

Lili Elber's Psychoanalysis of Gender Transformation in *The Danish Girl*

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Abstract

The point of exploration of the paper is to break down Lili Elber's (Eddie Redmayne) sexual orientation and change in the film *The Danish Girl* (2015); coordinated by Tom Hooper, the film received numerous accolades including The Academy Award in 2016. In the movie the character Gerda isn't well known like husband Einar in painting. She requests that Einar wear her dresses and posture as a female model for her canvas; she names the model as Lili Elber. The movie witnesses a turning point when Einar feels the gentility in him. In this paper the researcher has tried to analyse the character Lili-Elber in the light of the Psycho-analytical theories of Sigmund Freud. The film beautifully portrays the lovely female character in a man's body and the agony of by-taking a very exploratory sex reassignment medical procedure. Lili turns a transgender pioneer. The incredible acting of Eddie as Lili laves an impact on the mind of the people. A scene that takes place in the Royal Academy of Arts is extr-ordinary. Sigmund Freud's Psycho-analytical Theory can be traced in through the torments that Lili experience both physically and mentally. The movie *The Danish Girl* surpasses the social taboos and limits of sexual orientations.

Keywords: *Psychoanalysis, transgender, hypothesis.*

The Danish Girl (2015), directed by Tom Hooper, investigates Einar Wegner's (Eddie Redmayne) sexual character notwithstanding the solid social shame and Transgenderism. Tom Hooper a well known British Filmmaker; won the Academy Award for Best Director in 2011 pursued by BAFTA Award thus numerous striking honors. Lucinda Coxon is the screen playwright, she likewise won Satellite Award for best Adapted Screenplay for *The Danish Girl*; featuring with Eddie Redmayne OBE British performing artist, the Academy Award champ for the film *The Theory of Everything*, 2014. The movie was adopted from David Ebershoff's *The Danish Girl*. It was distributed in 2000 by the Viking Press in United States of America and Allen Unwin Press in Australia. It won Lambda Literary Award for the Supporting Actress to Alicia Vikander (Gerda Wegner). It additionally won Grande Prêmio do Cinema Brasileiro for Best Foreign Language Film by Popular Vote.

The movie is about Artist Gerda Wegner (Alicia Vikander) who asks her husband Einar (Eddie Redmayne) an extraordinary painter; to act like a female model (Lili) for a work of art. She paints her husband and her works were turn out to be so popular by the model Lili. Later the change occurs really. Einar experiences a sex reassignment medical procedure that would in the long run makes Lili an outstanding transgender pioneer. It was "Biologically Impossible" says psychiatrist John Hopkins. The novel is based on the incidents that happen in the life of Lili. Despite the fact that the movie goes under "LGBT" one can profoundly think about the character of Lili/Einar by applying Freud's Psychoanalysis. In the event that the hypothesis connects on Lili/Einar we can examinations the agony of sexual personality in spite of in Einar Wegner.

Einar is a famous Danish painter. Einar tries to explore his gender identity whether he is a male or female. He remains mentally as Lili Elbe and physically as Einar. His personal identity and gender does not correspond with each other. He says Lili is trapped inside a male's body. His consciousness separates the roleplay of both Einar and Lili. He needs to bring out Lili from the body of Einar; the internal sexual antagonistic selection. A complicated and sensitive story by applying Sigmund Freudian Psychoanalytic criticism supposes that much "narrative is the expression of desires and anxieties emanating from the unconscious part of the mind. They reside there as a consequence of the earlier repression of troubling episodes typically experienced in childhood." (J.A.Cuddon & M.A.R Habib, 568).

When we analyse the character from a psychoanalytic perspective: the movie centers around the character and his childhood. Paris restaurant scene ends with Hans and Gerda's discussion about the childhood of Einar. The audience comes to know about the central theme of the movie, only when Einar actually becomes Lili. Hans, Einar's friend says "he wears his grandma's apron, it tempted Hans to kiss, he kisses him, Einar was beautiful I kissed him his father kicked me away", this moment marks the birth of femininity inside Einar

"The apparel oft proclaims the man" (*Act I, Scene 3, 3*). If a person wears the apparel of a police, he/she will become a policeman unconsciously more than the physical change. The apparel has the ability to shape the brain and attitude of the character. Likewise, Einar gets triggered by the female attires, when Gerda uses Einar as her model; He gets disturbed psychologically. He sits in a different pose and he starts to feel some strangeness in himself. Gerda makes some changes in 'feminising' his pose. Einar feels the fabric by touching and feeling its softness.

Einar's movements attributes to the feminine quality. She brings out Lili from inside her husband. Ulla called Einar as Lili. Like twin babes inside from mother's womb, Einar is physically one with two spirits. He starts to feel the femininity by wearing the dresses of Gerda in him. Rasmussen a partly goat man, Einar's dealer, accepted her paintings. When both have decided to become physically one, she unbuttons him, Einar peels off his shirt underneath, and he wears Gerda's laced ship unconsciously. But Gerda rises to the occasion. Feels the fabric against his body. Clothes denote the inner feelings of human beings. For instance, in the Shakespearean play Hamlet, Black clothes denotes the melancholic state of Hamlet. Unconscious state of Einar to wear Gerda's fabrics inside his male suit, symbolizes the femininity of Einar which traps inside the male anatomy. Further, the element of fabric has given Einar to feel the feminine quality as Lili.

Einar's desire and anxiety emanating from the unconscious part of his mind to go along with Gerda as Lili to Royal Academy of arts. He disguises himself as Lili, and he is introduced as Einar's cousin. Lili is the belle at the ball, Royal Academy, in Denmark. Lili looks like old fashioned in his female attire in the society. Einar/Lili seems to be the most distinguished woman in this ball and that make Lili gets discomfort with the surroundings, He never let Gerda's hands in the ball and she requests by saying "You won't leave me, will you? She looks down at Einar/Lili's grip on her hand. She replies no, no never". They move together, and the people around the ball has started to stare at Lili, she looks away, blushing. Gerda replies "well you're a pretty girl, you'll have to get used to that". Psychoanalysis uplifts to the next level when Henrick Sandahl (Lili's gay lover), a handsome young man is introduced to the scene. Everybody is stolen by the ravishing beauty of Lili, and Henrick steps forward to see Lili.

"Lili sits at the edge of the dance floor on a bench. Henrick studies her closely; he goes and sits besides her. Lili takes a notebook from her bag and begins to jot down consciously. Henrick starts a conversation with Lili and enquires about her. Henrick looks so romantic; Lili steals a look at him. They move to the life drawing room, they sit on a bench in the lee of a sculpted classical nude and "Lili's cheeks burn". He gets fascinated. Henrick 'you're different from other girls and old-fashioned'. She becomes discomfort; Her Heart beats faster. Henrick says no it's more than that. I feel I'd need to ask permission before I kiss you.

He kisses her. When he releases her she gasps, and he kisses her again, finds his passion returned this time when she finally catches her breath she can't look at him. Without the permission of Lili again he kisses her because he didn't want to take the risk if she says no. Gerda gets shocked to see through the window and she sees that Lili and Henrick kissing each other, Gerda fasten her self, Lili falls down, she quickly takes her weight, now Einar's in grotesque drag, smeared with make-up and blood". When beauty fades out the real face of Einar comes out, his consciousness and gender identity by disguising Lili, He allows Henrick to kiss and admire; he forgets who he is? It is because of apparel.

Einar says to Gerda “But I wasn’t always me there was a moment when I was just Lili”. Gerda start to panic, “This is absurd .We need to stop make it stop Einar”. He replies her plainly by I am going to try. In love, Einar consciously to play two roles: Einar’s wife and Henrick’s Lady love.

In the costume shop, he starts to off his coat. He undresses before the mirror; reflects what one does. But one can’t show this to the external world. But Privately mirror reflects what one does. It’s furthermore the mirror reflects the world of every individual who looks at it. Likewise, the mirror is the world of Lili. The most important transformation scene has taken place in the costume shop. Einar consciously wants to see Lili through the mirror, his inner emotions overflows and fantasies him. His unconscious was conscious after making this transformation scene.

“There’s a desperation about him. But now he sees: the front of his shirt gapes reveals a cleavage, formed by his rounded shoulders. Einar is compelling...nervously unbuttons his shirt to the waist and leans forward again the effect is starting. He traced the shape of his ‘breasts’ with trembling hands. With a new urgency, he quickly strips off shirt, trousers, terrified that someone might catch him, yet driven to press on. He pulls off his underwear, returns to the mirror, and pushes his cock back between his legs, squeezing his thighs tight until he has an approximation of a vagina. He rounds his shoulders, takes in the arresting transformation, breathless with excitement, terror a sense of impending inevitable transgression”.

Being Lili, she loves Henrick, she is been meeting Henrick regularly, once she steps into his house, he starts to have a good romantic conversation and kisses Lili, and Henrick fastens Lili to have a sexual play but Lili can’t fulfill Henrick’s desire and Lili step out from Henrick’s house. The phenomenological conflict between Lili and Einar in the body, Lili often comes and loves Henrick but Einar’s male anatomy cannot give sexual companionship towards Henrick. The problem for Lili is Einar’s male sex organ. Gerda asks Einar you are in love, Einar replies no, I love you Gerda, only you; but Lili. Gerda’s eyes gush out of tears and angry on Einar. Gerda ask Einar, I want my husband back; plainly Einar replies ‘no, I can’t’. Totally Gerda felt absurd. Lili’s soul fights and wins.

Hexler enquires about the marriage, Einar replies, six years of marriage, no children, regularly coupling (sexual intercourse) happens but Einar’s spirit can’t be Einar. He asks about Lili, He replies; she comes from inside me. After, Hexler fails to cure Einar. “It’s not the confused state of masculinity and infertility”, changes happening in the spirits; Einar is not insane to cure. Stephen Hawking says, “Women are the most intriguing mystery”. Femininity is not only by dressing even the attitude and physical actions women are entirely different from men for example Eve was mysterious than Adam. Einar wants to study the actions of female; he starts to imitate the actions of the female in everywhere in Denmark shore.

Einar goes to Rue De Nuit (night street) a brothel house in Paris, he is behind the dark window, “ Einar studies the girl and gradually his body begins to mirror her, a parody of female abandon. We see his reflection in the glass now, gradually eclipsing breath of relief. He did, he studies with his consciousness, and we can learn the male and female anatomy’s different; both gender can disguise but the physical action male cannot do the same as female does.

When Hans Axgil appears in front of Einar, He is disguised as Lili, Einar don't want to reveal himself to his friend. The tragedy at this moment also takes place to Gerda than Einar. Gerda asks Einar “I need my husband. Just get him.” Einar as Lili “I can’t, she loses her hope. Gerda’s words are too emotional, she asks Einar/Lili I want to talk to my husband. I want to hold my husband. I need him. Can you get him? Can you at least try? Lili finally shakes her head desperately says sorry. She asked Lili to stop the game, but Lili reply how could I be? Look at me! Complete in psychologically transforms.

Einar has a hope to find an answer, He goes to Biblioteque Nationale, a library, Einar reads, driven, fascinate, he reads the books: “*The normal and Abnormal man*” by Dr. Clement Gauthier, “*A scientific study of sexual immorality*”. Identity crisis Einar again comes out unconsciously to get the solution for Lili. Now he is like a woman dressed as a man. Einar and Hans meet each other, which reveals his painful situation and thanks him for taking care of his wife Gerda. Einar struggles to be himself by saying “Every Morning I promise myself I’ll spend the whole day as Einar. But there’s so little Einar left” he says to Hans. Einar “I think sometimes about killing Einar. It’s only the thought that I’d be killing Lili too that stops me” says to Hans.

Gerda confess to Einar/Lili that ‘did I do this to you? If she, has not been for paintings’. Lili won’t come. Einar replies softly ‘you helped, bringing Lili to life, but she was always’. These dialogues are to heal Einar like the psychoanalysis therapy does. Gerda accepts Einar as Lili, the prime aim of psychoanalysis therapy making their unconscious, conscious and a hope for curing Einar. An existentialistic attitude towards Einar to live as Lili forever, Gerda helps her husband. Einar and Gerda met Warnekros for gender reverse; he also explains and warned that surgery never took before. Warnekros explains, “Two operations, the first to remove the male parts entirely. The second once you were strong again to construct a vagina”. Einar and Gerda look each other and he also warned by saying an irreversible change, and a high risk of failure, of infection, complications. Gerda says it’s too dangerous but Einar’s only hope. If it’s done Einar won’t be husband when he finished. Einar departs to Dresden, Germany, by having a sad love departure from Gerda.

Lili says this is not my body, “professors please take it away”. He accepts it. Each and every moment after the soul of Einar changes to Lili, Even the soul of Lili wants a female body in order to marry Henrick and to bare a child. A conversation with Ursula; she bares a child. Her words are inspiring to Lili to be a mother. Lili smiles at her with full of optimism. “Lili looks in the mirror at Einar for the last time”. Before Einar looks Lili in the mirror in the scene of the costume shop, Denmark, now its Lili looks Einar in the mirror for the last time. The Mirror reflects the actions, which we can’t exhibit in public. It’s a world of every individual without any discrimination. Einar’s spirit loses permanently in the physical state. Prof. Warnekros removes the sex organ of Einar and Lili’s spirit adopts the body of impotent.

Sketching plays a vital role in the movie, only sketching makes Lili comes out from Einar. Lili says to Gerda “what you drew; I become you made me more beautiful, now you’re making me strong, such powers in you”. The words are so beautiful. Einar is died (Einar transforms to Lili), even the dialogue of Gerda reveals her pain of her husband’s death. “It’s not so long ago we were married, you and me”. Lili replies to Gerda you and Einar, a painful reply to Gerda but that’s the sad reality. She replies, “I know it was Einar. But really it was you and me”. It shows the real love between Einar and Gerda. Henrick and Lilicame to gather, ‘Henrick reveals he is a gay’. Also, ask her He (God) made you a woman? “Lili replies god made me a woman. The doctor cures the sickness that was my disguise”. Gerda catch them from far. Even the questions hang between them “a real women?” “Yes, she is a woman without her vagina, she fastens her self to do the second operation, and it is not so easy to do. It will be a painful experience for her.

Lili shares her dreams to Gerda. In the move, it is two important things that made this movie more beautiful one was ‘mirror and dreams’. “Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung says dreams can reveal’s a person’s deepest unconscious wishes and desires”. Likewise Lili’s or Gerda’s dreams are the important part of the movie. Lili’s dream is a beautiful one she dreamt that she was a baby in her mother’s arms and her mother looked at her and called her Lili to the most of sad thing she is dead as Lili Elbe not as Einar. She may be at the hands of Einar’s mother in heaven; Not as Einar but as Lili Elbe. In the end of the movie, Gerda and Hans moves to Kattegat Sea, Jutland. The cliffs overlooking in the morning, a wonderful place, once painted by Einar in the studio house. She visited the place, her scarf flying like a flag at her throat it a stunning view. A rectangle of the ferociously strong sea, silver waves whipped by a wind. Gerda with tears of joy in her eyes, it was a stunning farewell, the scarf dances out from the cliff, out to sea into eternity.

The aim of the research paper is to prove Lili Elber’s Psychoanalysis of Gender Transformation in *The Danish Girl*. It is based on the real incident took place in the life of a Danish painter Einar later Lili Elbe. “‘Sex change’ is biologically impossible,” said McHugh. “People who undergo sex-reassignment surgery do not change from men to women or vice versa. Rather, they become feminized men or masculinized women. This paper is focused on the sufferings of both Psychological, physiological, by Einar to Lili. In the movie, *The Danish girl* has two important symbols, mirror and dream. Both the symbols are made the movie more sensitive among the audience. By applying the Sigmund Freudian psychoanalysis we come to know about the character Lili in detail. The movie centers on love. Gerda Einar’s wife loves Einar, Einar loves his wife but the transformation made the love separate, Henrick loves Lili, she also loves him but not as Einar only as Lili. *The Danish girl* exceeds the social taboos and boundaries of genders. From this movie the audience can learn to respect the feelings of others.

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