



Films on Race and Sexuality/Gender

Presented by Rita and Bill Hadden

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8-week Outline (key film excerpts shown in class)

- 1. The Wedding Banquet (1993)
- 2. Gran Torino (2008)
- 3. The Crying Game (1992)
- 4. The Hate U Give (2018)
- 5. American Beauty (1999)
- 6. Passing (2021)
- 7. The Danish Girl (2015)
- 6. Green Book (2018)
- QUESTIONS?

The Danish Girl (2015)

Awards / recognition:

- Film received five BAFTA Award nominations, including BAFTA Award for Best British Film at the 69th British Academy Film Awards.
- Film received Academy Award nominations for Best Production Design and Best Costume Design at the 88th Academy Awards.
- Vikander won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress and Redmayne was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actor.
- Film grossed \$11.1 million in N. America, \$53.1M in other territories for a worldwide total of \$64.2M, against a budget of \$15M.

The Danish Girl (2)

Director and Producer: Tom Hooper

- * His work was nominated for an Emmy Award for Outstanding Directing for *Prime Suspect* and *John Adams*, won award for *Elizabeth I*.
- Was nominated for the British Academy (BAFTA) TV Craft Award for Best Director for *Longford*. *The King's Speech* won multiple awards, including Best Director.
- Many wins for Hooper from the Directors Guild of America and the Academy Awards¹ and a Best Director nomination from BAFTA.

Written by Lucinda Coxon.

The Danish Girl (3)

Synopsis:

The act of posing as a female figure unmasks a popular landscape artist's life-long gender identity as a woman. She then names herself Lili Elbe. This sets off a progression of leaving behind the male identity which she has struggled to maintain all her life.

SETTING: Copenhagen, Paris, Dresden.

The Danish Girl (4)

MAIN CHARACTERS:

- Einar Wegener: successful male Danish landscape artist
- Gerda Wegener: female portrait artist, wife of Einar
- Lili Elbe: Einar, as female
- Hans Axcil: art dealer, childhood friend of Einar
- Henrik Sandahl: gay acquaintance of Einar and Gerda
- Dr. Kurt Warnekros: surgeon, pioneer of sex change operations.

DISCUSSION: what would you say THE DANISH GIRL is about and WHY?

- Disapproval and violence against LGBTQ people?
- Relationship among artists and gender?
- Romantic and platonic relationships?
- Anguish felt by transgender-born people?

The Danish Girl (6)

Questions for discussion:

- Is there anything you do not understand about this film?
- How is Einar's wife Gerda portrayed?
- In your opinion, why does Lili suddenly have a nosebleed?
- How do you interpret the film's ending?
- Why is Art at the core of this story?
- What does this film say about what love is?

(See next slide)

The Danish Girl (7)

Questions for discussion:

- In the first clip where Einar goes to the ballet stage to check the scenery, what strikes you?
- Why is it significant that Gerda tells Einar to “Just relax” when she wants him to model the ballet dancer’s leg and foot?
- What is the consequence of Gerda’s challenge to Einar to “Go as something different.”
- How does Henrik Sandahl recognize Einar?

The Danish Girl (8)


Questions for discussion:

- What does Einar do to learn to act like a woman?
- People in this film often ask important questions. Hans comes to visit but Lili leaves the room. Einar asks, “Do you think he noticed?” What do you think?
- Gerda asks Einar, “Did I do this to you?” What do you think?
- Einar asks Gerda, “Do you think I’m insane?” What do you think?

The Danish Girl (9)

Questions for discussion:

- Does this film take a position on Einar and Gerda's fertility issues?
- Why do you think Einar paints the bog with trees over and over?
- How have America's attitudes changed (or not changed) towards LGBTQ people since the 1990s?



***For questions and information,
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