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SOUL, LOVE AND ART IN "GAROTA DINAMARQUESA" (DANISH GIRL) - GENDER, CULTURE AND ITS REPRESENTATIONS IN CINEMA

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Abstract: The film: *A garota dinamarquesa*, de 2015, presents the spectator with Einar Wegener, a famous Danish painter, his wife, Gerda Wegener and a trajectory of love, suffering and struggle for the affirmation of their gender identity. This production deals with sensitive topics, such as transsexuality, marriage and even friendship. When we question the existence of respect for differences when we realize that much of our western culture is still immersed in its complexes and projections, remaining ignorant of its own identity and knowing little about its own gender. In this article, I sought to elucidate these aspects in an intimate analysis of Lili Elbe, as well as representations of her in Gerda Wegener's paintings.

Keywords: Lili Elbe. "The Danish girl" (*Garota Dinamarquesa*), transsexuality.

INTRODUCTION

This article conducts a theoretical discussion about the film: "*A Garota Dinamarquesa*" (2015), I sought to analyze how issues of gender, relationships and culture were addressed in cinematography. I argued, in the intimacy of Lili Elbe, through the materials chosen, for this purpose, in an attempt to carry out a more intimate analysis of the character.

Furthermore, it is worth questioning the existence of respect for differences when we realize that much of our western culture is still immersed in its complexes and projections, remaining ignorant of its own identity and knowing little about its own gender. Covered in their Mayan veils, ignoring that we are born with both male and female characteristics (man/woman), or, furthermore, the psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung in his renowned "Red Book", mentions that "the male and female person, not It's just a man or just a woman. Our soul cannot say what gender it is. These are questions that we

appreciate when reading the work of Jung and post-Jungians. The archetypes of Anima and Animus, eternally guide our existence.

For the research on Lili Elbe, I based myself on materials such as: "The Danish girl" (*Garota Dinamarquesa*), a 2015 film, paintings by Gerda Gottlieb, Lili's ex-wife, photographs and the book "Man into a woman: A Comparative Scholarly Edition". Furthermore, for a deeper study, I relied on articles that address issues of body, gender and identity and on concepts by psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This article aimed to analyze aspects that had some connection to the psychology of the artists. For that, it had as theoretical foundation, themes developed by the Swiss psychiatrist, Carl Gustav Jung. I use concepts such as the anima archetype, ego complex, theory of complexes and archetypes that touch the feminine, when penetrating the intimate about Lili Elbe. Regarding Gerda Wegener, I will address the archetype of the great mother and the striking traits of an Animus that manifests itself in the artist, in her behavior, strong and determined, beyond the standards of her time. All these themes are part of Jung's works.

The analysis based on elements from Lili Elbe's diary, which was used in the film's cut: *A Garota Dinamarquesa*. In this form of self-writing, the discussion is integrated within the scope of art analysis. Just as, for a deeper study of Lili Elbe's diary, concepts from the author Maurice Blanchot were used.

The intimate diary, which seems so free of form, so docile to the movements of life and capable of all freedoms, since thoughts, dreams, fictions, self-comments, important and insignificant events, everything suits you, in order and in As much disorder as you like, you are subject to an apparently light but dangerous clause: you must respect the calendar. This is the pact he signs

Thus, for writing a diary, according to the author, it is necessary to identify the day on which such writing was carried out, with a certain periodicity. The diaries, as well as Elbe's letters, have this configuration and this way, due to details such as the date, we were able to delve deeper into them.

SOUL, LOVE AND ART IN THE "GAROTA DINAMARQUESA"

'A GAROTA DINAMARQUESA' (2015)

'A garota dinamarquesa', a 2015 production, directed by Tom Hooper and starring Eddie Redmayne and Alicia Vikander, can be defined as a very sensitive film, as it addresses delicate topics such as transsexuality, marriage and even friendship.

The film introduces the viewer to Einar Wegener, a famous Danish painter from 1928 who supports his wife, Gerda Wegener, to be a painter like him, he supports and encourages her. But his wife cannot fully express what she feels in the painting. On one occasion, she decides to do a portrait of a ballerina in a long dress. However, the model does not show up to be portrayed and the painter decides to ask her husband for help in striking the pose so that she can do the portrait.

At that moment, Einar appears to be uncomfortable, but it is noticeable that this moment causes an internal spark to rise in the character and a different glow in his eyes. Shortly after this scene, a friend of the couple enters the studio with a bouquet of lilies, she smiling tells Einar that her name would now be Lily (Lily in English).

A further event to this was the presence of Einar, as Lili, at an event. Lili was introduced as a cousin of Einar. However, it is not from this moment on that Lili is considered transgender. According to Arán, we can define transsexuality as the "intense feeling of not belonging to the anatomical

sex, without the manifestation of delusional disorders and without organic bases (such as hermaphroditism or any other endocrine anomaly)" (ARÁN, 2006, p. 50).

With that, it is inferred that this event was a hook that the character needed, an awakening to something that was already inherent in her, her sexuality. Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that it was not his wife's request that made Einar "change" his sex, but an internal feeling in his being.

Even after the breakup of the marriage between the characters and Lili's gender resignification, she and Gerda remained close as friends. Gerda takes Lili to doctors, helps with the situation of gender reassignment, demonstrating her unconditional love for the character, we can identify in this relationship the Great Mother Complex As mentioned by Samuels (1989), he explains that being inserted in the domain of the Great Mother, even as an adult, brings "the pleasant and liberating feeling of not having responsibilities." (SAMUELS, 1989, p.94) Gerda has a genuine love for Lili, with special care, even after the separation and resignification surgery, she continues to nurture a friendship and unconditional love for her friend. I realize that both are linked to the archetype, one as a mother and the other as a daughter. Archetypes, from a view of Jacobi (2016), represent a profound enigma that goes beyond our capacity for rational apprehension. In Jacob's interpretation, Jung understands that an archetypal content always expresses a metaphor. According to Jacobi, he considers that the archetype:

It always contains something that remains unknown and unformulable. Therefore, any interpretation cannot necessarily go beyond the "as if..." One cannot directly answer where the archetype comes from, whether it was acquired or not (JACOBI, 2016 p.43).

In this light, in addition to the Great Mother archetype, we can find in the film concepts that surround the Anima archetype, and the

feminine archetypes. The complexes that, when penetrating the intimacy of Lili Elbe, I can thus observe according to the theory that I support. Jung gives us a definition for this theme:

Archetypes are, by definition, factors and themes that order psychic elements, forming certain images (to be designated as archetypal) but in a way that can only be recognized by the effects they produce. They exist preconsciously and supposedly form the structural dominants of the psyche in general [...]. As a priori conditions, archetypes represent the special psychic case of the “pattern of behavior” familiar to the biological and which lends all living beings their specific type. Just as the manifestations of this basic biological blueprint can change in the course of development, so can those of the archetype. Empirically, however, the archetype never came within the reach of organic life. He enters the scene with life (JACOBI, 2016, p.44).

The culture of the last century, a moment lived by Lili, and even nowadays, believes in causes, and in a conception of normality. A transsexual person can care for years to find out why they are like that, and even look for doctors and psychiatrists, as the character in the film did, to try to “fix” them. However, the solution to this problem lies in understanding that no one can heal them but themselves, and that acceptance of their inner self is the way out that will bring joy to the soul.

THE COMPLEXES THAT INVOLVED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LILI ELBE AND GERDA

At first, I will have to say a little about Carl Gustav Jung’s theory of complexes. According to him, complexes are groups of unconscious ideas associated with particular emotionally colored events or experiences. From his initial studies of word association, when he observed that certain words provoke intense reactions and others produce less reaction

than expected, understanding that the theory of complexes is a basic concept in Jungian clinical practice, as we work with materials of the Personal and Collective Unconscious.

Defined by Jung the complex as an image with a high degree of autonomy and related to a certain psychic phenomenon of intense emotional charge. Antagonistic with the dispositions or habitual attitude of conscience” (§201). It has an archetypal core and an internal connection, constituting a totality that, when constellated, tends to distort the perceptions and apprehension of egoic consciousness and interfere with its flow.

For Jung (1934/2013), the complexes, as constituents of the personal unconscious, have their peculiarities such as: autonomy, unconsciousness and repetition. They have autonomous energy, the more unconscious (or distant from the ego complex) they are, the greater their sovereignty over consciousness. We can glimpse the symptoms, through obsessive thoughts and in the oneiric world, the usual path to the unconscious.

In the Jungian clinic, the complexes are tied to the psychic construction of symptoms, and to the conception of dreams. Complexes surround consciousness in their own diegesis and perspective of experiencing and feeling their bonds.

The function of consciousness is to establish a relationship with these ideofective psychic properties, understanding that it is a continuous flow, on the way to our individuation. *“Her motto is: anything but be like mom! It is, on the one hand, a fascination that, however, never becomes an identification, and, on the other, an exacerbation of eros that exhausts itself, however, in a jealous resistance against the mother. Such a daughter knows everything she doesn’t want, but they are often unclear about what she imagines her own destiny to be. Her instincts are concentrated in the mother, in the form of defense, not lending*

itself, therefore, to the construction of her own life.”

I will talk about the Negative Maternal Complex experienced in the sphere of the individual, something I know well, and probably Gerda, just as I experienced it, and I also aim to elucidate in a simple way, deep down, to praise the importance of the feminine, presenting itself in different ways, diverse not only in the figure of the mother, but in the image of a valuable archetype that immersed in the patriarchal society we live in, has its energetic flow compromised, for other symbolic representations, which seems to motivate more the male and female fans and their countless contemporary variations.

“ It seems to me that those who go further in the individuation process almost always have some significant and indeed decisive experience of the unconscious in childhood. It seems to frequently occur, on the part of the inadequacies of the childhood environment or the child’s adaptation difficulties, or both, of a loneliness and dissatisfaction that make the child return to himself. This is equivalent to an influx of libido into the unconscious, which is thus activated and starts to produce symbols and images of value that help to consolidate the child’s threatened individuality. It is frequent the involvement of secret places or private experiences that the child feels as exclusively his and that strengthen his sense of worth in the face of an apparently hostile environment. Although not consciously understood or misunderstood and considered abnormal, these experiences leave a sense that personal identity has a transpersonal source of support. Thus they can sow the seeds of gratitude and devotion to the source of our being, which only emerges into full consciousness much later” (EDINGER, 1972, p. 383).

I spent years debating with my feelings, wanting to run away from my mother and having some contact with her and everything that made me suffer so much. Finally, I got

involved with men as effeminate and lost as I was, who I only found out later that I was the person who encouraged them, more than anyone else, to be free in their sexuality. Not unlike Gerda, I fell in love with men who wouldn’t give it to me for long, the misfortune of a marriage with children and a heteronormative home, so little did I know what was behind these relationships as much as they themselves. I was completely in love with a boyfriend, who later came out as homosexual and I had another passion that took me in a way that I never imagined feeling, again, in my puerile 20 years. Today both are happy with their choices, one of them is a straight female transsexual, and the other has a homo affective relationship, based on marriage. I am very happy, for all of us, and we remain best friends and we have an immense love that surrounds us. Thanks to my training I was finally introduced to the theory of complexes, and soon I identified with the concept of complex theory, in particular the: *Complexo Materno Negativo (Negative Maternal Complex)*, developed by Carl Gustav Jung, I was taken in such a way that I stayed the whole class, paralyzed and with a frightening fear. Luckily for me, I had therapy the next day, guided by my analyst, I started to delve deeper into the subject, and seeing myself being laid bare by Jung, I understood that I was entangled in the maternal complex. My analyst made me read: *Os Arquétipos e o Inconsciente Coletivo* (JUNG 1998), where he presents one of the aspects of the Negative Maternal Complex that is expressed in the form of defense against the mother:

In these daughters “who defend themselves from the mother, there is a spontaneous development of intelligence” (JUNG, 2002, p. 100), with the aim of creating a world, a sphere, where the mother has no place. The isolation is constant and there is no sharing of these intellectual discoveries with the mother,

at most she will exchange with the father who, if he has survived this mother, will also be looking for some corner of the house to hide where, frequently, he will find his daughter, “since both have the same survival strategy: the hiding place not accessible to the mother” (JUNG, 2002, p. 100), and by defending themselves against the woman/mother, they reinforce the sometimes massive presence of the father in the daughter’s psyche. Intellectual development, therefore, is accompanied by an emergence of masculine traits in general, according to Jung:

“This development stems from the daughter’s own needs and is not intended to honor a man she wants to impress by simulating spiritual camaraderie. The purpose is to break the mother’s power through intellectual criticism and superior culture, so as to show her all her stupidity, her logical errors and poor training” (JUNG, 2009, CW 9, ch. IV, p. 100).

“The three extreme types just described (Identification with the mother, Exacerbation of Eros and the Hypertrophy of the Maternal Aspect) are linked together by many intermediate stages, among which I want to mention only the main one. In this intermediate type, it is more a question of an exacerbation or blockage of female instincts than of a defense against the supremacy of the mother, which prevails over everything else. This case is a typical example of the negative mother complex. Her motto is: anything but be like mom! It is, on the one hand, a fascination that, however, never becomes an identification, and, on the other, an exacerbation of eros that exhausts itself, however, in a jealous resistance against the mother. Such a daughter knows everything she doesn’t want, but is generally unclear about what she imagines her own destiny to be. Her instincts are concentrated on the mother, in the form of defense, not lending itself to the construction of her own life” (JUNG, 2002, CW 9, chap. IV, p. 94).

The complexes are small islands and divisions, with a strongly affective and imagery

coloring, capable of acting on the Ego as a possession. Effectively, they are formed in the Ego’s relationship with the world and would be like “products” of traumas, emotional shocks that, in Jung’s words, “pull out a piece of the psyche” (JUNG, 2001, CW 8, § 204). The Negative Maternal Complex is particularly powerful in girls and is capable of marking the entire life and behavior of this future woman, since, being a “foreign body” that causes serious splits, it concentrates a very large amount of energy on the function of defense against mother, dominating the psychic scene and inhibiting the female instincts in the girl:

Returning to Gerda, she marries a man, kind, thoughtful and artist like her, however, this husband, does not sustain the hetero post for long and is succumbing, for his true feminine soul. Soon she becomes the breadwinner of the household,

and the great mother of the newborn LILI. She has to realize that her husband no longer exists, or that she was abandoned by him, once Lili takes her Einar, so much so that the film shows in a scene, her saying to Lili, I want my husband back and has the refusal of this possibility, because the husband who was there, rejects her, despises her appeals and once again, she is alone and loves the fruit of this symbolic love, the new arrival Lili.

“If, despite this, she marries by chance, her marriage only serves to get rid of her mother, or else fate imposes on her a husband with similar character traits to her mother. All instinctive processes and needs encounter unexpected difficulties; sexuality does not work, or children are not welcome, or maternal duties seem unbearable, or the demands of married life are met with irritation and impatience. In a way, all this does not belong to the essential realities of life, since its ultimate end is constituted solely by persistent defense against maternal power. Resistance against the mother as uterus often manifests itself in menstruation disorders, difficulty in becoming pregnant,

horror of pregnancy, bleeding and vomiting during pregnancy, premature births, etc. IV, page 100).

Here I remembered that she, Gerda was never a mother, and Lili dies in an attempt to have a uterus, to generate children. In a quote from the article *Negative maternal complex path to the unconscious*, written by Isa Carvalho, she puts such inquiries on the agenda:

Now, some questions can be raised: what kind of Ego formation is possible in this subjective condition? Since it too is a complex, how will the Ego develop when, at the very moment it is being instituted, the Negative Mother Complex is draining so much energy from the psyche? And the most disturbing question, according to Maroni: “why does the girl defend herself so violently against her mother, why does all her energy go into this? What kind of mother is this?” (MARONI, 2007, page 6). And she continues with her possible inquiries.

From then on, not having enough therapeutic narratives on which to base possible conclusions, I attached myself to the reports of my friends. We saw that our mothers were not welcoming of the feminine, neither in themselves, nor in the girl, nor as a metaphor for the world, as they were “suffered extensions of patriarchy, and the identification with this mother would represent the (psychic) death of the daughter” (MARONI, 2007, p. 6). Our mothers also did not want to live with the extensions suffered by their mothers, without the right to existence, to autonomy and they themselves rebelled against that feminine even more swallowed up by the “patriarchalism” of a more remote time. Therefore, the more we go back in time, the more we find massacred, un-lived, adulterated and abandoned feminines in the lives of countless women.

The feminine experienced by Gerda, Lili, myself, we maintained the desire to create

ourselves, even though stigmatized and with wounds left by our ancestors. As Isa de Carvalho expresses it very well, fulfilling a “triple” journey, the feminine as a psychic metaphor to be experienced continues not to be valued or accepted, on the contrary, it is lost and distances itself from the possibilities of identification amid so many other representations of greater importance, social importance. And history repeats itself, because patriarchal culture is also represented and replicated by the mother herself.

The subjectivity of these women becomes a kind of lame subject, because instinct, one of its most precious parts, has not developed and has not matured. “Without self-esteem, denying themselves, and without feeling the pleasure of living that only their own, instinctive base allows, they developed what Jung calls a negative animus. The first characteristic of a woman taken by the negative animus is the enlargement of the world of opinions, always ready to be used as weapons of attack” (MARONI, 2007, p. 7).

This “enlargement” of a certain aspect of the personality, by itself, already denounces a psychic polarization present in this woman who allocates her instincts and a great amount of energy in some corner of an imaginary trench, shooting at imaginary enemies (some of which are even real ones).), but few of these enemies could be set up as her “mother”, as she will later find out. Such women, with their apparent strong personalities, may become involved in destructive relationships, living, however, the consequences of these relationships in the most absolute secrecy, in the hiding place of childhood, never revealing to their mothers the sufferings of the soul and body they experienced.

The beers and memories shared with my childhood friends only increased the need we felt - and which some had already taken the initiative to do - to “forgive” our mothers,

because it is clear that not only them, but us too, we are aware of how much we reproduce the distortions of a patriarchal society, how much we do not accept and respect the feminine, always seeking to replicate a behavior that devalues and makes monochrome the nuances and colors of the female ego-body-thought, here united, but dissociated in the woman taken by the negative animus.

However, returning to the opening quote that also inspired the development of this article, so much psychic energy channeled into an object, such a feeling of inadequacy and isolation, can also create the foundations for introspection, a necessary movement in the process of self-knowledge, where this girl /woman can find her ways of expression, “placing the uterus in place of the phallus, both as metaphors of penetration and embracement, the embracement of the Negative Maternal Complex itself and of its own destinies. When the judgmental rage subsides, or begins to subside, in its place penetrating thought tends to develop, going phallically towards the obscure, the ambiguous, the instinctive, the unconscious - to try to bring it all to light! (MARONI, 2007, page 9).

THE PICTORIAL ART OF GERDA WEGENER

“The creative process consists of a long series of imaginative leaps on the part of the artist and his attempts to give form to them, shaping the material according to his intentions. Thus, he gradually gives birth to his work through ever-increasing definition of the image, until finally it acquires a visible form.”



On one side, Einar, and on the right, Lili Elbe



Portrait of Lili Elbe by Gerda Gottlieb in Art Deco style



I will analyze the pictorial images of the artist Einar Wegener, before being completely Lili Elbe. Joseph Campbell (1988) shows us that: The images of myth are reflections of the spiritual potential of each one of us. By contemplating them, we evoke their powers in our own lives. Jung tells us *“In the history of the symbol, the tree is described as the path and growth towards the unchanging and eternal, generated by the union of opposites and making it possible through its eternal already existing.”* (JUNG, 2000)

The tree is a great symbol for humanity. Chevalier (2016) says that if we were to analyze the importance of the tree in the symbolic sphere, we would need a book just for that. In addition to the symbolism of the tree in some traditions and the special value of some species for some peoples and religions, the tree itself can be seen as a symbol of psychological development and the individuation process.

Before talking about the symbol that the tree is, it is important to remember that in

several cultures the tree is a sacred symbol, not because it is a tree in the literal sense, but because it represents something that transcends it, such as a god or something connected to the structure of the world and of the universe (CIRLOT, 1984; CHEVALIER, 2016). This article is not intended to explore the symbology of the tree, that is, the appearance of the tree as a symbol, mythologem or manifestation of the divine, but propose a reflection on how the tree, as a living being, regardless of the species, is a symbol of the cycle of life, of the relations between conscious and unconscious and of the transcendent function. We can say that about any plant actually, but the tree, being the one that naturally “seeks the heavens” is more symbolic in this sense.

From the seed, the tree holds within itself all the potential for becoming. Some seeds even only “awaken” if they go through conditions such as drought, fire and even the digestive tract of some animals. The tree, in this context, only begins to become a tree if it goes through the awakening process and the one that does not find conditions to awaken may never become one, despite its potential having always existed.

After germination, the plant needs an effort to come out of the depths of the earth, it needs to leave this unconscious that is the soil and emerge into the air and into the light and, from there, its response to the environment starts to govern its development. The presence of sun, nutrients, competition between plants, predators and several other factors influence the path that the tree will follow towards its teleological destination: the sky and the shapes it will take along this path.

During this process, the plant will need to develop resilience to the environment in order to play a role in a larger system. Few are the trees that survive alone, many need to be included in an environment with other

trees, including other species, so that they can live, and, in some cases, help the environment around them to become conducive to itself and to the others. By getting rid of leaves and dead parts, the tree offers food to the soil and its microfauna, which, in turn, make the discard food for the tree itself and its surroundings.

From its birth to its death, the tree carries out the process of photosynthesis as a primordial process for its life. Through photosynthesis, the tree feeds itself, transforming sunlight and mineral salts extracted from the soil into food for its maintenance and growth. This way, it becomes a link between heaven and earth, causing elements of nature to combine, generating life.

The ascent of trees to the sky is accompanied by another phenomenon: the deepening of their roots. Very large trees without deep roots are doomed to premature death. The roots' search for deep soils has two main reasons: first, the fixation of the tree to the ground, so that its crown, taller, can resist the weather; second, the search for water and food in deeper areas. In this process, the roots often become "mirrors" of the crown, assuming the same size and shape or, in some cases, they may be larger than the aerial part of the plant, which allows some species to survive even fire.

Another interesting and deeply symbolic aspect of the tree is that its history is not forgotten. The trunk's growth rings record everything the tree went through and, more importantly, show that the plant often needed to recover from wounds, grew less in years of drought, grew too much in years of heavy rain, among other difficulties.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Pollack (1995) suggests that "when the image changes, the body changes". With that, we can infer that when Einar changes his body, she (Lili) sees in this change a way to fulfill an internal image of her Self.

Carrying out different readings of the same work favors the elaboration of perspectives, conjectures, increases the capacity for empathy and listening. Literature, history and psychology have, together, more similarities than differences, especially when we "observe" the producers of their contents: literati, historians, artists and psychologists. All, absolutely all, artisans of the same trade.

This reflection certainly does not contain the possible readings of the discursive objects presented, but they present light and interdisciplinary paths of art, letters and Jungian analytical psychology.

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