

Illustrations in *Man into Woman*

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The scholarly reception of *Man into Woman: An Authentic Record of a Change in Sex* has highlighted the importance of analyzing paratextual components, as we note in the Introduction to the print scholarly edition. Any collation of the four primary editions, published in three languages between 1931 and 1933, requires special attention to the illustrations. Indeed, the variation in the number, selection, and captioning of the illustrations across the editions tells its own story about how these various witnesses understand the subject matter of this narrative (“a Change in Sex”) and the protagonist (Lili Elbe). Since the typescript has no illustrations, this essay discusses the published editions only. As in the print edition, we use the American edition (A1) as our base text in the digital edition and archive.¹

The first edition of Lili Elbe’s life narrative, *Fra Mand til Kvinde* (D1), published in 1931, has only two photographs, both appearing at the beginning of the narrative. The first frontispiece (i01: “Einar Wegener (Andreas Sparre)”) is the same as the illustration facing page 80 in A1 (i05) where a date is added to the caption: “Einar Wegener (Andreas Sparre), 1929.” This illustration also appears in the British edition (B1, i08.) The second frontispiece, a photograph of Lili reading in the garden of the Women’s Clinic captioned simply “Lili Elbe,” appears in no other edition. These images positioned in close proximity at the beginning of the book encourage a reading of the narrative as captured in the Danish title, “from man to woman.” If the Danish edition did not establish the common practice of before-and-after illustrations in

¹ We are using the abbreviations for the four primary editions from the print scholarly edition. Illustrations are numbered as i01, i02, etc. for each edition. For a comparison of all illustrations and captions across the four editions, we refer readers to the illustration spreadsheet under Commentary.

transgender narratives, it clearly buttresses that convention. In contrast, the frontispiece in both the American and British editions is a single image of Einar Wegener, and in the German edition, a single image of Lili Elbe with the Matron at the Women's Clinic (dated June 1930).

The Danish edition also contains two handwriting samples to illustrate the dramatic change in Andreas after the first operation in Berlin, a change remarked upon in the narrative (A1 131, 283).² All four editions include handwriting samples, though the placement differs. D1 places them at the beginning, following the two photographs discussed above.³ Both images are the same as the handwriting samples in A1 (i17 and i18) and B1 (i23 and i24); in A1 and B1, the samples appear toward the end of the narrative (A1 280; B1 260). The captions in all three editions (A1, B1, and D1) identify the author and date of the letters from which the samples are taken (Einar Wegener, January 29, 1930, and Lili Elbe, June 14, 1931), but the Danish edition adds descriptions that interpret the scripts for the reader: "*Skripten er, som man vil se, fast og tydelig, en udpræget Mandsskrift.* [The handwriting, as you will see, is firm and clear, a distinct man's writing.]" (i03) and "*Skripten har forandret sig og er nu en flydende, ret veg Kvindeskrift.* [The handwriting has changed and is now a flowing, rather feeble woman's writing.]" (i04).⁴ The English-language editions offer no such commentary, but the caption for the second sample in A1 diverges significantly from B1 and D1. The latter editions identify the letter writer as Lili Elbe whereas A1 reads: "Fragment of Letter written June 14, 1931, by Einar Wegener (Andreas

² "He [Andreas] gazed at the card and failed to recognize his writing. It was a woman's script" (A1 131).

³ For ease of reference, and in conformity with the List of Illustrations in A1, we number each handwriting sample as a separate illustration, though they appear together in a single page in all the editions.

⁴ Marianne Ølholm, the Danish translator on our project, notes that the word "veg" can be translated as "weak," "feeble," "yielding" (as in submissive) or "spineless." To translate it as "supple" or "delicate" would give it a more positive meaning that the word carries. The word choice serves to confirm the gender dichotomy the narrative reinforces in that Lili presents herself as weak and submissive. Google Translate renders "ret" as "straightforward" ("ret" can also mean "straight") instead of "rather," a translation that distorts the gendered contrast.

Sparre), after he had been transformed into the woman, Lili Elbe” (i18), the caption providing an encapsulated story of the sex change. Here as in other captions the American edition insists that Lili is essentially Einar.

The German edition, *Ein Mensch wechselt sein Geschlecht*, published in 1932, also places the handwriting samples at the beginning of the book, following the Foreword (G1 i02), though the samples in the German edition differ from those in the others. Where in the Danish and English-language editions, both samples are excerpts from letters written in Danish, in the German edition, the samples are from a dedication page (*Widmungsblatt*) of Einar’s co-authored book, *Le Livre des Vikings*. The first is Einar’s dedication in Danish to his father inscribed in 1924; the second sample is in French and is Lili Elbe’s dedication of the same book to Niels Hoyer in 1931. Why these handwriting samples were changed in the German edition is not documented in any archival materials we have found, but in the narrative, Lili gives a copy of this book to her German friend (the character modeled on the editor, Niels Hoyer) and so the handwriting samples may have been changed to conform more closely to the narrative.⁵ Since the English-language version was translated from the German edition, why the American and British editions reverted to the samples in the Danish edition remains a mystery, for the two dedications likewise suggest the difference described in D1, a shift from a firmer script to a more flowing one.

⁵ Writing to her friend from the Women’s Clinic after the last operation, Lili says:

“I should like to give you a little present. Hence I am sending you Andreas’ book, *Le Livre des Vikings*, which he published in 1924, in conjunction with Ch. Gyuot [sic.] at L’Edition d’Art H. Piazza, Paris. You are to keep it as a memento. Look at the first page! Andreas has written on it: ‘To my dear father—from Andreas, Paris 21.2.1924. And underneath I have written: ‘To my friend . . . Lili Elbe, Copenhagen, 5th June, 1931.’” (A1 285).

Of the nine illustrations in the German edition, three are presented in a side-by-side display that is not used in the other editions, reinforcing the before-and-after photographic convention of many transgender narratives. Only three of the nine illustrations in G1 also appear in A1. The first one is captioned “*Andreas Sparre (Einar Wegener) als Zwanzigjähriger* [Andreas Sparre (Einar Wegener) at the age of 20]” (G1 i03). This photograph appears as the frontispiece in A1 where the names are reversed and the age replaced by a date: “Einar Wegener (Andreas Sparre) about 1920.” In 1920 Einar would have been thirty-eight, not twenty as specified in the German caption. It is likely that H. J. Stenning mistranslated the German reference to age as a date, for at the age of 20 Einar had not yet married Gerda, and in a self-portrait from 1904, when he was 22, Einar sports a soft beard, as in the illustration. By 1920, when he was 38, Einar had been Gerda’s model for nearly a decade, and in photographs from 1917 and 1924, he is clean-shaven, offering further evidence of a mistranslation.⁶ The name order in the G1 caption, identifying the figure as Andreas first, then Einar, emphasizes the fictionality of the narrative. The reordering of the names in A1 and B1 presents the figure in the photograph as historical, not fictional.

The second illustration in G1 appearing in A1 as well is a painting by Gerda Wegener with Lili as model (G1 i04), undated in A1 (i10). The caption in G1, “*Ein Gemälde von Gerda Wegener, Paris 1921, zu dem Andreas Sparre als Lili Modell gestanden hat* [A Portrait by Gerda Wegener, Paris 1921, with Andreas Sparre as the model Lili]” departs from the usual practice: here G1 names Andreas (not Einar) as the model whereas the caption in A1 simply states “with Lili as model.” (Typically, though, the American edition identifies Lili as Einar more often than

⁶ For the self-portrait and two photographs referred to here, see the catalogue of the exhibition of Gerda Wegener’s paintings at the ARKEN Museum (pages 81, 8, and 25, respectively).

the others.) The third illustration that appears in both G1 and A1 is a photograph of “Lili Elbe in the Women’s Clinic, Dresden 1930” (A1 i11). The caption in G1 does not identify the person in the photograph; it simply states “*Dresden 1930, Nach der Operation* [Dresden 1930, after the operation]” (G1 i08).

None of the other illustrations in G1 appear in A1. One illustration, however, does appear in both G1 and B1: a porcelain figure of a woman with a dog, attributed to Einar Wegener. In G1 the caption reads “*Eine Porzellanplastik von Andreas Sparre (Einar Wegener) Paris 1928*” (i06); In B1 it is captioned “Porcelain Figure by Einar Wegener (Andeas Sparre)” (i02). This illustration is misidentified in both editions. Einar Wegener never worked in porcelain, at least not to our knowledge, but the Wegeners’ close friend with whom they stayed in Beaugency, Léon Leyritz (Jean Tempête in the narrative), did sculpt in porcelain, producing figures of theatrical characters and perfume bottles for the Parisian perfumer Jean Desprez. The figure in this illustration is likely Lili and the Wegeners’ dog, Hvappe, sculpted by Leyritz.⁷

The other illustrations appearing in G1 alone are mainly photographs taken before the operation, dated Paris 1918 and Paris 1929 (i07 and i11), and after the operation, dated Dresden 1930 (i09 and i012) and Copenhagen, 1930 (i10). One image, though, is a painting by Gerda Wegener from 1922 (G1 i05) whose figures are identified as Lili, a ballerina from the Royal Theater in Copenhagen (Ulla Poulsen), Elena (Hélène Allatini’s prototype in the narrative), and the artist, Gerda, in the background (and, unmentioned in the caption, Hvappe, the dog). No illustration in G1 contains photographs of Einar Wegener’s paintings. Andreas/Einar’s role as an artist is downplayed in the German illustrations.

⁷ Possibly “von” was mistranslated from the German and the caption in B1 should read “of” rather than “by.” In that case, however, it would likely identify the model as Lili, not Andreas. It seems more likely a case of misattribution.

The American edition has eighteen illustrations compared with twenty-five in its British counterpart. Interestingly, of the seven photographs missing in A1 (for A1 was likely produced from stereotype plates of B1 and thus the photographs must have been purposely removed), five are photographs of Einar Wegener's art (the porcelain figurine, misattributed to Wegener, and four paintings), and one is a photograph of an older Gerda Wegener (Grete Sparre in the narrative) sitting on a couch with three of her paintings on the wall behind her (B1, i13). The seventh is a photograph of Einar, Gerda, and two French friends (unidentified) dated "Chambord, France, 1926" (B1 i05) in which Einar sports his characteristic pose of hand on hip evident in photographs of Lili as well. What these omissions seems to suggest is that the American edition, like the German, seeks to downplay Wegener as an artist figure, playing up the sensationalism of his transformation. The American edition contains only two illustrations of Einar's paintings, compared with six in the British. When considered in light of the only other difference between the two English-language editions, namely the captioning of illustrations, the American edition in effect emphasizes the definitive "change" from man into woman more so than its British counterpart. The difference in the captions is best illustrated by the second illustration in A1 (facing page 40), which carries the caption: "Einar Wegener (Andreas Sparre) Posing as Lili, Paris, 1926" (i02). The same photograph in B1 (i03) is captioned "Lili, Paris, 1926." The American edition emphasizes Lili as a rôle, a performance; the British edition acknowledges her as a person. Similarly, the photograph of Lili and Claude is captioned in A1, "Einar Wegener (Andreas Sparre) at the time he began to assume the name of Lili, and her friend Claude, Beaugency, France, 1928 (before the operation)" (i03); in B1 the caption reads, "Lili and her friend Claude, Beaugency, France, 1928 (before the operation)" (i06). With one exception, this

difference is consistent across the illustrations in the English-language versions.⁸ Where B1 identifies Lili Elbe, A1 reminds us that the figure in these photographs is actually Einar Wegener, who had been transformed into, assumed the name of, or posed as Lili Elbe.

Paratextual materials affect the reading of gender in this work as much as the variances in narrative elements, lexical choices, and pronoun use. The selection and captioning of illustrations across these editions represent competing understandings of gender and emphasize different aspects of the story. With nine illustrations of the Wegeners' paintings (not counting the misattributed porcelain figure), the British edition pays the most attention to the artistic lives of the protagonists. With its omission of any paintings by the Wegeners and its side-by-side display of photographs, two of them depicting before-and-after pictures, the illustrations in the German edition, as in the Danish, downplay that aspect of the Wegeners' lives to focus on Lili's emergence. The American edition insistently "deadnames" Lili, to adopt a contemporary term, underscoring Einar's transformation. As we note in the Introduction to the print scholarly edition, readers of these various editions get different narratives of Lili's life, but they also get different conceptions of what a change in gender identity means. The illustrations and their captions disclose how these variant editions understand the subject of this narrative and subtly affect how each presents the history of transgender

⁸ That exception is a photograph of Lili in A1 dated 1930 that reads, "Einar Wegener (Andreas Sparre) after having definitely assumed the name of Lili, Paris, January 1930" (i06), whereas the same photograph in B1 is captioned, "Einar Wegener (Andreas Sparre) impersonating Lili // Paris, January 1930" (i10).