteristic throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁸ Yet, there were different layers of manliness that individuals possessed. Gender passing individuals demonstrated their initial layer of manliness through their strength, their physicality, and their outward appearance. Their second layer of manliness was evidenced through their understanding of being a provider for their family and as a breadwinner.

¹⁶⁷ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan; England), December 28, 1860, 2.; "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Reynolds's News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.

¹⁶⁸ Begiato, "Punishing the Unregulated Manly Body," 46.; Begiato, *Manliness in Britain*, 5.

Chapter Three

Queer Intimacies

Queer relationships were practiced by gender passing individuals even though they had the potential to be viewed by others as ostensibly heterosexual. Individuals and their partners engaged in what appeared to be relationships that were upheld by heteronormative values. Helen Berry has recognised that in queer theory ‘the plausibility of a marital bond can only be sustained through the successful and repeated performance of the social role of a husband and wife’.¹ In a similar sense, gender passing individuals also performed the appropriate roles attributed to husbands and wives during their lives. Gender passing individuals performed these social roles and challenged the normative values of a marriage being between a man and a woman through their literal same-sex relationships.

Although we can subjectively see gender passing individuals as queering marital norms, they were, in fact, primarily focussed on committing themselves to their gender identity. In turn this also included being committed to the role of a husband and ultimately queering the heterociscentric notion of marriage in the nineteenth century. Gender passing individuals performed in a recognisably heterociscentric way that, first fitted into a normalised society where a man was the breadwinner and a woman was at home supporting the family and, second where heterosexual marriage was mandatory. To the viewing public, gender passing individuals did not challenge binaries of gender within their own relationships. Yet, gender passing individuals queered the understanding of heteronormativity and ultimately nonconformed to a traditional marriage between a man and wife by following the mode of nineteenth century marriage.

The term ‘queer’ will be used throughout this chapter as a means of discussing relationships that challenged binary ideals about gender.² Historically, the term ‘queer’ has

¹ Helen Berry, “Queering the History of Marriage: The Social Recognition of a Castrato Husband in Eighteenth Century Britain,” *History Workshop Journal* 74, (2012): 40.

² Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 137-148.; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, (New York: Routledge, 1990).; Judith Butler,

referred to something that was strange or different.³ Towards the latter part of the nineteenth century, queer was used to vilify homosexual activity and remained a homophobic insult throughout the twentieth century.⁴ During the 1980s and 1990s theorists and critics began to develop 'queer theory' which challenged this idea of there being a binary society.⁵ Peter Barry has argued that one of the key questions of queer theory is 'whether it is gender or sexuality which is more fundamental in personal identity'.⁶ In gender passing relationships, however, we can see that gender was fundamental to the individual as they consolidated their gender performance before committing themselves to another.

In this chapter the themes of commitment and confidence from the 4 C's of Passing framework will be weaved throughout. Gender passing individuals needed to not only commit to their gender performativity, but they also needed to be loyal to their wives and partners. Individuals had to commit their lives to supporting their family and this included being confident enough to embody the breadwinner role and, in some cases, like John Murphy and John Smith, they had to provide comfortably for multiple children and be confident in their ability to do so.

Historically, marriage has signified a bond between two people. Joanne Begiato (nee Bailey) has argued that, 'marriage shaped the lives of most adults, whether they entered informal or formal versions of it, or did not marry through choice or circumstance'.⁷ She continues by highlighting that all types of marital commitment 'marked physical, emotional and economic maturity and – depending on sex – wealth, status and participation in civic and social duties and rights'.⁸ Indeed, in the nineteenth century marriage was an obvious way to show commitment to another person. Ideally, marriage required honesty and the love of your

Undoing Gender, (London: Routledge, 2004).; Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 335.

³ Jeffrey Weeks, *Coming Out: The Emergence of LGBT Identities in Britain from the 19th Century to the Present* (London: Quartet Books, 2016).

⁴ Laura Doan, 'Topsy-Turveydom: Gender Sexuality, and the Problem of Categorization' in *Disturbing Practices: History, Sexuality, and Women's Experience of Modern War* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 97-134.

⁵ Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 137-148.; Tyson. *Critical Theory Today*, 335.

⁶ Barry. *Beginning Theory*, 138.

⁷ Joanne Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England 1660-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

⁸ Bailey, *Unquiet Lives*, 2.

partner. Marriage was also a societal contract. It therefore resulted in a different social status: procreation, an extended family, stability, and a future.

In the context of gender passing, marriage can be examined in a way that focusses simply on the bonds between two people and on the performativity of social expectations. For instance, gender passing individuals assumed a heteronormative relationship yet, whilst they engaged in these relationships, they challenged the meaning of marriage being between a biological man and a biological woman. This critique destabilises traditional marriage and opens it up to new ways of looking at a familiar practice.⁹ The first half of this chapter explores the language of relationships in the nineteenth-century press and the legal marriages that gender passing individuals engaged in.

Legal marriage was not the only way that gender passing individuals committed themselves to another. John Smith, for instance, cohabited with his partner until his death.¹⁰ Cohabitation, however, 'was not one of blanket condemnation' in the nineteenth century, according to Ginger Frost.¹¹ Vicky Holmes has highlighted that couples engaged in cohabitation for various reasons including, financial security, 'family disdain, the age of the couple, being able to make an easy escape from a difficult relationship, or merely just not seeing 'marriage worth their while'.¹² However, as Rebecca Probert has highlighted, cohabitation depended on how it was defined by each couple or community.¹³ The second half of this chapter therefore explores cohabiting couples and how they lived socially as man and wife but still maintained their roles as husbands, breadwinners and providers.

In the same way that gender passing individuals challenged the roles of gender identity in nineteenth-century Britain, they also questioned what was expected of individuals who engaged in marriages and other committed relationships. Sheila Jeffreys has argued that

⁹ Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).; Rebecca L. Davis, "'Not marriage at all, but simple harlotry': The Companionate Marriage Controversy," *The Journal of American History* 94, no. 4, (2008): 1137-1163.; Sheila Jeffreys, "Women and Sexuality" in *Women's History: Britain 1850-1945: An Introduction* edited by June Purvis, (Routledge: London, 1998), 193-216.

¹⁰ "[From the *Macclesfield Courier* of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.

¹¹ Ginger Frost, *Living in Sin*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 1.

¹² Vicky Holmes, *In Bed with the Victorians: The Life-Cycle of Working-Class Marriage* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 2-3.

¹³ Rebecca Probert, ed. *Cohabitation and Non-Marital Births in England and Wales, 1600-2012* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 5.

in marriage 'men gained ownership of women's bodies and all the resources of their free labour'.¹⁴ To an extent we see this in Harry Stokes and Ann Hants's relationship in that Ann was paid for her services as a servant and not as a wife when the couple separated. As discussed in *Chapter Two: What Makes a Man?* respectability was also an attractive quality. Indeed, Frost has recognised that 'an honourable or honest man was one who provided, kept his word, and told the truth' and this honourability and respectability was largely the case for most gender passing couples.¹⁵ Both honour and respectability were coded masculine values which were then applied to determine the moral quality of a marital relationship. Therefore, these qualities are also significant when evaluating the successes of gender passing individuals as husbands in society.

¹⁴ Jeffreys, "Women and Sexuality," 194.

¹⁵ Ginger S. Frost, *Promises Broken: Courtship, Class, and Gender in Victorian England* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995), 46.

The Language of Queer Intimacies

Language and imagery have become central to definitions and understandings of gender passing individuals. Sometimes language included individuals being described as a 'female husband' or as a 'Man-Woman' like Harry Stokes.¹⁶ Newspapers also dealt with 'concealment of sex' cases.¹⁷ The contemporary language and imagery that has been used to describe gender passing individuals in the press rendered the stories recognisable to readers. In this sense, language became universal and accessible when readers had the same knowledge and understanding as those who were writing and researching the articles and could make links to other similar cases. This section explores how gender passing individuals were labelled in terms of their queer relationships and focuses on the language that was used to describe the roles of those individuals in newspaper reports.

It was largely a person's biological identity that became the basis for the roles that they performed. Gender passing individuals, however, tore down these biologically informed gender roles privately through their embodiment of masculinity even when they adhered to heterociscentric values. Moreover, exposure of gender passing individuals revealed that not every man was a husband and not every husband was a man. Although gender passing individuals queered heterociscentric values, the truth was that individuals approached their relationships in the same way that they approached their gender identity, in a way that made them recognisable as men. They adhered to the ideals of heterociscentricity to assist with a smoother transition into society, yet they also queered normative ideals through their same-sex relationships with their partners.

Newspaper reports that commented on gender passing cases used various terms to describe individuals, by focussing on their 'Extraordinary Marriage' or referring to their biological identity explicitly such as William Seymour being labelled as a 'Female Cabdriver' in

¹⁶ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; "'Harry" Stokes, The Man-Woman." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

¹⁷ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.

1875 or Mary Newell as 'The Female Thief in Masquerade' in 1861.¹⁸ The two most common terms used to describe gender passing individuals were cases of 'concealment of sex' and as a 'female husband'.¹⁹ In this sample of twenty-five gender passing cases, there are eleven instances where individuals were labelled as a 'female husband' and nine cases that categorised them as 'concealment of sex' cases.

The term 'female husband' was used in John Murphy's case in 1825 and William Cullener's case in 1893.²⁰ There was a longevity in the use of this term suggesting that it was culturally knowable. Reference to gender passing individuals as 'female husbands' came from a 1746 pamphlet that was produced by Henry Fielding as was discussed in the *Introduction* and *Chapter Two: What Makes a Man?*.²¹ Fielding criticised female husbands in his opening remarks by emphasising the necessity of 'the continuance of the human species'.²² He continued by arguing that people needed to be 'govern'd [sic] and directed by virtue and religion', something which recognised the supremacy and intrinsic value of the Bible and faith more widely in the eighteenth century.²³

In his pamphlet, Fielding described a female husband as a biological woman who fulfilled all the requirements of a husband. He noted how female husbands purposefully duped typically older and more impressionable women into marrying them and consequently took advantage of them. What is most interesting is how Fielding suggested female husbands should be dealt with after their exposure, writing:

...it was to be hoped that this example will be sufficient to deter all others from the commission of any such foul and unnatural crimes: for which, if they should escape the shame and ruin which they do well deserve in this

¹⁸ "A Female Thief in Masquerade." *Reading Mercury, Oxford Gazette, Newbury Herald and Berk's County Paper* etc., (Reading: England), November 16, 1861.; "A Female Cabdriver in Liverpool – Strange Disclosure." *Liverpool Albion*, (Liverpool: England), February 13, 1875.

¹⁹ "A Female Husband." *Banbury Guardian*, (Oxfordshire: England), October 10, 1853.; "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Reynolds's News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.

²⁰ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; "A Female Husband in Court." *Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough*, (North Yorkshire: England), December 6, 1893.

²¹ Henry Fielding, *The Female Husband: Or, the Surprising History of Mrs Mary, alias Mr. George Hamilton*, (London: M. Cooper, at the Globe in Paternoster Row, 1746), 1-23.

²² Fielding, *The Female Husband*, 1.

²³ Ibid.

world, they will be most certain of meeting with their full punishment in the next.²⁴

The value of religion was clear in Fielding's argument. Punishment for gender passing individuals was reserved for God. Furthermore, Fielding suggested that he was protecting other women from potentially becoming involved with female husbands through the publication of his pamphlet. The pamphlet itself acted as a manual to highlight the tell-tale signs that women ought to have been aware of when looking for a husband. The irony, of course, was that gender passing individuals were more visible in society in the nineteenth century as they actively engaged in work and contributed to society. They were also discussed in newspaper reports and in the publication of street ballads. The construction of them as a threat was not something that was seemingly upheld in local communities according to newspaper reports.

In the case of Albert Guelph, a middle-class gender passing individual, newspaper reports referred to him as a 'female husband' when he appeared in the press in 1853.²⁵ This demonstrates the universality of the term and that it did not have any social boundaries attached to it. Albert was also described as a 'pseudo husband' in the *Banbury Journal*, a term that remained unique to his case. 'Pseudo' refers to something being fake. Sheila Jeffreys has highlighted that the female invert in the early twentieth century was seen as a 'pseudohomosexual' that was 'perverted by choice of accident rather than biology, and was seen as being capable of reversion to heterosexuality'.²⁶ The idea of 'choice' becomes particularly interesting in relation to some gender passing cases. For instance, Charles Wilkins, Anna Maria Wilkins (male name remained unknown in reports) and William Seymour identified as men after difficult heterosexual marriages. The press highlighted how they had returned to their biological identity sometime after identifying as men. Perhaps newspaper reports humoured cases such as these because ultimately gender passing individuals maintained the social equilibrium of male and female heterosexual relationships when and if they returned to living their lives as female. Nonetheless, this is demonstrable of the

²⁴ Fielding, *The Female Husband*, 23.

²⁵ "A Female Husband." *Banbury Guardian*, (Oxfordshire: England), October 20, 1853.

²⁶ Jeffreys, "Women and Sexuality," 207.

instability of gender and highlights how some gender passing individuals moved between and beyond the seemingly rigid notions of gender throughout their lives.

The term ‘female husband’ was also used in the case of John Murphy in 1825. John Murphy appeared in the press when he revealed himself to be female after two years of marriage. John married Matilda Lacy after being blackmailed by his future mother in law who was protecting her daughter after she became pregnant.²⁷ Although John was described as being ‘not very easy in the character of a husband’, *Bell’s Life* suggested that he fulfilled this role to some extent. Ginger Frost has highlighted that a man needed to be the initiator of a relationship, to be brave, take control of any debts he had accrued and most importantly, he needed to keep his word.²⁸ Although these transferrable qualities were not limited to husbands, they were typically reserved for men. Indeed, John Murphy kept his word in keeping his wife’s illegitimate child a secret and raising them as his own and providing financially for them as his family.

Although the term ‘female husband’ was used throughout the nineteenth century to describe gender passing individuals in newspaper reports, it was between the 1850s and 1870s that we see a shift in terminology. During this period, the term of ‘concealment of sex’ was frequently used to label gender passing individuals. Indeed, this understanding of ‘concealment’ in cases such as these inspired the fourth C in the 4 C’s of Passing framework. Compared to the term ‘female husband’, ‘concealment of sex’ cases indicated a muted response. The term was not as sensationalised as that of ‘female husband’ cases and was almost matter of fact in comparison. The word ‘concealment’, for example, implied hiding or obscuring something. Yet, the term itself failed to consider the gender of the individual, what roles they performed, their marital status, who their family were and where they were employed.

Respectability and honourability were important to gender passing individuals as these were qualities that nineteenth century men adhered to. Geoffrey Best has argued that from the 1850s onwards, respectability was a key aim in civic life and people spent more time in tackling ‘sanitary, administrative and cultural problems of their cities’ to highlight their

²⁷ “The Female Husband.” *Bell’s Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; “Female Husband.” *Leeds Intelligencer*, (West Yorkshire: England), July 14, 1825.

²⁸ Frost. *Promises Broken*, 40-43.

changing attitudes.²⁹ The shift in terminology in describing gender passing individuals used in newspapers may have also reflected a contemporary shift in attitudes in that people no longer wanted to not follow typical lines of gossip. The use of the word ‘concealment’ in Thomas Green’s case in 1861, for instance, purposefully obscured his gender identity and thus gave his narrative an insincere quality to it, highlighting this apparent shift in how newspapers dealt with gender passing cases.³⁰

Thomas Green found himself in court for accruing debt for a suit of clothing that he had commissioned but did not pay for. Even before the reader engaged with the article, they are drawn to the possibility that Thomas was hiding his biology purposefully due to the headline being one of ‘concealment of sex’. As a result, a contemporary reader may have had a negative response to Thomas’s case due to the language that was being used. After reading the article, however, we become familiar with the reason for Thomas’s gender passing. The *York Herald* commented:

Green stated that when very young, she was in the service of a lady who, requiring the services of a little page, dressed her up as a boy, and she has retained the dress of a male (to the confusion of her tailor) ever since.³¹

Not only does this suggest that Thomas was pushed into the role of a boy by someone in a position of authority, but it also suggests that people were aware of his gender passing. This is evidenced by the article noting how Thomas’s tailor was confused when altering and making his clothing as well as the lady who employed him. Similarly, the use of the phrase ‘concealment of sex’ referred only to Thomas masquerading his biology. It did not take into consideration his role as a man in society nor as a husband to his wife. Interestingly, Thomas was released to his wife, with no further action being taken, despite being sentenced to thirty days in prison once his biology was exposed.

Language became central to understanding how gender passing individuals were viewed by the public and in their wider communities, a theme that will be explored in more detail in *Chapter Four: Conforming in the Unsuspecting Community*. Some newspaper reports referred to gender passing individuals as ‘female husbands’ and others were described as

²⁹ Geoffrey Best, *Mid Victorian Britain, 1851-75*, (London: Fontana Paper Backs, 1979), 33-34.

³⁰ “Extraordinary Case of Concealment of Sex.” *York Herald*, (York: England), May 11, 1861.

³¹ *Ibid.*

'concealment of sex' cases. Newspapers also considered how gender passing individuals fulfilled their roles not only as men but as husbands and partners as well. Gender passing individuals conformed to the stereotypical view of gender and the roles associated with male partners at that time. By doing so, they sought to enhance their passability into heterociscentric society.

Lived Experiences

Marriage has always signalled the ultimate union between two individuals and was a legal and binding contract between a man and a woman. A religious ceremony was the only legal way to commit two people together and the introduction of Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act in 1753 made it law that marriages were held in religious institutes, were solemnised by clergymen and registered locally with authorities.³² In 1856 civil marriages were introduced for non-religious ceremonies to take place. Yet, these marriages still required the couple to be registered. Any other ceremonies or cohabitation was not considered legal.³³ Begiato has argued that 'wives and husbands obtained many elements of their self-identity and public reputation, and even a sense of superiority, from marriage and the household. However, the positions of both were unstable and dependent on each other's good will'.³⁴ Although there was a connection between husbands and wives, both knew their separate roles and expectations. From my sample, eleven cases appear to have been married. Of these, I have located five marriages with registrations and certificates. This section focuses on legally constituted marriages between gender passing individuals and their spouses and reflects on the centrality of the husband to the relationship.

Marriage, like gender, was and still is, a social construct. For gender passing individuals, marriage was a social performance executed in public that not only solidified their performative gender identity but also demonstrated their commitment to fulfilling the role of a husband. Susan Clayton has argued that everything in life becomes a performance as if on stage, resulting in the public critically evaluating the presentation of each performer.³⁵ In the marriage ceremony each person has their role to play. The priest, for instance, facilitates the ceremony and confirms that the couple have fulfilled the criteria of marriage such as the

³² Rebecca Probert, *Marriage, Law and Practice in the Long Eighteenth Century: A Reassessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

³³ William Gibson and Joanne Begiato, *Sex and the Church: Religion, Enlightenment and Sexual Revolution* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2017).

³⁴ Bailey, *Unquiet Lives*, 84.

³⁵ Susan Clayton, "Can Two and a Half Centuries of Female Husbands Inform (Trans)Gender History?," *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 14, no. 4 (2010): 288-302.

couple living locally, being of appropriate age and having their banns read. The witnesses, sometimes friends or family, were supporters of the couple. The bride knew that she needed to evoke a virginal quality as well as displaying her motherly and nurturing side. The husband himself became the leading man, evoking the image of a protector. He was to become a breadwinner and needed to be kind and loving to his wife.

Although the idea of a queer marriage was not formally accepted in British society until 2014, non-heterosexual marriages have occurred throughout history. Both Sharon Marcus and Martha Vicinus have explored the history of female marriage and intimate friendships in their work.³⁶ Some middle- and upper-class women engaged in social marriages with a close friend of the same sex. By 'social marriage', I am referring to a non-legally binding, consensual contract between a same-sex couple who committed themselves to each other and were engaged in a close private relationship. Marcus has described how some of these relationships were accepted and acknowledged in society because they helped to 'cultivate the feminine virtues of sympathy and altruism that made women into good helpmates'.³⁷ For many, female marriage was a practice run before a 'real' marriage was fulfilled.

In contrast, the working classes were not privy to this type of female marriage as far as we are aware. Moreover, working-class women did not have the necessary means to remain living at home waiting for a potential bachelor to sweep them off their feet. There were sexual double standards, meaning that the roles of working-class men and women differed.³⁸ The sexual double standard in the nineteenth century meant that there were certain expectations for men and women to follow. Although men were responsible for providing, women also needed to find stable employment or marry to be financially and emotionally supported.³⁹ In some instances, marriage was viewed as a 'woman's proper destiny', especially for women like Abigail Naylor who was encouraged to move away from the family home and into the work of work by her father, following the death of her mother.⁴⁰

³⁶ Martha Vicinus, *Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women 1778-1928* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004).; Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire and Marriage in Victorian England* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007).

³⁷ Marcus, *Between Women*, 26.

³⁸ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, (Oxon: Routledge, 1996), 9.; Sarah Fitzpatrick, "Separate Spheres: A Closer Look at Ideological Gender Roles in Victorian England through the Sensational Novel," *Victorian*, (2015): 1-9.

³⁹ Joanne Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁴⁰ Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 195-196.

It was in her job as a housemaid that she met James Allen and they began their relationship together. Perhaps, in this sense, the example of James and Abigail's marriage in 1807 fulfils the concept of traditional marriage, from courtship through to eventual widowhood.

The marriage between James and Abigail Allen was one that was stereotypical of the time. James's narrative was an early example of gender passing in the nineteenth century and was the first case I came across when uncovering different narratives. Indeed, James's story intrigued audiences with hundreds of newspaper articles and a pamphlet published about his life after his death in 1829. The couple had a tumultuous marriage from the beginning of their relationship until James's death twenty-one years later. Although it has been difficult to locate primary material surrounding the private lives of gender passing individuals, James and Abigail's case was documented more widely in the press and street literature. However, it was largely their public identity that was focussed on.

James and Abigail began their romantic relationship in the home where they were employed. Both worked for Mr Ward and lived in 6 Camberwell Terrace in London.⁴¹ James was employed as a groom to Mr Ward and Abigail was a housemaid at the property. Frost has argued that domestic work 'was central to the construction of both genders' and called it 'the foundation of masculine self-identity'.⁴² James's employment as a groomsman was his initiation into the world of work. James learned his trade as a young man before moving to the city where he developed his skills into more manual employment on the docks. In his employment as a groom he crafted his own understanding of his masculinity and was recognised for it.

James was just eighteen years old when he began working for Mr Ward and was highly favoured for 'his manners', which were 'generally obliging[ly] kind as to win alike the regard of his superiors and equals'.⁴³ James was described as a model employee with one article stating that 'his habits were strictly moral; and his person so smart and clean'.⁴⁴ The fact that James was a model employee demonstrated that he was not only a good working-class man

⁴¹ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband," *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.; "Inquest," *The Times*, (London: England), January 15, 1829, 3.; "Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829. "The Female Husband." *The Times*, (London: England), January 17, 1829, 3.

⁴² Frost, *Promises Broken*, 40.

⁴³ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 6-7.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

in his abilities but also in his morality. Therefore, James, it seems, worked harder than his co-workers and performed his masculinity better than them.⁴⁵ Leonore Davidoff has recognised that employees needed to pay a tax premium on male domestic servants highlighting the decline in men engaging in this type of employment throughout the nineteenth century.⁴⁶ The fact that Mr Ward actively paid a premium for James Allen shows his ability to complete work to a high standard and also his likeability as an individual.

Due to James and Abigail's romantic relationship they were asked to leave Mr Ward's home and were unable to work together. James stayed local, but Abigail moved to Margate to keep her reputation as a good housemaid. Many working-class women went into domestic service, according to Davidoff, until they found a husband and this was also the case for Abigail.⁴⁷ The couple 'regularly correspond[ed] through love letters to each other and planned to eventually get married'.⁴⁸ Abigail received a letter from James after several months 'desiring her to come to London, and seal by marriage the vows of eternal love which had been so reciprocally pledged to each other'.⁴⁹ Abigail was granted just three day's leave from her employment and it was during this time that the couple married. The couple's marriage registration that can be seen in figure 11, confirmed that James and Abigail were married on 13 December 1807 in Camberwell.⁵⁰ It was this same marriage registration that Abigail produced to authorities to confirm her legal marital status after James's death some twenty-one years later.

⁴⁵ Lisa Hager, "A Case for a Trans Studies Turn in Victorian Studies: "Female Husband" of the Nineteenth Century," *Victorian Review* 44, no. 1 (2018): 47.

⁴⁶ Leonore Davidoff, "Mastered for Life: Servant and Wife in Victorian and Edwardian England," *Journal of Social History* 7, no. 4 (1974): 406-420.

⁴⁷ Davidoff, "Mastered for Life," 406-420.

⁴⁸ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 8.

⁴⁹ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 9.

⁵⁰ Marriage registration of 'James Allen' and 'Abigail Naylor' original ownership belongs to St Giles Church, Camberwell but on loan to *London Metropolitan Archives*, reference number: p73/gis/014, accessed through Ancestry.com. Reproduced with permission from Father Nick George from St Giles Church, Camberwell and Wendy Hawke at London Metropolitan Archives.

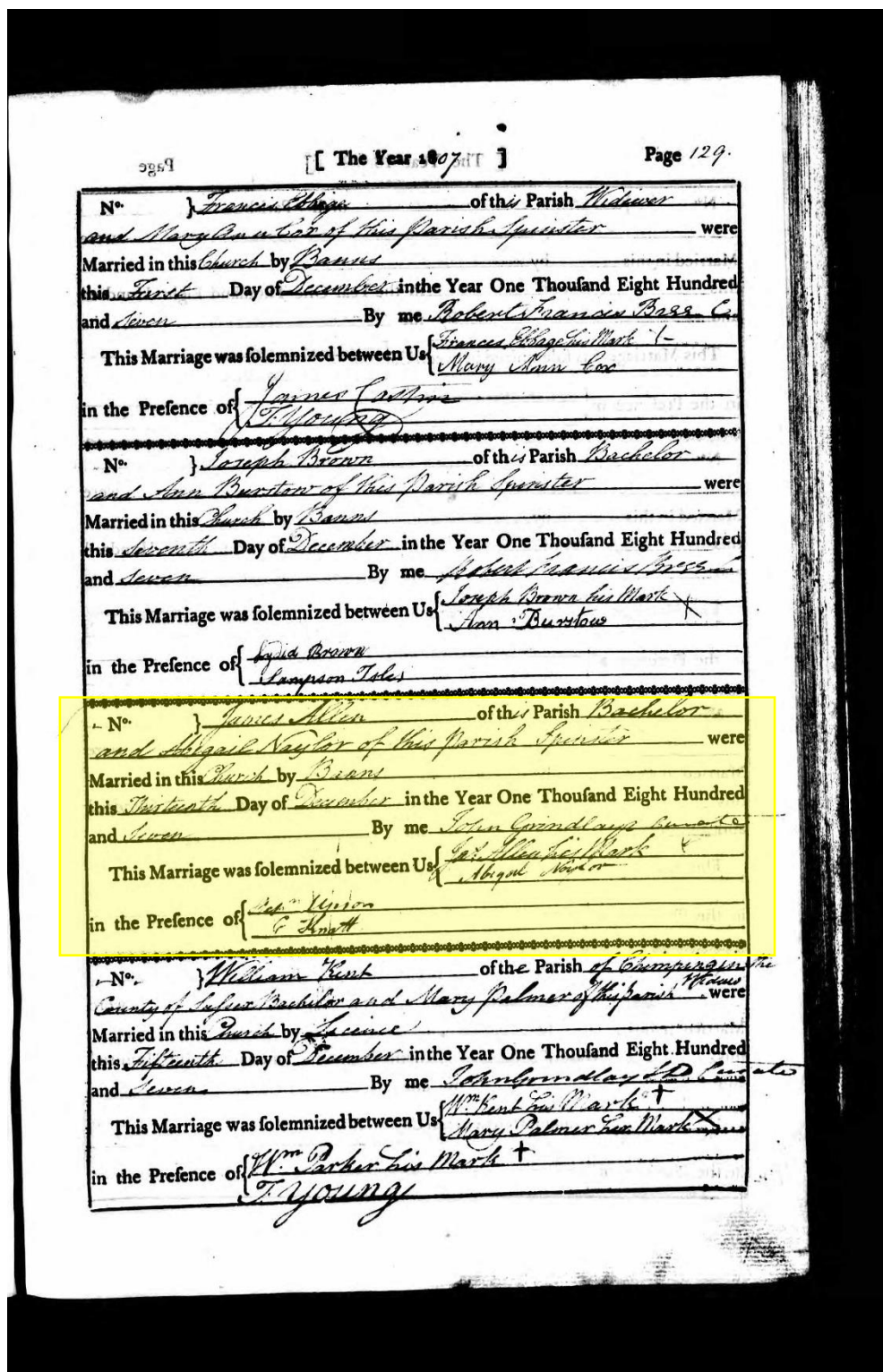


Figure 11 Marriage registration of James Allen and Abigail Naylor married December 13, 1807. Originally held in St Giles Church, Camberwell but on loan to London Metropolitan Archives, reference number: p73/gis/014. Permission to reproduce this marriage registration has been granted by Father Nick George from St Giles Church and Wendy Hawke for London Metropolitan Archive.

In *An Authentic Narrative*, the pamphlet that was published about James's life following his death in 1829, the author highlights that James organised the whole wedding prior to Abigail's arrival, writing:

James met her [Abigail] by appointment, and from him she learned that the banns had been duly proclaimed in the parish church of St Giles, Camberwell, and that he had arranged that the marriage ceremony should take place on the following day, well knowing that her stay from her situation would be necessarily prescribed.⁵¹

Evidently James wanted to commit himself to Abigail and demonstrated this by organising the couple's wedding. Banns were traditionally read for three weeks prior to the couple marrying to allow enough time for anyone to contest the matrimony. As James rushed this it may have caused some concerns amongst the local community, although, the marriage seemingly went ahead without an issue.

Despite their traditional marriage, however, the couple began their married life in an untraditional way. After marriage, newlyweds typically lived together in the wife's parental home if they did not have their own house.⁵² The pamphlet noted that Abigail, 'Having lost her mother in the early part of her life, left home to seek a livelihood by servitude' at an early age.⁵³ Therefore, it was not practical for the couple to return to Abigail's family home and it was noted that James did not have any family to support him. After the couple's marriage, therefore, Abigail returned to Margate and it was agreed that James would find a suitable marital home for the couple before Abigail moved to London. Essentially, the couple committed themselves to each other in their marriage but then separated again to allow James to fulfil his first role as a husband and to provide for his wife before they could start their lives together.

When exploring the intimacies of the couple's marriage, the pamphlet clearly challenged and questioned the sincerity of James. According to the author their marriage was tarnished from the beginning due to James purposefully concealing his biological identity and duping Abigail into unknowingly marrying him. The pamphlet wrote:

⁵¹ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 9.

⁵² Holmes, *In Bed with the Victorians*, 16-17.

⁵³ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 5.

nothing can be more revolting than the idea of one fellow-creature, at the altar of a church, in the presence of his Creator, pledging himself to another in a fictitious character... What must have been the frame of mind of James Allen at that moment, when committing so irreparable a fraud, under such solemn circumstances, is, upon reflection, a matter of astonishment and regret.⁵⁴

This passage questioned James's credibility as an honourable person owing to his active defiance of God. This was also expressed in how he challenged the true meaning of marriage by binding himself to Abigail despite him knowingly concealing his biological identity. This interpretation of James being duplicitous also has links with how bigamy was understood in the nineteenth century. Indeed, if both parties were aware of the bigamous marriage then there was some toleration by the community and many cases of bigamy did not make it to trial.⁵⁵ John Gillis has argued that it was only 'when the original spouse decided to make trouble' that the trial made it to court.⁵⁶ Similarly, Frost argues that bigamous unions were 'strong evidence for the resilience of people's attachment to matrimony'.⁵⁷ Matrimony represented stability and ultimately respectability in the community for both the husband and wife. Although there was no direct discussion of James or Abigail's religious affiliation, St Giles Church, where the couple married, was a Church of England institute and remains as part of the Parish of Camberwell.⁵⁸ It is not clear if James and Abigail were practicing Anglicans but it is likely that they had some knowledge and experience of Christian formalities prior to their marriage. They would have both been clear on what was expected of them once they had committed themselves to one another.

James was dedicated to starting their married life in the best way that he could. He obtained employment, including that of a 'degenerated cow keeper', a shipwright and sawyer

⁵⁴ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 10.

⁵⁵ Ginger S. Frost, "Bigamy and Cohabitation in Victorian England," *Journal of Family History* 22, no. 3 (1997): 286-306.; David M. Turner, "Popular Marriage and the Law: Tales of Bigamy at the Eighteenth-Century Old Bailey," *The London Journal* 30, no. 1 (2005): 6-21.

⁵⁶ John R. Gillis, *For Better, For Worse: British Marriages 1600 to the Present*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

⁵⁷ Frost, "Bigamy and Cohabitation," 291.

⁵⁸ St Giles Church, Camberwell, Southwark, London is still a thriving church in the local community and Father Nick George has been very helpful in providing me with permission to use the archives in this thesis. Accessed January 24, 2019. <https://stgilescamberwell.org/>

in order to provide some stability for his wife.⁵⁹ Although it seemed as though James was a model husband in the press, his correspondence with Abigail ceased and she was unable to contact him for some time. The pamphlet recognised this loss on Abigail's part, writing:

To add to her sorrow and perplexity, she was wholly at a loss where to write to, James having kept his address at this time a secret, for obvious reasons. Inquiry after inquiry was instituted, through the medium of her friends in London, but no James was to be heard of.⁶⁰

Evidently James had ceased their previously regular correspondence which resulted in Abigail being left deserted in Margate. The pamphlet went on to describe James as 'heartless'.⁶¹ It was not until August 1808, eight months after their initial wedding, that James sent for Abigail to come to London where the couple finally began their married life together.

Both the pamphlet and newspapers reported that James deserted his wife on several occasions during their marriage. The first being the day after the marriage when Abigail returned to Margate to work and James remained living in London to begin finding their marital home. On a separate occasion, James disappeared for three and a half months leaving Abigail to financially support herself.⁶² The pamphlet commented:

she [Abigail] had learned the rudiments of straw-bonnet making; therefore, in the absence of all other means of providing the necessities of life, she applied for employment in that line and fortunately succeeded.⁶³

One day after shopping Abigail returned home to an empty house. James had 'taken everything valuable of a portable nature with him'.⁶⁴ Not only had he left his wife without any explanation; he had also taken the amenities and treasures from the house that they had worked so hard to obtain. James was remembered in the press for being the breadwinner and

⁵⁹ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.; "Inquest." *The Times*, (London: England), January 15, 1829, 3.; "Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.; "The Female Husband." *The Times*, (London: England), January 17, 1829, 3.

⁶⁰ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 13.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 25.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 24.

as a 'sober and industrious' husband being able to 'turn her hand to anything'.⁶⁵ Yet, by leaving Abigail to provide for herself he failed one of the fundamental characteristics of being a breadwinner: that of dependability.⁶⁶ After several weeks, James returned and eventually settled back into life at home. James gave Abigail no explanation for his disappearance and went back to his previous job as a shipwright after relying on Abigail for financial support.⁶⁷ Perhaps James had needed time away to heal himself mentally and when back at home with Abigail he was committed to the role of being a good husband, once again.

It was in January 1829 that Abigail received information that James had been in an accident at work. On her arrival at St Thomas's Hospital, the news was given to her that her husband was dead. James had died when a piece of timber hit him on the head whilst he was in a saw pit at the dockyard where he worked.⁶⁸ At this point, the traditional marriage vows ceased, 'till death do us part' and Abigail became a widow.

Abigail's status as a widow was questioned when her husband's biological sex was publicly revealed. This led to Abigail feeling compelled to respond to neighbours by signing a public affidavit that denied she had any prior knowledge of the biological sex of her husband.⁶⁹ *The Times* wrote how the 'poor woman having been dreadfully annoyed by some of her neighbours who doubted the truth of her statement' and that she wanted to 'set the matter right' and prove her innocence.⁷⁰ This public affirmation was a clear sign that Abigail wanted to secure her reputation in her community. Some press reports, including one in the *Newcastle Courant*, concluded that having buried her husband, Abigail lived as an 'industrious, honest woman'.⁷¹ Abigail did not return to the press, nor have I been successful in tracing her in any census material or marriage data after this date.

⁶⁵ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.

⁶⁶ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.

⁶⁷ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 27.

⁶⁸ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.; "Extraordinary Investigation: or the Female Husband." *The Observer*, (London: England), January 18, 1829.; "The Female Husband." *The Times*, (London: England), January 22, 1829. 4.; "The Female Husband," *Globe*, (London: England), January 22, 1829.

⁶⁹ "The Female Husband." *The Times*, (London: England), January 22, 1829, 4.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.

Gender passing individuals had to be bold in their choice of partner. They needed to be certain that their wife would not expose their biological identity if they became aware of it, something that Harry Stokes discovered in 1838 when his wife of twenty-one years exposed him as being biologically female.⁷² Individuals needed to be accepting of their own abilities to perform as a husband and be assured that their wife was devoted to them. Some of the wives of gender passing individuals, including Sarah Deakin and Abigail Allen, claimed that they did not know of their husband's biological identity after it was exposed in the press.⁷³ If, indeed, this was the case, then gender passing individuals had been successful in fulfilling their expectations of men in society but also in the private sphere of the home. Although, it is necessary to highlight that consummation of the marriage was required for the union to be legitimate. If a spouse could prove that the marriage was not consummated, then there would be grounds for an annulment.⁷⁴ As nineteenth century views on consummation allowed only for vaginal intercourse with a penis the likelihood that these women could prove their partners were female would have enabled them to have an annulment. Interestingly, however, I have not found cases to support this.

In 1846, the *Glasgow Herald* published an article taken from the *Liverpool Albion* in an example of scissors-and-paste journalism. The article was headlined 'Marriage Extraordinary' and referred to the relationship of Charles and Sarah Wilkins (nee Deakin).⁷⁵ The use of the term 'extraordinary' was used in several other gender passing cases during the nineteenth century. It was likely that this term was used because it conveyed shock and had a sensationalised quality to it. Charles held various positions as a factory worker and an industrial worker in Smethwick in Birmingham. He was also known for his lothario-like status around town.⁷⁶ Yet, Sarah represented stability for him, and he became 'a most exemplary husband' according to the *Glasgow Herald*.⁷⁷ After marrying Sarah, Charles 'ceased to crack jokes with the girls as they passed and ha[d] even forsaken his accustomed pipe and cup at

⁷² "The Female Husband in Manchester." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.; "The Woman Husband." *Manchester Guardian*, (Manchester: England), April 14, 1838, 2.

⁷³ "The Female Husband in Manchester." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 4, 1838.; "Smethwick: Romantic Affair." *Birmingham Journal*, (Birmingham: England), August 1, 1846.

⁷⁴ William Gibson and Joanne Begiato, *Sex and the Church in the London Eighteenth Century: Religion, Enlightenment, and the Sexual Revolution*, (Camden: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

⁷⁵ "Marriage Extraordinary." *Bradford Observer*, (Bradford: England), August 20, 1846.; "Marriage Extraordinary." *Glasgow Herald*, (Glasgow: Scotland), August 21, 1846.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

the Swan'.⁷⁸ As we can see in this example, even lotharios wanted to settle down and Sarah supported Charles in doing so.

Confirmation of the couple's marriage was taken from the Civil Marriage Registration Index highlighting that the couple married in a civil ceremony in 1844.⁷⁹ The introduction of the Civil Marriage Act of 1837 meant that couples were no longer required to marry in an Anglican religious institute as had been the case after Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753.⁸⁰ Instead, couples could be married outside of a church although they still needed a marriage license.⁸¹ During the latter half of the nineteenth century it was, perhaps, easier for gender passing individuals to commit themselves to another person in marriage as they did not require a religious ceremony to commit to one another. Olive Anderson has highlighted that this freedom of choice surrounding how couples were married allowed for more people of different religions or nonconformists to engage in this type of union.⁸² Indeed, 'the way the mass of Victorians chose to be married has some possible bearings on Victorian sexual *mores* and questions the meaning of marriage in nineteenth-century England', according to Anderson.⁸³ Civil marriage allowed more people to marry from a variety of different religious or social backgrounds. Yet, the couple still needed to have a marriage licence for it to be deemed legal.

Ten years prior to his marriage to Sarah in 1844, Charles was engaged in a heterosexual marriage where he was the wife, known as 'Mary Curzon'. Yet, the reason for the breakdown of this marriage was due to domestic abuse, in that the husband had 'behaved to her [Charles] in such an improper manner that she was compelled to leave him'.⁸⁴ For Charles, then Mary, to actively leave the financial and social security of their husband suggests that the marriage was a particularly difficult one. It was at this point that Mary began identifying and living as Charles Wilkins and travelled around the country engaging in

⁷⁸ "Marriage Extraordinary." *Bradford Observer*, (Bradford: England), August 20, 1846.; "Marriage Extraordinary." *Glasgow Herald*, (Glasgow: Scotland), August 21, 1846.

⁷⁹ Charles Wilkins and Sarah Deakin's marriage registration retrieved from England and Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915, volume: 18 page 696.

⁸⁰ Frost, *Living in Sin*, 4-6.

⁸¹ Olive Anderson, "The Incidence of Civil Marriage in Victorian England and Wales," *Past & Present* 69, (1975): 50.; Frost, *Living in Sin*, 4-6.

⁸² Anderson, "Civil Marriage," 50.

⁸³ Anderson, "Civil Marriage," 52.

⁸⁴ "Marriage Extraordinary." *Glasgow Herald*, (Glasgow: Scotland), August 21, 1846.

relationships with women and working in different types of employment, before marrying Sarah Deakin.

It was some time after his marriage to Sarah that newspaper articles commented on Charles's personality noting that he had become a 'shrew' and was no longer 'one of the most amiable creatures in the world'.⁸⁵ There was a shift in his personality that encouraged him to reveal his own biological identity and thus show his confidence as a gender passing individual. The *Liverpool Mail* commented that Charles 'doffed the male attire' that he had worn for a decade and 'became humble, pale-faced Mary Curzon'.⁸⁶ The article described how Charles altered his appearance and returned to his female identity. However, the article did not discuss Charles's reason for doing so, nor did it consider the feelings of his wife Sarah.

Due to Charles's public exposure, it can be easy to assume that Sarah was left feeling humiliated and that the marriage likely ceased. Indeed, the *Globe* wrote that 'the wife appears to feel ashamed of the whole affair, and Curzon is not by any means communicative on the subject'.⁸⁷ However, in the 1851 and 1861 census there is a record of a 'Mr Charles Wilkins' and a 'Mrs Sarah Wilkins' living in Wolverhampton, not too far from Smethwick. Although we cannot say for sure that these were the same couple, it is possible that after revealing himself as 'Mary Curzon' on a public platform, Charles returned to his male identity. Perhaps his inner turmoil with his gender identity had resulted in a need for him to be truthful to his wife and adhere to the promises that he had made in marriage. Charles's story highlighted that for some people identifying as a man represented security and safety. Whether escaping from an abusive marriage or travelling around the country men were less at risk than women and this gave them freedom to move around.

Most of the gender passing individuals in this study, however, maintained a level of consistency in how they fulfilled the roles of men and husbands. By undertaking paid work in masculine occupations, they provided a man's wages to the household. However, for most working-class families, one wage did not support the whole family.⁸⁸ The unattainable ideal was clear in Harry Stokes's case when he was exposed for not providing regular housekeeping

⁸⁵ "Marriage Extraordinary." *Glasgow Herald*, (Glasgow: Scotland), August 21, 1846.

⁸⁶ "Marriage at Smethwick." *Liverpool Mail*, (Liverpool: England), May 8, 1846, 3.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Seccombe, "Patriarchy Stabilized," 55.

payments to his wife that resulted in his exposure in 1838. In patriarchal society, the man, in most cases the husband, was considered the dominant individual, expected to assume an authoritative position in both the relationship and in society. Harry married Ann Hants on 14 January 1817 as can be seen in figure 12.⁸⁹ The couple were married in Sheffield and their union was solemnized in St Peter's Cathedral.⁹⁰

After twenty-one years of marriage the couple separated. Anna Clark has highlighted that some couples separated simply by mutual consent in a public manner, in the same way that common law marriage was invoked.⁹¹ Yet, Harry had no legal right on the property that they both shared, nor did he have the rights of coverture that marriage awarded to men such as financial responsibility for the home and ownership of the wife's property. This was because he and Ann were not legally married due to their same-sex identity. Begiato has argued that 'the legal and economic limitations imposed on married women stemmed from the legal fiction that a husband and wife were one person'.⁹² Indeed, Harry and Ann were both reliant on one another and supported each other during their marriage with Harry providing the majority of the income and Ann working as his bookkeeper. Even though Harry and Ann were legally married and lived together as man and wife for over two decades, they did not have the same rights as other married couples once Harry's biology was revealed. Arguably, pressure was on Harry to be a reasonable, respectable, and responsible husband which resulted in him moving out of their marital home whilst Ann remained living there.

⁸⁹ Marriage certificate of 'Henry Stoake' and Ann Hants' taken from England, Select Marriages, 1538-1973, FHL Film Number: 919328, 919329, 919360, 919361, 919362. Registration accessed from Sheffield Archives and Local History, Ref: PR 138/ 114, Sheffield City Archives, PR138/3/16.

⁹⁰ St Peter's Cathedral has also been known as St Peter and Paul's Cathedral and more commonly known as Sheffield Cathedral. Accessed January 25, 2019 <http://www.sheffieldcathedral.org/>

⁹¹ Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working-Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 44-50.

⁹² Joanne Bailey, "Favoured or Oppressed? Married Women, Property and "Coverture" in England, 1660-1800," *Continuity and Change* 17, no. 3 (2002): 351.

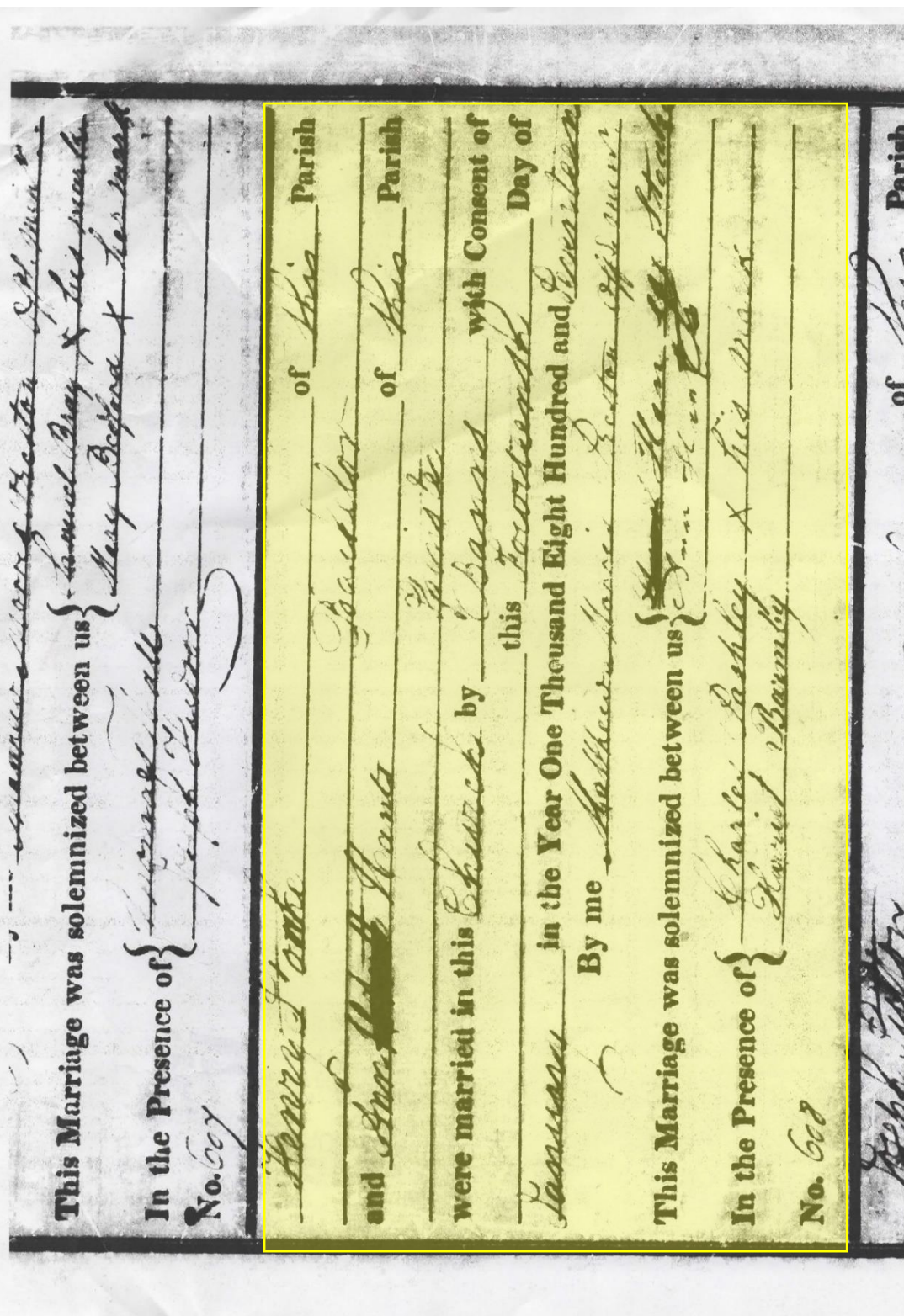


Figure 12 Copy of the marriage between Henry Stooke and Ann Hants on 14 January, 1817. Permission to reproduce this marriage registration has been granted by Sheffield City Archives, PR138/3/16.

Both Ann and Harry seemed to have a comfortable marriage for twenty-one years. *The Morning Chronicle*, who reported on this case early on in its discovery, commented that:

A few days ago, a respectable female waited upon an attorney in this town and asked advice in a case of a very peculiar nature. It seems that her husband, a master bricklayer, who had been in the habit of trusting her implicitly in his business, even leaving to her management of the bookkeeping requisites in his trade, had of late, for some cause or other, refused to allow her the weekly usual sum for housekeeping.⁹³

Ann's decision to go to the authorities meant that she knowingly exposed Harry's biological identity and was not concerned about any repercussions. By raising her concerns with authorities, Ann risked herself being investigated for engaging in a same-sex female marriage. Newspaper reports noted that 'the wife has also stated that she accidentally made the discovery of the sex of her husband as much as two or three years back, but she had kept the secret to the present time', which seems to suggest that they had been together for at least seventeen years without Ann being aware of Harry's biological identity.⁹⁴ Newspaper reports did not comment on the reasons for Harry's refusal to pay his wife the usual sum. After being exposed in this public manner, Harry disappeared from trade directories and did not return for several years.

Divorce in nineteenth-century Britain went against the rite of marriage and many people could not afford to divorce their partner especially those in the working classes. Annulment was an option in some instances, but it differed to divorce. Annulment deemed the marriage void whereas divorce could be heard on accounts of cruelty or adultery.⁹⁵ Moreover, legal separation was only achieved through complex arrangements or a private bill which was expensive. Neither of these were a possibility for Harry and his wife. It was not until 1857 that the Matrimonial Causes Act recognised marriage as a legally binding contract based on a promise made by both parties.⁹⁶ This recategorization of marriage widened the net for those who wanted to obtain divorce and how they went about it. But it was still out

⁹³ "The Female Husband in Manchester," *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Joanne Bailey, "Favoured or Oppressed? Married Women, Property and 'Coverture' in England, 1660-1800," *Community and Change* 17, no. 3 (2002): 351-372.

⁹⁶ Shani D'Cruze, "Women and the Family" in *Women's History: Britain 1850-1945: An Introduction*, edited by June Purvis (Routledge: London, 1998), 51-84.

of reach for the working classes, who during this time, were more dependent on separation. Money, in this instance, became a significant contributing factor in the breakup of Harry and Ann's marriage. Disagreements over money were the most common reasons for domestic abuse in the nineteenth century.⁹⁷ Press reports that commented on Harry's case noted that he could be violent at times and this was also corroborated in articles after his death in 1859.⁹⁸

Ann remained living with Harry as his wife for twenty-one years. However, the cessation of housekeeping ultimately contributed to the breakdown of the marriage. The *Manchester Guardian* explored the legal proceedings of this case in their article. Mr Joseph Sadler Thomas took Ann's case on as he was the Deputy Constable of Manchester at that time. Interestingly, Mr Thomas had previously been constable of Covent Gardens and coincidentally oversaw the case of James Allen in 1829 and was responsible for the publication of the pamphlet about James's life.⁹⁹ Evidently, Mr Thomas's experience qualified him to deal with another case of gender passing. Despite the apparent conformity of their marriage, since it was performed by a clergyman and in a religious institution, it was not considered legal due to Ann and Harry's same-sex identity. The *Manchester Guardian* explored this approach in some detail, commenting that:

Mr Thomas, the Deputy Constable, has had several interviews with the husband, in which he has endeavoured to induce her to make some provision for the woman who she has so shamefully deceived; and who having, for twenty-one years, filled the character of a wife, greatly benefitting the interests of the supposed husband, but the business, books and accounts, had surely some claim to compensation as [a] servant, if she were unable by law to demand the maintenance of a wife.¹⁰⁰

The idea of Ann claiming compensation for her marriage suggested that the relationship was not recognised as legitimate by the law. Indeed, the newspaper's comment does indicate that Ann had acted as a wife, but instead as a household manager during her marriage to Harry.

⁹⁷ Joanne Begiato, "Beyond the Rule of Thumb: The Materiality of Marital Violence in England c. 1700-1857," *Cultural and Social History* 15, no. 1 (2018): 39-59.; Ginger Frost, "He could not hold his passions': Domestic Violence and Cohabitation in England (1850-1905)," *Crime, History and Societies*, (2008): 5-6.

⁹⁸ "A Female Husband In Manchester." *The Observer*, (Manchester: England), April 17, 1838, 1.; "A Romance in Real Life." *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, (London: England), October 29, 1859.; "'Harry' Stokes, The Man-Woman." *Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser*, (Paisley: Scotland), November 5, 1859, 6.

⁹⁹ "The Woman Husband." *Manchester Guardian*, (Manchester: England), April 14, 1838, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

Ann, therefore, required payment for her services. It is interesting to consider that a wife was expected to perform the tasks such as cooking and cleaning, that a servant was paid for, yet did not necessarily require payment from her husband. Ann was given twenty-one years' salary as a servant, as opposed to that of a wife, as she had been during that time. This resulted in a 'human negotiation' between the couple with Harry agreeing to give the marital home with all its contents to his wife as payment.¹⁰¹ The fact that the couple's marriage ended in Ann being paid as a servant and not recognised legally as a wife seemingly discredits their committed relationship to each other and authorities felt it easier to pretend their relationship did not exist.

Regular marriage across the classes in nineteenth-century Britain became a respectable way for people to devote themselves to one another. Through marriage, relationships, and familial connections, we start to see a shift in how gender passing individuals showed their commitment to their partners. Some remained faithful to one another and had long marriages, Harry Stokes and James Allen, for example, were married collectively for over forty years.¹⁰² Whereas others had multiple partners in quick succession like Charles Wilkins.¹⁰³ Gender passing individuals not only fulfilled the roles of a husband, but they also displayed their embodiment of masculinity by being reasonable towards their wives, like Harry was to Ann. A gender passing individual's devotion to their partner was demonstrative of how they upheld the values of contemporary men.

¹⁰¹ "The Woman Husband." *Manchester Guardian*, (Manchester: England), April 14, 1838, 2.

¹⁰² "Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 1, 1829.; "The Female Husband in Manchester." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.

¹⁰³ "Marriage Extraordinary." *Glasgow Herald*, (Glasgow: Scotland), August 21, 1846.

Disrupting the Institution of Marriage

Although regular marriages were deemed the most ‘typical path’ according to Vicky Holmes, they were not always practiced by working-class communities.¹⁰⁴ For some gender passing individuals, marriage was too expensive, and it was difficult to obtain a marriage licence. This resulted in some couples cohabiting as man and wife, like John Smith and his unnamed partner, and Harry Stokes and his partner Frances Collins. This section considers the lives of those ‘living in sin’, to use the title of Frost’s book, and explores how they disrupted the traditional institution of marriage in their relationships.¹⁰⁵ Non-traditional committed relationships or cohabitation occurred in the cases of John Murphy, John Smith and Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson as they found themselves in a strategic or convenient marriage at least once during their lives.¹⁰⁶ Although John Murphy, John Smith and Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson did not move from partner to partner, according to press reports, they were still confident in being committed to another person and share their life with them. Perhaps these relationships were a way of confirming their manliness in their respective communities.

There were numerous reasons to get married. Some married for love, affection, and companionship as well as having children and starting a family. For others, marriage was a convenience and a way of acquiring a dual income for financial security or to follow societal conventions. Typically, marriages of convenience have been understood to be prevalent amongst the middle- and upper-class communities.¹⁰⁷ Characteristically, it referred to men and women marrying in arranged relationships that strategically benefitted each family, perhaps through a shared sense of status, wealth or land.¹⁰⁸ Gender passing individuals, on

¹⁰⁴ Holmes, *In Bed with the Victorians*, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Frost, *Living in Sin*, 4-6.

¹⁰⁶ “The Female Husband.” *Bell’s Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; “Female Husband.” *Leeds Intelligencer*, (West Yorkshire: England), July 14, 1825.; “[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday].” *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.; “Singular Case of Concealment of Sex.” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848.; “Extraordinary Concealment of Sex.” *Reynolds’s News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.; “A Real ‘Female Husband.’” *Northern Echo*, (Darlington: England), January 3, 1894. (two parts)

¹⁰⁷ Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*, 87.

¹⁰⁸ Davidoff, “The Family in Britain,” 70-75.; Frost, *Living in Sin*, 9.

the other hand, engaged in strategic marriages for more obvious and personal reasons. Largely these marriages provided the cover of a nuclear family which allowed them to be scrutinized less by society. Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson and John Smith married single women who already had children and lacked the support of a male breadwinner and provider. They therefore filled this position in a way that upheld the nuclear family ideal.¹⁰⁹

Strategic relationships were facilitated by gender passing individuals as a means of protecting their biology, concealing something of their partner's past and economic security. Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson appeared in the press twice after his death, the first time in 1869 and for a second time in 1894 when his story was revisited by the *Northern Echo*.¹¹⁰ Joseph lived in Durham and was a miner in the winter and harvester in the summer, gaining some notoriety in the community for his skills.¹¹¹ When Joseph settled in Durham he quickly began a relationship with a young servant girl whom he later married. I have been unable to locate confirmation of this marriage; therefore, it is possible that the couple may have simply cohabited as man and wife as opposed to committing themselves to one another in a legal marriage.¹¹²

Nonetheless, Joseph and his first wife Sally remained faithful to one another in a solid relationship for over twenty years before Sally's death. It was implied in the press reports that Sally was pregnant, and Joseph married her early on to conceal the illegitimate child. This was only mentioned in later press reports from the *Northern Echo*, however, *Reynolds's News* commented on the couple's relationship stating,

They had lived together twenty-three years, when the wife died, and the reputed husband professed to lament her loss very much, but at length grief wore off, and she [Joseph] married a second wife, with whom she lived a number of years, but not on the most affectionate terms, and eventually, by mutual consent they separated.¹¹³

The author of that article inferred that Joseph quickly re-married after the death of his wife. The loss of a partner after twenty-three years would have been a difficult bereavement to

¹⁰⁹ Probert, *Marriage Law and Practice*, 15.

¹¹⁰ "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Reynolds's News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.

¹¹¹ "A Real 'Female Husband'." *Northern Echo*, (Darlington: England), January 3, 1894.

¹¹² Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*, 55.; Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, 231-259.

¹¹³ "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Reynolds's News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.

deal with. During this time, it was common to engage in a marriage of convenience simply for a companion or helpmate. The fact that the new couple later separated by 'mutual consent' highlights that there was an amicable split.¹¹⁴

In press reports that were published in 1894 that revisited Joseph's life, the relationships that he had been engaged in were discussed in more detail. These articles may have embellished the narrative to entice readers. It may have been that the journalists revisited the case altogether and found additional material that I have been unable to locate. The *Northern Echo* commented that there was an ulterior motive to Joseph's first marriage, specifically the presence of an illegitimate child. There were some discrepancies with reference to the longevity of the relationship, but press reports highlighted the couple's faithfulness to one another. The son that was mentioned in later articles was not discussed in the initial reports on Joseph's death, nor were there any references to a child other than that in the *Northern Echo* report. If indeed Sally was pregnant before she committed her life to Joseph, their marriage, at least in the press, was viewed as strategic.

The *Northern Echo* highlighted that 'Joe had saved her [Sally] from disgrace, and in return Sally had faithfully kept Joe's secret through all the intervening years'.¹¹⁵ Through this marriage of convenience, Sally's respectability was maintained in the community, Joseph's biological identity was concealed, and together the couple engaged in a normative relationship. Evidently, the union of both Sally and Joseph was instrumental as each spouse gained something from it. For Joseph, his masculinity was confirmed through Sally's pregnancy and publicly demonstrated that he was able to reproduce. For Sally, on the other hand, the marriage allowed her to maintain her respectability in society. Indeed, if Sally knew about Joseph's biological identity before their marriage, she was also committing to not having any more children and living with a gender passing individual. Perhaps her respectability was more important.

To become a husband required more than just providing financially, although this remained a significant part of the marriage contract. Indeed, the roles of a husband were complex and seemed to encompass several elements. Both Frost and Clark have commented

¹¹⁴ "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Reynolds's News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.

¹¹⁵ "A Real 'Female Husband.'" *Northern Echo*, (Darlington: England), January 3, 1894.

on the different qualities that men needed to have.¹¹⁶ Husbands were subjected to both societal expectations and those of their wives and families. One way that individuals heightened their social status was stepping up and being dependable. For gender passing individuals, the support of their family was recognised in press reports, as if it was a selfless act. We see a continued level of trust, commitment and consistency in some gender passing cases such as that of John Smith and his wife. The *Manchester Courier* and the *Morning Chronicle* reported on the death of John in 1848. The articles reported that John had cared for his partner's eleven children in return for her keeping his biological identity a secret.¹¹⁷ *The Morning Chronicle* commented:

She [John's wife] had lived with him some fourteen years; she met him first at New Mills, in Derbyshire; they were not married, although living together: that she has eleven children: he followed the trade of knife grinder and tinker, and sometimes got as much as 10s. a day.¹¹⁸

Although John and his long-term partner had not solemnised their union in a full marriage they cohabited together with the wife's children from a previous relationship. In most gender passing cases there was a longevity to marriage that lasted a long time until death or other unforeseen circumstances. This highlights that individuals were committed to their roles as husbands and men and worked hard to make a success of their marriages and relationships.

Upon his death, John's partner was approached by authorities to ask if she had known about the biological sex of her husband.¹¹⁹ The wife initially commented that she had been made aware of his biological identity the day before his death but was willing to keep his secret because he had provided and supported her and her children for several years.¹²⁰ The *Morning Chronicle* wrote that:

On being further questioned, the woman stated that the eleven children of which she has spoken were by another husband, who was dead; and the

¹¹⁶ Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*, (1995).; Frost, *Promises Broken*, 40; Steinbach. *Understanding the Victorians*, (2012).

¹¹⁷ "[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848.

¹¹⁸ "[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

reason she gave for living with the deceased was that she was promised maintenance, which promises seemed to have been faithfully kept by the deceased.¹²¹

In most of the gender passing cases in this thesis, companionship became central to the success of their relationship. In this example of queer intimacy, the idea of John and his wife being companions can be explored. Companionship was 'not something working men and women expected to find in marriage' according to Gillis.¹²² Instead, as Rebecca Davis argues, it was friends, neighbours and family that provided companionship for wives.¹²³ However, this view is too simplistic and for most husbands and wives, there needed to be some sort of intimate and emotional connection for them to commit their lives to one another and this was the same for gender passing individuals.

Gender passing individuals and their partners created a system of mutual support, evidenced in the longevity of their relationships and how secrets, such as illegitimate births, were concealed. In strategic relationships in particular, couples had to trust each other to maintain their privacy and the secrets that they kept.¹²⁴ The idea of companionship within relationships, not to be confused with companionate marriage, gave a sense of purpose to individuals and a sense of belonging.¹²⁵ John Smith and his wife were companions in how they maintained a level of privacy surrounding their cohabitation and John's biological identity. Both individuals were in a vulnerable position, one without the support of a husband and eleven children to feed and the other concealing his biology. By staying true to his word and committing himself to providing for his wife, both partners made their lives work for their situation.

Strategic marriage can also be shown in the case of John Murphy who exposed his identity in 1825 to escape from his then wife Matilda Lacy. Davidoff has explored that there was a 'premium on chastity before marriage' especially for women.¹²⁶ This premium was

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, 252.

¹²³ Rebecca L. Davis, "Not marriage at all, but simple harlotry": The Companionate Marriage Controversy," *The Journal of American History* 94, no. 4 (2008): 1141.

¹²⁴ Marcus, *Between Women*, 193-194.

¹²⁵ Frost, *Living in Sin.*; Gillis. *For Better, For Worse.*; Probert. *Marriage, Law and Practice.*; Probert ed. *Cohabitation and Non-Marital Births.*

¹²⁶ Davidoff, "The Family in Britain," 75.

upheld across all relationships and retaining a good reputation amongst the working classes was essential. It was likely that this was the reason for Mrs Lacy needing to find her daughter, Matilda, a husband in John Murphy after she became pregnant.¹²⁷ One of the main reasons for couples not marrying, according to Frost, was because they were already married to another partner and were unable to obtain a divorce.¹²⁸ Another reason was due to the financial cost of the marriage license itself. For some it was just not feasible.

Life for working-class women in the nineteenth century was difficult. Society was particularly hard on single women, runaways and those who were pregnant.¹²⁹ Parishes did not want the added responsibility of accepting runaways and their unborn children and women would be returned to their home parishes, typically to marry.¹³⁰ *Bell's Life* commented on this in reference to the case of Matilda Lacy:

The Lacy's both mother and daughter, then proposed to this female John Murphy, that she should marry Matilda, and father the child, in order, by doing so, to conceal the shame of the unfortunate Matilda, and to prevent that compulsory disclosure of the real father which the parish officers were insisting upon.¹³¹

This 'proposal' from Mrs Lacy was more of a demand, with *Bell's Life* noting 'By some accident, this woman [Mrs Lacy] became acquainted with her [John Murphy's] sex, and terrified the poor wench, by telling her she was liable to be transported for going about in male clothing'.¹³² The use of the phrase 'poor wench' implied that John was naïve. He was manipulated by Mrs Lacy who was focussed on preserving her daughter's respectability at all costs.

The couple were married for two years and during this time, Matilda became pregnant again. As John worked in a neighbouring town, the parish became interested in the family largely because more children arrived despite John not living there. Clearly, the child was not

¹²⁷ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; "Female Husband." *Leeds Intelligencer*, (West Yorkshire: England), July 14, 1825.

¹²⁸ Frost, *Living in Sin*, 2-3.

¹²⁹ Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, 113.

¹³⁰ Frost, *Promises Broken*, 40.

¹³¹ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; "Female Husband." *Leeds Intelligencer*, (West Yorkshire: England), July 14, 1825.

¹³² *Ibid.*

John's and therefore, we can deduce that Matilda must have been having sexual relations with someone else whilst John was away from home. The press described 'prolific Matilda' as a 'serious incumbrance to the parish'.¹³³ Evidently, local authorities were interested in Matilda and her suspected infidelity for newspaper reports to have commented on this. The couple's marriage ended when John exposed his own biological identity to the parish, this came after the birth of Matilda's second child. *Bell's Life* wrote that 'the poor girl [John Murphy] declares that she should long since have disclosed her sex had she not been intimidated by the threats of Matilda's mother'.¹³⁴ A marriage that began as a strategic relationship that supported the other's motive ended in extortion. Matilda and Mrs Lacy took advantage of John and put him in a position where he was no longer able to support himself or his family.

Bell's Life believed that John sought work that was typically female after his exposure, suggesting that it was likely that they lived as a woman. Matilda, however, went on to remarry. On 1 April 1830 Matilda Lacy married Charles Brown in Aston-upon-Trent, remaining in the same area where she had lived with John.¹³⁵ It is interesting to reflect on whether this marriage would have brought about the shame that she and her mother had been trying to avoid or was it all forgotten five years later when she remarried? Whatever the case, for John Murphy and Matilda Lacy, marriage was used as a convenience. Clearly, they did not love one another and married simply to keep each other's secrets.

Although cohabitation was not formally advocated, it was more acceptable in working-class communities. Holmes has recognised that cohabitation became more attainable for couples because it was less expensive.¹³⁶ Similarly cohabitation also occurred when couples separated and began a new relationship without a divorce. Extra costs on top of rent, food and essentials were a luxury that many working-class couples could not afford. Therefore, cohabitation was the next best way to bind two people together and engage in a social marriage. The marriage between Anna Maria Wilkins and John Curtis, for instance,

¹³³ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; "Female Husband." *Leeds Intelligencer*, (West Yorkshire: England), July 14, 1825.

¹³⁴ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.

¹³⁵ Matilda Lacy married Charles Brown in Aston-upon-Trent on 1 April 1830 according to *England, Select Marriages, 1583-1973* FHL Film Number 497377

¹³⁶ Holmes, *In Bed with the Victorians*, 2-3.

demonstrated that not all cohabitation was successful. John Curtis was accused of bigamy after he tried to remarry in 1850.

The *New Devon Journal* commented that John and Anna Maria separated amicably in 1840 and Anna Maria went on to “change her condition” and ‘assumed male attire’, from then on they lived as a man.¹³⁷ Anna Maria, whose male name remained undisclosed in press reports, went on to marry a local housemaid and the pair ‘lived together as man and wife’.¹³⁸ After some years, ‘the housemaid tired of her female husband and married a real man’, leaving Anna Maria on their own.¹³⁹ In this sense, perhaps Anna Maria was not fulfilling their role as a man in a confident or consistent way which resulted in their wife seeking someone more permanent. In the meantime, John Curtis was in a new relationship and wished to remarry but needed proof that his estranged first wife, Anna Maria, was dead. Living in the neighbouring town Anna Maria heard about John’s predicament and, not content to allow their estranged husband happiness, ‘she assumed her female attire’ and had him arrested for bigamy.¹⁴⁰ Anna Maria returned to their female identity simply to spite John. This case demonstrates the seriousness of marriage and the dangers that people faced if they did not go about it in the correct manner.

If a husband or wife became widowed or found themselves deserted, they typically took in a lodger or sought a housekeeper.¹⁴¹ Usually, the housekeeper acquired the role of the mother or wife and the lodger supported the landlady as a husband.¹⁴² In this sense we see the need for the maintenance of the social equilibrium with the expectation of a man having a wife and a woman having a husband. After Harry Stokes’s public separation from his wife in 1838, he disappeared from his regular trade directory entries.¹⁴³ It was not until 1844 that Harry reappeared in these directories as a beer retailer with his then partner, Frances Collins.¹⁴⁴ Frances was a widow and was also Harry’s landlady according to some newspaper

¹³⁷ “Extraordinary Case of Bigamy.” *New Devon Journal*, (Barnstaple: England), March 28, 1850.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, 236.

¹⁴² Holmes, *In Bed with the Victorians*, 2-3.

¹⁴³ Information confirmed using *Pigot and Slater’s and Kelly’s Trade Directories* accessible in Manchester Central Library.

¹⁴⁴ Information confirmed using *Pigot and Slater’s and Kelly’s Trade Directories* accessible in Manchester Central Library.

reports. The *Liverpool Mercury* commented that Frances ‘was some fifteen or twenty years his senior’ who had children of her own.¹⁴⁵ At the time of his death, Harry was around sixty years old, which indicated that Frances was between seventy-five and eighty years old, yet the couple were still active as public house landlords. Perhaps this was because of their need to maintain a steady income, even in old age.

There were discrepancies between newspaper reports regarding the marital status of Frances and Harry, with some implying that they were married and others suggesting that they cohabited. Due to Harry’s public exposure and the nature of Harry’s first separation, it is unlikely that Harry would have been allowed to remarry in a traditional way. Instead, cohabitation may have been more attainable for him and Frances. The *Liverpool Mercury* commented that Frances claimed she had been unaware of Harry’s biological identity writing,

She declares with solemn earnestness that she did not know, until informed the other day, that the person whom she has been living with for twenty-five years, sleeping together night after night in the same bed, was a woman, and her own children looked upon Stokes as their step-father.¹⁴⁶

The reference to the couple ‘sleeping together night after night’ suggests there may have been a level of intimacy between them, although this was not discussed.

How the couple came to be together was unclear in press reports, with the *Ashton Weekly* maintaining that they were initially landlady and lodger and the *Liverpool Mercury* suggesting that it was Frances’s good nature and friendship that provided Harry with somewhere to live. Although Frances claimed she had been unaware of Harry’s biological identity, she admitted that ‘she took Stokes into her house in the first instance, out of pity, to shield him from the persecution to which he was subjected to’.¹⁴⁷ If, indeed, Frances was unaware of Harry’s biological identity, as she claimed to be, why would he have been persecuted in society and in need of protection? Perhaps, this denial from Frances was a way of protecting her own respectability in the community after the second exposure of Harry’s biological identity, something that Abigail Allen did when James’s biology was revealed after

¹⁴⁵ “Woman Passing as a Man for Forty Years.” *Ashton Weekly Reporter*, (Stalybridge: England), October 11, 1859.; “A Woman Passing as a Man for Forty Years.” *The Bell’s Weekly Messenger*, (London: England), October 22, 1859, 6.; ““Harry” Stokes, The Man-Woman.” *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

¹⁴⁶ ““Harry” Stokes, The Man-Woman.” *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

his death. The couple were hard workers, but financial concerns eventually claimed the life of Harry Stokes, who was found dead in the River Irwell in October 1859.

Most of the gender passing individuals in this sample tended to commit themselves to their partner, whether through legal marriages or cohabitation. For others, such as Frederick ‘Scratchem’ Mitchell, their relationship status and personal history remained a mystery.¹⁴⁸ Frederick ‘Scratchem’ Mitchell appeared in the *Liverpool Mercury* in 1867 following his death. Frederick was nicknamed ‘Scratchem’ due to his ‘fidgety disposition’ and had ‘dressed as a man’ for at least fifteen years, according to press reports.¹⁴⁹ Newspaper reports also stated that Frederick had moved into an all-male lodging house in Westminster where he had spent the last remaining months of his life.

Frederick was described as a private person who ‘was exceedingly well educated and drank nothing stronger than tea’.¹⁵⁰ There was a suggestion that he was the ‘illegitimate daughter of a scotch nobleman’, which would explain his level of education.¹⁵¹ Despite his death, the *Liverpool Mercury* noted that ‘she slept in a separate bed in a room in which 22 men also slept, but not the slightest suspicion was created as to her being a woman’.¹⁵² There was no discussion of Frederick having a partner, a companion, a confidant or even a friend. Although Frederick remained bound and true to his gender identity and was successful in concealing his biological body whilst living in a communal space, he lived the last remaining months of his life as a recluse. Alternatively, Frederick may have been a private individual in general and enjoyed living in isolation and solitude. Nonetheless, the fact that Frederick did not receive attention, love, or care as he neared the end of his life raises the question of how many other gender passing individuals died alone in the nineteenth century.

John Murphy of Wigan experienced a similar death. John died at ninety-seven years old in 1860. The *Wigan Observer* commented that John died alone in his home and had relied

¹⁴⁸ “Concealment of Sex for Fifteen Years.” *London Daily News*, (London: England), August 23, 1867, 6.; “Concealment of Sex for Fifteen Years.” *Liverpool Daily Post*, (Liverpool: England), August 24, 1867, 7.; “A Romantic Case.” *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), August 24, 1867.; “Concealment of Sex for Fifteen Years.” *Durham Country Advertiser*, (Durham: England), August 30, 1867, 3.

¹⁴⁹ “A Romantic Case.” *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), August 24, 1867.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² “Concealment of Sex for Fifteen Years.” *Liverpool Daily Post*, (Liverpool: England), August 24, 1867, 7.

on neighbours and medical officers to support and care for him.¹⁵³ The *Manchester Courier* noted that John Murphy had identified as male on his arrival in Wigan where he settled for the remainder of his life, some fifty years previous.¹⁵⁴ Therefore, for forty-seven years, John must have identified as a woman. Indeed, according to newspaper reports, John Murphy's female name was 'Betty Lavin'.¹⁵⁵ It is possible that John was engaged in a heterosexual relationship as Betty. If so, what made them present as a man and at what point was this deemed necessary? It was possible that the loss of a husband forced Betty to assume the identity of John for financial stability. Alternatively, Betty may have always felt that they were a man and therefore took the opportunity to present as one later in life when it felt safer for them to do so. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate any further information about John Murphy/Betty Lavin about their private life and therefore it will remain just that, private.

Although marriage in the nineteenth century was the most obvious path to follow, it was not always attainable due to cost or class concerns amongst other variables. Therefore, irregular relationships such as cohabitation, were often more achievable. Not all gender passing individuals committed themselves to another person though and some remained single. To the outward viewing public, most gender passing individuals engaged in heterociscentric relationships in how they fulfilled their roles as husbands and providers. In their own way, however, they fundamentally challenged heterociscentric values by concealing their biology and committing themselves to living as men and they also engaged in relationships that were appropriate for them, their partners, and their families.

¹⁵³ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, (Manchester: England), January 1, 1861.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

Conclusion

Marriage was the ultimate ideal in the nineteenth century. Marriage represented steadiness, security, children, and family. For gender passing individuals including John Murphy, James Allen and Charles Wilkins, traditional marriage was, at times, a challenge.¹⁵⁶ John Murphy's wife Matilda Lacy, took advantage of him until he could no longer live with the pressure.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, James Allen deserted his wife on several occasions and Charles Wilkins humiliated his wife by outing himself as biologically female sometime after their marriage.¹⁵⁸ Although marriage, as an institution, became idealised it did not automatically result in a happily ever after moment. Individuals worked hard to be good husbands and to be a breadwinner, yet they were also conflicted as they had to conceal their biological identity. This surely would have put a strain on their relationship.

Marriage was not the only way in which gender passing individuals committed themselves to their female partners: for some, common-law marriage and cohabitation became more convenient due to financial hardship or social conditions. John Smith and Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson, for instance, cohabited with their wives and protected the illegitimacy of their children, settling into a nuclear family where no questions were asked.¹⁵⁹ Strategic relationships also occurred to better both the lives of vulnerable women and gender passing individuals. Although historians have argued that companionship amongst the working classes was not something to be sought after in marriage, gender passing relationships had signs of companionship in how they supported each other and provided a safe environment.¹⁶⁰

Finally, language used to describe gender passing relationships has become vital in identifying contemporary terminology. Gender passing individuals were described as 'female

¹⁵⁶ "The Female Husband," *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; "Extraordinary Investigation," *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.; "Smethwick: Romantic Affair," *Birmingham Journal*, (Birmingham: England), August 8, 1846.

¹⁵⁷ "The Female Husband," *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.

¹⁵⁸ "Extraordinary Investigation," *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.; "Smethwick: Romantic Affair," *Birmingham Journal*, (Birmingham: England), August 1, 1846.

¹⁵⁹ "[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday]," *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.; "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex," *Reynolds's News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.

¹⁶⁰ Holmes, *In Bed with the Victorians*, 2-3.

husbands', an eighteenth-century term that became widely used in contemporary society.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, this term juxtaposed with cases labelled as 'concealment of sex', which suggested a more criminal and clinical understanding of gender passing. Different language that was used became universally acknowledged which enabled readers to make connections and links with other cases throughout history. Gender passing individuals not only embodied men in their existence, but they also adopted qualities such as being dependable and being the provider of the family. In these positions of authority, they became the ideal life partner in some respects, whether through regular marriage or irregular queer intimacies.

¹⁶¹ Fielding, *The Female Husband*, 1-23.

Conforming in the Unsuspecting Community

‘So great was the excitement of the neighbourhood, at this disclosure, that numbers, from curiosity, crowded to view the body, and were horror struck at finding the report to be strictly true’, wrote *Bell’s New Weekly Messenger*, reporting on the death of Mr Wright in 1834.¹ The excitement from his neighbours and their disbelief at discovering the biological identity of Mr Wright sent shockwaves through the community. This one sentence encapsulates a moment of consternation. It highlights Mr Wright’s success at performing his gender in a confident and committed manner. It also alludes to his ability to conceal his biological body effectively, as well as, consistently performing in a recognisably masculine way. Indeed, this was a celebration of his ability to pass in a heteronormative ideal world. These seemingly ordinary qualities of passing are what made him extraordinary once his biology was exposed. Most gender passing individuals went about their daily lives without any issues, as far as we know, once they were revealed, they became a ‘thing’ to be looked at and a ‘seen to be believed’ phenomenon. Yet, their lives and memory were frequently tarnished by the public needing to see individuals which resulted in gender passing individuals being objectified by their communities and by the journalists who reported on their lives.

Community is central to this chapter and can be defined by many different identity markers including likes and dislikes, where an individual lives, a person’s political stance or class as well as their gender, family, or education. Gender passing individuals made their own communities through their varied career choices from harvester to miner or groomsman to shipwright. There was a fluidity between occupations and a mobility to an individual’s existence that enabled them to move around the country. Thematic discussions of community have been used amongst historians which enables them to consider specific ideas that are central to their own research. Caroline Derry has argued that ‘community does not describe

¹ “Extraordinary Discovery.” *Bell’s Weekly Messenger*, (London: England), 14 December, 1834, 8.

a homogenous group of people', instead, 'it involves a group of people with overlapping – not unified – lives, experiences and interests'.² Indeed, we see this overlapping in gender passing cases because so many followed a similar route from rural worker, to manual worker, to marriage and parenthood. This chapter explores what gender passing individuals did within their community to demonstrate their confidence and commitment to others.

Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' becomes significant when exploring gender passing cases. Although Anderson's work focussed on nations and how they were created through the interweaving of imagined communities we can see a link that applies to gender passing individuals. Anderson argued that communities were imagined by people in order for them to feel part of a larger group.³ If we apply this notion to gender passing individuals we can see how they developed their own version of imagined communities simply to 'fit in'. Frederick 'Scratchem' Mitchell for instance, moved into shared lodgings towards the end of his life despite the risk that he may have been exposed by the men that he was living with.⁴ Indeed, this lodging community that Frederick reached out to provided him with safety and security until he died in 1860.

This chapter is split into four sections with each section focussing on a different interpretation of community. First, it considers the shared sense of identity that community offers. It examines the role of the family and how gender passing individuals created their own families when they moved away from home. It explores the impact of the family and how they influenced individuals during their lifetime. John Smith, for instance, followed a similar trade to his father and became a knife grinder and spoon maker after being raised by their father and several brothers.⁵ In this sense we can see how the familial community provided support for John as he grew up and moved away from the family home forging a life of his own.

Second, it examines the importance of occupational communities especially when thinking about Harry Stokes and John Murphy who were both apprentices during their

² Caroline Derry, "Female Husband", *Community and Courts in the Eighteenth Century*, *The Journal Legal History* 38, no. 1 (2017): 56.

³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006), 5-6

⁴ "Concealment of Sex for Fifteen Years." *London Daily News*, (London: England), August 23, 1867.

⁵ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848.

teenage years. Denis Mills has argued that ‘occupation is key to community identity’, not least because individuals had to communicate and engage with their workmates for most of the day.⁶ Gender passing individuals were driven to provide for their families and their support was essential. There was also a need to be respectful of other people’s spaces. Keith Snell has highlighted that people recognised regional similarities amongst fellow workers and supported local workmanship.⁷ Builders, such as Harry Stokes and John Murphy would have also been aware of their geographical parameters and where they could and could not work. In this sense there was a mutual, unspoken, but expected respect between employers and their employees. It is the importance of the working community that is showcased in section two of this chapter and the consideration of how gender passing individuals were viewed by others on the street and through the relationships that they fostered between their neighbours.

Third, this chapter investigates the spatial community and where gender passing individuals lived alongside their occupational community shown through a case study of the public house. Both James Allen and Harry Stokes were public house landlords at some point during their lifetimes and it was imperative that they demonstrated their ability to be competent workers.⁸ They also needed to consistently maintain their gender identity without being exposed. Indeed, it was their ability to confidently perform the roles associated with those of a man and a beer retailer to maintain a good level of custom to their fellow community members. Ultimately gender passing individuals were at the mercy of their customers who could make or break their business by visiting or boycotting their establishment, so it was important to keep them on side.

Finally, this chapter considers the extended community responses to gender passing individuals by using street ballads, Shakespeare, and case studies such as Chevalier d’Eon. Gender passing cases have largely been explored in isolation of one another, but this chapter investigates the possibility of an unsuspecting community amongst gender passing individuals. Although gender passing individuals concealed their biological identities and

⁶ Denis Mills, “Defining Community: A Critical Review of ‘Community’ in *Family & Community History*,” *Family & Community History* 7, no. 1 (2004): 5.

⁷ Keith D. Snell, “The Culture of Xenophobia,” *Social History* 28, no. 1 (2003): 1-30.

⁸ “Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband.” *The Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.; “The Female Husband in Manchester.” *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.

performed their gender as men, they must have also been aware of others like themselves when they read newspapers, listened to street ballads, or heard gossip in the street. Perhaps we can argue that there was a private, almost secret, community amongst gender passing individuals with local news stories, pamphlets and street ballads allowing their narratives to reach other people in areas across the country.

Creating Family

The idea of a close community can be lost, at times, owing to the dominance of a broader understanding of community. For instance, much focus has been placed on wider geographic communities or class. Yet, community can also be explored through smaller relationships such as belonging to a family. For most gender passing individuals, family was an important way to develop a support network. Newspaper reports commented on how individuals were estranged from their biological families which resulted in them forging new familial connections through their partners or wives. Other gender passing individuals had the added pressure of becoming a father or stepfather.⁹ Family life gave gender passing individuals a sense of purpose in providing and embodying the idea of breadwinner ideology. This section of the chapter discusses the types of family that gender passing individuals created and their roles as not only husbands and men but also as fathers.

In the same way that biology did not define all men as husbands, not all fathers were biologically male. Gender passing individuals including John Murphy, John Smith and Harry Stokes were fathers.¹⁰ Harry was hailed for his role as an active stepfather to Frances Collins's adult children. Julie-Marie Strange has challenged the misconceptions surrounding working-class fatherhood and has argued that, 'Only when we situate fathers with mothers in conceptualising the working-class family can we begin to understand the importance of the family, in all its formations, as a site for the constructions of self'.¹¹ The importance of both mother and father was evident in how they created the environment they lived in for both themselves and their family. Strange has recognised that the roles of the husband differed

⁹ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; "Smethwick: Romantic Affair." *Birmingham Journal*, (Birmingham: England), August 01, 1846.; "[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.; "'Harry' Stokes, The Man-Woman." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

¹⁰ "Smethwick: Romantic Affair." *Birmingham Journal*, (Birmingham: England), August 01, 1846.; "[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.; "'Harry' Stokes, The Man-Woman." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

¹¹ Julie-Marie Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working-Class, 1865-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 18.

from those of the father.¹² This becomes particularly evident in gender passing cases because individuals had to understand and perform the roles of a man, alongside those of a husband, a father and stepfather. Therefore, there were different expectations that individuals needed to contend with which ultimately resulted in them having to perform in a confident, consistent, and committed manner.

It was rare for press coverage to explore the biological families of gender passing individuals because they were usually estranged from a young age. Revisiting the case of John Smith from 1848 has revealed some interesting discussions about family and community. Born as Sophia Locke, the only daughter of a scissor-grinder and tinker, John Smith was part of the travelling community.¹³ The family were nomads around Biddulph-Moor in Staffordshire.¹⁴ Sophia's mother died during child birth, and with several other older sons, Sophia's father raised his daughter as a son. *The Morning Chronicle* commented that 'At three years old she [John Smith] assumed male attire and used to accompany a brother to various towns, visiting the public houses, and dancing to a violin which he played'.¹⁵ Evidently, Sophia's father was more confident in raising sons and perhaps lacked an understanding of how to parent daughters.

The decision made by Sophia's father to raise them as male can be explored in two ways. Perhaps Sophia was conditioned to perform a gender identity contrary to their biology simply for ease. Or perhaps more likely, contemporary gender divisions meant children were raised in a way that conditioned them as male and female. Mr Locke clearly lacked confidence in his gender knowledge about rearing his daughter and settled to raise her as a son. Being raised as male would have also allowed Sophia to go out to work with their brothers. Strange has highlighted that 'a father's strength, courage and work provided a prism through which father and son could communicate'.¹⁶ This theme of continuing a parent's work was expressed by an article in *The Morning Chronicle* in 1848 when Sophia, then John Smith, also

¹² Strange. *Fatherhood*, 3.

¹³ Thomas Acton, *Gypsy Politics and Social Change* (London: Routledge & Kegan Ltd, 1974).; David Cressey, "Evangelical Ethnographers and English Gypsies from the 1790s to the 1830s," *Romani Studies* 26, no. 1 (2016), 63-77.

¹⁴ "[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Strange. *Fatherhood*, 8-9.

fell into similar work as their father. The newspaper article commented that 'In this manner [as a man] she grew up to womanhood and then, commenced the trade of her father'.¹⁷ John Gillis has demonstrated that 'family has been redefined from people sharing a place to people sharing a past and future'.¹⁸ In this example, John chose to confidently embody his masculinity in a way that was recognisable to others and commit himself to the environment he lived in and fulfilled the roles, such as a breadwinner, that were placed upon him.

It was the community that could make or break an individual, resulting in gender passing individuals being at risk every day. In close working-class village communities, there was little privacy as local gossips, neighbours and supposed friends regularly talked about their quirky neighbours.¹⁹ Due to limited local resources, which was heightened following the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, parishes could prohibit welfare and local relief from being offered to undeserving women who became pregnant outside of marriage.²⁰ Women became the sole providers for children or had to prove the paternity of their children to receive support. This was near impossible for most, resulting in many single women with illegitimate children living in poverty.²¹ Ultimately, the communities that individuals belonged to were instrumental in the tolerance of their gender identity and relationship status, including the decision for some to raise children that were not biologically their own.

Young, working-class women were expected to be virtuous, however, pre-marital relations were known to occur. Indeed, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall have argued that 'a woman's femininity was best expressed in her dependence', whereas masculinity was measurable in a 'man's ability to support and order his family'.²² Providing that the couple

¹⁷ "[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.

¹⁸ John R. Gillis, "Making Time for Family: The Invention of Family Time(s) and the reinvention of Family History," *Journal of Family History* 21, no. 1 (1996), 5.

¹⁹ Andrew August, *The British Working-Class 1832-1940* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2007), 20.; Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working-Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 27.

²⁰ Anna Clark, "The Rhetoric of Chartist Domesticity: Gender, Language, and Class in the 1830s and 40s," *Journal of British Studies* 31, no. 1 (1992), 66.; Leonore Davidoff, "The Family in Britain," in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950: Volume 2: People and Their Environment*, ed. F. M. L. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 95.; Jane Humphries, "Class Struggles and the Persistence of the Working-Class family," *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, (1977), 250.

²¹ R. Sauer, "Infanticide and Abortion in Nineteenth Century Britain," *Population Studies* 32, no. 1 (1978), 89.

²² Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall ed., *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), 144.

married if they became pregnant, communities were tolerant of the relationships and even quietly acknowledged them in some cases.²³

Gender passing individuals not only provided financially for their partner's, but they also supported some vulnerable women in the community. The theme of gender passing individuals supporting single, pregnant or widowed women appears across several gender passing cases including John Murphy and Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson.²⁴ As we have already seen, John Murphy, who appeared in the press in 1825, was blackmailed into marrying Matilda Lacy and forced to raise her children to keep his biological identity a secret. However, Joseph's case was more focussed on a loving family basis. The *Northern Echo* in 1894 revisited Joseph's case sometime after his death and focussed on his marriage to his first wife.²⁵ Joseph married a young woman named Sally and the couple settled in Etherley in County Durham. The quick birth of a son in this relationship suggests that Sally was already pregnant before she married Joseph. To the unknowing contemporary public and the local gossips, the quick pregnancy may have suggested that the couple had engaged in pre-marital sex.

The family remained a unit for thirty years until Sally's death, although press reports did not comment further on the couple's child. Perhaps marrying a woman who was already pregnant was a relief for Joseph as he did not have to publicly prove his virility. Joseph's biological identity remained concealed to the public as his wife was pregnant which was a clear sign to the community that he was able to reproduce. Although we do not know what happened to the couple in the privacy of their own home, we can speculate. Perhaps, Joseph kept his body concealed and the couple shared a companionate marriage and raised their child comfortably in that manner. Alternatively, Joseph and Sally may have been so committed to one another that he was confident in his abilities as a man that he lived openly with his wife. Nonetheless, Joseph orchestrated the formation of family in a way through a heterociscentric ideal and this allowed him to be viewed as a good husband and father by others in the community. The couple stayed committed to each other for over thirty years

²³ Davidoff, "The Family in Britain," 71-130.

²⁴ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Reynolds's News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.; "The Female Husband." *South Wales Echo*, (Wales), December 30, 1893, 2.; "A Real 'Female Husband.'" *Northern Echo*, (Darlington: England), January 3, 1894.

²⁵ "A Real 'Female Husband.'" *Northern Echo*, (Darlington: England), January 3, 1894.

until Sally's death suggesting that the relationship was a good one and that the couple loved each other.

The dominant understanding of marriage was that newlyweds engaged themselves in a loving relationship and went on to have a family. A legal and religious requirement of a traditional heterosexual marriage included consummation and, by extension, the birth of children.²⁶ The topic of sexual intimacy was not discussed in gender passing cases in newspaper reports, presumably because of its taboo nature. For nineteenth century audiences it was the physical act of 'penile penetration of the vagina' that constituted the only experience of sexual intercourse.²⁷ It is necessary to highlight that although other forms of sexual contact were practised Christianity saw reproductive sex within marriage as the only legitimate form of sex. Anything else was illegitimate sexual behaviour. Indeed, this was one of the reasons why people at that time found the idea of lesbian sex difficult to understand. The possibility of gender passing couples engaging in any sexual relations was not something that was acknowledged in newspaper reports although it was alluded to for comedic effect in the street ballads which will be explored in *Part IV: Public Interest*.

In James and Abigail Allen's case, newspaper reports implied that the couple's marriage was irregular due to the pair not engaging in a sexual relationship. In a traditional view of marriage, love became central to human existence and the relationship that people had with God. The act of making love to reproduce was therefore the natural expectation of a husband and wife.²⁸ The pamphlet commented how 'Night after night but confirmed the revolting truth that she [Abigail] was condemned to the unnatural state of wedded widowhood'.²⁹ Anna Clark and Ginger Frost have both recognised the strict sexual double standards between men and women in the nineteenth century.³⁰ They have argued that individuals who were in childless marriages were viewed at times with pity because of their

²⁶ Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*, 42-61.; Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, 231-259; Gail Savage, "The Wilful Communication of a Loathsome Disease': Marital Conflict and Venereal Disease in Victorian England," *Victorian Studies* 34, no. 1 (1990), 36.

²⁷ Susie Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 209.

²⁸ Emma Donoghue, *Passions Between Women*, (London: Pan Macmillan, 2014).

²⁹ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative of the Extraordinary Career of James Allen, The Female Husband*, (J.S Thomas: Covent Garden, 1829), 16.

³⁰ Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*, 51-55; Ginger S. Frost, *Promises Broken: Courtship, Class, and Gender in Victorian England* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1995).; Ginger S. Frost, *Living in Sin: Cohabiting as Husband and Wife in Nineteenth Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).; Savage, "The Wilful Communication," 35-54; Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 196.

inability to produce children, and other times they were viewed with suspicion for perhaps using methods to avoid children altogether.³¹ As James and Abigail remained childless for their twenty-one-year marriage, it is possible that the community around them may have been suspicious that they were using contraception, practicing abstinence or pitying them because they could not complete their family. Emma Donoghue has argued that a lack of children or engagement in sexual intercourse suggested impotency amongst men.³² James's inability to reproduce may have raised concerns about his masculinity, thus demonstrating the flaws in his gender performativity.

The creation of a familial network was not simply limited to the people that gender passing individuals lived with. Instead, non-traditional familial relationships can be explored through working relationships and apprenticeship placements. Securing apprenticeships for working-class men in the nineteenth century and obtaining a skilled trade was a 'crucial route to security' according to Keith McClelland.³³ Work was intrinsic to men's status in both the home and family and, although they typically worked outside the home, some apprenticeships were carried out inside the home, bridging the gap between public and private. By familiarising themselves with different trades young men had a platform to become good examples of working-class men as they matured. Some gender passing individuals in this sample, including Harry Stokes and John Murphy, obtained apprenticeships from a young age.³⁴

Apprenticeships in England have had a long history, spanning from the twelfth century to current day. It was during the reign of Elizabeth I that apprenticeships first became available and were defined as 'technical training across a wide range of occupations'.³⁵ Alternatively, in the mid to late seventeenth century, apprenticeships were used as a way of controlling the poor and elevating the social skills of middle- and upper-class children.³⁶ This approach was extended into the eighteenth century when apprenticeships became common

³¹ Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 196.

³² Donoghue, *Passions Between Women*, 87.

³³ Keith McClelland, "Masculinity and the 'Representative Artisan in Britain, 1850-1880,'" in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* ed. Michael Roper and John Tosh (London: Routledge, 1991), 81.

³⁴ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; "The Woman Husband." *Manchester Guardian*, (Manchester: England), April 14, 1838, 2.

³⁵ Joan Lane, *Apprenticeship in England: 1600-1914* (London: UCL Press, 1996), 8.

³⁶ Lane, *Apprenticeship in England*, 8.

across higher social levels.³⁷ The nineteenth century, however, saw a focus on apprenticeships as a form of child exploitation.³⁸ Although there were acts put in place, such as the repeal of the Elizabethan Statute in 1814, apprenticeships were not always managed by local authorities.

In the nineteenth century apprenticeships were reserved for young boys who were employed from around fourteen years old. Joan Lane has highlighted that 'In trades requiring physical strength (tanner, baker, butcher, bricklayer, farrier or blacksmith), the older boy, aged fifteen or sixteen was far more useful than the younger child'.³⁹ Obviously, this was due to the physical strength that older boys had.

Newspaper articles recalled that Harry Stokes had left home around 1807/1808 when he was eight years old following a difficult childhood:

From what could be gleaned of this history of this female husband it would seem that she had assumed the garb and character of a boy at an early age, and that in that character she was apprenticed, at the age of sixteen or seventeen, to a master builder, in one of the large towns in Yorkshire.⁴⁰

Lane's estimation as to the age of apprentices employed in manual labour is corroborated in *The Observer's* approximation of Harry's age during his own apprenticeship. Although apprentices were expected to pay a premium to their master for their bed, board and training, the heavy taxation of apprenticeships by the 1810s made it increasingly uncommon for masters to accept large premiums.⁴¹ Instead it was simply by committing their time to their master that the apprentice was trained in a particular skill which may have included bricklaying, cobbling or masonry amongst others. It is likely that this was what Harry did to learn his craft. *The Observer* highlighted that Harry lived with his master, was taught, fed, and clothed; therefore, it is impossible not to imagine that there was a close bond between the pair during the seven years of his apprenticeship. Apprentices developed a relationship with non-family members who taught them a skill and for gender passing individuals, this

³⁷ Chris Minns and Patrick Wallis, "The Price of Human Capital in a Pre-Industrial Economy: Premiums and Apprenticeship Contracts in Eighteenth Century England," *Explorations in Economic History*, (2013), 335-350.

³⁸ Patrick Wallis, "Apprenticeships and Training in Pre-Modern England," *Journal of Economic History*, (2008): 832-861.

³⁹ Lane, *Apprenticeship in England*, 12.

⁴⁰ "A Female Husband In Manchester." *The Observer*, (Manchester: England), April 16, 1838, 1.

⁴¹ Lane, *Apprenticeship in England*, 3-4.

relationship meant acceptance and acknowledgement within their communities as men and as workers.

Family became an important close community for gender passing individuals that offered support and belonging. Gender passing individuals typically distanced themselves from their biological families and childhood communities to be safer in their own identities as men. Ultimately, intimate communities and family support offered a new sense of belonging and familiarity for gender passing individuals. Within their own families they were viewed as the head of the home and in society they were viewed as men, workers, husbands, and fathers.

Part II

On the Street

Gender passing individuals typically began their male lives in rural communities where they developed their skills before moving to the city. Both Andrew August and John Benson have recognised the mobility of the working classes and their freedom to move around the country in search of better job opportunities and an improved quality of life.⁴² This was the case for Harry Stokes who grew up in Doncaster but moved to Sheffield where he obtained an apprenticeship and finally moved to Manchester where he settled.⁴³ Similarly, James Allen ‘degenerated to a noted cow-keeper’ when Abigail went to live with him after their marriage in 1808, before settling into his career as a shipwright in Rotherhithe, London.⁴⁴ Gender passing individuals tended to lead mobile lives in the early stages of their embodiment of men, perhaps never fully confident enough to settle in one area.

To become part of their localised community gender passing individuals needed to fit in. To do this they committed themselves to fulfilling masculine ideals. For instance, they worked manual jobs and some, like James Allen, regularly contributed to benefit societies to protect themselves if they were unable to work. Their ability to commit themselves to these roles and be consistent in their performativity aided their social transition into masculine life. As well as working, gender passing individuals submerged themselves in masculine leisure activities, such as visiting the public house. This became an important part of working-class life as it enabled individuals to take a break from the mundanity of their working lives. The public house was vibrant and considered a ‘popular amusement [that] was generally raucous, sometimes violent, and often competitive’.⁴⁵ Public houses remained a popular past time, as we will see in *Part III: The Public House*, and both James Allen and Harry Stokes were employed as public house landlords during their lifetime. Both needed to be confident and exude

⁴² Andrew August, *The British Working Class 1832-1940* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2007), 15.; John Benson, *The Working-Class in Britain 1850-1939* (Essex: Longman Group UK Limited, 1989), 120.

⁴³ “The Female Husband in Manchester.” *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.; “The Woman Husband.” *Manchester Guardian*, (Manchester: England), April 14, 1838, 2.

⁴⁴ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 1-40.

⁴⁵ August, *The British Working-Class 1832-1940*, 52.

personality to make their establishment a place where people wanted to visit. There was also a desire amongst the working classes to be involved in clubs and societies, which allowed different types of communities to develop organically and come together. People 'made conscious decisions to join such groups' and evidently there was a desire from people to be involved, as Christopher French suggests, through a shared sense of interest.⁴⁶

Although the type of leisure activities that gender passing individuals engaged in were not explored in the press, James Allen's regular contributions to a benefit club highlighted how he wanted to be accepted as part of the community alongside other workers.⁴⁷ By contributing to a benefit club, James prepared for the future and projected the image that he was a responsible man. In this sense James fulfilled the requirements of being a hardworking man and was a 'representative artisan' according to Thomas Wright.⁴⁸ Wright argued that a 'representative artisan' was someone who:

can command good work and good pay all the year round, has a comfortable home, saves money, provides through his benefit and trade clubs for the proverbial rainy day, is in his degree respected because self-respecting... is a person rather to be envied than pitied.⁴⁹

Evidently there was a focus on men saving, working and being responsible with their money. The drive to provide was a vital part of the structure of nineteenth century working-class identity as well as gender performativity and expectation. James Allen clearly demonstrated his willingness to provide for his family through his ability to save and make plans for his wife to be supported after his death.

It is only through researching the lives of gender passing individuals that we begin to see a sense of commonality and community amongst them. Gender passing individuals were made aware of others like themselves when they read newspaper articles or listened to street gossip especially if cases of gender passing happened in the same town or city. John Murphy, Harry Stokes, and Thomas Green, for example, all lived in the Greater Manchester area for

⁴⁶ French, "The Good Life in Victorian and Edwardian Surbiton," 115.

⁴⁷ McClelland, "Masculinity and the 'Representative Artisan,'" 74.; Wright, "The Journeyman Engineer," 2.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

most of their lives.⁵⁰ These three individuals were active members in their respective communities with the deaths of Harry and John being just one year apart. Although John lived in Wigan, it was possible that he may have read about Harry's death in the newspapers like the *Manchester Guardian* or heard local gossip when speaking to friends or neighbours. Thomas Green, on the other hand, was younger than both Harry and John and may have read about Harry's initial exposure in 1838. Perhaps this spurred Thomas on to settle in Manchester and start a new life with his wife. Although these examples do not prove categorically that connections were made between individuals, we can see a distant community being formed through the help of copy-and-paste journalism and its ability to reach wider audiences. An unknowing community formed in that gender passing individuals may have been aware that there were others like themselves but were not completely confident in revealing their biological identity.

Community was also expressed in places where gender passing individuals finally chose to settle. William Seymour, who first appeared in the press for being found guilty of theft, appeared in the 1871 census record and lived in Back Ashton Street in Liverpool.⁵¹ In *Gore's Directory of Liverpool and its Environs* of 1875, there were three professionals noted as living in Back Ashton Street where William resided. In number 63 was John Heydon who was a tailor, in number 67 lived Maria Riches who was a ladies outfitter and in number 65, likely to have been the house where William lived with his wife Agnes and their lodger, was Mrs Mary Ellis who was letting rooms in the property.⁵² What was most interesting about this area was the variety of professionals that lived on adjoining Ashton Street including William Browne who was a ship's pilot, Charles Bell a piano-forte maker, Celia Mellan a professor of French and Ed Clements a registrar of marriages.⁵³ Alongside the various professionals, the Lock Hospital was situated nearby as well as The Temperance Hotel and The Royal Lunatic Asylum.⁵⁴ The area that William chose to live in was striking because he was a cabdriver, recognised by George Cruikshank as one of the lowest occupations next to ostlers and shoe

⁵⁰ "The Female Husband in Manchester." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.; "Extraordinary Case of Concealment of Sex." *York Herald*, (York: England), May 11, 1861.

⁵¹ 1871 Census accessed on www.ancestry.com Class: RG10; Piece: 3780; Folio: 43; Page: 36; GSU roll: 841892.

⁵² *Gore's Directory of Liverpool and its Environs*, 1874, 1875 and 1876 editions accessed in Liverpool Central Library and Archive on Microfilm, accessed April 12, 2019.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

shiners according to *The British Beehive* etching, yet he lived in a particularly vibrant community.⁵⁵ According to the trade directory, Mrs Mary Ellis was occupant of 65 Back Ashton Street for at least three years. This highlighted that not only was Mr Ellis a successful landlady she also had a good repertoire of lodgers which included William Seymour. Given that Mrs Ellis remained at the property after William's identity was exposed suggests that the revelation did not immediately affect the community or indeed her reputation.

Neighbours were central to working-class communities. Wherever people lived they had neighbours living next door to them or sometimes even sharing their home. Some neighbours may have even been aware of a gender passing individual's biological identity because they were living in such proximity to them. Neighbours, however, were not necessarily prioritised in press reports about gender passing cases. They were used to either confirm the shock of the biological exposure or they were used to show support to the wife of the individual who had been exposed.

Many of the press reports offered intimate analyses of the individual's narratives, suggesting that either neighbours or friends may have provided information to journalists for their stories. Emily Cockayne has explored the intimacies of working-class housing in urban areas writing that 'all types of classes of people [were] shoehorned into the city centres and connected through a network of neighbours'.⁵⁶ That being said, it was interesting that the neighbours of gender passing individuals largely remained silent in press reports. Newspaper reports, at times, were in awe of gender passing individuals, but the immediate community may not have agreed with this as they may have felt duped. Indeed, both Geoff Ginn and Asa Briggs have highlighted that there were differences in values and experiences by those being observed and those observing.⁵⁷ It was possible that those living in the community were reluctant to speak to journalists as they too wanted to maintain a level of privacy. Just as journalists may not have spoken to neighbours or friends because of working-class community closeness, this may have also meant that people did not expose community secrets.

⁵⁵ George Cruikshank, *The British Bee Hive*, (London, 1867). <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-british-bee-hive> accessed May 3, 2019.

⁵⁶ Cockayne, *Cheek by Jowl*, 31.

⁵⁷ Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (Hammondsmith: Pelican, 1968), 315.; Geoff Ginn, "Answering the 'Bitter Cry': Urban Description and Social Reform in the Late-Victorian East End," *The London Journal* 31, no. 2 (2006): 181.

One exception to the absence of neighbours in press reports of gender passing cases was 'Mary Daly' who supported Abigail Allen's innocence after the revelation of James's biological identity. Mary appeared in the *Newcastle Courant* in one of the earliest articles to cover James's death, commenting that 'Mary Daly deposed, that she has known the deceased and the female who passed as his wife for a number of years'.⁵⁸ The *Newcastle Courant* went on to describe how Mary had encouraged Abigail to leave James 'several times on account of his jealousy'.⁵⁹ Mary categorically stated that 'she was confident that Mrs Allen was a perfectly innocent woman, as innocent as the witness's infant granddaughter'.⁶⁰ Here we see 'sisterhood' being expressed publicly in newspaper reports with Mary supporting Abigail's innocence. Cockayne has argued that neighbours were 'given, not chosen' and they could 'enrich or ruin our lives'.⁶¹ In this sense, we see that although Mary clearly supported Abigail's claims, she could have, quite easily, questioned her credibility publicly.

Neighbourhoods became an important type of community that offered support to each other, specifically practical and emotional support. Women typically had a close neighbour who helped with childcare or food when they were able to.⁶² There was evidence of this close neighbourly support network in the relationship between Abigail Allen and her neighbour and friend Mrs Pittman, who appeared in the pamphlet about James's life after his death. Most notably it was Mrs Pittman who announced James's return after he had disappeared for several weeks, she entered the home when James had disappeared and was pictured as the heroine of the story. Elizabeth Roberts's work on working-class women recognises how women 'relied upon their neighbours (and their kin) for sociability and friendship'.⁶³ We see this in the relationship between Abigail and Mrs Pittman after James's disappearance when Abigail relied upon Mrs Pittman for support.

James was a private man and did not engage in masculine leisure activities such as going to the local public house, which seemed to single him out. Eric Dingwall commented that James's 'youthful appearance made some of the more knowing hands raise their

⁵⁸ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Cockayne, *Cheek by Jowl*, 1.

⁶² Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, 3-8.

⁶³ Cockayne, *Cheek by Jowl*, 1; Gillis, "Making Time for Family," 1-13.

eyebrows, [and] suspected that he was a pansy'.⁶⁴ Dingwall's use of the word 'pansy' is not only a slur in today's society but it also shows the book as a product of its time as it was used to imply that the individual was a homosexual or effeminate man. In this sense, it suggests that the contemporary public may have also viewed some gender passing individuals as being homosexual due to their biological identity being female. Given that work colleagues questioned James's manliness, perhaps he was not as successful at gender passing as newspaper reports implied. Indeed, August has reflected on how men and women's 'emotional ties' were different, and men's relationships were focussed 'with their mates at work or at the pub, women with their children, kin or neighbours'.⁶⁵ Therefore, because James did not commit himself to engaging in these typically accepted roles for men he was noted as being different and thus vulnerable to detection.

One evening, after not showing an interest in visiting the public house with colleagues, James was attacked and 'violently thrown to the ground'.⁶⁶ It was then that his colleagues 'proceeded to take the unanswerable liberties with his person' but James 'fought them with determined courage'.⁶⁷ Evidently James's colleagues were curious about him and this implies that he was not as believable as a man as the newspapers suggested. Perhaps it was his reserved and private nature that jeopardised his successful gender performance. Despite being labelled as a 'sober, steady, strong active man' by *The Times*, James was not always recognised as this by his colleagues.⁶⁸ Indeed, if his gender identity had been completely accepted then it would not have been so violently challenged.

This violent incident with James and his work colleagues affected him negatively and his personality changed after it, according to the pamphlet. James also disappeared from his marital home several times following the attack. On one occasion when James disappeared the pamphlet commented that 'Her [Abigail's] apprehensions for his safety now became excited to their utmost; there was no other mode of ascertaining whether he had committed

⁶⁴ Eric J. Dingwall, *Some Human Oddities: Studies in the Queer, the Uncanny and the Fanatical* (London: Hame and Val Thal., 1947), 42.

⁶⁵ August. *The British Working-Class*, 22.

⁶⁶ Anonymous. *An Authentic Narrative*, 20.

⁶⁷ "An Authentic Narrative of the Extraordinary Career of James Allen the Female Husband," (J.S Thomas: London, 1829), 20.

⁶⁸ "Inquest." *The Times*, (London: England), January 15, 1829, 3.; "The Female Husband." *The Times*, (London: England), January 17, 1829, 3.; "The Female Husband." *The Times*, (London: England), January 22, 1829, 4.

any personal rash act.⁶⁹ Evidently, Abigail had reason to believe that James may have committed a 'rash act. Perhaps due to his personality change Abigail may have thought James may have committed suicide, and therefore needed to enter their home. The pamphlet noted:

It was at this time that his wife first perceived the symptoms of a change in his treatment of her, [following the attack] - from the most friendly confiding, and affectionate terms, he was altered to an ill-natured and suspicious being'.⁷⁰

On finding out that James had disappeared Mrs Pittman, the friendly neighbour, arranged for a ladder to be brought along to enter the property before she 'ascended to the bedroom window, and having entered, made the most diligent search over the premises; but no James was to be found'.⁷¹ In this description, Mrs Pittman was depicted as a heroine in confirming James's disappearance and then in her offer of emotional support for her friend, Abigail.

When James returned home after three months, Mrs Pittman appeared again in the pamphlet and it was she who announced James's return. The pamphlet commented on this and wrote:

Her friend, Mrs Pittman, who was at this time sitting with her, suddenly exclaimed, "Oh! My God, Mrs Allen, here's your husband!" She arose in the greatest state of agitation, and exclaimed, "If it is he, and he dares to approach me, I will kill him for his cruelty and baseness."⁷²

Evidently there was a familiarity and solidarity between the women as evidenced in the accustomed way that they spoke to one another.⁷³ This ideal of support was practiced by working-class women through their friendships with neighbours whereas men tended to seek companionship through their work colleagues and drinking partners.⁷⁴

Although in this case Abigail's neighbour was supportive and approachable, this was not always the case for other neighbours. Within the social parameters and literal closeness

⁶⁹ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 24.

⁷⁰ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 20-21.

⁷¹ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 24.

⁷² Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 25.

⁷³ Ross, *Love and Toil*, 15.

⁷⁴ August, *The British Working-Class*, 22.

of neighbourhoods, neighbourliness could have been dictated by proximity rather than being nurtured by choice. This would have resulted in strained relationships ‘and the neighbourly spirit [being] withdrawn or poisoned’ due to relationships being contrived, according to Cockayne.⁷⁵ Indeed, bad feeling was aimed at Abigail after the death of James. *The Globe* commented that Abigail felt it necessary to sign a public affidavit to the effect of denying any knowledge of James’s biological identity. This was due to ‘having been dreadfully annoyed by some of her neighbours who doubted the truth of her statement’.⁷⁶ Therefore, we can see the significance of the community in how neighbours had the ability to support or vilify an individual.

Judgement from the local community was also explored in Harry Stokes’s case after his marriage ended with Ann. According to the *Liverpool Mercury* Harry sought out a new bride in Betsy, ‘a plump little widow who kept a beerhouse’.⁷⁷ The couple became involved in a relationship and ‘it was resolved that the twain should become one flesh’.⁷⁸ On the couple’s wedding night a ‘terrible row’ occurred and ‘The night was spent in downright quarrel and fighting’ resulting in Harry being arrested for an assault.⁷⁹ Although the *Liverpool Mercury* did not disclose the particulars surrounding why the couple fought, we can assume that it was linked to consummating the marriage with the suggestion of the two becoming one flesh. This description of an attack and subsequent arrest only appeared in the *Liverpool Mercury*, that was published after Harry’s death, and implied that he was uncontrollable in both his temper and his behaviour, particularly towards women.

On his release from the New Bailey, Harry was ‘considerably persecuted by those little gamins who know so well how to torment street celebrities while he was also the object of much curious speculation among his brethren of the trowel’, wrote the *Liverpool Mercury*.⁸⁰ ‘Gamins’ in this description referred to street urchins who were typically children. The fact that Harry was tormented by children demonstrates that he was recognisable in the street. Evidently, his private life and personal story had penetrated the public sphere far beyond the newspaper coverage and had affected his life. The ‘gamins’ had no fear and had power and

⁷⁵ Cockayne. *Cheek by Jowl*, 1.

⁷⁶ “The Female Husband.” *The Globe*, (London: England), January 22, 1829.

⁷⁷ ““Harry” Stokes, The Man-Woman.” *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

influence on the street. Perhaps the children offered the voice of the people in how they tormented Harry and the community may not have been as tolerant towards him as earlier newspaper reports suggested.

Harry lived and worked in the public eye not only in a literal sense of physically building his surroundings, but he also policed the community in a voluntary position as a Special Constable. Due to the industrial boom of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the standard of living and quality of life declined dramatically. As a result, tensions rose and workers put pressure on local authorities.⁸¹ In 1819, mass meetings called for government reform, and in some of the large industrial cities such as Manchester, there were riots.⁸² The Special Constable Act of 1831 gave the Chief Police Officer of each district in Manchester the option to appoint Special Constables on a temporary basis.⁸³ Harry was successful in securing one of these positions and was a Special Constable for the eleventh and thirteenth District of Manchester. Special Constables were voluntary positions and were called upon for extra support on the street at events such as ‘elections, orange processions and meetings of trade unions’.⁸⁴ The *Manchester Guardian* acknowledged Harry’s commitment to the position, writing ‘she is remembered to have been one of the most punctual in attendance, and the most forward volunteer in actual duty’.⁸⁵ This description of Harry’s role as a Special Constable was complimentary to his character and highlights his dedication to this trusted position. As a special constable, he had the ability to police and control the community that he was a part of.

We know that Harry Stokes must have been in this position as a Special Constable between 1831 (when the Act was passed) and 1833 due to his address at that time. In the Old Key District breakdown for Special Constables, Harry was noted as living in 11 Cumberland Street, and this remained his address until 1833, according to the trade directories.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Andrew Davis, *The Gangs of Manchester* (Preston: Milo Books LTD, 2006); Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006).

⁸² Chris Williams, ed., *A Companion to Nineteenth Century Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

⁸³ Greater Manchester Police Museum and Archives. Accessed September 24, 2019.

<https://www.gmpmuseum.co.uk/collection-item/history-of-special-constables-in-manchester/>

⁸⁴ “Woman-Husband.” *Manchester Guardian*, (Manchester: England), April 14, 1838, 2.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Addresses and information accessed using the *Pigot Trade Directory* and *Kelly’s Trade Directory* held in Manchester Central Library: 1824-25 – Henry Stoke, bricklayer, 13 Potter Street (pg. 153); 1829 – Henry Stoakes, bricklayer, 11 Cumberland Street; 1830 – Henry Stoakes, bricklayer, 11 Cumberland Street; 1833 – Henry Stoakes, bricklayer, 21 Cumberland Street; 1836 – Henry Stoakes, bricklayer, 21 Cumberland Street (pg. 254).

However, the *Manchester Guardian* suggested that Harry was enlisted as a Special Constable for just one year. The article read, 'we understand that she is no longer a special constable, because she did not, on the last annual procession... present herself to the New Bailey'.⁸⁷ Although the reasons for this was inconclusive, the article commented on Harry's dedication noting that, 'she was not discarded or discharged; there was no complaint against her; and probably the extension of her own business was her only motive for not resuming the danger of this office'.⁸⁸ What is interesting about this article is that there was an emphasis on the dangerousness of being a Special Constable as well as the 'unpleasantness' of the position.⁸⁹ It is unlikely that newspapers would have described the same position as dangerous and unpleasant were it not for Harry's biological identity being exposed.

As an alternative to being a law abiding citizen like Harry Stokes, William Seymour received a two month sentence of hard labour in February 1875, for stealing '22lbs of beef' and '5lbs of veal' from Mr Henry Moorby who owned a butcher's on Leece Street in Liverpool.⁹⁰ Although William denied being guilty of this crime, the *Liverpool Mercury* commented that 'upon the arm and breast of her coat were traces of suet'.⁹¹ This consequently resulted in a guilty verdict and two months hard labour was confirmed. The Calendar of Prisoners and Quarter Sessions catalogued William Seymour as plaintiff forty-eight of fifty-one to be processed on 14 February 1875. In addition, there was a handwritten note that accompanied his entry stating, 'Seymour, William otherwise Mary Seymour, otherwise Mary Honeywell'.⁹² Evidently this not only referred to William's male name but also one of his alias identities. 'Mary Honeywell' in this instance, was William's married female name before they escaped from their abusive husband. Another alteration was made on the

Pigot's Manchester Directory: 1836 – Henry Stoakes, bricklayer, 21 Cumberland Street (pg. 313).

Pigot and Son's General Directory: 1838 – Henry Stoakes, bricklayer, 21 Cumberland Street (pg. 315).

Pigot and Slater's Directory of Manchester: 1843 – Henry Stoakes, Beer Retailer, 3 and 5 Quay Street
Information can also be found online archived by Jenny White. Accessed December 4, 2018.
<https://wearewarpandweft.wordpress.com/harry-stokes-a-female-husband-in-manchester/harry-stokes-timeline/>

⁸⁷ "Woman-Husband." *Manchester Guardian*, (Manchester: England), April 14, 1838, 2.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ "A Woman as a Cabdriver for ten years, A Romance of the Rank." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), February 13, 1875.

⁹¹ "A Woman as a Cabdriver for ten years, A Romance of the Rank." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), February 13, 1875.; "Domestic." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), February 13, 1875.

⁹² Quarter Sessions held at Liverpool, February 12, 1875, Class: HO 27; Piece: 171; Page: 14, accessible on Ancestry.com

actual trial notes for the case that can be seen in figure 13, and reads 'Being asked in what name she would be tried, she replied M.H'.⁹³ Two things are striking about this comment. Firstly 'M.H' refers to William's married name as being 'Mary Honeywell'. By accepting this name William risked being publicly exposed as Honeywell's estranged wife, as well as being exposed to the potential wrath of Honeywell who had been openly vilified as a domestic abuser in newspaper reports. Secondly, William chose to be tried as a woman. This was despite him having lived as a man for at least fifteen years.

⁹³ Quarter Sessions Record held at Liverpool, 10/02/1875, reference: 347 QUA 2.218, accessed in Liverpool Central Library and Archives, January 2017. Permission to reproduce this court record has been granted by Helena Smart at Liverpool Central Library and Archives.

43	William Connor ...	29	Painter ..	R	T. S. Raffles, Esq., Liverpool.	9th
44	James Kehoe ...	14	Carter ...	Imp.		
46	William Welsh...	14	Labourer ...	N		
47	Mary Hughes ...	26	Hawker ...	N	Ditto ...	
48	William Seymour, other- wise Mary Seymour, otherwise Mary Honey- well; tried as <u>Mary</u> <u>Honeywell</u> ...	25	Car Driver	Well.	Ditto ...	
49	Jane Pagden ...	44	None ...	R & W mod.	Ditto	
50	William Kenny ...	24	Fireman ...	Imp	Ditto	
51	William Molloy...	19	Sailor ...	Imp.	T.	

being asked what
name she would be
tried she replied
m

Figure 13 William Seymour's original Quarter Sessions Record held in Liverpool Central Library and Archives, 347 QUA 2.218. Permission to reproduce this court record has been granted by Helena Smart at Liverpool Central Library and Archives.

William Seymour was labelled as 'The Female Cabdriver' of Liverpool by the press after his initial arrest. Although the press commented and exposed William's biological identity, Mr J. B. Aspinall, who was prosecuting, commented 'How do you account for the way your [sic] going about in male clothing, and as a cardriver? [sic] What is the meaning of it? Of course, it is not an offence but one wishes to know something about you'.⁹⁴ It is not completely clear what Aspinall meant by 'of course it is not an offence'.⁹⁵ Perhaps he suggested that it was not an offence for a woman to be a cabdriver, or maybe he implied it was not an offence to gender pass. Nonetheless, there seemed to be a level of tolerance towards William in that his gender identity and presentation was not challenged. It is possible that he was not the first gender passing individual to appear in a Liverpool Court, although he is the only one that I have located.

The judge overseeing the case, Mr Raffles, highlighted the likeability of William's character and recognised his commitment to his wife and his work. Indeed, this was clear when he reflected on William's industriousness as a cabdriver noting, 'You seem, although in an odd way, to have been obtaining an honest livelihood, and in such a case, I always deal with a prisoner in the utmost leniency'.⁹⁶ Despite this, on several different occasions the press commented on the mocking tone of the public gallery throughout William's interrogation.⁹⁷ A breakdown of the interrogation was published in the *Liverpool Mercury* and after William was asked how long he had been gender passing he replied:

The Prisoner – I have done it ten years – ever since I have been away from home.

The Clerk of the Peace – She is a widow, I think (Laughter)

Prisoner – No, sir, not that I know of. (Renewed laughter.)

The Recorder – I don't know that there is any reason why I should treat you differently from any other prisoner. Is this your first offence?

⁹⁴ "A Woman as a Cabdriver for ten years, A Romance of the Rank." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), February 13, 1875.; "Domestic." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), February 13, 1875.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ "A Female Cabdriver in Liverpool – Strange Disclosure." *Liverpool Albion*, (Liverpool: England), February 13, 1875.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

Prisoner – I am innocent. The boy (the witness) has made a mistake I am sure.⁹⁸

The outbursts of laughter and leading questions suggested that William was not taken seriously in the court and was treated as someone to be ridiculed. Although there was some acknowledgement of William's success at embodying his masculinity, the public evidently found the case to be amusing.

A follow up article about William published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, known for its liberal character, raised questions about the need for female cabdrivers. The journalist wrote:

It would be interesting to know whether during the period she acted as cabdriver, William Seymour ever drove Mrs Giacometti Prodggers; and if so whether any dispute on the subject of cab law has ever risen between the two ladies. Probably not; the gentler sex understand each other better than they understand a man, or are understood by the obtuse and ignominious creature.⁹⁹

Mrs Giacometti Prodggers, who was the focus of the article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, was an aristocrat who severely disliked cabdrivers and was given the name of the 'Cabman's Nemesis' throughout London. A caricature of her was published in *Punch* magazine after William's biological exposure on the sixth of March 1875 and can be seen in figure 14.¹⁰⁰ Here, we can see *Punch* using the case of Mrs Prodggers to further mock William as he may have been one of those cabdrivers running away from her when she visited the cab office. The dramatic entrance of Mrs Prodggers in the cartoon shows cabmen scrambling from their seats and hiding from her and trying to avoid having to drive her anywhere.

⁹⁸ "A Woman as a Cabdriver for ten years, A Romance of the Rank." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), February 13, 1875.; "Domestic." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), February 13, 1875.

⁹⁹ "Anonymous." *Pall Mall Gazette*, (London: England), February 16, 1875, 6.

¹⁰⁰ "The Cabman's Shelter." *Punch*, (London: England), March 6, 1875, 106. Accessed in *Liverpool John Moores University Special Archive Collection* held in Aldham Roberts Library, accessed November 29, 2018.; Heather Tweed, "Mrs Giacometti Prodggers, the Cabman's Nemesis," September 19, 2012. <https://publicdomainreview.org/essay/mrs-giacometti-prodggers-the-cabman-s-nemesis> accessed November 7, 2020.



Figure 14 The Cabman's Shelter, Punch, March 6, 1875. Courtesy of Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives, image taken by me.

Mrs Prodgers earned the notorious title of the 'Cabmen's Nemesis' due to her regularly taking a cab around London and stopping just short of her original destination. If the cabman charged her the full fare, she threatened them with the law and was successful in over fifty cases.¹⁰¹ By mentioning Mrs Prodgers in the article, the *Pall Mall Gazette* expected their readers to have a certain knowledge of her identity and what she represented in the cab driving world. Similarly, *Punch* expected their audience to make a link between both Mrs Prodgers and William Seymour to understand the humour in the cartoon. However, *Punch* also used the cartoon to mock William by likening him to Mrs Prodgers, who was a biological female and presented as a woman, perhaps implying that William should also have done the same.

Although William Seymour's biological identity was revealed due to his criminal behaviour, his arrest for theft was a secondary feature within the *Pall Mall Gazette* article. The newspaper not only focussed on William's success as a cabdriver, but also on the fact that he was biologically female. Furthermore, it raised the question of whether there should be more legal female cabdrivers around the city. The article concluded by stating:

Many of the differences that now arise between cabmen and their fair passengers, would, no doubt, be avoided if ladies knew that the driver on the box of the vehicle they engage with was a 'woman and sister' instead of simply being a 'man and a brother'.¹⁰²

By opening a dialogue and approaching questions on such a public platform, the journalist challenged social law and etiquette. These questions suggested that there was a need for women to feel safer when travelling alone in the city. Having the option of a female cabdriver may have enabled women to move more freely, even if their presence was threatening to the patriarchal system. Yet, in this conversation, William's gender presentation is dismissed completely and instead it is his sexed body that becomes of most importance.

Gender passing individuals lived openly in their communities as their true gendered selves irrespective of their biological expectation or predetermination. Through this, they

¹⁰¹ H. Tweed, 'The Cabmen's Nemesis', October 2018. Accessed on December 4, 2019 <http://www.cabbieblog.com/the-cabmans-nemesis-2/>; Lux, 'Mrs Giacometti Prodgers', published on July 23, 2015. Accessed December 4, 2019. <https://www.whaleoil.co.nz/tag/mrs-giacometti-prodgers/>

¹⁰² "Anonymous." *Pall Mall Gazette*, (London: England), February 16, 1875, 6.

engaged in meaningful relationships, built up a network of work colleagues, engaged in the wider community and navigated the transition from rural life to urban city dwelling.

The Public House

For the working classes, the public house was instrumental in their relaxation after a gruelling working day or week. Ian Pritchard has argued that the public house represented ‘cultural masculinity’ in that it was a space largely reserved for men.¹⁰³ He notes that ‘there was a relative air of working-class respectability connected with pub-based leisure’, particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁴ Men visited the public house and socialised as a way of taking time away from the difficulties of work and homelife. For Harry Stokes and James Allen, the public house not only represented leisure but also employment as they were both landlords. Yet, the public house was viewed critically by some commentators who saw it as wasting income. Individuals like John Coulter and Harry Stokes, for instance, were criticised by newspapers for their enjoyment of visiting the public house and in both cases, alcohol contributed to their demise.¹⁰⁵

The public house was a social space and the increased frequency of alcohol abuse and drunken behaviour recorded in police courts, satirical cartoons like *Punch* or in newspapers throughout the early nineteenth century encouraged the need for regulation and change.¹⁰⁶ Public house licenses were brought in to ‘maintain public order on the premises’ according to David Beckingham.¹⁰⁷ The government also introduced several different acts in the nineteenth century these included The Beer Act of 1830 and the Wine and Beerhouse Act of 1869. These acts were introduced in a bid to take control of the increasingly problematic relationship that some of the population had with alcohol. These laws aimed to reduce public drunkenness and disorderly behaviour by regulating the sale, production, and distribution of alcohol. If individuals were unable to practice teetotalism, as was the aim of The Temperance

¹⁰³ Ian Pritchard, ‘Beer and Britannia’: Public-House Culture and the Construction of Nineteenth Century British-Welsh Industrial Identity’, *Nations and Nationalism* 18, no. 2 (2012): 336.

¹⁰⁴ Pritchard, ‘Beer and Britannia,’ 336.

¹⁰⁵ ‘The Female Husband in Manchester.’ *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.; ‘A Female Husband,’ *York Herald*, (York: England), January 26, 1884.

¹⁰⁶ Gutzke, ‘Progressivism,’ 235-259; David Beckingham, ‘Gender, Space and Drunkenness: Liverpool’s Licensed Premises, 1860-1914,’ *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, (2012), 647-666.; Mike Huggins, ‘Exploring the backstage of Vice Respectability,’ *Journal of Victorian Culture* 22, no. 1 (2017), 81-88.

¹⁰⁷ Beckingham, ‘Gender, Space and Drunkenness,’ 648.

Movement, then choosing to drink beer rather than spirits was considered to have a better effect on an individual's physical and mental well-being.¹⁰⁸

Throughout the nineteenth century, the public house was seen as a free and performative space and yet a space that was predominantly reserved for men.¹⁰⁹ The public house enabled individuals to be themselves, and it was perhaps for this reason that some gender passing individuals became public house landlords.¹¹⁰ This type of employment may have been a draw for individuals in that they were responsible for themselves and did not need to prove their masculinity, not least because the public house was largely reserved for men's pleasure. Pritchard has viewed the public house as a convenient opportunity for 'relieving everyday stresses and hardships at a time when existence was arduous and life expectancy limited'.¹¹¹ Similarly, both Peter Bailey and Brian Harrison have reflected on the ease and function of obtaining alcohol in a public house.¹¹² Harrison considers this to be 'a convenient, generally acceptable, easily consumed article of symbolic exchange and so featured predominantly in the reaffirmation of social relationships'.¹¹³ Moreover, pub-based leisure offered a level of working-class male sociability and provided an outlet for the release of stress.¹¹⁴

The public house was central to working-class communities and for many it represented not only leisure time but also separation from home and work life.¹¹⁵ Clark has

¹⁰⁸ Erika Rappaport, "Sacred and Useful Pleasures: The Temperance Tea Party and the Creation of a Sober Consumer Culture in Early Industrial Britain," *Journal of British Studies*, (2013): 990-1016.; Lillian Lewis Shiman, "The Blue Ribbon Army: Gospel Temperance in England," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 50, no. 4 (1981): 391-408.; Pekka Sulkunen, and Katariina Warpenius, "Reforming the Self and other: The Temperance Movement and the Duality of Modern Subjectivity," *Critical Public Health*, (2010): 423-438.; Henry Yeomans, "What did the British Temperance Movement Accomplish? Attitudes to alcohol, the Law and Moral Regulation," *Sociology*, (2011), 38-53.

¹⁰⁹ Deborah Woodman, "Social Order and Disorder in Nineteenth Century Drinking Place: An Evaluation of Manchester and Salford," *The International Journal of Regional and Local Studies* 6, no. 1 (2010): 72-97.

¹¹⁰ "Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.; "A Female Husband In Manchester." *The Observer*, (Manchester: England), April 16, 1838, 1.; "Woman Passing as a Man for Forty Years." *Ashton Weekly Reporter*, (Stalybridge: England), October 22, 1859.; "Mary East, The Female Husband," *The Odd Fellow*, (London: England), May 2, 1840.; "A Female Husband." *The North Eastern Gazette*, (Middlesbrough: England), July 2, 1891.

¹¹¹ Pritchard, "Beer and Britannia," 329.

¹¹² Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian Britain 1830-1885*, (London: Routledge, 1978).; Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815-1872* (Keele: Keele University Press, 1994).

¹¹³ Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 25-26.

¹¹⁴ Pritchard, "Beer and Britannia," 336.

¹¹⁵ David W. Gutzke, "Progressivism and the History of the Public House, 1850-1950," *Cultural and Social History* 4, no. 2 (2007): 235-259; James Kneale, "'A Problem of Supervision': Moral Geographies of the Nineteenth-

explored the importance of the public house in relation to working class men in the nineteenth century, arguing that 'drinking bound workmen together'.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, Clark argues that 'for working men, not the street but the workplace and the pub defined their community'.¹¹⁷ The public house centred around a community and was not merely geographically important to sociability and leisure time.¹¹⁸ It is interesting, for example, that Harry Stokes began a relationship with his second partner, Betsy, after meeting her in a public house. Perhaps he sought out this relationship as a way of engaging in community life, something he may have lost after his separation from his first wife. Indeed, it was also in the public house that Harry went on to settle with his third partner, Frances Collins, who was also the landlady of her own establishment. It was quite possible that Harry frequented these public houses and rented his own as a means of belonging to a community.

The internal geography of a pub can be usefully compared to that of a theatre, with the bar representing the stage. This is similar to how the body has been discussed by Susan Clayton and Terence Turner, in that the body becomes a 'symbolic stage' through the concept of 'social skin' and presentation.¹¹⁹ In a similar way we can see the public house being likened to a 'symbolic stage' in how conversations flow and the physical act of conversing with customers and serving them demonstrates the sociability of the public house. Therefore, all public spaces have the potential to become a 'symbolic stage', to use Turner's words, that enabled gender passing individuals to be viewed by others in a familiar way.¹²⁰ In the public house there was a level of social etiquette that was acknowledged so that individuals performed respectfully and appropriately. The bar was a physical divide and a barrier that prohibited punters from coming too close to the landlord. For gender passing individuals, like Harry Stokes and James Allen who were landlords, the bar may have been used as a way of protecting themselves against individuals who challenged them and their identity.

Century British Public House," *Journal of Historical Geography*, (1999): 333-348; Pritchard, "Beer and Britannia," 326-345.

¹¹⁶ Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*, 29.

¹¹⁷ Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*, 27.

¹¹⁸ August, *The British Working-Class 1832-1940*, 22; Benson, *The Working-Class in Britain*, 93-138.

¹¹⁹ Susan Clayton, "Can Two and a Half Centuries of Female Husbands Inform (Trans)Gender History?," *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 14, no. 4 (2010): 288-302.; Terence S. Turner, "The Social Skin," reprinted in the *Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2, no. 2 (2012): 486.

¹²⁰ Turner, "The Social Skin," 486.

Public houses in the nineteenth century were spaces that allowed both the customers and those in charge to be themselves. However, the public house was also a space where people were comfortable to perform different identities to their usual ones. This may have included performing in a hypermasculine way and engaging in smoking, drinking excessively, or fighting, something which Charles Wilkins was comfortable with. Charles claimed that one of the reasons for his gender passing was because it allowed him to ‘travel without exciting attention’ and also visit places that were typically reserved for men, like the public house.¹²¹ Indeed, Jen Manion has argued that gender passing individuals, or to use her preferred term, ‘female husbands’, were ‘incredibly vulnerable to harassment, violence and punishment’.¹²² They risked detection every day simply by being active and consistent in their gender presentation, particularly when drinking in their local public house. Nonetheless, Charles enjoyed the frivolity and the atmosphere of the public house with the *Glasgow Herald* commenting that ‘her conduct favoured the deception, for she could smoke, drink, tell her story and sing her song with any of the workmen, who looked upon her as a capital boon companion’.¹²³ Charles’s ability to fit into the public house environment allowed him to keep his identity concealed for over a decade.

In three instances of gender passing cases that feature in this sample, James Allen, Harry Stokes, and James Howe all became public house landlords during their lives. James Howe was a rare case because although he died sometime in the middle of the eighteenth century, he reappeared twice in the nineteenth century press, firstly in 1840 and secondly in 1869.¹²⁴ It is for this reason as well as his career as a public house landlord that he has been included in this discussion. James Howe and his wife were landlords at several different establishments including a road-side public house in Epping, *The Lime House Hole* in Essex and *The White Horse* in Poplar.¹²⁵ *The Odd Fellow*, which published an article on the couple in 1840, remarked on their commitment to their community and ability to manage their pubs between themselves, writing that ‘during the whole period of the two females cohabiting as

¹²¹ “Marriage Extraordinary.” *Glasgow Herald*, (Glasgow: Scotland), August 21, 1846.

¹²² Jen Manion, *Female Husbands: A Trans History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 1.

¹²³ “Marriage Extraordinary.” *Glasgow Herald*, (Glasgow: Scotland), August 21, 1846.

¹²⁴ “A Female Husband.” *North Eastern Gazette*, (Middlesbrough: England), July 2, 1891.

¹²⁵ “Mary East, The Female Husband.” *The Odd Fellow*, (London: England), May 2, 1840.; “A Female Husband.” *The North Eastern Gazette*, (Middlesbrough: England), July 2, 1891.; “The White Horse.” Pub History, accessed September 26, 2018, <https://pubshistory.com/LondonPubs/Poplar/WhiteHorse.shtml>

man and wife, which was thirty-four years, they lived in good credit and esteem, having traded for many thousands of pounds and been always punctual in their payment'.¹²⁶ The press recognised the couple's ability to complete the work expected of a public house landlord and did so in a professional manner. *The Odd Fellow* continued, 'They never kept either maid or boy; but Mary East, the late James Howe, always used to draw the beer, serve and fetch in and carry out pots herself'.¹²⁷ Perhaps the decision to not have staff enabled the couple's relationship to remain private. Indeed, they concealed their same-sex relationship by only relying on each other for support. The example of James Howe highlights the ongoing interest from the nineteenth-century press in historic gender passing cases, as well as contemporary ones.

The focus on saving money and being a 'representative artisan', to use Thomas Wright's words, was also highlighted in the case of James Allen.¹²⁸ After James was physically attacked by his work colleagues, he and Abigail relocated to Baldock in Hertfordshire and became public house landlords at *The Sun Inn*, now called *The Victoria*. During the first twelve months, the couple established themselves as effective landlords. Their success was evident in the disclosed savings that the couple had. In eighteen months, the *Plymouth and Cornish Advertiser* revealed that the couple had saved between sixty and seventy pounds, which is the equivalent of just over £4,000 in today's money.¹²⁹ Although James earned an average of eight pounds a month in his position as a shipwright, the fact that he was able to save around seventy pounds as well as maintaining his home and paying rent suggested that the couple had a lucrative business at *The Sun Inn*.¹³⁰ Naively, they left this small fortune in a bedside table whilst they were away from their home and it was stolen.¹³¹ The couple were left with

¹²⁶ "Mary East, The Female Husband." *The Odd Fellow*, (London: England), May 2, 1840.

¹²⁷ "Mary East, The Female Husband." *The Odd Fellow*, (London: England), May 2, 1840.; "A Female Husband." *North Eastern Gazette*, (Middlesbrough: England), July 2, 1891.; Donoghue, *Passions Between Women*, 70-82.

¹²⁸ McClelland, "Masculinity and the 'Representative Artisan'," 74.; Wright, "The Journeyman Engineer," 2.

¹²⁹ This value has been calculated by using the National Archives Currency Converter by inputting £70 for 1820 as it is unclear when Abigail and James were landlords to the public house. Currency Converter, *National Archives*, accessed September 29, 2018, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result>

¹³⁰ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 19.

¹³¹ "Most Singular Affair – A Female Husband." *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post or Plymouth and Cornish Advertiser*, (Exeter: London), January 22, 1829.; Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 22.

no choice but to return to Rotherhithe where James began working once again for Mr Trotter's ship building company.¹³²

Although James was successful as a public house landlord for only a short time Harry Stokes became a beer retailer for the nearly thirty years, after his separation from Ann Hants. The level of consistency and confidence in gender passing that Harry demonstrated during his lifetime may have helped him to remain living in his local community in Manchester for the entirety of his adult life. Harry Stokes's involvement in the public house industry, on the other hand, came after meeting a new partner named Frances Collins. It was thought that Harry was a regular customer in Frances's first establishment after his exposure in 1838. The couple then licensed several other public houses in Manchester including the *Pilgrim's Rest*, one on Corporation Street and another on Quay Street, all of which are no longer there.¹³³ According to Neil Richardson, *The Sun* and *The Friendship Inn* were the two public houses registered on Quay Street.¹³⁴ Both of these public houses were considered a solid source of income, according to Richardson, and it is likely that one of these establishments was linked to Harry and Frances. Due to the public nature of Harry's biological identity being revealed in 1838, it is highly likely that his local community knew about his identity. Regardless of this, he remained living in the Spinningfields area after his exposure.¹³⁵

Not all working-class people had a good relationship with alcohol. Beckingham has explored these relationships particularly in relation to working-class women. He highlights that 'concerns about drinking were thus, not simply about public vices but also reflected concerns such as failing motherhood, which threatened the private sphere'.¹³⁶ Therefore, the introduction of 'effective licensing of drinking places' became necessary as a means of 'controlling and shaping behaviour as much as regulating the sale and consumption of

¹³² Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 23.

¹³³ "Curious Case of Prolonged Concealment of Sex." *Birmingham Daily Post*, (Birmingham: England), October 20, 1859.; "Woman Passing as a Man for Forty Years." *Ashton Weekly Reporter*, (Stalybridge: England), October 22, 1859.; "'Harry' Stokes, The Man-Woman," *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859. Having visited the areas where these public houses were expected to be in Manchester, the sites are no longer those of public houses. For instance, the site of the public house on Corporation Street is now part of the *Marks and Spencers* complex.

¹³⁴ Neil Richardson, *Salford Pubs: Part One: The Old Town, including Chapel Street, Greengate and the Adelphi* (Manchester: Neil Richardson, 1974), 42.

¹³⁵ "Woman Passing as a Man for Forty Years." *Ashton Weekly Reporter*, (Stalybridge: England), October 22, 1859.; "'Harry' Stokes, The Man-Woman." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

¹³⁶ Beckingham, "Gender, Space and Drunkenness," 649.

alcohol’.¹³⁷ Ann Hants, who exposed Harry Stokes’s biological identity, claimed that he ‘treated her as she considered in an unkind manner’ particularly after consuming alcohol.¹³⁸ The author of an 1838 article in *The Morning Chronicle* painted Harry as someone who could not control himself, writing:

The wife replied, that this [the lack of housekeeping] was not the only cause she had of complaint against her spouse: for that she [the husband] was occasionally intoxicated, and that when in this state, the husband treated her very ill.¹³⁹

Harry’s problem with alcohol was confirmed again in the *Liverpool Mercury* after his death in 1859.¹⁴⁰

Harry’s ill temper and intoxication was not only mentioned by his first wife, Ann. Harry also spent time at The New Bailey for attacking his second partner known as ‘Betsy’ as discussed earlier in the chapter.¹⁴¹ It is possible that due to gender passing individuals committing themselves to their masculinity in such a consistent and obliging way they also embodied negative masculine traits, that being domestic abuse. Indeed, it is possible that gender passing individuals were so comfortable as men that they also took on the authority that came with it. Which, for some, sadly seemed to be a reason for abusing their dependents. Joanne Begiato has highlighted that the causes of domestic abuse are more complex than unequivocal power, instead, ‘The hierarchical system of patriarchy contained the potential for men to abuse their power and sought to provide a means to prevent this’.¹⁴² For Harry, there were contributing factors such as alcohol that seemed to add to his overall aggression. It is no surprise then that Harry also died whilst intoxicated following a fall into the River Irwell after he had been out drinking. Perhaps it was an accidental slip on his way home or suicide as was confirmed on his death certificate. Either way, Harry had a difficult relationship with alcohol which might have intensified during his employment as a public house landlord.

¹³⁷ Beckingham, “Gender, Space and Drunkenness,” 648.

¹³⁸ “The Female Husband in Manchester.” *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ ““Harry” Stokes, The Man-Woman.” *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool; England), October 24, 1859.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Joanne Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown, 1660-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

In a similar case, the *York Herald* ran a brief article about John Coulter in January 1884. John worked as a labourer and lived in Belfast for most of his life. He had been married to his wife for around twenty years but ‘they had been separated for the past six years on account of the drinking habits of the deceased’, according to the *York Herald*.¹⁴³ Evidently John had struggled with alcoholism which resulted in the breakdown of his marriage and contributed to his death after ‘falling downstairs on Sunday last while in a state of intoxication’.¹⁴⁴ Gender passing individuals dealt with lots of expectations during their lives from being a breadwinner and stable provider, to performing in a recognisably masculine way and concealing their biological bodies. Although we cannot presume, we can speculate that the enormity of their performance would have put immense pressure on their mental health. Perhaps alcoholism was an easy escape for some individuals. Similarly, alcohol was a way to perform in a hypermasculine manner which, ultimately, had the potential to go wrong and cause serious harm to the individual or others.

The public house was a constant in most working-class communities in the nineteenth century. Yet, it also led to the downfall of many, not least Harry Stokes and John Coulter. For those individuals, like Harry and James Allen, who worked in a public house, their performativity of an appropriate gender was a constant. This would have put pressure on them to be recognisably male and perform in a way that was socially acceptable to protect their identities. There was a multiplicity to the public house in that although it was a space to socialise and relax, it was also a space to perform in a hypermasculine way and an opportunity to be loud and leary. Furthermore, the public house acted as a domestic space for the landlord and their family as they inhabited the space for work, pleasure and living. With this came the potential for domestic abuse in both the work and the home by the husband as we saw with the case of Harry Stokes.¹⁴⁵ The public house could offer solace and shelter, but only for the men who were prepared to fit in.

¹⁴³ “A Female Husband.” *York Herald*, (York: England), January 26, 1884.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Robert Shoemaker, “Male Honour and the Decline of Public Violence in Eighteenth-Century London,” *Social History* 26, no. 2 (2001): 190-208.

Public Interest

Newspapers introduced readers to gender passing individuals and their stories. It was through these stories that many gender passing individuals were acknowledged and recognised for their ability to identify as men, workers, husbands and sometimes as fathers. Newspaper reports frequently included references to other figures in contemporary popular culture including William Shakespeare and an early French gender passing individual by the name of Chevalier d'Eon. Yet, newspapers were not the only way that gender passing cases penetrated the public consciousness. This section discusses street ballads and popular culture references that were hidden within gender passing cases, focussing on their significance and importance.

Poetry and Street Ballads

The street ballad or broadsheet ballad was printed cheaply on one side of inexpensive paper. They were usually pasted on walls in local communities for the public to enjoy.¹⁴⁶ Street literature encapsulated one moment, one event or one individual and offered a story that was explored not simply through reading but through performance as well. Sometimes these street ballads were performed in music halls or in public houses. As the nineteenth century progressed, technological advances such as the printing press allowed ballads to be published quickly and more frequently. David Fowler has argued that this made ballads available to a wider audience and their cheap price allowed more people to engage with them.¹⁴⁷

Ballads brought people together, commemorated events and they were also entertaining.¹⁴⁸ Both Alison Oram and Annmarie Turnbull have argued that street ballads 'were used to report gossip about news, current affairs, politics, royal scandals, crimes and murders as well as human interest stories'.¹⁴⁹ Ellen O'Brien has reflected on the nature of

¹⁴⁶ Leslie Shepard, *The Broadside Ballad: A Study in Origins and Meaning* (London: H Jenkins Publishers 1962).; Leslie Shepard, *The History of Street Literature* (London: David and Charles, 1973).

¹⁴⁷ David Fowler, *A Literary History of the Popular Ballad* (Durham: Durham University Press, 1986), 7.

¹⁴⁸ Gerald Newman ed. *Britain in the Hanoverian Age, 1714-1837: An Encyclopaedia* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1997), 39-40.

¹⁴⁹ Alison Oram and Annmarie Turnbull, ed., *The Lesbian History Sourcebook: Love and Sex between women in Britain from 1780-1970* (London: Routledge, 2001), 11.

ballads commenting that ‘their simplistic rhymes and rhythms, to which syntax is often sacrificed, have been interpreted as symptoms of ideological and intellectual simplicity’.¹⁵⁰ Yet, the simplistic nature of ballads were purposeful as this allowed more people to understand them. They provided a means of escapism, even if it was at the expense of the people or the person being depicted. Florence Boos has concluded that such poetic works have ‘expressed a historically evolving industrial class consciousness’.¹⁵¹ Ballads were a representation of working-class culture and they were a way of putting news stories into a digestible and entertaining form, thereby allowing stories to reach the masses.

Although street ballads were written as a way of entertaining audiences, they can also be read as pieces of poetry. In his work, Jason Rudy has made links between the Victorian ballad and poetry, with a particular focus on Spasmodic Poetry.¹⁵² Rudy has argued that ‘if poetry mirrors the world in which it is composed, then spasmodic verse provides a suggestive picture indeed of England’.¹⁵³ Spasmodic poetry typically included the theme of humour and/or derogatory intentions.¹⁵⁴ As an extension of this, street ballads aimed to evoke a feeling of comedy and fun for the audience. Gender passing individuals were ‘presented as shocking and controversial figures’ in some nineteenth century British newspapers.¹⁵⁵ As street ballads tended to focus on controversy and entertainment, it is unsurprising that the topic of gender passing appeared in them. Indeed, gender passing individuals would have been viewed as entertaining content for a street ballad, as they were amusing and linked with the popular newspaper articles being published at that time.

One of the first ballad’s called ‘The Female Husband’ was about James Allen and was published around 1838 according to Oram and Turnbull, a publishing date which coincided with the initial biological exposure of Harry Stokes.¹⁵⁶ Due to the explicit links to James Allen’s biography, however, it is more likely to have been published nearer to his death in 1829. The

¹⁵⁰ Ellen O’Brien, “Every Man Who Is Hanged Leaves a Poem”: Criminal Poets in Victorian Street Ballads,” *Victorian Poetry* 39, no. 2 (2001): 320.

¹⁵¹ Florence Boos, “The Poetics of the Working Classes,” *Victorian Poetry* 39, no. 2, (2001): 103.; Florence Boos, “Class and Victorian Poetry,” *Literature Compass*, (2002): 1-20.

¹⁵² Jason R. Rudy, “On Cultural Neoformalism, Spasmodic Poetry and the Victorian Ballad,” *Victorian Poetry* 41, no. 4 (2003): 590-596.

¹⁵³ Rudy, “On Cultural Neoformalism,” 591.

¹⁵⁴ John William, *William Edmonstoun Aystoun: A Short Biographical Dictionary of English Literature*, (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1910).; Rudy, “On Cultural Neoformalism,” 590-596.

¹⁵⁵ Manion. *Female Husbands*, 1.

¹⁵⁶ Oram and Turnbull, “The Female Husband,” 21-23.

time of publication is interesting because it shows the popularity of James's narrative and the lengths that the author went to produce a street ballad relating specifically to his life. Alternatively, if the ballad was written around 1838, according to Oram and Turnbull's estimation, it demonstrates that James's story was still piquing the interest of the public some nine years after his death. This may have been why James's story was referred to in coverage of Harry Stokes's exposure in 1838. The second ballad, 'The Female Husband, who had been married to another female for twenty-one years' made just one link to James Allen in relation to his employment as a shipwright. Instead it focussed on the importance of having an intimate relationship with one's partner to fulfil societal expectations of marriage and produce a family.

The ballad, 'The Female Husband', follows a traditional form of alternative iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter which gives it pace and flow. The opening of the ballad argued that it was 'a bit of fun', and not to be taken too seriously.¹⁵⁷

If you want to hear a bit of fun,
Oh listen unto me,
About a female husband,
The life you never see,
Such a singular thing you never knew,
No not in all your life,
As two females to be wed,
And live as man and wife.¹⁵⁸

This jest confirms to the audience that the ballad was produced for entertainment. Evidently there was some confusion in labelling the subjects of the ballad, as initially they were described as two females, then as a female husband and later as man and wife. This recognises the significance of explicit labelling in the nineteenth century and reflects upon how labels gave individuals more legitimacy in their communities.

This mocking tone was also evident in the second ballad, 'The Female Husband, who had been married to another female for twenty-one years'. In this ballad, the character of 'I' was the wife of the female husband in the title. Furthermore, the content of the ballad suggests that it was about the lives of James and Abigail Allen, implying that the character of 'I' in the ballad was indeed Abigail.

¹⁵⁷ Oram and Turnbull, "The Female Husband," 21-23.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

Why, Mother Chatter, I do not believe half of what is said about it – Pho, pho, do you think I would have been in bed with my husband twenty-one minutes without knowing what he was made of, much more twenty-one years, for I should never have patience to wait so long.¹⁵⁹

Here the character responding to Mother Chatter is clear about her sexual relationship with her husband. It suggested that she would have encouraged sex between herself and her husband if he had not instigated it himself.

An overwhelming theme throughout both street ballads was that of giving women the power to confirm their partner's biological identity largely through sex. This 'Taste and try before you buy' attitude was evident in the concluding stanzas of both ballads.¹⁶⁰ 'The Female Husband' read,

So young women all a warning take,
And mark what I do say,
Before you wed, your husband's try
Or else you'll rue the day.¹⁶¹

In this instance, the narrator advocates pre-marital sex to confirm the biological identity of the husband. As we have already seen in *Chapter Three: Queer Intimacies*, pre-marital relationships were quietly acknowledged in working-class communities providing that the couple eventually married. Although it is necessary to acknowledge that these ballads were for entertainment purposes and were used to mock, provoke, and explore both gender and sex. Indeed, it was being consistent and conforming to gender norms that seemingly allowed gender passing individuals to socially fit in. It was essential that they maintained this level of confidence in all aspects of their lives.

This discussion of the lack of sexual intimacy between Abigail and James was a constant theme in the pamphlet about their marriage. Both ballads and the pamphlet referred to the lack of marital consummation on the couple's wedding night due to an illness James had. 'The Female Husband' stated:

The parties they were shown to bed,
The bride sir, thought of that,

¹⁵⁹ Charles Hindley, "The Female Husband, who had been married to another female for twenty-one years," in *Curiosities of Street Literature* (London: Seven Dials, 2012), 119.

¹⁶⁰ Hindley, "The Female Husband, who had been married to another female for twenty-one years," 119.

¹⁶¹ Oram and Turnbull, "The Female Husband," 21-23.

But the bridegroom was taken ill,
Made everything look flat,
From his bride he turn'd and twisted,
Then she to herself did say,
My husband is a hermaphrodite,
A wager, I would lay.¹⁶²

Similarly, in 'The Female Husband, who had been married to another female for twenty-one years', the author states,

With this pretty handsome groom, sir,
She went and spent the honey-moon, sir,
The very first night my love should cuddle,
Up in the clothes he close did huddle;
And with his face against the wall, sir,
He never spoke a word at all, sir,
A maid to bed I then did go, sir,
And a maiden am now, heigho! Heigho! Sir.¹⁶³

Both stanzas explored how Abigail had wanted to consummate the marriage. This has links with the early modern period where women were seen to be sexually voracious with Begiato arguing that, 'women's bodies were thought to see the characteristics of men's, predisposing them to desire sexual activity with men'.¹⁶⁴ Nonetheless, this lack of consummation ultimately resulted in Abigail being married but remaining a virgin.

The inclusion of the phrase, 'Made everything look flat' in 'The Female Husband' likely referred to James's inability to have an erection and was therefore unable to consummate the couple's marriage. This was also included for comedic benefit because impotency amongst men was emasculating in the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, in these ballads, women were encouraged to confirm who they were marrying through a physical examination of their husband's genitalia. 'The Female Husband, who had been married to another female for twenty-one years' concluded with,

Pretty maidens list I pray, sir,
Unto what I now do say, sir,
Taste and try before you buy, sir,
Or you'll get bit as well as I, sir;
See he's perfect in all parts, sir,
Before you join your hand and heart, sir,

¹⁶² Oram and Turnbull, "The Female Husband," 21-23.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Bailey, *Unquiet Lives*, 111.

¹⁶⁵ Donoghue, "Female Husbands," 87.; Fern Riddell, *The Victorian Guide to Sex: Desire and Deviance in the 19th Century* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2014).; Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 196-197.

You then with all your strength may try, sir,
To be fruitful, increase, and multiply, sir'.¹⁶⁶

By advocating this attitude, women could be confident in their choice of husband and in their commitment. This empowered women to take control of their future and choose for themselves who they wanted to marry. Yet, it is necessary to highlight the dual aspects of these ballads in that although they can be read as empowering women, they can also be used to describe failing men and consequently sexually voracious (though disappointed) wives.

Mary Newell: Arrest and Demise

Street ballads were typically viewed as an urban tradition that commemorated events. Although they were popular in rural areas, it was in the urban areas where they flourished. Peter Gammon has recognised that broadside ballads were 'written by the journalistic hacks of the day to cover such news as a robbery or hanging, to memorialise, or simply to offer entertainment'.¹⁶⁷ The aim of ballads was for the audience to be shocked. They offered drama and, above all, entertainment. Mary Newell's case was not short of entertainment value and included gender passing, theft, framing, escape, and criminal conviction. Nonetheless, the significance of this case lay in the temporality of Mary's gender passing. Newspaper reports implied that Mary identified as male simply to abscond from the police following a staged theft from their place of work.¹⁶⁸

Mary was named in newspaper headlines as 'The Female Thief in Masquerade', with the *Reading Mercury* reporting on 'An apparently smart-looking youth, wearing a large woollen plaid wrapper, who turned out to be a young female masquerading in men's clothes, [who] was charged at the Westminster Police Court'.¹⁶⁹ The use of the word 'masquerading' has been discussed as a key feature of twentieth-century newspaper reports on gender passing cases.¹⁷⁰ The use of the term 'masquerading', according to Oram, suggested that

¹⁶⁶ Oram and Turnbull, "The Female Husband," 21-23.

¹⁶⁷ Peter Gammon, *The Oxford Companion to Popular Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 82-83.

¹⁶⁸ "A Female Thief in Masquerade." *Reading Mercury, Oxford Gazetteer, Newbury Herald and Berk's County Paper* etc., (Reading: England), November 16, 1861.; "A Female Thief in Masquerade." *The Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, (Salisbury: England), November 16, 1861.; "A Female Thief in Masquerade." *Berkshire Chronicle*, (Berkshire: England), November 23, 1861.

¹⁶⁹ "A Female Thief in Masquerade." *Reading Mercury, Oxford Gazetteer, Newbury Herald and Berk's County Paper* etc., (Reading: England), November 16, 1861.

¹⁷⁰ Alison Oram, *Her Husband was a Woman! Women's gender-crossing in modern British popular culture* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 40-45.

gender passing individuals consciously concealed their identity to pursue relationships, acquire masculine employment and obtain men's wages.¹⁷¹ Although Oram's work has focussed on twentieth-century newspapers, there are similarities within this case and those discussed by Oram as Mary masqueraded knowingly to avoid being arrested by the police.

A street ballad that commemorated Mary's theft focussed on their calculated approach and how they had engineered the crime scene, writing:

While her master was from home;
She turned the house near inside out,
Indeed I am no joker,
She cut the hair off her head,
And stuck it on the poker

She got a lot of bullock's blood,
And mixed up in a pail, Sir,
So to think I am murdered, now
Master will not fail, Sir;
She smashed the poker right in two,
That no one should doubt it,
With a bit of glue, now this is true,
She stuck the hair about it.¹⁷²

The ballad highlighted Mary's plan to stage the burglary and hinted at some struggle that allowed them to escape the home with the stolen goods. This gruesome retelling of the crime would have undoubtedly attracted a lot of readership. Street ballads included these stories to entice and entertain their audience. Similarly, it was a more digestible way for the public to learn about crimes in their area rather than reading a full article.

Newspapers also published articles about Mary and the press commented on their colourful history of stealing from previous employers. The street ballad was not published until 1871 despite it commemorating the crime that she had committed in 1860, again highlighting the longevity and public interest in gender passing cases.¹⁷³ The *Berkshire Chronicle* revealed the extent of Mary's previous criminal life and highlighted their involvement in stealing a purse and brooch from Colonel Wynyard of 22 Chester Street, Belgrave Square and Lady Gipps of 11 Chester Street following the theft of 'a very valuable

¹⁷¹ Alison Oram, *Her Husband was a Woman! Women's gender-crossing in modern British popular culture* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 40-45.

¹⁷² Hindley, "'Mary Newell, The Artful Girl of Pimlico,'" 140.; Oram and Turnbull, "Mary Newell, The Artful Girl of Pimlico," 29-31.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

diamond pin and amethyst ring'.¹⁷⁴ Interestingly, Mary stayed local as a domestic servant, moving just ten doors away which suggested that they must have received a good reference when they left their post for them to remain working on the same street. Perhaps there was not a close community amongst the residents of Chester Street or, more likely, the other thefts were not linked to Mary initially.¹⁷⁵

Newspaper reports noted that Mary's crimes depicted them as a calculated thief which may have suggested why other thefts from previous employers were attributed to them. The *Berkshire Chronicle* wrote a tale of particularly gruesome and violent proportions, commenting on the visible traces of blood that were strewn throughout the house in the staged robbery. The newspaper articles commented:

Mr Barker... entered the house by the back window, which was found open. A most extraordinary scene presented itself. In the passage stood a pail, containing red fluid, which was supposed to be blood. Near it lay two parts of a poker, which had been broken in two, and to which adhered blood and hair.¹⁷⁶

After they absconded with the stolen goods, Mary Newell was traced to Great Yarmouth, where they identified themselves as Mr Heath, who was a fellow worker that they had stolen from during their thieving spree in Mr Barker's residence. It was simply through performing the gendered characteristics of a man and dressing in Mr Heath's clothing that Mary was accepted as male. In Great Yarmouth Mary rented rooms and quickly began a relationship with the landlady of the property, perhaps fulfilling the social expectation of being a respectable partner. The *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* commented that 'having dressed himself in a suit of clothes, the gentleman's clothes who he presented, he took his landlady to the theatre and, on a Sunday, to Church'.¹⁷⁷ The swiftness of this relationship may have been used as a way for Mary to mask themselves from any local police suspicion and allowed them to remain undetected.

¹⁷⁴ "A Female Thief in Masquerade." *Berkshire Chronicle*, (Berkshire: England), November 23, 1861.

¹⁷⁵ Belgrave Square today remains one of the largest examples of nineteenth-century civic squares and it houses residents for ambassadors across the world, 11 Belgrave Square is the Embassy of Portugal and 22 Belgrave Square is the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany.

¹⁷⁶ "A Female Thief in Masquerade." *Berkshire Chronicle*, (Berkshire: England), November 23, 1861.

¹⁷⁷ "A Female Thief in Masquerade." *The Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, (Salisbury: England), November 16, 1861.

County of <i>Middlesex</i>			231			
Returns of all Persons Committed, or Bailed to appear for Trial, or Indicted at the <i>High Court General Session</i> held at <i>Old Bailey</i> on the <i>16th</i> day of <i>December</i> 18 <i>61</i> , shewing the nature of their Offences, and the result of the Proceedings						
No.	NAMES	Offence of which these trials were convicted or acquitted, and of which these discharges without trial were charged on Indictment or Conviction	Convicted and Sentenced			
			Death	Fine or Service	Imprisonment; (state if also Whipped or Fined)	Whipped, Fined, or Discharged on Bail
1	<i>John Seary</i>	<i>Simple Larceny</i>			<i>1 Month</i>	
2	<i>Thomas Barman</i>	<i>Attempt to break and enter Dwelling house</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
3	<i>Francesca Bianchi</i>	<i>Larceny by Servant in Dwelling house and Receiving</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
4	<i>Henry Moore</i>	<i>Embezzlement</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
5	<i>Samuel Connor</i>	<i>Larceny after previous conviction</i>			<i>2 years</i>	
6	<i>Edward Garrett</i>	<i>Embezzlement</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
7	<i>John Walton</i>	<i>Larceny from person</i>			<i>2 years</i>	
8	<i>Joseph Hyde</i>	<i>Larceny and Receiving</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
9	<i>George Oakley</i>	<i>Larceny and Receiving 2 convictions</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	<i>upon each conviction the sentence to run concurrently</i>
10	<i>George Harris</i>	<i>Larceny from person</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
11	<i>William Blackham</i>	<i>False pretences</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
12	<i>William Handcock</i>	<i>False pretences</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
13	<i>James Hawry</i>	<i>Attempt to prevent arrest grievous bodily harm &c.</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
14	<i>Richard Smith</i>	<i>Larceny by Servant Receiving</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
15	<i>Emma Grose</i>	<i>Larceny Receiving</i>			<i>3 Months</i>	
16	<i>Mary Ann Woods</i>	<i>Larceny in Dwelling house Receiving in Dwelling house</i>			<i>3 Months</i>	<i>in a Reformatory</i>
17	<i>Mary Newell</i>	<i>Larceny by Servant Receiving</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
18	<i>Elizabeth Schindler</i>	<i>Larceny from person after 2 previous convictions</i>			<i>2 years</i>	
19	<i>Rebecca Halley</i>	<i>Larceny and Receiving after previous conviction</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
20	<i>Caroline Little</i>	<i>Larceny in Dwelling house Receiving after previous conviction</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
21	<i>Thomas Bond</i>	<i>Selling indecent songs</i>			<i>3 Months</i>	
22	<i>George Hopp</i>	<i>Larceny and Receiving</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
23	<i>William Humphrey</i>	<i>Larceny Receiving necessary after fact</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
24	<i>Peter Bruce</i>	<i>False pretences</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
25	<i>George Wade</i>	<i>False pretences</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
26	<i>Walter M. Donald</i>	<i>Larceny from person after previous conviction</i>			<i>2 years</i>	
27	<i>Margaret Humphreys</i>	<i>Larceny and Receiving</i>				<i>Acquitted</i>
28	<i>Mary Ann Welch</i>	<i>Simple Larceny</i>			<i>3 Months</i>	
29	<i>Charles Silbury</i>	<i>Embezzlement and Larceny by Servant in Dwelling house</i>			<i>3 Months</i>	<i>upon each conviction the sentence to run concurrently</i>
30	<i>John Warner</i>	<i>Larceny by Servant Receiving</i>			<i>12 Months</i>	
21-9						
Home Office Return.			It is requested that where more than one Sheet is used, each may bear a separate Heading, as the Returns are bound up as Records.			

Figure 15 Mary Newell being sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment for larceny, taken from the Westminster Police Court, 1861 Class: HO 27; Piece: 129; Page: 231. Permission to reproduce this court record has been granted by The National Archives.

It was with the help of the community that Mary Newell was located. Newspaper reports recalled how members of the public had noticed that Mary left the home with luggage before making their way to the train station.¹⁷⁸ The police named Michael John Sheen as the detective officer and he was deployed to Great Yarmouth to arrest Mary. Mary was brought to Westminster Police Court, with the trial notes that can be seen in figure 15 and was imprisoned for eighteen months for 'larceny by a servant in the dwelling house'.¹⁷⁹

She was placed in the dock in the attire in which she had been captured – another suit of Mr Heath's – wearing one of his shirts and wellington boots. She had cut her hair short, the more closely to resemble a man. She buried her face in her hands and endeavoured to hide herself from the gaze of those present.¹⁸⁰

Like other gender passing individuals who appeared in court, such as William Seymour and Thomas Green, it was Mary's outward appearance and clothing that identified them as male. Newspaper reports later commented that Mary was given a suit of their own female clothing for the remainder of the trial, which concluded with Mary being found guilty and sent to prison. O'Brien has argued that many convicted murderers chose to leave a ballad behind as an ode to their legacy or notoriety.¹⁸¹ Although not written by themselves the street ballads that were published about gender passing individuals offered a longevity to their narrative and a means of acknowledging their gender identity publicly.

Street ballads offered a medium to the working classes to explore the lives of gender passing individuals. The authors of the ballads and journalists of the newspaper articles used gender passing stories to sell papers and prints. By publishing cases relating to other gender passing individuals, such as James Allen appearing in Harry Stokes's articles, there was a longevity to the cases that allowed conversations to develop around the concept of gender passing. We can see the longevity of gender passing cases through these ballads. Mary Newell, for instance, clearly had a plan to abscond and take a colleague's clothes to conceal their bodies, pass as male and escape from the area largely undetected. Describing how Mary

¹⁷⁸ "A Female Thief in Masquerade." *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, (Salisbury: England), November 16, 1861.

¹⁷⁹ Mary Newell, charged with Larceny and sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment taken from the Westminster Police Court, November 1861. Class: HO 27; Piece: 129; Page: 231, Accessed on Ancestry.com.

¹⁸⁰ "A Female Thief in Masquerade." *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, (Salisbury: England), November 16, 1861.

¹⁸¹ O'Brien, "Every Man Who Is Hanged Leaves a Poem", 319-342.

successfully passed as a man through their physical appearance and relationship with their landlady the modern reader can only imagine the difficulty that they faced everyday trying to be consistent in their masculine performance every day and be confident in their gender as well as being able to conceal their biological body.

Shakespeare and the Victorians

William Shakespeare has become a symbol of quintessential Britishness.¹⁸² The link between Shakespearean characters and gender passing individuals was an obvious choice for journalists to comment upon because they became culturally knowable scripts for the public. Gail Marshall has recognised how Shakespeare was a part of nineteenth century British culture. He was championed in schools following The Education Act of 1870, and his work was used in all-level theatrical productions including amateur dramatics and major level productions as well as being published in newspaper articles and reviews.¹⁸³ Kathryn Prince has argued that Shakespeare was viewed as a ‘working-class hero, icon of English masculinity, arbiter of anachronistically Victorian morality and many other things’.¹⁸⁴ Perhaps by including these Shakespearean links, journalists wanted to show gender passing individuals as working-class heroes and people to be admired in their local communities.

Shakespeare included a lot of gender passing in his own work, from the men playing female characters and plots in plays such as *As You Like It*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Twelfth Night* for example. It is possible that newspapers and street literature included these Shakespearean quotations to lead their reader’s back to the essence of Shakespeare and how he blurred gender binary roles in his own work. The earliest use of a Shakespearean quotation appeared in James Allen’s pamphlet that was published after his death and appeared on the contents page that can be seen in figure 16.¹⁸⁵ The quotation was taken from *Hamlet* and read,

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,

¹⁸² Gail Marshall, ed. *Shakespeare in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹⁸³ Marshall, ed. *Shakespeare*, 5.

¹⁸⁴ Kathryn Prince, *Shakespeare in the Victorian Periodicals* (London; Routledge, 2008).; Kathryn Prince, “Shakespeare in the Periodicals” in *Shakespeare in the Nineteenth Century* edited by Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 60.

¹⁸⁵ Anonymous. *An Authentic Narrative*, 1-40.

Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.¹⁸⁶

In this exchange between Hamlet and Horatio, Hamlet was speaking to his father's ghost in a private moment when Horatio interrupted the conversation. Horatio, being an educated man, had difficulty in accepting the possibility of Hamlet seeking comfort from a ghost. In this conversation, Hamlet encouraged Horatio to be more open minded to the possibility and to not be restricted by his own beliefs. The inclusion of this quote implies James's community struggled to accept him. This quote was well-used in the nineteenth century and acknowledged that there were things outside the norm, evidently this included gender passing individuals.

¹⁸⁶ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet: The Oxford Shakespeare*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), Act I, Scene V, Lines 167-168.

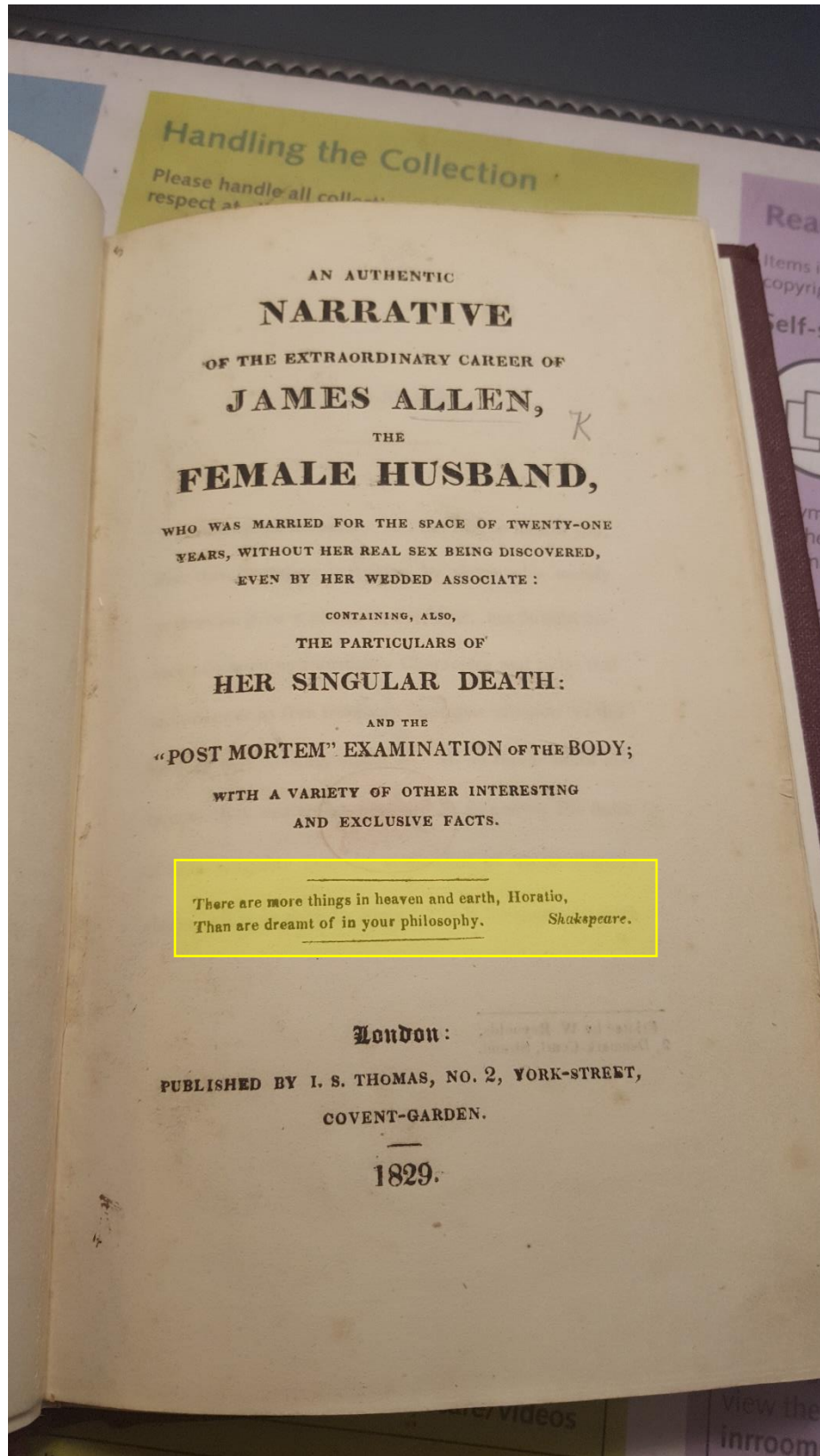


Figure 16 Copy of the front page of the pamphlet that was written for James Allen after his death. Image taken by me accessed in The British Library, March 2017, General Reference Collection, 1202.c.5. Permission to reproduce this pamphlet has been granted by The British Library.

There is a different discussion and use of Shakespeare within Charles Wilkins's case. Charles first appeared in newspapers in 1846 following a return to his biological identity.¹⁸⁷ It was reported that Charles had become a 'shrew' after several months of marriage.¹⁸⁸ Initially Charles was an exemplary husband yet his ability to be present and show love for his wife changed. The *Liverpool Mail* wrote,

Life was to him becoming unbearable; so he determined to take 'arms against the sea of troubles' and became a woman! Charles Wilkins doffed the male attire he had worn for ten long years, and, undergoing a metamorphosis not much less extraordinary than that of a caterpillar, became humble, pale-faced Mary Curzon.¹⁸⁹

The inclusion of Charles taking 'arms against the sea of troubles', was another reference to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* taken from the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy.¹⁹⁰ In this soliloquy, Hamlet was torn between life and death. In this instance, the cultural reference to *Hamlet* allowed educated readers to understand Charles's own inner turmoil. Charles had to decide whether to reveal his biological identity and potentially lose his wife and family or continue living as a man and be a committed husband and father.

In the article there was reference to the concealed female body being revealed through the idea of metamorphosis. Charles 'doffing' the male clothing that he had become accustomed to allowed him to be viewed as female.¹⁹¹ This highlights not only the importance of clothing for gender passing individuals in concealing their biological bodies, but also the importance of committing themselves to a gender identity that the community recognised. Through their clothing and their performativity of masculinity, individuals were accepted and viewed as men. However, once they removed these garments, they were characterised by their biological bodies, as we will see in *Chapter Five: After Lives*

Finally, a Shakespearean quote appeared in an article about John Murphy that read,

Into the lead and slippered pantaloons,

¹⁸⁷ "Marriage Extraordinary." *Glasgow Herald*, (Glasgow: Scotland), August 21, 1846.

¹⁸⁸ "Marriage Extraordinary." *Glasgow Herald*, (Glasgow: Scotland), August 21, 1846.; "Marriage Extraordinary." *Canterbury Journal*, (Kent: England), August 22, 1846, 4.

¹⁸⁹ "Marriage at Smethwick." *Liverpool Mail*, (Liverpool: England), August 8, 1846, 3.

¹⁹⁰ William Shakespeare, "Hamlet," in *Hamlet: The Oxford Shakespeare* ed. Alan Hibbert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), Act III: Scene I, line 61.

¹⁹¹ "Marriage Extraordinary." *Glasgow Herald*, (Glasgow: Scotland), August 21, 1846.

With spectacles on nose and pouch on side.¹⁹²

This quotation was taken from 'The Seven Stages of Man' monologue in *As You Like It*.¹⁹³ The monologue begins,

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts...¹⁹⁴

The cycle of man begins with the infant, followed by the 'whining schoolboy', the lover, the soldier and the middle-aged 'justice'.¹⁹⁵ It was the sixth stage of man that the press used to describe John Murphy, highlighting his age and vulnerability. The elderly man who was no longer as fiery, as masculine, or as able as he once was, was deemed to be at the penultimate stage of his life. John Murphy was ninety-seven years old at the time of his death in 1860 and was bedbound, therefore the choice of quotation highlighted his own demise as he approached the end of his life. By quoting only part of this monologue the journalist expected their readers to understand the reference to the play and the meaning of the monologue.

Other Gender Passing Links: Chevalier d'Eon

The introduction of historic gender passing cases being used in nineteenth-century newspaper reports about gender passing individuals suggests that journalists actively engaged with other cases to make links between them. For instance, *The Morning Chronicle* referred to James Allen in its initial coverage of Harry Stokes's case.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, when Harry first appeared in the press in 1838, reports made the connection between his identity and Chevalier d'Eon's gender nonconforming identity, writing:

All of the circumstances communicated to us relative to this singular case we do not feel justified in publishing; but we may mention a few of the principal

¹⁹² William Shakespeare, *As You Like It* [1599] (London: Wordsworth Editions, 1993), Act II: Scene VII, lines 157-158.

¹⁹³ William Shakespeare, *As You Like It* [1599] (London: Wordsworth Editions, 1993), Act II: Scene VII, lines 138-165.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, (Manchester: England), January 5, 1861.

¹⁹⁴ William Shakespeare, *As You Like It* [1599] (London: Wordsworth Editions, 1993), Act II: Scene VII, lines 138-141.

¹⁹⁵ William Shakespeare, *As You Like It* [1599] (London: Wordsworth Editions, 1993), Act II: Scene VII, line 152.

¹⁹⁶ "The Female Husband in Manchester." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.

facts connected with what is here known of the history of this Chevalier d'Eon in humble life, of course suppressing the names of parties.¹⁹⁷

Chevalier d'Eon has become an important historical figure, particularly amongst the trans community.¹⁹⁸ They are recognised for their gender nonconforming identity, as they presented as both male and female during this lifetime. The *Norwich Gazette* published an article after the death of Chevalier d'Eon in 1810 which highlights the ambiguity of their identity and the confusion that was evident in the public sphere:

The Chevalier d'Eon... died at his lodgings in New Milman Street, Guilford Street, on Tuesday Last... It will be remembered that a great doubt at one time existed to which gender he belonged, which, however, was set at rest by the verdict of 12 matrons who decided in favour of the female; and from that time to the present he wore the costume of that sex. But on his decease taking place it was unexpectedly discovered that the Chevalier was a perfect male!¹⁹⁹

Chevalier d'Eon was a French Diplomat, freemason, writer and soldier who died in poverty in London in 1810 at the age of eighty-one years old.²⁰⁰ They were a successful spy, and infiltrated Empress Elizabeth of Russia's court as a woman under the request of King Louis XV.²⁰¹ In *The London Magazine* in 1777, a caricature of Chevalier d'Eon was published and can be seen in figure 17.²⁰² Note how the artist showed Chevalier d'Eon as both male and female through their clothing to highlight the juxtaposition of their identity.

¹⁹⁷ "The Female Husband in Manchester." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.

¹⁹⁸ Ardele Haefele-Thomas, "Embracing the Middle Ground: The Chevalier/Chevaliere d'Eon," in *Introduction to Transgender Studies* (New York: Harrington Press, 2019), 278-287.

¹⁹⁹ "Postscript." *Norwich Gazette*, (Norwich: England), May 26, 1810.

²⁰⁰ Simon Burrows, Jonathan Conlin, Russell Goulbourne and Valerie Mainz ed. *The Chevalier d'Eon and his Worlds: Gender, Espionage and Politics in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Continuum UK, 2010).

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² "Mademoiselle de Beaumont, or the Chevalier d'Eon," *The London Magazine*, (London: England, 1777), accessed on April 8, 2019. <https://www.thelondonmagazine.org/> Image can also be accessed on Wikipedia through Library of Congress and is in the public domain https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chevalier_d%27%C3%89on accessed November 7, 2020.



Figure 17 Mademoiselle de Beaumont, or the Chevalier D'Eon
'Mademoiselle de Beaumont, or the Chevalier d'Eon', The London Magazine, (London; England, 1777). Accessed April 8, 2019 <https://www.thelondonmagazine.org/>

The decision to liken Harry Stokes to Chevalier d'Eon was a conscious one on the part of the journalist. It suggested that there was a longevity to cases of gender passing. Furthermore, it suggested that journalists actively made connections between gender passing individuals contemporary to the period and historic cases. Although *The Morning Chronicle* published other gender passing cases, including John/Elizabeth Hayward, they only referred to Harry Stokes and the Chevalier d'Eon in one report.²⁰³ The journalist of this article clearly expected their readers to have a certain level of knowledge surrounding the story of Chevalier d'Eon and wanted the reader to make the connection between them and Harry.

Due to the extraordinary nature of gender passing cases, it seems as though printed material discussed individuals in a way that contemporary readers understood. The two street ballads about James Allen were largely aimed at women and encouraged them to be sure of their husband's identity before they committed to marrying them. The ballads were tongue in cheek, as evidenced by their suggestion that couples should engage in pre-marital sex to confirm this. The use of Shakespeare within newspaper reports also encouraged readers to be more receptive to new ideas and open to the lives of gender passing individuals more specifically. Although, the vein of mockery and humour is never too far from the nineteenth century audience evidenced in someone concealing their biological identity. Finally, making links between other historic gender passing individuals, such as Chevalier d'Eon, highlighted that journalists were engaging with similar historic cases which unwittingly contributed to the creation of a community.

²⁰³ "Another Female Husband," *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), January 30, 1829.; "The Female Husband in Manchester," *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.; "[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday]," *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.

Conclusion

Community gives people a sense of belonging. Through identity markers, such as race, gender, class or occupation, individuals were aware that they were constrained due to the 4 C's of Passing characteristics and, as such, they had to participate in their communities effectively to be accepted by others. Gender passing individuals challenged predetermined roles of biology to commit to a life that celebrated their own gender identities. Moreover, as well as uniting individuals and bringing certain groups together, communities defined and divided people through labelling and categorisation.

Community, as an imagined space, gave gender passing individuals an opportunity to find their own way of belonging. Community experiences are explored through the prisms of intimate and extended experiences that have been discussed throughout this chapter. For instance, gender passing individuals experienced close communities inside their own familial networks. Some gender passing individuals including Harry Stokes, Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson and John Smith were recognised for their roles as not only husbands and men but as active step-fathers.²⁰⁴ Their intimate experiences of fatherhood enabled them to gain access to a closed community of fatherly experience that united them.

Community means a shared sense of experience and a shared set of values, ultimately culminating in an understanding of belonging. Neighbours became central to the lives of gender passing individuals as a means for them to be recognised as men. This was because neighbours provided a support network and comradeship. It was also imperative that gender passing individuals performed their gender in a way that was recognisable to their neighbours for them to be accepted. In some instances, such as after James Allen's death, it was the support of neighbours who protected Abigail that enabled her to stay living in her community. Ultimately, neighbours provided the emotional support that Abigail had lost when James died.

Furthermore, community relates to the wider public and society. Through the publication of popular culture items such as portraits, pamphlets and street ballads, an

²⁰⁴ "Woman Passing as a Man for Forty Years." *Ashton Weekly Reporter*, (Stalybridge: England), October 22, 1859.; "[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.; "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Reynolds's News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.

extended connection was made between gender passing individuals. In press reports, journalists referred to other historic cases for readers to make the connection.²⁰⁵ In doing so, these narratives reached the wider community through readership, and unwittingly created a much larger community of individuals.

²⁰⁵ "The Female Husband in Manchester." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.; "The Woman Husband." *Manchester Guardian*, (Manchester: England), April 14, 1838, 2.

Chapter Five

After Lives

One of the main themes that I have explored throughout this thesis is that gender is a performative identity. I have argued that gender is an identity to be maintained and performed by individuals. Although death signalled the end of a lived life, for gender passing individuals, their demise cemented the understanding of how they had passed for most of their adult lives. Through death the extent to which they concealed their biological bodies were revealed. Joanne Bourke has argued that 'All men's bodies were endowed with signs and declarations of age, generation, class and ethnicity. It is within this socially constructed 'frame' that bodies lived, were imagined and died'.¹ Indeed, this constructed 'frame' that Bourke has discussed is evident in how men were expected to behave and how they were strong providers for their families. Yet, this was only the case when the individuals were alive. In death, however, the bodies were at the mercy of those around them. People chose whether they continued to conceal the intimate parts of the body, just as the individuals had done for many years of their lives. In death, an individual's body was constructed, manipulated, and made presentable for others to view and, for gender passing individuals, it was this that was focussed on in newspaper reports.

Through death, individuals such as Harry Stokes, James Allen, John Smith and John Murphy, were exposed as biologically female by the press.² Although the press exposed their biological identity, those same newspapers also appreciated individuals for practicing an appropriate understanding of masculinity. After their deaths, gender passing individuals no longer had control of their gender identity. Instead, they were predominantly viewed and labelled as women due to their exposed and unprotected biological bodies. This chapter

¹ Joanne Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1996), 11.

² "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.; "The Female Husband in Manchester." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), April 13, 1838.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.

explores the deaths of several gender passing individuals who were publicly exposed after they died, both literally and metaphorically.

In both sickness and in death, it is no surprise that gender passing individuals were unable to fulfil the 4 C's of Passing framework in an effective manner. Their weakness through illness meant they were not as confident as they might have been whilst alive. They were unable to achieve complete consistency in performativity because gender was an active identity that required the individual to be alive. They could, however, conceal their bodies as much as they were able to prior to their death, as we will see with Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson and John Murphy, to maintain their dignity as they approached the end of their lives.

This chapter feeds into the idea of the body being exposed and explores what nineteenth-century society understood about 'good death' and 'bad death' as discussed in Pat Jalland's work.³ By examining different gender passing cases that focussed on the death of an individual, this chapter considers what death meant for their identity, their families and their communities. These cases also highlight the types of death that gender passing individuals faced ranging from illness, and old age to suicide and accidental death in the workplace. Similarly, using nineteenth-century traditional rituals surrounding death, it explores how they were commemorated in gender passing cases and how some traditional rituals, at times, exposed individuals. Bodies without conscious agency, for example those who were sick, were unable to perform their gender confidently or consistently which resulted in them becoming vulnerable. Therefore, the rituals and practices of sickness and death, like the laying out process, ultimately exposed this.

Finally, using James Allen's death as a case study this chapter reflects on the support and protection bestowed upon James in order that his body and his dignity were preserved. This chapter considers the longevity of specific gender passing cases, as evidenced by the extent of the coverage that surrounded their deaths. It uses newspaper articles, pamphlets, census material and death certificates to highlight how some gender passing individuals were written about, and how their lives were remembered.

³ Pat Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

The Concealed Body

The dying body remains a live body until the finality of death after which it becomes a corpse. Only after death does the corpse become an object which is available to be displayed and viewed by families, the public, medical officers, and coroners. Although, it is important to note that, this observing of the body came without the consent of the individual themselves and was ultimately a violation of privacy. Academic research and scholarship surrounding nineteenth-century death has largely been focussed on middle- and upper-class interpretations.⁴ Jalland's book, *Death in the Victorian Family*, remains one of the most extensively researched books on death.⁵ Yet, its narrow focus on middle-class interpretations and celebrations of death means that it has limited utility with reference to working-class gender passing individuals. Although Julie-Marie Strange has bridged the gap in research about nineteenth-century working-class death and grief by 'reading the silences' of the ordinary classes, death amongst the working classes in nineteenth-century Britain remains an under researched area.⁶

Death and dying are different ways to interpret the inanimate body. This section examines what happened to gender passing individuals as they made their journey towards the finality of death. The dying body was representative of an individual knowingly facing the end of their life. Typically, this happened with the support of family and loved ones. The dying still had an awareness of themselves and their surroundings and retained limited control of their presented selves. Thus, some gender passing individuals remained committed and consistent to their gender identity and presentation in the face of imminent death. Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson for instance, kept his trousers on whilst he was on his death bed

⁴ David Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).; John McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment: Changing Attitudes to Death Among Christians and Unbelievers in Eighteenth-century France* (Oxford: Oxford Papers, 1981).; Helen Frisby, "Drawing the pillow, laying out and port wine: the moral economy of death, dying and bereavement in England, c. 1840-1930," *Mortality* 20, no. 2 (2015): 103-127.; Helen Frisby, "'Them Owls Know': Portending Death in Later Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-century England," *Folklore* 126, no. 2 (2015): 196-214.; Julie-Marie Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 11.

⁵ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 5.

⁶ Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty*, 11; Frisby, "Drawing the Pillow," 106.

and refused to take them off.⁷ As *Chapter Two: What Makes a Man?* highlighted trousers were an outward sign of an individual's commitment to his gender identity. Therefore, Joseph's reliance on his trousers and dedication to protecting his manliness before his death demonstrates his commitment to his masculinity even as he approached the end of his life. Evidently, for Joseph, trousers were not just an item of clothing but were symbolic of their masculinity and demonstrated how they wanted others to respond to them.

From this sample of twenty-five gender passing cases, thirty-nine percent of individuals were revealed to be biologically female after being exposed following their deaths.⁸ The deaths of these individuals ranged from illness and workplace accidents, to old age and suicide. Interestingly, the ages of these individuals at the time of their death ranged from between twenty-four years old in the case of James Watson to ninety-seven years old for John Murphy.⁹ There was also a heavy clustering of gender passing individuals dying around the forty to sixty age range, with an average age of fifty-seven years old.¹⁰ Perhaps this longevity was because they took more precautions to live safely and avoided detection to protect both themselves and their families. However, it is important to acknowledge that some gender passing individuals, like John Coulter and Harry Stokes, abused alcohol during their lifetime. Similarly, many were engaged in manual labour which would suggest that they were more at risk of injury or death.

After their death, an individual no longer had control of how they wanted to present themselves to the world and were therefore unable to conceal their bodies. Through death, the individual became inanimate, an object that was made presentable to family and friends.

⁷ "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Reynolds's News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.; "A Real 'Female Husband.'" *Northern Echo*, (Darlington: England), January 3, 1894.

⁸ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.; "Extraordinary Discovery." *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, (London: England), December 14, 1834, 8.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848.; "'Harry' Stokes, The Man-Woman." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.; "Concealment of Sex for Fifteen Years." *Liverpool Daily Post*, (Liverpool: England), August 24, 1867, 7.; "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Reynolds's News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.; "Remarkable Case of Concealment of Sex," *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, (Sheffield: England), December 21, 1880, 3.; "A Female Husband." *York Herald*, (York: England), January 26, 1884.; "Concealment of Sex." *Belfast Telegraph*, (Antrim: Belfast), July 13, 1910.

⁹ "Remarkable Case of Concealment of Sex." *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, (Sheffield: England), December 21, 1880, 3.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.

¹⁰ These statistics have been calculated from averaging out the known ages of the ten different gender passing individuals that were revealed in death.

The physical body that was left behind did not warrant the same social status to that of the living body, or indeed the dying body. It can be argued that, through death, the body loses its place in society. The corpse undergoes many bodily transformations including rigor mortis whereby the body becomes static. In this process, the corpse is at the mercy of those around it to give it respect and dignity. Helen Frisby has recognised this in her discussion of traditional folklore surrounding death and argues that there was 'profound social and emotional ties between the living and the soon-to-be-dead'.¹¹ Indeed, there was comfort in preparing for the death of a loved one and maintaining a connection with the dying. For gender passing individuals, death marked the end of their ability to conceal their biological body. They became vulnerable to detection from authorities, loved ones and the public. Although the legacy and memory of the individual remained important to the bereaved family, the corpse itself became symbolic of the individual and something tangible to hold on to until burial.

Because of the concealed body becoming objectified by those around it and something to be looked at, gender passing individuals were labelled through their reproductive bodies which were female. As a result, their status and identity as men became lost altogether. In his article on working-class death, Steve Conway has argued that 'The poor have long been associated with the materiality of the embodied and disgusting subject. It is as if such disgusting materiality has denied them the possibility of a 'pure identity', as long as they remain working class'.¹² Because of their social status, the working classes lacked a 'pure identity' and therefore lost their ability to be seen as such in society.¹³ Moreover, both Julie-Marie Strange and Lindsey Prior identify how corpses were labelled as 'things' and have recognised that the dead body lacked ownership.¹⁴

In the nineteenth century, the body was referred to as 'it' after death. The dead body became something to be viewed and cared for prior to its interment. Yet there were also cases of gender passing individuals who were alive being described as 'it', as in the case of John/Elizabeth Hayward.¹⁵ Due to the uncertainty surrounding the gender and biology of

¹¹ Frisby, "Drawing the Pillow," 109.

¹² Steve Conway, "Death, Working-Class Culture and Social Distinction," *Health Sociology Review* 21, no. 4 (2012): 448.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Lindsey Prior, *Social Organisation of Death* (London: St Martin's Press, 1989), 158.; Strange. *Death, Grief and Poverty*, 66.

¹⁵ "Another Female Husband." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), January 30, 1829.

Hayward, newspapers and contemporaries were confused resulting in the difficulty of labelling Hayward when they first appeared in the press in 1806. Indeed, by referring to Hayward as 'it', perhaps the press highlighted the abjection linked with them as an individual. This also lessens the monstrousness and confusion of Hayward's unknown gender and biology and instead, links them to someone who was altogether removed from society.

Although, in some instances the gender passing body was described as 'it', language in newspaper reports referred to individuals using a mixture of both female and male pronouns. When Harry Stokes was revealed to be biologically female in 1838, *The Observer* wrote, 'From what could be gleaned from the history of this female-husband it would seem that she had assumed the garb and character of a boy at an early age'.¹⁶ The use of female pronouns in this instance raises questions about Harry's masculine abilities. Similarly, the use of the term 'female-husband' mocked Harry's abilities as a working-class breadwinner and provider for his family. Arguably, this can be interpreted as a public attack on Harry's masculinity.

The use of female pronouns in Harry's case, however, was in direct comparison to a middle-class gender passing individual named Captain Kennington who appeared in *Bell's Weekly Messenger* in 1834, just four years before Harry Stokes.¹⁷ The newspaper commented on Captain Wright's appearance and wrote, 'It wore a gold chain suspended from its neck, which reached down to the extremity of its waistcoat'.¹⁸ Evidently, 'it', in this case, was used in a derogatory manner. The explicit use of 'it' in *Bell's Weekly Messenger* did not appear nor was it used in other newspaper reports to describe deceased gender passing individuals. This terminology may have been unique to *Bell's Weekly Messenger* and we can see that the word 'it' demonstrated the commodification of the dead body as Strange and Prior have both recognised. Yet, what is interesting about *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, is that they also reported on Harry Stokes twice in 1859 after he died. In the newspaper reports, Harry was referred to as 'she', 'he' and as 'it'. The first report, published on 22 October, wrote about Harry as a man commenting that, 'His name was Henry Stokes; but though he was known by this name, he

¹⁶ "The Female Husband in Manchester." *The Observer*, (London: England), April 16, 1838.

¹⁷ "The Late Husband at Kennington." *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, (London: England), December 14, 1834, 8.

¹⁸ Ibid.

was not a man and his proper name was Harriett Stokes'.¹⁹ Alternatively, the second article that was published on 29 October, used 'it' to describe Harry, commenting that 'it would probably have been buried in its clothes as it was'.²⁰ Although 'it' is a way of dehumanising a person, as we saw in Hayward's case, *Bell's Weekly Messenger* used this as a term to describe at least two deceased gender passing individuals in the nineteenth century.

For gender passing individuals to be successful in passing, they needed to be clear in their gender embodiment and be consistent in their approach. This consistency enabled them to be identifiable as their gendered self and to be accepted as men in their communities. However, illness and ultimately death, put them at risk of detection. It made them vulnerable as individuals no longer had control of how their body was presented or concealed. This resulted in some individuals being exposed as biologically female and for some becoming a spectacle in their local community through press exposure. Nonetheless, through their death, the public were also made aware of the extent to which individuals went to effectively pass and conceal their biological bodies to live as men without detection whilst alive.

¹⁹ "A Woman Passing as a Man for Forty Years." *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, (London: England), October 22, 1859, 6.

²⁰ "A Romance in Real Life." *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, (London: England), October 29, 1859.

Good Death and Bad Death

Although death marked the physical end of a person's life, the death of a gender passing individual meant that their exposure posed the potential for public questions to be asked by society and newspapers about their character, identity and how they lived their lives. This section examines the differences between 'good death' and 'bad death' and investigates how the deaths of gender passing individuals were described in press reports and remembered by their communities. The deaths of gender passing individuals in this instance inform us of the different types of deaths that they had. These included death of natural causes, old age, and prolonged illnesses. Yet, this section also considers how families and communities were not always prepared for the death of a loved one and how they dealt with shock deaths such as suicide and accidents.

Throughout the nineteenth century, there was a fictionalised phenomenon of 'good death' and 'bad death'. These two approaches were discussed by Jalland in her book on middle-class death practices.²¹ Although Jalland's book focused on middle-class death there are some similarities between her subjects and working-class gender passing individuals. A 'good death' was reliant on the dying individual giving their family enough time to come to terms with the inevitability of their passing. In the example of John Murphy, we can see his death in 1860 as being 'good' in how he came to terms with his own demise after battling with a yearlong illness according to newspaper reports.²² 'Good death' meant preparation and it allowed families to reconcile themselves with the increasing possibility of losing their loved ones. It also allowed them to feel prepared for their loved one's departure. This method was loosely based on the Christian approach to death, whereby the dying individual was encouraged to make peace with themselves and others around them as well as offering familial advice and support before they died.

²¹ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 5.

²² "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.

Alternatively, a 'bad death' was characterised through sudden death including suicide, murder and unexplained disappearances where family and friends were unable to prepare themselves for the loss of their loved one.²³ Examples from this sample include James Watson who was a twenty-four-year-old groomsman in Glasgow.²⁴ He was kicked in the head whilst tending to his horse and after his body was recovered, his biological identity was revealed. James was unable to tell anybody about his gender identity and thus its revelation was a shock to the community and to his employers. Alternatively, Harry Stokes committed suicide in 1859. The suddenness of his death meant that his family were unable to prepare for his loss.²⁵

Although early mortality was in decline from the middle of the nineteenth century, diseases and illness were still a prevalent cause of death due to poor hygiene, overcrowding and poor living conditions.²⁶ One example of a 'good death', to use Jalland's phrase, is coming to terms with and accepting that prolonged illness eventually resulted in death. John Smith's case highlights his own struggle with illness when he contracted dysentery and was nursed to the end of his life by his wife.²⁷ John Smith was pronounced dead on 16 September 1848 just eleven days after contracting the disease. His death was confirmed by his wife, landlady and Mr Bland, who was the medical officer of the Macclesfield Union. Mr Bland had previously questioned John Smith's gender identity whilst he treated him because he had been 'struck with [John's] peculiarity; the face, lips, general expression and the voice being those of a woman', wrote *The Morning Chronicle* when reporting on his death.²⁸

Instead of gender passing individuals performing and embodying their masculinity, their illness made them vulnerable to detection and risked their exposure. To perform as a man, John needed to embody his masculinity through being strong and active however, illness made him weak. The weakness that he sustained made it near impossible for him to be committed to his gendered performance. Anna Clark has argued that 'Masculinity was

²³ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 35.

²⁴ "Remarkable Case of Concealment of Sex." *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, (Sheffield: England), December 21, 1880, 3.

²⁵ "Harry" Stokes, The Man-Woman." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.

²⁶ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 5; Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain*, 27.

²⁷ "[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire general*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848.

²⁸ "[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.

something which had to be performed, constantly reasserted and defended, which was not easily attained'.²⁹ Yet, for gender passing individuals, performing their masculinity was practiced through their appearance and personality, and illness ultimately altered this performance. The landlady of the property that John Smith and his wife rented confirmed that, whilst he was living with her, John looked like a man, dressed like a man and acted as a man the whole time the couple had lodged there.³⁰ John's landlady noted his masculine performance through his clothing, relationship status and employment, deducing that these elements demonstrated that he was a man. It was only at the point of death when John no longer had control over the visible presentation of his body that his gender identity was openly challenged by Mr Bland and subsequently the press.

After the burial of John Smith, Mr Bland chose to make authorities aware of his biological identity. Interestingly, Mr Bland's concerns were rejected 'as the case was concealment of sex and not one of doubt as to the cause of death'.³¹ The judge ruled that a full inquest was therefore unnecessary. What is striking about this response is that by rejecting the possibility of an inquest, the authorities were either not concerned about gender passing or, perhaps more likely, they were unsure about how to deal with the case. Furthermore, due to the individual being deceased, they were viewed simply by their biological body. At this stage, how they lived their lives and provided for their families was not taken into consideration.

The fulfilment of the 4 C's of Passing is reliant therefore on a healthy body. Illness and death affected how individuals were identified by the public. Similarly, illness deteriorated the healthy body, physically weakening it. The inanimate corpse also made it nearly impossible for gender to be personified by the individual. Therefore, for most gender passing individuals, death marked the end of their gendered self and exposed their biological identity to others.

²⁹ Anna Clark, *Alternative Histories of the Self: A Cultural History of Sexuality and Secrets, 1762-1917* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017), 39.

³⁰ "[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire general*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848.

³¹ Ibid.

The case of John Murphy from Wigan was a particularly complex narrative, with different official institutions such as local authorities, the press and the Church registering his death in several different ways. John Murphy was a hawker and cadger from Wigan who died of natural causes in December 1860 at the age of ninety-seven years old. His burial registration and death certificate, that can be seen in figure 18, state that John was buried in All Saints Church in Wigan town centre. All Saints Church holds online records which contain evidence of a recorded Evangelical burial on 30 December 1860 for a 'John Murphy'.³² Although the Register of Burials for Wigan revealed that there was no record of this.³³ There was, however, a registration for 'Betty Lavin', who, according to the *Wigan Observer* and *Manchester Courier*, was the birth name of John Murphy.³⁴

The church record suggests that John Murphy, received an Evangelical burial and was buried on consecrated grounds at All Saints Church. In allowing this religious burial there was some acknowledgement of John's alternative gender identity. The *Manchester Courier* noted that:

As John Murphy she lived and died. As John Murphy her death was registered by the surgeon and it was only when the final offices previous to interment were being performed that her sex was discovered.³⁵

This suggests that the surgeon knew that John Murphy was biologically female, yet he allowed him to be buried as a man in the church. Strange has recognised that the threat of a pauper burial was a real concern for many people as 'it removed ownership of the corpse from the bereaved and prohibited and/or circumvented many secular and spiritual mourning commemorative rites'.³⁶ Perhaps one of the reasons for John's religious burial was an act of kindness on the part of officials as John had no extended family to bury him respectfully but he was well-known in the community according to newspaper reports. Indeed, the surgeon

³² The Parish Church of All Saints in Wigan. LDS Film 1885704, pg. 107, entry 85. Accessed July 11, 2018 <http://www.lan-opc.org.uk/Wigan/Wigan/allsaints/index.html>

³³ Register of Burials are documents recorded by parish registrars and are related specifically to any marriages, baptisms or deaths associated with that parish.

³⁴ 'Betty Lavin' was registered dead on the 28 December 1860 according to the Register of Burials that was accessed at Wigan Local Archives in October 2017.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex," *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex," *Manchester Courier*, (Manchester: England), January 5, 1861.

³⁵ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier*, (Manchester: England), January 5, 1861.

³⁶ Julie-Marie Strange, "'Tho' lost to sight, to memory dear': Pragmatism, Sentimentality and Working-Class Attitudes towards the grave, c. 1875-1914," *Mortality* 8, no. 2 (2003), 145.

may have allowed John to be buried in a religious way in the knowledge that the body would not be exhumed. The fact that John was registered under his male name demonstrates respect for his character, recognition of his masculinity, and perhaps some acceptance of his life as a man.

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF DEATH

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE



Application Number 9335899-1

REGISTRATION DISTRICT									
1860 DEATH in the Sub-district of Wigan in the County of Lancashire									
Columns:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of Death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
205	Twenty sixth December 1860 34 Nicholas Nook off Scholes Street	John <u>Murphy</u>	Male	97 years	Hand loom Cotton Weaver	Natural decay Certified	James Thompson In attendance 34 Nicholas Nook off Scholes Street Wigan	Twenty seventh December 1860	Robert Halliwell Registrar

In No. 205 Column 2 for "John Murphy" substitute "Betty Lavin" and in Column 3 for "Male" substitute "Female"
Corrected on the Ninth January 1861 by me Robert Halliwell Registrar in the presence of James Thompson X The mark of John Bamber

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Deaths in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the Twelfth day of July 2018

DAZ 096056

CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE. ©CROWN COPYRIGHT
WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.

040299 10202 10005 SPSL 012193



Figure 18 My copy of the death certificate of John Murphy, accessed through the General Registry Office: 1514667

John Murphy's death on 26 December 1860 was registered by John Halliwell the following day. John Halliwell was a notable registrar in Wigan and remained a registrar of births, deaths and marriages for the Borough of Wigan throughout his working life.³⁷ There was a note written to the side of the death certificate which can be seen in figure 18. It reads:

In No. 205 Column 2 for "John Murphy" substitute "Betty Lavin" and in Column 3 for "Male" substitute "Female".
Corrected on the Ninth January 1861 by me Robert Halliwell Registrar in the presence of James Thompson X the mark of John Bamber.³⁸

This note on the death certificate corroborates the alterations made for John after his biological identity was confirmed, but still established that he was buried initially as 'John Murphy'. It is possible that by acknowledging John's gender identity there was respect for him, however, the change in names may have been necessary for administration to keep the records as accurate as possible.

Murder, suicide, accidental death, or unexplained disappearances prevented the family preparing for the loss of their loved one. After death occurred, gender passing individuals received more recognition and public interest than when they were alive. This phenomenon of female to male gender passing was a curiosity that piqued the interest of the newspapers. On 14 October 1859, the evening before his death, Harry Stokes had been drinking at the Swan Inn in Pendlebury. The barmaid Mary Gorton commented that Harry had appeared 'upset in his mind' when he had left the pub that evening.³⁹ Despite his consistent employment and a support network at home, as evidenced by his long-term relationship to widower Frances Collins, Harry committed suicide. Olive Anderson has explored how men over the age of fifty-five who lived in new industrial towns such as Manchester, Sheffield or Liverpool had a much higher suicide rate than those in other areas of the country.⁴⁰ Indeed, working-class men were more likely to commit suicide as a way of ending the monotony of their working lives.⁴¹ It was highlighted in the press that financial difficulties caused Harry to

³⁷ I have been successful in locating Robert Halliwell in the 1871, 1881 and 1891 census where he lived in 37 Upper Dicconson Street, Wigan (now The Juniper Hotel). He lived here for at least thirty years with his wife Rebecca, he also cared for his niece Elizabeth Halliwell and had a general servant for his home.

³⁸ Certificate of Death obtained from General Register Office, July 12, 2018. (DAZ 096056) Year 1860, Qtr D Vol. 08C Page 36.

³⁹ "Woman Passing as a Man for Forty Years." *Ashton Weekly Reporter*, (Stalybridge: England), October 22, 2018.

⁴⁰ Olive Anderson, "Did Suicide Increase with Industrialisation in Victorian England?," *Past and Present*, (1980): 156-158.

⁴¹ Ibid.

take his own life. Newspaper reports commented on his death as ‘found drowned, supposed suicide’.⁴²

In the Quarter Sessions Records and Petitions of the Michaelmas Session in 1859, which Harry appears, there is a log of the deaths of people who had died away from home unexpectedly and needed to be repatriated. In Harry’s case, this meant going back to Manchester. The headings on the table read, ‘Number’, ‘Date’, ‘Name of Deceased’, ‘Place Where Dead’, ‘Subsequent fee’, ‘No. of Miles’, ‘Mileage’, ‘Paid for use of Room’, ‘Medical Witness’, ‘Medical Fee’, ‘Other Witnesses’ and ‘Remarks’.⁴³ Clearly there was a process in place by which authorities returned bodies home for a proper burial. It is likely that this process ‘re-exposed’ Harry’s biology as there was reference made to both his male identity and his female name in the record.

Despite Harry identifying as male for over fifty years and demonstrating his commitment and consistency in his gender identity for all that time, he was registered as female on official documentation. On Harry’s death certificate that can be seen in figure 19, he was named as ‘Harriett Stokes’ yet under ‘rank or profession’ a note was added stating ‘Bricksetter [sic] having assumed and worn man’s attire for twenty years and upwards’.⁴⁴ Harry Stokes lived most of his adult life as male, yet it was his biological body that seemingly labelled him as female after his death. Nonetheless, it is necessary to highlight that authorities acknowledged Harry’s working abilities and recognised that he had lived as a man for more than twenty years.

⁴² “Woman Passing as a Man for Forty Years.” *Ashton Weekly Reporter*, (Stalybridge: England), October 22, 1859.; “Harry” Stokes, The Man-Woman.” *Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser*, (Paisley: Scotland), October 5, 1859, 6.

⁴³ “Harriett Stokes nee Harry Stokes.” Quarter Session (QSP 3591/1-111) Michaelmas Session 1859 accessed July 11, 2018 using *Lancashire, England Quarter Sessions Records and Petitions, 1648-1908*.

⁴⁴ Harry Stokes Death Certificate, accessed through *General Registry Office*, GRO Reference number: COL113338/2018. Ref. 1859, Dec, Salford, 8d, 2.

Superintendent Registrar's District <i>Salford</i>									
Registrar's District <i>Pendleton</i>									
18 ⁸⁹ . DEATHS in the District of <i>Pendleton</i> in the County of <i>Lancaster</i>									
No.	When Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
286	<i>Fourth</i> <i>October</i> <i>1889</i> <i>at Made</i> <i>Wyke.</i> <i>Pendleton.</i>	<i>Harriet</i> <i>Stokes</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>about</i> <i>60</i> <i>years</i>	<i>Bricklayer</i> <i>having assumed</i> <i>and worn male</i> <i>attire for 20</i> <i>years and</i> <i>upwards.</i>	<i>Drowning</i> <i>in the</i> <i>River Irwell</i> <i>suspected</i> <i>homicide.</i>	<i>Information received from</i> <i>Mrs. J. Butler</i> <i>Coroner for Lancashire</i> <i>Inquest held</i> <i>15th October 1889</i>	<i>Twelfth</i> <i>October</i> <i>1889</i>	<i>Thomas</i> <i>Allen</i> <i>Registrar</i>

Figure 19 My copy of Harry Stokes death certificate accessed through the General Registry Office, volume 8d pg. 2.

As a comparative study, the deaths of John Murphy and Harry Stokes are particularly important. Both men died within twelve months of one another and lived in neighbouring towns, yet their deaths were registered differently. John Murphy did not have any familial support and lived alone, which was in direct contrast with Harry who had a family and a support network.⁴⁵ Despite John Murphy being encouraged to accept more help from medical officers, he obstinately refused.⁴⁶ It is likely that John's rejection of help was fuelled by the worry and anxiety due to the likelihood of his biological identity being revealed. Perhaps age was taken into consideration and John Murphy was buried as a man out of respect. It also highlights how different authorities had different methods of recording deaths. Alternatively, Harry Stokes had already appeared as female in the press and therefore journalists offered a follow up story on him.

Once individuals no longer had control of how they wanted their bodies to be viewed by the public, the press challenged and questioned their gender identity and the successfulness of their gender passing. After death, the lives of gender passing individuals were discussed frequently in local and national press reports and they were admired for their ability to fulfil masculine roles in contemporary society. The demise of gender passing individuals were considered 'good' if the individual contributed to society. This included contributing financially and obtaining regular employment as well as performing appropriate gendered roles and providing for their families.

⁴⁵ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex," *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Customs, Dissections and Discovery

The body is a physical entity that consists of organs, flesh, tissues, blood, veins, capillaries, arteries, nerves, and muscles. All these things must work together for the body to be an active and living thing. The body can be altered both cosmetically and medically. For female to male gender passing individuals, their biological bodies were concealed, enabling them to confidently and consistently pass whilst they were alive. The skin, for Jay Prosser, is important as it is the first thing a person sees. Prosser argues that 'It [skin] holds each of us together, quite literally contains us, protects us, keeps us diverse, and yet is our first mode of communication with each other and the world'.⁴⁷ Yet, for gender passing individuals, their skin and reproductive organs ultimately exposed them in death and was labelled according to its anatomical and biological characteristics. The live body could be gendered differently, but in death, individuals lost this ability. This section explores the rituals and traditions surrounding death in the nineteenth century and reflects upon how gender passing individuals were remembered in their communities.

In the nineteenth century, death was part of everyday life. The easy spread of disease due to poor living conditions and the lack of sewage systems, in addition to several cholera epidemics between 1832 and 1866, meant that death and illness were a regular occurrence.⁴⁸ Various rituals and traditions were associated with death at this time. For instance, some middle-class families posed for photographs with their newly deceased family members or had replica dolls created of their dead children.⁴⁹ Working-class families, on the other hand,

⁴⁷ Jay Prosser, *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 65.

⁴⁸ Stephen Halliday, "Death and Miasma in Victorian London: An Obstinate Belief," *British Medical Journal*, (2001): 1469-1471.; Pamela K. Gilbert, *Mapping the Victorian Social Body*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).; Pamela K. Gilbert, *Cholera and Nation: Doctoring the Social Body in Victorian England*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

⁴⁹ Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1992).; S. J. Langer, "Our Body Project: From Mourning to Creating the Transgender Body," *International Journal of Transgenderism*, (2014): 66-75.; Ben Roberts, "A Tale of Two Funerals: Civic Ritual, Public Mourning and Community Participation in late Nineteenth Century Middlesbrough," *Cultural and Social History* 13 no. 4, (2016): 467-482.; Virginia Beard and William C. Burger, "Change and Innovation in the Funeral Industry: A Typology of Motivations," *OMEGA – Journal of Death and Dying*, (2017): 47-68.

worked hard to save their family members from a pauper-style burial and committed themselves to using saving clubs, life insurance and benefit societies.⁵⁰ Strange has commented that this level and expectation of forward planning 'illustrates the extent to which families feared the prohibitive conditions of the pauper grave'.⁵¹ Working-class people therefore commonly planned for the inevitability of death and made necessary preparations to support their families after the process.

In death, the deathbed became a symbol of the limbo between life and death and was central to those who were dying or ill. The bed itself enabled visitors to see the individual in their time of need. The likelihood was that a person would be born in a bed, usually the marital bed, and die in their bed at home, therefore the bed remained a symbol of life and death. Frisby has commented that the deathbed was used to 'lend social, emotional and spiritual support to the dying person, and one another'.⁵² It acted as a stable vehicle where friends and family members could come and pay their respects to a loved one. John Murphy, who lived in Wigan, was bedbound for over twelve months prior to his death.⁵³ His lengthy demise was indicative of his age and was registered as 'natural decay' according to his death certificate.⁵⁴ Although the press acknowledged that John did not have the familial support of loved ones, he had regular visitations from his medical officer.⁵⁵ Likewise, newspapers commented on how he relied on the support of his neighbours that came to care for him, which suggests he was a popular person and someone who was thought well of in his immediate community.

Although gender is an active identity and one which must be performed and practiced, the death of an individual made the public become aware of the lengths some went to in concealing their biological bodies. Some gender passing individuals were depicted as predominantly lone figures by the press, like Frederick 'Scratchem' Mitchell who lived alone

⁵⁰ The New Poor Law of 1834 made the pauper grave as anonymous and undignified as possible as a way of encouraging the poorer classes to maintain a solid work ethic and elevate their social status to avoid potential pauperism.

⁵¹ Strange, "'Tho' lost to sight, to memory dear," 147.

⁵² Frisby, "Drawing the Pillow," 108.

⁵³ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier*, (England: Manchester', January 5, 1861.

⁵⁴ Certificate of Death obtained from General Register Office, July 12, 2018. (DAZ 096056) Year 1860, Qtr D Vol. 08C Page 36.

⁵⁵ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier*, (England: Manchester', January 5, 1861.

for most of his life and was estranged from his biological family. Although some individuals were in committed relationships with their partners and wives, overall, there was no discussion of them having a larger family network. As the previous chapter demonstrated, many were estranged from their biological families at a young age. Death rituals centred on the process of preparing the body which was to be completed by family members and close friends as a means of supporting the interment. Due to their lack of familial support and relationships there was less family involvement in a gender passing individual's death. Arguably, an individual's death showed the partial acceptance into family and how they could rely on their close relationships and friendships when they were in times of crisis.

One of the main rituals that was undertaken once the individual had died was the laying out of the body. It was this ritual that was the ultimate exposure of gender passing individuals and confirmed their biological identity. Before rigor mortis had claimed the corpse, the body was straightened out, repositioned, or posed in the coffin. It was then tied with string to keep the position of the corpse looking peaceful and natural for any visitors wishing to view it.⁵⁶ This positioning and manipulation of the corpse suggested how the dead body itself became objectified. The inanimate body was at the mercy of both its family and any medical staff that encountered it and the corpse was their responsibility to prepare it for interment. The deceased's hair was combed over and cleaned, along with the cutting of the fingernails and the shaving of beards for men. For some, death meant they took on a more respectable and presentable outward image than they did whilst they were alive.⁵⁷

Due to the ongoing threat and concern of illegal body snatching, authorities tried to keep the demand for human remains low by passing the Anatomy Act of 1832. The Act allowed any unclaimed corpses to be sold on to medical institutions and facilities for educational purposes.⁵⁸ The threat of the resurrection men and body snatching was a concern, so it was typical that the body of the deceased was kept at home in the period between death and burial. This highlights the body being a symbol of 'continued emotional

⁵⁶ Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain*, 11.; Frisby, "Drawing the Pillow," 106.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ John Knott, "Popular Attitudes to Death and Dissections in Early nineteenth century Britain: The Anatomy Act and the Poor," *Labour History*, (1985): 1-18.

attachment' as Frisby has argued.⁵⁹ By allowing the body to remain at home, wives and families had control of how their loved ones were prepared for burial.

Every death is unique to the individual and it is necessary to question whether a gender passing individual's vulnerability was determined by the location of their death and the type of death they had. In some gender passing cases, it was unclear if the body remained at home or at another institute. For instance, James Allen was taken to St Thomas's Hospital to try and save his life after an accident at work; therefore it was likely that he remained at the hospital.⁶⁰ John Murphy, on the other hand, died at home perhaps remaining there until his burial.⁶¹ In other gender passing cases such as John Coulter, who accidentally fell and died whilst intoxicated, their resting place was not revealed nor was it investigated how their biological identity was revealed after their death.⁶² Perhaps there was a level of protection given to these individuals due to their vulnerability.

As most bodies resided at home prior to interment, the body inevitably began to decay. As part of the laying out process, before the body began to decompose, the bladder and rectum were relaxed, and the open orifices were stuffed with herbs and flowers to mask the smell of the decaying corpse.⁶³ Prior to John Smith's death in 1848, newspaper reports commented on how he had informed his wife about his biology. The *Manchester Courier* wrote, 'the day before the death, when the deceased requested that she would allow no one to assist her in laying out the body, but sew it up in a sheet, which she did'.⁶⁴ Here the laying out of the body was completed by John's wife showing that she cared for her husband and actively tried to protect and conceal his biological identity after he died. Therefore, when a gender passing individual was laid out, the extent to which they had concealed their bodies became clear. Similarly, the body would have been viewed in such an intimate and visceral manner that the biological sex was ultimately revealed.

⁵⁹ Frisby, "Drawing the Pillow," 112.

⁶⁰ "Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.; "Extraordinary Investigation: or the Female Husband." *The Observer*, (London: England), January 18, 1829.

⁶¹ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Wigan Observer*, (Wigan: England), December 28, 1860, 2.

⁶² "A Female Husband." *York Herald*, (York: England), January 26, 1884.

⁶³ Frisby, "Drawing the Pillow," 113.

⁶⁴ "[From the Macclesfield Courier of Saturday]." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), October 10, 1848.; "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848.

For families of the deceased, the washing of the body and the act of laying out the corpse 'represented a final gesture of intimacy and affection', according to Strange.⁶⁵ The laying out of the body signalled that the gender passing individual was biologically female as they were no longer in control of their body. One defining ritual that was undertaken during the laying out process was the undressing of and preserving of the corpse. It was at this point that the individual was at their most vulnerable and their biological identity was exposed both in a public and private manner. For gender passing individuals, the laying out ritual demonstrated how they had concealed their biological body throughout their lives. For instance, when both James Allen and Harry Stokes's bodies were discovered, the extent to which they had distorted their breasts and upper torsos for a more masculine silhouette was also revealed.⁶⁶

After the laying out of the body there were several more rituals to be practiced. Visiting the corpse was reserved for close friends and family. During these visits, guests were encouraged to 'solemnly touch or kiss the corpse' to show them and their families respect, according to Frisby.⁶⁷ The day after an individual died professional bidders, usually from the local community or known to the family, invited prospective funeral guests as it was inappropriate to attend a funeral without being asked by the bereaved family.⁶⁸ Coverage of the deaths of James Allen and Captain Wright suggested that their funerals were well-attended and heavily populated with mourners and observers alike.⁶⁹ On discussing the reaction from Captain Wright's community, *Bell's Weekly Messenger* commented that the neighbourhood were 'horror-struck' on learning that Captain Wright was biologically female and they all 'crowded to view the body'.⁷⁰ Perhaps both of these individuals were well-liked in their communities and workplaces resulting in many people paying their respects to them. Alternatively, and more likely, people came to see the bodies of gender passing individuals to

⁶⁵ Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty*, 66.

⁶⁶ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *The Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.; "Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.; "Curious Case of Prolonged Concealment of Sex." *Birmingham Daily Post*, (Birmingham: England), October 20, 1859; "Woman Passing as a Man for Forty Years." *Ashton Weekly Reporter*, (Stalybridge: England), October 22, 1859.

⁶⁷ Frisby, "Drawing the Pillow," 115.

⁶⁸ Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty*, 66.

⁶⁹ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative of the Extraordinary Career of James Allen, The Female Husband*, (J.S Thomas; Covent Garden, 1829), 1-40; "Extraordinary Discovery," *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, (London: England), December 14, 1834, 8.

⁷⁰ "Extraordinary Discovery." *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, (London: England), December 14, 1834, 8.

confirm the phenomenon for themselves due to the public interest surrounding gender passing in the local and national press.

Increasingly from the middle of the nineteenth century, death became memorialised with elaborate funerals taking place and the erection of gravestones complete with symbolic signs and poems commemorating the lives of the deceased became popular.⁷¹ Many people were buried in nearby graveyards attached to churches and for some gender passing individuals, the local churchyard was their final resting place. However, many local churches were demolished in the twentieth century to make way for housing projects and industrial areas, therefore I have been unsuccessful in visiting any graves of gender passing individuals.

Newspaper articles that were published after an individual's death typically followed scissors-and-paste journalism, where the newspaper borrowed another published story.⁷² Melodee Beals has argued that scissors-and-paste journalism was used as a way of 'creating a highly decentralized, global news network' allowing stories to reach more areas.⁷³ However, during the Victorian period, it was also seen as something 'to be publicly shamed and (theoretically) barred'.⁷⁴ Although newspapers did not always reference the original source, it enabled the same stories to be republished and disseminated quickly around the country in both local and national newspapers. Joseph Josiah Charles Stephenson's narrative appeared in 1869 when he died and later in 1894 when his story was republished.⁷⁵ Joseph identified as a man for fifty years and lived in Toft Hill in County Durham. He died aged between seventy-eight and eighty-nine years old.⁷⁶ In 1894 Joseph was recounted in two newspapers, initially in December in the *South Wales Echo* and then two weeks later in the *Northern Echo*.⁷⁷ This

⁷¹ Gary Laderman, "Locating the Dead: A Cultural History of Death in the Antebellum, Anglo-Protestant Communities of the Northeast," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63, no. 1 (1995): 27-52.; International Southern Cemetery Association, accessed October 2, 2018 <http://www.iscga.org/history-of-gravestones.html>

⁷² Scissor and Paste created by Melodee Beals a Digital Historian at Loughborough University, accessed August 9, 2019, <http://scissorsandpaste.net/>; Melodee H. Beals, 'Scissors-and-Paste-O-Meter Officially Launched for 1800-1900', September 6, 2017 and accessed August 9, 2019, <http://mhbeals.com/scissors-and-paste-o-meter-officially-launched-for-1800-1900/>.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Dundee Courier and Argus*, (Dundee: Scotland), November 29, 1869, 3.

⁷⁶ Having accessed a copy of a death certificate for a 'Mr Josiah Charles Stephenson' of Toft Hill, Etherley, his age at time of death was recorded as seventy-eight years old. However, in press reports there was a suggestion that he was eighty-nine years old.

⁷⁷ "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Reynolds's News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.; "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Dundee Courier and Argus*, (Dundee: Scotland), November 29, 1869, 3.; "Extraordinary

coverage explored his personal life with his first wife and described him as having several committed relationships with women.

Coverage published in *Reynolds's News* in 1869 gave a general report on Joseph's death writing, 'It is said, she came from Scotland fifty years ago in the guise of a young man, and obtained employment at one of the collieries... and ultimately married a servant girl at the village inn'.⁷⁸ Although Joseph died in 1869, coverage was sparse and general. Yet, in 1894 the *Northern Echo* revisited his story where more information was included. For instance, there were witness reports and in-depth details about Joseph's personal life with his first wife as discussed in *Chapter Three: Queer Intimacies*.⁷⁹ Evidently journalists were interested in gender passing stories as they revisited and referenced related gender passing cases in other articles. However, by including more information about Joseph twenty years after his death, the validity of the source base is questionable, and the narrative may have been embellished. Despite the differing nature of the articles, one thing remained the same: Joseph was a sickly man. Due to his regular illnesses, Joseph had 'been dependent on some kind neighbours, whom she always prevented from coming too near'.⁸⁰ Joseph was reliant on others and therefore he was in a particularly vulnerable position. No suspicions were raised in the case of Joseph as far as we are aware, highlighting that he clearly presented himself successfully enough to be recognised as a man despite him nearing death.

Revisiting stories was not something that was reserved for nineteenth-century gender passing individuals. Like Chevalier d'Eon, discussed in the previous chapter, newspapers turned to other gender passing cases from the eighteenth century to support their writings about nineteenth century gender passing individuals. The story of Mary East, also referred to as Jane West, for instance, was republished twice in the nineteenth century.⁸¹ Mary East decided to live with her friend as man and wife to protect the promise that they had made to

Concealment of Sex." *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth and Brecon Gazette*, (Cardiff: Wales), December 4, 1869.; "The Female Husband." *South Wales Echo*, (Wales), December 30, 1893, 2.; "A Real 'Female Husband.'" *Northern Echo*, (Darlington; England), January 3, 1894.

⁷⁸ "Extraordinary Concealment of Sex." *Reynolds's News*, (London: England), December 5, 1869.

⁷⁹ "The Female Husband." *South Wales Echo*, (Wales), December 30, 1893, 2.

⁸⁰ "A Real 'Female Husband.'" *Northern Echo*, (Darlington; England), January 3, 1894.

⁸¹ "Mary East, The Female Husband." *The Odd Fellow*, (London: England), May 2, 1840.; "A Female Husband." *The North Eastern Gazette*, (Middlesbrough: England), July 2, 1891.; Emma Donoghue, *Passions Between Women*, (London: Pan Macmillan, 2014), 70-82.

their male partners before the men were arrested and later imprisoned for robbery.⁸² Once the couple decided on this, ‘the difficulty was who was to be the man, which was soon decided by the flip of a halfpenny’ according to *The Odd Fellow*.⁸³ Mary became the man in their platonic relationship and the pair went on to have a successful career as public house landlords, as was discussed in the previous chapter. Elsewhere, James Allen’s story was revisited in 1929 when *The Observer* published his story in a centenary edition of the newspaper.⁸⁴ The longevity of James’s narrative highlights that he was a pioneering gender passing individual and was obviously a well-known figure in the press after his death, something which will be explored in more detail in the following section.

⁸² “Mary East, The Female Husband.” *The Odd Fellow*, (London: England), May 2, 1840.; “A Female Husband.” *The North Eastern Gazette*, (Middlesbrough: England), July 2, 1891.

⁸³ “Mary East, The Female Husband.” *The Odd Fellow*, (London: England), May 2, 1840;

⁸⁴ “A Hundred Years Ago: Extraordinary Investigation or the Female Husband.” *The Observer*, (London: England), January 20, 1929.

The Death of James Allen

Both local and national newspapers scrutinized the success of gender passing individuals largely based on the longevity of their passing, the confidence they had in their gender identity, their commitment to gender and their consistency in performing socially as men. Their success was determined specifically by the extent to which they provided a comfortable home for their wives and their ability to maintain regular employment. When reporting on gender passing cases, newspaper stories used similar words to convey shock and disbelief. James Allen's story represents one of the earliest gender passing cases in this sample, and his story was used as a point of comparison with that of Harry Stokes in 1838 by the *Morning Post*.⁸⁵ Similarly, James's story encouraged revisiting the case of John/Elizabeth Hayward in the *Court of Requests* which was reported on in *The Morning Chronicle* in 1829.⁸⁶ Later, James Allen also reappeared in a centenary edition of *The Observer* which re-published an interesting story from one hundred years previous.⁸⁷

The Observer, *The Morning Post* and the *Newcastle Courant* all referred James's biological identity as an 'Extraordinary Investigation'.⁸⁸ The word 'extraordinary' was used to highlight how gender passing was uncommon and shocking, something that Jen Manion has also explored.⁸⁹ The word displayed interest and public engagement with how gender passing individuals passed successfully throughout their lives. Newspapers viewed a person's ability to provide a stable and secure living environment for their families as being true to heterociscentric contemporary ideals. James was described as an industrious man who took pride in his different career choices and supported his wife for most of their twenty-one-year marriage.

⁸⁵ "Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.

⁸⁶ "Another Female Husband." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), January 30, 1829.

⁸⁷ "A Hundred Years Ago: Extraordinary Investigation or the Female Husband." *The Observer*, (London: England), January 20, 1929.

⁸⁸ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.; "Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.; "Extraordinary Investigation: or the Female Husband." *The Observer*, (London: England), January 18, 1829.

⁸⁹ Jen Manion, *Female Husbands: A Trans History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 1.

James and his wife Abigail lived in 32 East Lane, Rotherhithe in south-east London. James was a sawyer and employed by Mr Robert Crisp.⁹⁰ On 13 January 1829, James left for work but did not return home. James and his colleague William Shrieve had been tasked with the cutting and disposing of fir trees; James was at the bottom of the pit and William was on the top.⁹¹ The *Leeds Intelligencer* followed James's death and wrote that 'a large piece of timber fell on the head of the deceased, who was at the bottom of the pit, and she fell senseless bleeding from the nose, mouth and ears'.⁹² Medical staff were unable to help him when they attended the scene and he was pronounced dead on arrival at St Thomas's Hospital. James's colleague, William noted that his 'skull had been fractured in several places' resulting in his death.⁹³ Mr Thomas Shelton who was coroner for James ruled that his death was 'accidental'.⁹⁴

Although the press seemingly hailed James's masculinity and ability to fulfil the expectations of a man, later material written about him was not always complimentary. Eric Dingwall, a British anthropologist, and psychical researcher published various books on sexology and the paranormal throughout his life.⁹⁵ In his book *Some Human Oddities*, published in 1947, Dingwall explored the life and death of James Allen. Dingwall labelled James as 'the man who was not' in his research, evidently challenging James's social status and gender identity.⁹⁶ Dingwall's choice of language throughout the chapter went far beyond mis-gendering James and he was described as 'the oddest of odd transvestites'.⁹⁷ Not only does this language show the publication as a product of its time, it also shows a lack of

⁹⁰ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.

⁹¹ Note that in the *Newcastle Courant* article Shrieve was named as John Shrieve and not William, however other sources recalled a William Shrieve.; "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.; Anonymous, "An Authentic Narrative of the Extraordinary Career of James Allen, The Female Husband." (J.S Thomas; Covent Garden, 1829), 1-40.; Eric J. Dingwall, *Some Human Oddities: Studies in the Queer, the Uncanny and the Fanatical*, (London: Hame and Val Thal., 1947), 45.

⁹² "A Female Husband – Most Extraordinary Fact." *The Leeds Intelligencer and Yorkshire General Advisor*, (Leeds: England), January 22, 1829.

⁹³ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: England), January 4, 1829.

⁹⁴ "Extraordinary Investigation." *The Morning Post*, (London: England), January 16, 1829.

⁹⁵ Eric J. Dingwall, *The Girdle of Chastity: A Medico-Historical Study*, (Routledge: London, 1925).; Eric J. Dingwall, *Ghosts and Spirits in the Ancient World*, (Trubner and Company; London, 1930).; Eric J. Dingwall, *Racial Pride and Prejudice*, (Greenwood Press; London, 1946).

⁹⁶ Dingwall. *Some Human Oddities*, 38.

⁹⁷ Dingwall, *Some Human Oddities*, 46.

understanding of alternative gender identities in the 1940s. Moreover, it highlights the longevity of James's story as well as how language has developed and changed periodically.

Through death, James no longer had control of how his body was concealed, manipulated, or revealed to the prying public. Death rendered James voiceless and unable to perform his gender in a confident, consistent, or committed manner. Even though James was credited for his ability to embody contemporary understandings of masculinity in the press after his death, Dingwall's exploration of his life focussed on the anatomical differences between James's biological body and that of a male body. Dingwall described James as a 'well-nourished woman, with no abnormality of any kind'.⁹⁸ Again, demonstrating how the biological identity of an individual was more important than gender after death.

James was viewed and labelled by the fact that he had breasts and female genitalia. His biological characteristics ultimately exposed him as a woman to the contemporary public. Although James's genitalia were not explicitly discussed by the press, it was hinted at and implied with the language that was used. As discussed in *Chapter Two: What Makes a Man?*, James was described as being perfectly formed with a female body that had been preserved and swathed in bandages.⁹⁹ His breasts were described to be like any other woman's and were concealed underneath binding.¹⁰⁰

On 16 January 1829, the funeral of James Allen took place. It was conducted by Mr Butler, who was a well-known undertaker in the area. The funeral was well-received by the local community according to newspaper reports and attracted a crowd of people who genuinely knew James Allen and wanted to pay their respects, and those who were interested in the phenomenon surrounding his gender identity. The funeral service and burial took place at St John's Churchyard, Horseleydown in Surrey according to records.¹⁰¹ Instead of being

⁹⁸ Dingwall, *Some Human Oddities*, 45.

⁹⁹ "Extraordinary Investigation, or the Female Husband." *Newcastle Courant*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne; England), January 4, 1829.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ St John's Church, which no longer exists, was built between 1727 and 1733. It was an active Anglican Parish until it was damaged during the Blitz in the 1940s. Although rebuilding took place in 1968, the site was bought by The London City Mission in 1975 and they moved several crypt and vault burials to Brookwood Cemetery. I have been unable to locate who James was buried with, however, it is possible that his remains may have been moved to Brookwood Cemetery in the 1970s.

F. A. Youngs, *Guide to the Local Administrative Units of England: Southern England* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1979), 491; Reffell Family History, accessed August 27, 2018, <http://www.reffell.org.uk/churches/stjohnhorsleydown.php>

buried in a family plot or alone, a decision was made by the authorities to bury James in a vault. These 'precautions were taken to prevent the malign activities of the resurrection men', according to Dingwall.¹⁰² Due to the unique nature of James's case, body snatching and other activities were a real threat.¹⁰³ John Knott has highlighted that in 1828, just a year before James's death, a good quality corpse could have been sold to medical and educational institutions for eight to ten guineas.¹⁰⁴ Owing to James's uniqueness as a gender passing individual it is likely that the price for his body would have increased. Therefore, burying James in a private vault protected both his identity and his physical body.

James's death registration, as shown in figure 20, indicated that his burial, cost one pound and one shilling in 1829.¹⁰⁵ This roughly equated to around five days of paid manual labour in 1829.¹⁰⁶ James received 'no less than eight pounds a month' in wages with his monthly wage equating to £542.41 in today's money.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, James's regular payments to a benefit society would indicate that his funeral was already paid for and Abigail was looked after. Nonetheless, the decision from authorities to bury James privately suggests a threefold argument. First, there was a level of tolerance for gender passing individuals, in that there was a more advanced and intricate level of burial arranged by the authorities. Second, authorities were willing to protect gender passing individuals after their death. Third, in the case of James, it showed that authorities were concerned about bodysnatching and the threat from the resurrectionists as evidenced by their willingness to protect James's body.

¹⁰² Dingwall, *Some Human Oddities*, 45.

¹⁰³ Knott, "Popular Attitudes," 1-18.; Conway, "Death, Working-Class Culture and Social Distinction," 441-449.; Frisby, "Drawing the Pillow," 103-127.; Roberts, "A Tale of Two Funerals," 467-482.

¹⁰⁴ Knott, "Popular Attitudes," 3.

¹⁰⁵ Registration of James Allen's death in 1829, registered in the Parish of St John, Horseleydown.

General Registration Office: Registers of Births, Marriage and Deaths surrendered to the Non-Parochial Commission of 1857 accessible at The National Archives, Kew, Surrey. (Class: RG8, Piece Number: 73). Permission to reproduce this death registration has been granted by Paul Johnson who is The National Archive Image Library Manager at the time of completion.

¹⁰⁶ National Archives Calculate Purchasing Power, accessed August 27, 2018, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/>

¹⁰⁷ Anonymous. *An Authentic Narrative*, 19; Sums calculated using the National Archives Currency Converter, accessed October 2, 2018, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result>

Register of Burials in the New Ground, New Street, in the Parish of St John, Horselydown, in the County of Surrey, in the Year 1829									
Name.	Age. Years, Months, Days.	Where from.	When Buried.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.	Undertaker's Name.	Dues paid for Vault.	Dues paid for Ground.	Where Buried. Division.	Page.
Sarah Eliza. Hooper	2 9	Geology St. Clementine	17	Rev. W. Henry Richardson	Richardson	10 6			115
John Hooper	1 3	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	4	Do	Allen	10 6			115
Elizabeth. Hooper	3 7	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	4	Do	Allen	10 6			115
Sarah. Bellamy	10	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	8	Do	Do	10 6			115
Ann. Anderson	52	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	7	Do	Do	10 6			115
Richard. Hooper	42	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	11	Do	Do	10 6			115
Margaret. Hooper	10	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	11	Do	Do	10 6			115
Ann. Hooper	1 7	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	11	Do	Do	10 6			115
Charles. Hooper	3 2	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	11	Do	Do	10 6			115
Elizabeth. Hooper	3	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	12	Do	Do	10 6			115
James. Allen	42	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	16	Do	Do	10 6			115
Ann. Hooper	5	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	18	Do	Do	10 6			115
Richard. Hooper	10	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	18	Do	Do	10 6			115
William. Hooper	11	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	18	Do	Do	10 6			115
James. Hooper	11	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	24	Do	Do	10 6			115
James. Hooper	38	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	25	Do	Do	10 6			115
Richard. Hooper	23	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	25	Do	Do	10 6			115
John. Hooper	42	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	25	Do	Do	10 6			115
Ann. Hooper	38	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	29	Do	Do	10 6			115
Mary. Hooper	12	Gravel Lane. Bowdler	31	Do	Do	10 6			115

Figure 20 Registration of James Allen's death in 1829, registered in the Parish of St John, Horselydown. General Registration Office: Registers of Births, Marriage and Deaths surrendered to the Non-Parochial Commission of 1857 accessible at The National Archives, Kew, Surrey. (Class: RG8, Piece Number: 73). Permission to reproduce this death registration has been granted by Paul Johnson, Image Library Manager at The National Archives.

James held positions in several different areas of employment during his lifetime including in domestic service, the agricultural sector and industrial work. James provided for his wife Abigail throughout their twenty-one-year marriage. However, breadwinner status did not solely focus on the ability to provide, it was also based upon the ability to save and plan. Thomas Wright's 1873 definition of a 'representative artisan' highlighted that there was a need for men to save, work and be responsible with their money. The drive to provide was a vital part of the structure of nineteenth-century working-class identity as well as gender performativity and expectation, something that James Allen succeeded in. Newspaper reports commented on how he was a regular contributor to his benefit club called *The Associated Brethren of Barbican*. This meant that he had money saved up in the club to support his family if he found himself with no work, he became ill or he died. Despite these regular contributions, however, there were difficulties in releasing the stipend to Abigail after James's death according to the pamphlet.

Mr J. S. Thomas of 2 York Street was the publisher of *An Authentic Narrative*, the pamphlet that explored James's life. Mr Thomas was also Abigail's attorney following James's death. Indeed, it was Mr Thomas who wrote a letter to *The Times* newspaper, that can be seen in figure 21, to highlight that Abigail had been ridiculed and victimised in her local community. In the letter, Mr Thomas commented upon how Abigail was 'entirely destitute' and that the benefit club that James had regularly contributed to had withheld her payment.¹⁰⁸ It also stated that 'she is at this time labouring under great terror through the menaces of a set of unfeeling beings in that neighbourhood having expressed their determination to ill-treat her.'¹⁰⁹ This letter clearly demonstrates that Abigail was vulnerable and that her community no longer accepted her after the revelation of her husband's death. Mr Thomas, it seems, was the public facing 'manager' of Abigail Allen and was involved with her public and legal concerns. Mr Thomas not only appeared in James Allen's case, but also in the separation of Harry Stokes and Ann Hants when he was deputy constable of Manchester in 1838. Perhaps his experience with James Allen's case and his support of Abigail after her husband's death qualified him to take an active role in other gender passing cases.

¹⁰⁸ "The Female Husband." *The Times*, (London: England), January 20, 1829.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

THE FEMALE HUSBAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I am desired by Mrs. Allen, the surviving associate of that extraordinary female who has, for more than 21 years, passed as her husband, to contradict the statement of the club to which her late associate belonged having denied their assistance as yet. I regret, Sir, to add, that independent of the sufferings of this unfortunate woman, being left entirely destitute, she is at this time labouring under great terror through the menaces of a set of unfeeling beings in that neighbourhood having expressed their determination to ill-treat her, as they did on the occasion of the funeral, whenever she goes out.

From some exclusive and most extraordinary information that is in my possession, and which I shall shortly lay before the public, the fact of Mrs. Allen's keeping secret her wrongs for so long a period does honour to her nature, and, I trust, will at least entitle her to the protection of the magistracy of the district in which she resides.

I am, Sir, your very obedient,
2, York-street, Jan. 19.

J. S. T.

We understand that John Fullarton, Esq., advocate, has been appointed one of the Judges of the Court of Session, in the room of Lord Eldon, resigned.—*Caledonian Mercury*.

Figure 21 "The Female Husband." *The Times*, (London: England), January 20, 1829. Permission to reproduce this newspaper has been granted by The British Library.

The letter seemingly questioned the morality of *The Associated Brethren of Barbican*. Yet, the pamphlet categorically denied that the benefit club had not offered money to Abigail commenting that 'it is injustice due to its members and officers to state, that they never objected to pay for the funeral allowance as was falsely reported'.¹¹⁰ Although, it is unclear if the pamphlet was published in response to *The Times* article or not. *The Associated Brethren* was described as a 'noble institution' in the pamphlet, a phrase that recognised its superiority at the time. It may have been that *The Associated Brethren* used the pamphlet as a platform to heighten its own reputation. This was evidenced by the endorsement of *The Associated Brethren* in the pamphlet, writing:

Mrs Allen was immediately paid the full sum, and she was also treated by them, and the proprietor of the house in which the society is held, with the utmost humanity and attention.¹¹¹

The language that was used to describe the intention of *The Associated Brethren*, such as 'the utmost humanity and attention' given to Abigail through their repayment suggests they were trying to change their social position.¹¹² They gave themselves 'everlasting credit' for their swiftness in responding to James's death.¹¹³ We can also see *The Associated Brethren* as being a progressive and forward-thinking institution given the fact that it was willing to pay out the dividend to Abigail despite James's ruse.

Following his death, James was no longer able to conceal his biological identity, nor was he able to embody his masculinity. Instead, he was labelled via his breasts and female genitalia, as per the description of him being 'as fine a formed woman as ever was looked upon'.¹¹⁴ Not only does this focus on the importance of outward gender passing through clothing and bodily manipulation, it also suggests the importance of passing consistently, confidently and being committed to the performance of gender.

¹¹⁰ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 38.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 36.

Conclusion

Death inevitably occurs, but in the nineteenth century the likelihood of early death increased due to the widespread occurrence of disease, poor living conditions or unsafe working environments. Whether individuals died in a sudden manner such as murder or suicide, or they suffered from an illness, death was a part of the make-up of nineteenth-century Britain.¹¹⁵ Death brought people together to reflect on the deceased person's life. It was an opportunity for self-reflection and a time to reconcile familial differences.¹¹⁶ For gender passing individuals death signalled their public exposure as female and the end of their ability to perform as men. This exposure allowed the press to unpick their way of life, and at times, challenge their confidence and commitment to their gender identity.

Death marked the end of a gender passing individual's male identity and an individual's gender embodiment. Ultimately, gender passing individuals were labelled and viewed by their biological and anatomical bodies once they died. This demonstrates how contemporary understandings favoured biological identity over gender performativity. For nineteenth century society, it was biology that seemingly dictated the life that an individual led.

Thirty-nine percent of gender passing individuals were revealed as female through their death, which is the largest proportion of revelation from the twenty-five cases in this sample. In the press, gender passing individuals were admired for their industriousness and willingness to support and provide for their wives, partners, or families. Yet, although the press recognised an individual's abilities to live as men, they were labelled as explicitly female due to their biological bodies. They became the ultimate object of curiosity, with their stories being told in press reports, pamphlets, and street literature. Indeed, they attracted the attention of the public because their lives were so different to heterociscentric society and they demonstrated that gender was an identity that was malleable and challenged what was normative in the nineteenth century.

¹¹⁵ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, (1996).

¹¹⁶ Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870-1914*, (2005).

Conclusion

In 1838, when Harry Stokes was first exposed as biologically female by the press, *The Observer* seemed clear about the ultimatum that Harry would face. They wrote:

...the woman who has ventured to assume the character of a man will no longer be able to continue to carry on business in this town, and that she must either lay aside her disguise, and resume the appearance which most befits her sex; or, if she will retain her unfeminine appearance and character she must seek to hide her imposture in some place where she is not known.¹

Yet, as we already know, Harry remained an active member of his local community as a man for another twenty-one years until his death in 1859. This ultimatum was also published in the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Freeman's Journal* (a newspaper published in Dublin).² Looking ahead to Harry Stokes's second appearance in the press after his death in 1859, the *Liverpool Mercury* commented upon his generosity, his workmanship and entrepreneurial skills. They even commented on his ability to be a good host and how he was a social person, writing:

Her industry and skill at one time placed her in very comfortable circumstances, and there are persons who are now ensconced naming the foremost men of Manchester who have been entertained at the rearing suppers given by "Harry" Stokes'.³

Although these 'foremost men of Manchester' who described Harry's character remained anonymous, this comment clearly recognised that Harry had a positive impact on his community. After his exposure Harry went on to be a public house landlord with several successful businesses with his partner Frances Collins. He was also a stepfather to her

¹ "A Female Husband in Manchester." *The Observer*, (Manchester: England), April 16, 1838, 1.

² "The Woman Husband." *Manchester Guardian*, (Manchester: England), April 14, 1838, 2.; "A Female Husband in Manchester." *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, (Dublin: Ireland), April 16, 1838.

³ "'Harry' Stokes, The Man-Woman." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

children, a special constable, protecting his city for at least a year and as suggested by the *Liverpool Mercury*, he was well liked by his friends and enjoyed an active social life.

Evidently, Harry and others like him, demonstrated that gender passing individuals were popular in their communities. Harry remained living in Manchester despite his first wife exposing his biological identity at the end of their marriage. People who had access to the local press would have been aware of Harry's story and perhaps gossiped about his biological exposure to others. Despite this, his defiance to leave his community showcased that there was, at least, some acknowledgement and tolerance of gender performativity in nineteenth-century Britain.

At the centre of this thesis has been the argument that gender was, and still is, a performative identity. This has been highlighted by the creation of microbiographies of gender passing individuals and explored in the lives that they led. Gender passing individuals challenged the social equilibrium of gender in the nineteenth century and questioned the significance of the separate spheres ideology through their defiance of their biological identity.⁴ Yet, gender passing individuals still managed to perform their gender in an obviously masculine way and thus recognised the importance of binary ideals in nineteenth-century Britain.

Although the ideal of separate spheres ideology suggested that men frequented the public sphere and women remained at home in the private sphere, this ideology was not always possible to implement across the classes. Indeed, separate spheres was 'prescriptive, not descriptive and its influence was largely confined to the middle class'.⁵ Therefore, not all people had the luxury of remaining at home while their husbands went out to work. Working-class women, for instance, managed the home, cared for any children, they were active in the community, cooked, cleaned and contributed to the family income.⁶ Gender passing

⁴ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall ed., *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).; Leonore Davidoff, Keith McClelland and Erika Varikas ed., *Gender and History: Retrospect and Prospect* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers LTD, 2000).; John Tosh, "What Should Historians do with Masculinity?: Reflections on nineteenth century Britain," *History Workshop Journal*, (1994): 179-202.

⁵ Susie Steinbach, "Can We Still Use Separate Spheres"? British History 25 Years After Family Fortunes," *History Compass*, (2012), 826.

⁶ Leonore Davidoff, "Class and Gender in Victorian England: The Diaries of Arthur J. Munby and Hannah Cullwick," *Feminist Studies* 5, no. 1 (1979): 86-141.; Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).; Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working-Class Women*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publishers Limited, 1984).

individuals, on the other hand, rejected their predetermined lifestyle of bearing and caring for children and being subservient wives in favour of becoming the breadwinner and the stable head of the household. Individuals fulfilled these roles quietly enough to fit into society without exposure, yet boldly enough to reinforce the contemporary preservation of binary ideals.

The use of language has been instrumental throughout this thesis both in terms of using it appropriately to refer to gender passing individuals and how to locate gender passing cases in digital and online records. As was discussed in *Chapter One: An Intellectual Discussion*, Anna Clark, Christine Burns and Susan Stryker have all recognised that there are problems with modern terminology when it is applied to historic individuals and their presumed identities.⁷ Although I have remained neutral by using the term ‘gender passing individuals’, it is impossible not to see a link between gender passing cases and gender nonconforming people including transgender people, gender fluid and non-binary individuals. Yet, the microbiographies of gender passing individuals have focussed specifically on the performativity of gender and how individuals performed as a gender contrary to their biological identities. The development of the term ‘gender passing individual’ and the concept of ‘gender passing’ was created to combat the overpowering need to label historical individuals with contemporary terms that we have become familiar with. These terms are problematic as they were not widely used, understood, or defined in nineteenth-century Britain. Instead, most gender passing individuals identified as ‘male’ in official documentation, including census material and trade directories, as well as in their communities.

Using the themes of gendering the body, intimate relationships, community life and death, this thesis has explored how gender passing individuals lived in society and how they were successful in fulfilling acceptable roles as working-class men. As an extension of these thematic approaches, the 4 C’s of Passing framework has been instrumental in bringing the chapters of this thesis together. *Chapter One: An Intellectual Discussion* set up the conversations that were central throughout the other chapters. It reflected on the origins of gender performativity, working-class masculinity, the importance of the community and how

⁷ Christine Burns ed., *Trans Britain Our Journey from the Shadows* (London: Unbound, 2018).; Anna Clark, *Alternative Histories of the Self: A Cultural History of Sexuality and Secrets, 1762-1917* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017).; Susan Stryker, *Transgender History*, (California: Seal Studies, 2008).

gender passing individuals embodied their gender identity. The 4 C's of Passing framework has also been important throughout this thesis with each chapter focussing on specific characteristics. *Chapter Two: What Makes a Man?* explored how gender passing individuals needed to be confident to perform in a way that allowed them to be accepted by others in society. *Chapter Three: Queer Intimacies* focussed on the commitment that gender passing individuals showed to both their gender identity and to their wives and families. *Chapter Four: Conforming in the Unsuspecting Community* considered the importance of consistency in performativity and how this aided an individual's social transition and their impact in society. *Chapter Five: After Lives* highlighted the lengths that gender passing individuals went to in order to be accepted as men during their lifetime and how they concealed their biological bodies to fit into society's understanding of masculinity. Although it is necessary to highlight that all of the chapters in this thesis interweave with one another and the 4 C's of Passing framework is evident throughout.

Chapter Two: What Makes a Man? examined the importance of confidence when gender passing individuals performed as men. It argued that gender passing individuals embodied their masculinity in a recognisable manner. Gender is a social construction, according to Judith Butler, and something to be actively performed. In the opening of her book *Undoing Gender*, Butler likens gender performativity to a literal onstage performance but highlights that there is a certain level of constraint that must be acknowledged, she writes:

If gender is a kind of a doing, an incessant activity performed, in part, without one's knowing and without one's willing, it is not for that reason automatic or mechanical. On the contrary, it is practice of improvisation within a sense of constraint.⁸

The live and performative quality of gender was evident in the lives of gender passing individuals who actively embodied their masculinity.

Confidence has remained a key theme across the chapters as it was imperative that gender passing individuals were recognisable as the gender that they presented as. Any gender slippages such as a lack of facial hair, small stature or a weakly voice raised suspicion according to newspaper reports. Indeed, the significance of confidence was also evident in

⁸ Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (London: Routledge, 2004), 1.

the cases of John/Elizabeth Hayward and the example of Albert Guelph, in which reporters were unsure of the biological identity and background of the individual.⁹ Therefore, performing their gender in a confident manner supported a gender passing individual's embodiment of masculinity and their social transition into masculine society. As we have understood gender to be a social construction and performative identity then it is something to be 'done. Yet, if it can be 'done' then it can also be 'undone'.¹⁰ A similar argument has also been explored through the creation of masculinity according to John Tosh, who argues that just as 'manhood' has been made 'so too can it be 'unmade'.¹¹ In these chapters we have seen gender passing individuals 'undoing' their predetermined biological lives in order to 'do' or embody a gender identity that was appropriate to them.

Chapter Three: Queer Intimacies examined the importance of commitment and relationships in the lives of gender passing individuals. Commitment in this sense meant not only being committed to their gender identity, but also being a faithful husband and, in some cases, a father. Press coverage often focussed on their faithfulness in relationships, such as the reports of Abigail and James Allen, married for twenty-one years.¹² Similarly, Harry Stokes remained married to his first wife Ann Hants for twenty-one years and his later relationship with Frances Collins lasted for over two decades.¹³ When William and Agnes Seymour settled in Liverpool they too were already in a long-term committed relationship.¹⁴ Most of these gender passing individuals appear to have actively sought out a partner and newspaper reports implied that they wanted to settle down and fulfil society's expectations of men. Perhaps this shows the willingness of the individual and their commitment to becoming a breadwinner, a provider, and a husband. It also indicates that living a normative life provided a means of avoiding scrutiny.

Performativity is another parallel theme running throughout this thesis. Yet, gender performativity was not necessarily the only performative aspect in a gender passing

⁹ "Another Female Husband," *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), January 30, 1829.; "A Female Husband," *Banbury Guardian*, (Oxfordshire: England), October 20, 1853.

¹⁰ Candice West and Don H. Zimmerman, "Doing Gender," *Gender and Society* 1, no. 2 (1987): 125-151.

¹¹ John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Harlow: Pearsons Education Limited, 2005), 22.

¹² "Extraordinary Investigation: or the Female Husband." *The Observer*, (London: England), January 18, 1829.

¹³ "The Woman Husband." *Manchester Guardian*, (Manchester: England), April 14, 1838, 2.

¹⁴ "A Woman as a Cabdriver for ten years, A Romance of the Rank." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), February 13, 1875.

individual's life. For instance, John Gillis has highlighted how the act of marriage itself can be likened to a social performance or drama, writing:

It is true that we can never be entirely free of the blinders that class, culture, age and gender impose, but we will be more readily [able to] recognise our biases if we think of marriage not in legal, institutional terms, but as a social drama in which not just the couple but several parties play crucial roles.¹⁵

Indeed, *Chapter Three: Queer Intimacies* reflected on the different roles played by members of the community like that of the priest performing the ceremony, the bride and groom committing their lives to one another as well as family and friends, who also had their own part to play in the marriage itself.

After engaging in a literal marriage or cohabitation gender passing individuals remained committed to their roles as men. Fulfilling society's expectations was essential because it aided a gender passing individual's transition into masculine life and enabled them to live undetected in society. Furthermore, through performing socially acceptable roles associated with being a husband and provider, gender passing individuals would have been viewed as respectable in the community. Newspaper reports focussed on an individual's respectability as evidenced in how they performed and identified as men in an active way. Again, confidence was important for gender passing individuals to embody as this also aided the performance of masculinity and allowed them to be accepted by those around them.

Alongside being a husband or committed partner some gender passing individuals, like John Murphy, Harry Stokes, Charles Wilkins, and John Smith, were fathers and stepfathers to children. This meant that they were also expected to be good examples to their dependents and support more than just themselves and their wives. Newspaper reports commented on how John Smith actively supported his wife and her eleven children for several years after she was widowed.¹⁶ Although dysentery was the eventual cause of his death in 1848, John's landlady commented on his ability to provide for all of his family and pay his rent on time. In

¹⁵ John R. Gillis, *For Better, For Worse, British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 5-6.

¹⁶ "Singular Case of Concealment of Sex." *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General*, (Manchester: England), October 11, 1848.

this sense John Smith stepped up to his duty as a father for as long as possible and provided as comfortable a home as he could manage.

Throughout this thesis I have reflected on how gender passing individuals were considered masculine during their lifetime. Individuals were manly not simply by their physicality and strength but also through their obligations as men. Tosh has examined how manliness was the 'most articulated indicator' of a man's identity in the nineteenth century.¹⁷ He highlights that 'Always used in the singular, it [manliness] implied that there was a single standard of manhood, which was expressed in certain physical attributes and moral dispositions'.¹⁸ For working-class men, particularly those who saw themselves as respectable, this involved being able-bodied, strong, a hard worker, not drinking or smoking excessively, being faithful to wives and engaging in regular employment. Indeed, we see this level of physical manliness manifested in the bodies of gender passing individuals through the language that was used to describe them such as being 'stout', sturdy, 'hardworking' and being of 'moderate size'.¹⁹

It was also clear in newspaper reports that being moral was important, for instance, becoming a 'representative artisan', as defined by Thomas Wright in 1873.²⁰ This expectation included obtaining and maintaining regular manual work, saving through benefit clubs, preparing for illness and thinking ahead to the future. Yet, the gender passing individuals in this sample show that although there was a cultural script to be followed it was not always a fixed script that had to be performed or expressed. This cultural script also discriminated against men that were deemed effeminate or not masculine enough, which we saw in the case of Charles Wilkins who was mocked and called "Suke" by his fellow workers.²¹

In his definition of 'community', Raymond Williams has argued that as a term 'it never seems to be used unfavourably'.²² In other words, there is no opposite or negative meaning

¹⁷ Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 2.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ "The Female Husband." *Bell's Life*, (London: England), July 10, 1825.; Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 1-40.; "Another Female Husband." *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), January 30, 1829.

²⁰ Keith McClelland, "Masculinity and the 'Representative Artisan' in Britain, 1850-1880," in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* edited by Michael Roper and John Tosh (London: Routledge, 1991), 74.; Thomas Wright, "The Journeyman Engineer," *Our New Masters*, (London, 1873), 2.

²¹ "Smethwick: Romantic Affair." *Birmingham Journal*, (Birmingham: England), August 1, 1846.

²² Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Revised Edition. (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1983), 76.

of 'community'. However, for gender passing individuals, navigating the community and society in general was a particularly difficult and challenging task. The focus of *Chapter Four: Conforming in the Unsuspecting Community* examined how gender passing individuals engaged in society and were accepted by their local community. The community was composed of people they worked with, their neighbours, potential employers and those people who could make them or break them. Therefore, it was essential that gender passing individuals maintained a level of consistency in their gender performance as well as remaining approachable, respectable and confident members of the community in order to keep up the appearance of being 'sober, steady, strong active' men, a phrase used to describe James Allen in *An Authentic Narrative*.²³

Seeking a sense of belonging and acceptance was essential for gender passing individuals. Being accepted in their community meant that they could live safely and without the risk of exposure. This sense of community occurred within a broader understanding of working-class identity and on an intimate level with family, friends, and neighbours. Colin Creighton and Jane Humphries have both examined 'kinship' and the relationships that were developed in neighbourhoods and how neighbours assisted with childcare, companionship, and leisure.²⁴ This sense of community was evident in Harry Stokes's relationship with Frances Collins. Press reports recalled how Harry was ridiculed by people in the community following his initial exposure in 1838.²⁵ This resulted in Harry becoming Frances's lodger and later the pair engaged in a committed relationship with one another. Nevertheless, this example demonstrated the levels of cruelty within Harry's local community.

Street ballads that reflected on the lives of gender passing individuals, discussed in *Chapter Four: Conforming in the Unsuspecting Community*, have given us a glimpse as to how individuals were written about in a non-journalistic format and aimed at 'common people'. What was most interesting about the street ballads was that they encouraged their female readers to 'check' their husbands before marrying them. In doing so, the writers encouraged pre-marital sex to confirm whether their husbands were capable of reproducing children and

²³ Anonymous, *An Authentic Narrative*, 24.

²⁴ Jane Humphries, "Class Struggles and the Persistence of the family," *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, (1977): 247.; Colin Creighton, "The Rise of the Male Breadwinner Family: A Reappraisal," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38, no. 2 (1996): 313.

²⁵ "'Harry' Stokes, The Man-Woman." *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

thus their ability to maintain a heteronormative marriage and a family life. Although street ballads did not seem to ridicule gender passing individuals for their gender identity, they did remind people that failing to live up to gender codes was risky. The ballads also demonstrated explicitly that masculinity and virility went together and that a man needed to prove his masculinity by reproducing and having a family. Nonetheless, street ballads also appreciated and recognised gender passing individuals and their bravery in a seemingly binarized world. Therefore, although there were some discrepancies with potential bullying in the community, the overarching discussion suggested that gender passing individuals fitted into society and fulfilled expectations of masculinity to a high standard. So much so, many individuals lived their lives without being exposed publicly prior to their deaths.

Thirty-nine percent of gender passing individuals in this sample were revealed as biologically female after their deaths and it is likely that many more were not revealed as female during their lives at all. After their deaths, newspaper reports highlighted how gender passing individuals had manipulated their biological bodies to embody a more masculine physique, demonstrated their commitment, consistency, and confidence in performing a gender contrary to their biology. For instance, the microbiography of James Allen's death showcased how he not only supported his wife whilst he was alive, but also how he prepared for his own death and was thus committed to providing for her after he was gone.²⁶ James Allen became one of the most respectable gender passing individuals in this sample because he put provisions in place to secure Abigail's future without him.²⁷

In *Chapter Five: After Lives*, we saw how the death of an individual ultimately ended their performativity of masculinity and reduced them to sexed bodies. As has been discussed by Julie-Marie Strange and Lindsey Prior, the body became an inanimate object in death.²⁸ In terms of ownership Prior has highlighted that the cadaver was 'talked of in terms of 'it' rather than a given name'.²⁹ It is clear that this terminology correlates with discussions raised in *Chapter Two: What Makes a Man?*. For instance, 'it' was used in press reports to dehumanise

²⁶ "Extraordinary Investigation: or the Female Husband." *The Observer*, (London: England), January 18, 1829.

²⁷ McClelland, "Masculinity and the 'Representative Artisan,'" 74.; Wright, "The Journeyman Engineer," (1873), 2.

²⁸ Julie-Marie Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 66.; Lindsey Prior, *The Social Organisation of Death: Medical Discourse and Social Practises in Belfast* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 1989), 158.

²⁹ Prior, *The Social Organisation of Death*, 158.

individuals such as John/Elizabeth Hayward when neither their gender nor their biology could be confirmed without invasive medical investigation.³⁰ The argument central to chapter two reflected on the importance of gender performativity being an active identity. Likewise, *Chapter Five: After Lives* corroborated this argument because in death, gender passing individuals were viewed largely by their biological body and were consequently labelled as women and registered as female on their death certificates or burial registrations. Although some press reports, like the *Liverpool Mercury* in the case of Harry Stokes, commented on the importance of labelling gender passing individuals as men, slippages still occurred, and press reports referred to gender passing individuals as women and used female pronouns.³¹ This demonstrates both the importance of gender stereotypes and heterociscentricity at the time. These apparent gestures of social acceptance suggest a much greater degree of tolerance for gender nonconformity than we might expect for a society where rigid gender roles were widely prescribed.

Even though this thesis has argued that we need to be careful not to align gender passing individuals solely with a trans narrative, it is necessary to highlight that there is a rising toxicity from gender critical people which is increasing momentum in both academic and non-academic circles. In recent years there has been a rise in derogatory discussions being aimed at attacking trans women. The most common argument that has been raised by gender critical people has related to the potential danger of predatory men ‘pretending’ to be trans in order to exploit ciswomen and female only spaces.³² Janice Raymond’s book *The Transsexual Empire*, for example claimed that ‘gender is an expression of biological sex’ and as such cannot be altered.³³ Raymond stated that ‘the man who undergoes sex conversion is *not* female’ (Raymond’s italics) and this argument was also supported by Sheila Jeffreys and Germaine Greer.³⁴ Third wave feminism (1990s-2008) was initially supportive of trans rights for many

³⁰ “Another Female Husband,” *The Morning Chronicle*, (London: England), January 30, 1829; William Hutton F.A.S.S., *Courts of Requests: Their Nature, Utility and Powers described with a Variety of Cases determined in that of Birmingham*, (Birmingham: Knott and Lloyd, 1806), 419-430.

³¹ “Harry” Stokes, The Man-Woman,” *Liverpool Mercury*, (Liverpool: England), October 24, 1859.

³² Viv Smythe, “I’m Credited with Having Coined the acronym TERF, Here’s how it happened,” *The Guardian*, published November 28, 2018. Accessed November 6, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/nov/29/im-credited-with-having-coined-the-acronym-terf-heres-how-it-happened>

³³ Sally Hines, “The Feminist Frontier: On Trans and Feminism,” *Journal of Gender Studies* 28, no. 2 (2019): 146.; Janice Raymond, *The Transsexual Empire* (London: The Women’s Press, 1979).

³⁴ Raymond, *The Transsexual Empire*, 10; Germaine Greer, *The Whole Woman* (London: Black Swan, 1994).; Sheila Jeffreys, *Gender Hurts: A Feminist Analysis of the Politics of Transgenderism* (London: Routledge, 2014).

years, particularly with the publication of Butler's argument of gender being a series of acts performed consistently and Kimberlé Crenshaw's development of intersectionality, which highlights that people have more than one identity marker.³⁵ Yet, by 2008 divisions began to emerge particularly through online platforms. From then, the term 'Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminist' (TERF) was introduced by Viv Smythe to differentiate between gender critical radical feminists and other radical feminists who did not hold the same values.³⁶ Indeed, the term 'TERF' has become an increasingly powerful term that has been used as a slur against those gender critical people.

Interestingly, it is typically transwomen that are attacked by gender critical people. Michea B, an active blogger and trans advocate, argues that gender critical people try to 'recruit us [transmen or non-binary people] in the fight against transwomen, or they want us destroyed/forced to be women'.³⁷ It is unlikely that gender critical people would support the notion of gender performativity and the malleability of gender because they do not recognise biological men as having had to struggle in a patriarchal society when they transition to female. Indeed, Michea B has explored how:

TERFs and anti-trans people rely on our anger and our frustration. They see our struggles and associate them with the struggles of "women" and try to bring us in with the whole story of how they understand how hard it is to fight against the patriarchal structures of the western world, how they want to listen to us and work with us to better our work.

In this sense, therefore, gender critics fail to recognise the difficulties that gender nonconforming people have faced historically nor do they recognise the ongoing difficulties that individuals face daily.

A personal priority has been to reflect on the ways that this research has impacted others outside of academia. In his book, John Tosh examines the significance of history and

³⁵ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, (New York: Routledge, 1990).; Kimberle Crenshaw ed., *Critical Race Theory* (New York: New Press, 1995).

³⁶ Viv Smythe, "I'm Credited with Having Coined the acronym TERF, Here's how it happened," *The Guardian*, published November 28, 2018. Accessed November 6, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/nov/29/im-credited-with-having-coined-the-acronym-terf-heres-how-it-happened>; Feminism 101 FAQ, accessed November 6, 2019, <https://finallyfeminism101.wordpress.com/purpose/>

³⁷ M. B. "Begone TERF," published June 9, 2014. Accessed November 6, 2019 <https://medium.com/@themicheab/of-terfs-and-trans-men-9fbc004caf33>

why it is important that the public engage with it. He argues that ‘heritage nurtures a relationship between ordinary people and their historical environment’.³⁸ It is this idea that has inspired me to speak to people about my research and allow people to see the link between historic gender nonconforming people and people in today’s society.

My research is focused on the notion of ‘identity history’, according to Tosh, in that it explores the history of one group of people, that being gender passing individuals. He notes that ‘the visible remains of the past – often tidied up and sometimes restructured – are intended to stimulate the imagination’.³⁹ However, I have consciously tried not to restructure aspects of gender passing lives. Instead, I have created packages of information through microbiographies that have explored their lives through the material that is available to us. By visiting different institutes and talking to academics, non-academics, members of the public, young people and older people have become aware of historic gender passing individuals. For gender nonconforming people that I have spoken to, they can see a connection between themselves and the narratives within this thesis, thus, heightening their sense of self and their own history.

Throughout this process I have been involved in various public engagement projects that have been focussed on raising awareness about nineteenth-century gender passing individuals. This has included working as a historical adviser on Abi Hynes’s vignette called *Mister Stokes: The Man-Woman of Manchester* that was commissioned for the 2016 *Outing the Past* Festival and performed in the *People’s History Museum* in Manchester.⁴⁰ As a historical adviser I shared newspaper articles about Harry’s life in order for the play to be as historically accurate as possible. The vignette offered an interpretation of Harry’s life where he rose from the dead and explained his story whilst he was being laid out by a local woman. In October 2017 I contributed to the *Tales of the City* exhibition that was exhibited at the *Museum of Liverpool* which extended its run to March 2019.⁴¹ I also presented at the *Outing*

³⁸ John Tosh, *Why History Matters* (London: Red Globe Press, 2019), 10.

³⁹ Tosh, *Why History Matters*, 10.

⁴⁰ Abi Hynes Blog, accessed June 24, 2019 <https://abihynes.wordpress.com/2016/03/04/the-man-woman-of-manchester/>; People’s History Museum, accessed March 23, 2020 <https://phm.org.uk/events/outing-the-past-lgbt-history-month-guided-tour/>

⁴¹ *Tales from the City* exhibition displayed from October 2017 to March 2019 at The Museum of Liverpool, accessed June 26, 2019, <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/mol/exhibitions/tales-from-the-city/>.

the Past Festival Hub in the Museum of Liverpool for LGBT History Month in 2018.⁴² As part of Liverpool's *Light Night* in 2018 I was asked to display my own research and engage in a new project that explored the life of Dr James Miranda Barry. This was held in the *Liverpool Medical Institute* and an image of the event can be seen in figure 22.⁴³ There were over one thousand visitors to this event in one evening and by speaking to members of the public and different charitable organisations, more people left the event with the knowledge that there was a history of gender nonconformity than when they arrived. During *Light Night*, a worker from the Young Person's Advisory Service spoke to me about the importance of my research in allowing young gender nonconforming people to connect with their own sense of history.⁴⁴ I shared with her copies of James Allen's newspaper article and she took them to distribute amongst the young gender nonconforming people in her youth group. It is experiences and conversations like these that are essential in the dissemination of research and allowing as many people as possible to be aware of gender passing individuals and their lives.

⁴² *Outing the Past Festival* as part of LGBT History Month, accessed December 13, 2019 <https://www.outingthepast.com/>

⁴³ Liverpool Light Night, free annual arts festival, accessed December 13, 2019 <http://lightnightliverpool.co.uk/>

⁴⁴ Young Persons Advisory Service (Y.P.A.S) is a charity that supports children and young people with their mental health and well-being in the Liverpool area and predominantly works with you people aged between five and twenty-five years old. Accessed December 13, 2019, <https://ypas.org.uk/>



Figure 22 Image taken by me of members of the public engaging in Light Night display.

Dr Laura King at The University of Leeds was successful in obtaining a *British Academy Rising Star Award* in January 2019 which I was also involved in. This was a collaborative project with Ellie Harrison's *The Grief Series*.⁴⁵ Harrison invited a group of artists from The Faro in Mexico to Leeds for two weeks where they used a sample of my research as an inspiration to create death masks in the style of their Dios Los Muertos festival. In figure 23, there is a photograph of the artists' interpretation of my research and how they used the portraits of James and Abigail Allen to create death masks to sit over the skull. The plainness of the skull represented how you cannot tell the difference between people on the inside and that we are all the same. The metal wire that the skulls were crafted from represented the couple's wedding rings and their hands reached out to one another showing their love. One artist commented on how my research had inspired him to go away and locate gender passing individuals in Mexico. This research has already begun by artist Ria Brodell in their 2017 exhibition *Butch Heroes* with the case of Petra 'Pedro' Ruiz.⁴⁶ By sharing information and engaging in these types of conversations discussions about global historic gender nonconforming individuals can begin.

⁴⁵ "All That Lives," section seven of *The Grief Series* with Ellie Harrison, accessed June 24, 2019, <https://www.griefseries.co.uk/projects/all-that-lives>

⁴⁶ Ria Brodell, *Butch Heroes* (Berkeley: Edition One Books, 2017). Accessed February 24, 2020, <https://www.riabrodell.com/about-butch-heroes>; Petra 'Pedro' Ruiz, Mexican 'Butch Hero', accessed February 24, 2020, <https://www.riabrodell.com/petra-pedro-ruiz>

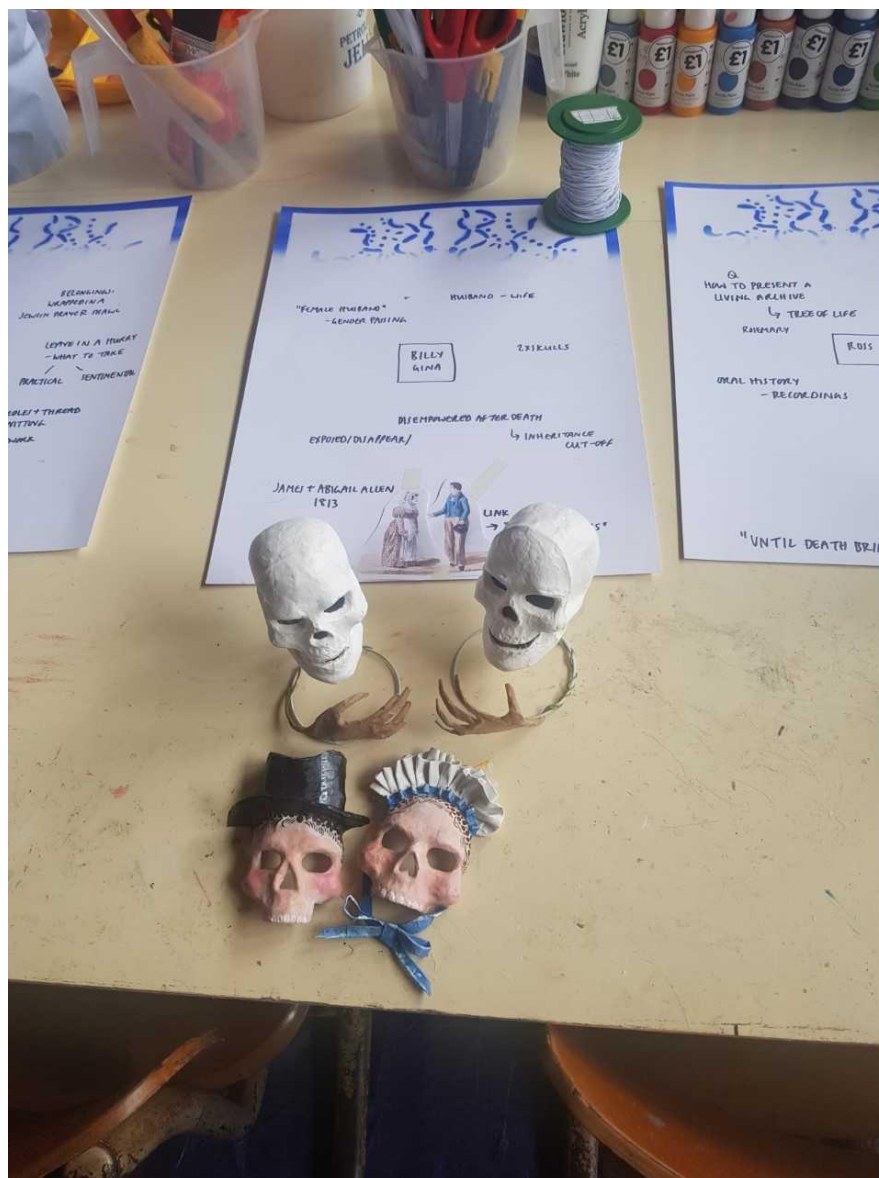


Figure 23 Image taken by me at the 'All That Lives' conference in May 2019.

Presenting at a variety of academic conferences including the annual *British Association of Victorian Studies* and the annual *Urban History* conference has highlighted the importance of engaging with different academic audiences. In March 2019 I was asked to be a part of the initial planning and development of the 'April Ashley and Trans Lives of Liverpool' exhibition in *Liverpool Central Library*.⁴⁷ I used records that were available at the library including the Quarter Sessions papers, newspaper reports, census material, street and trade directories as well as maps and images to retell the life of William Seymour. Part of the completed exhibition can be seen in images in figure 24. This exhibition was something I was particularly proud of and by disseminating my research in a visual way it allowed visitors of the library to engage with gender passing history. Indeed, it is exhibitions like this that seem to answer Tosh's question of why history matters. History matters to educate audiences, to start and continue conversations and it gives people opportunities to be involved and aware of non-traditional history.

⁴⁷ "April Ashley and Trans Lives in Liverpool," displayed in Liverpool Central Library from July 2019 to September 2019. Accessed July 12, 2019 <https://www.artinliverpool.com/events/liverpool-central-library-uncovering-the-archive-of-april-ashley-mbe-and-trans-lives-in-liverpool/>

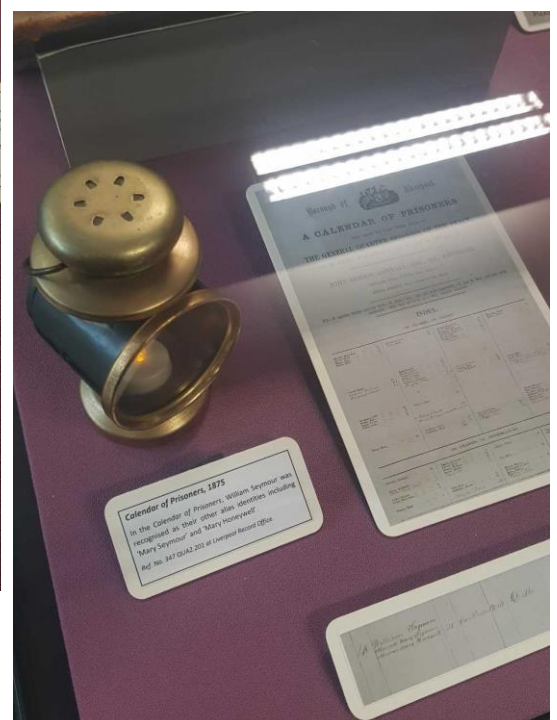


Figure 24 Images taken by me on the launch of April Ashley and Trans Lives Of Liverpool in July 2019 at Liverpool Central Library.

BBC Radio Manchester involved me in their *In This Place: Gaychester* podcast series.⁴⁸ My role was to discuss Harry Stokes's life using the material that has featured heavily throughout this thesis and this was first aired in August 2019. I have always enjoyed teaching people from a young age and I was successful in becoming a tutor with *The Brilliant Club* in 2019 where I have developed a Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 course called *Gender Passing and the Body in Nineteenth Century Britain*.⁴⁹ Some of the activities that have been most successful have included students interviewing Harry Stokes or James Allen and writing their own street ballad. Below is an exert from a fourteen-year-old student encouraging wives to be aware of who they were potentially marrying, and an additional message of support aimed towards historic gender nonconforming people:

Your husband may be a bricklayer,
Or work in any weather,
But please keep in mind,
What may be under his clothes of leather.

If you are hearing this,
And feeling distressed,
Please just keep in mind,
That gender cannot be suppressed.⁵⁰

The drive to participate in so many public engagement projects has been to highlight to adults, the elderly, young people, children, academics and non-academic professionals that gender passing, and gender nonconforming people, are not a new phenomenon, instead, gender nonconformity has always existed. Something which I think I have done successfully particularly when working in a variety of different schools across the Merseyside area. Jo Clifford has argued that 'ever since human beings began to organise themselves there have existed different genders and sexualities outside the heterosexual norm'.⁵¹ This thesis has

⁴⁸ "The Ballad of Harry Stokes," in the series *In This Place: Gaychester* on BBC Radio Manchester. Initially aired in August 2019 and made available on BBC Sounds app in November 2019. Accessed December 12, 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07t646g> [accessed: 13/12/2019 at 16:06].

⁴⁹ The Scholar's Programme with The Brilliant Club, accessed December 13, 2019, <https://thebrilliantclub.org/>.

⁵⁰ This piece of work was produced as a piece of homework after reading the street ballad about James Allen published in Oram and Turnbull's book.

Alison Oram and Annmarie Turnbull ed., *The Lesbian History Sourcebook: Love and Sex between women in Britain from 1780-1970* (London: Routledge, 2001).

⁵¹ Jo Clifford, 'Introduction' in *Introduction to Transgender Studies* edited by Ardele Haefele-Thomas's (New York: Harrington Press, 2019), xxix.

demonstrated just how successful these nonconforming individuals were in living their ordinary, yet extraordinary, lives.

Due to my many public events and presentations and my willingness to present my research at a variety of events I have been approached by organisers to contribute to the Transgender Day of Visibility celebrations in March 2021. During lockdown I was commissioned to write a book review for Jen Manion's *Female Husbands: A Trans History* for the *Journal of Victorian Culture*. I was also asked to contribute to an online symposium for *Outing the Past* that was cancelled this year due to Covid-19. These opportunities have presented themselves to me through engaging in conversations with different people and organisations. In July 2020 I was awarded a *Postgraduate Outstanding Communicator* award after being nominated by my supervisors and I have had the opportunity to speak to a variety of people online from different areas of the university about the ways I have disseminated my research outside of academia. My public engagement events and their impact are something I am extremely proud of. Research is not meant to sit in a book or be held at a library, instead, it should reach different audiences and be shared with people and only the researcher is responsible for doing this.

Ultimately, this thesis has confirmed two things. Firstly, it has argued that gender is an active and performative identity. It was an identity to be crafted and maintained in the nineteenth century. Secondly, this thesis has highlighted that gender passing individuals were active members of their communities. They supported their families, maintained a regular income and were good examples of working-class men. The success of their gender performances was expressed through an acknowledgment of the 4 C's of Passing framework that has been discussed throughout. By performing confidently and consistently as men, whilst concealing their biological bodies gender passing individuals were viewed positively by the press. Gender passing individuals demonstrated their commitment to their lives as men and their roles as husbands and fathers, they were confident in executing masculine values, and they were consistent in their gender performativity. Gender passing individuals proved categorically that it was about performing the expectations of masculinity in nineteenth-century Britain in an obvious, recognisable, and acceptable manner that rendered the individual a success. Ultimately these performances proved incontestably that not every man was a male.

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