*Note:* All items in brackets were written by Sigurd Wegener Thomson and are not translator insertions. Sigurd seems to have written in haste, leading to a number of mistakes, missing words, or incomplete sentences, which are noted when practical. The original letter includes notations and underlining in red and sometimes black, which most likely were added by Harthern.

Translated by Kristin Jacobsen and Maiken Boysen, 20 November 2017.

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| SIGURD WEGENER THOMSEN  STUD. MED.  GENTOFTEGADE 14.  GENTOFTE  15. 6. 31  Kære Red.[[1]](#footnote-1) Harthern!  Mange tak for sidst – og  tak fordi de[[2]](#footnote-2) vilde låne mig  den bog, – som jeg desværre  glemte over vor interessante  samtale. –  Jeg havde fået det ind=  tryk, at de[[3]](#footnote-3) vilde skrive bogen  råt og brutalt – og det  glædede mig overordentligt at  se, at de[[4]](#footnote-4) ikke vil det –  men gøre den ægte, sand=  færdig og menneskelig – og  2.  “germanisere” bogens atmosfære.  Jeg er enig med dem i  deres syn på hvordan bogen  skulde skrives – og er oprigtig  ked af det, at de[[5]](#footnote-5) bunden  af et utilfredsstillende grund=  lag og af personlige hensyn – fordi  bogen skal skrives nu. –  Jeg vil gerne hjælpe dem  så meget jeg kan – ved at  sætte dem ind i hendes  reactioner i den første tid  hun var her i Danmark,  idet jeg er ganske tryg mht.  deres discretion. –  [[6]](#footnote-6)  Da jeg – som vordende læge,  også har interesseret mig  meget for det anatomiske og  3.  fysiologiske, har jeg en del opteg=  nelser vedrørende disse ∧ ting[[7]](#footnote-7) – Da  de pointerede, at de ikke var  interreserede heri,- springer  jeg dem over – eller medtager  dem i forkortet form – hvis  de bidrager til forståelse af  hendes psyche. –    16/8 – 31.  Lili og Gerda kom her til  formiddag. Lili skal bo her. Hun  er her i København for at få  ansigtshuden feminiseret.  Hendes psyche er ganske  kvindelig - -  - - . Det svage punkt er  ansigtet. Håret er: paryk! Og  underansigtet er endu mas=  4  culint[[8]](#footnote-8). – De brune øjne er  imidlertid decideret kvindelige og  ganske smukke, -- med pæne  øjenbryn og vipper.  Jeg gik en tur i haven  – og ned langs med Gentofte  sø, og fik talt med hende.  Hendes menneskelige atmosfære  er fuldent feminin.  - - Han og Gerda havde  jo aldrig sådan været gift:  kun været gode kammerater  og suppleret hinanden.  [Skildring af Einars på =  tænkte selvmord.] – Dette  fortalte hun mig i en  pjanket tone, men jeg har  indtryk af, at det var  Be’s alvor. –  5.  18/8.  Lili og jeg har snakket  meget sammen på vore[[9]](#footnote-9) små  ture ved Gentofte sø – som hun  finder “aldeles henrivende”.  Bag det pjankede pigebarn,  er der et[[10]](#footnote-10) meget klart tænkende,  forstående og følende sjæl.  Det er nemlig mor vi har  drøftet. Lili synes mors mangler  består i  1. - - - - - - Vil man  endelig fortælle om sine syg=  domme olig. skal man gøre  det livligt og spøgende – og  kun én gang!  - - - -  4. Forsømt sit ydre[[11]](#footnote-11)  6.  Lili og jeg er bleven meget  fine venner, – og jeg sætter  mere og mere pris på hende.  22/8  Mor har nu fortalt Lili  hele historien[[12]](#footnote-12) – og Lili har  tålmodigt ofret den nød=  vendige eftermiddag. Ovenpå  det var hun temmelig øde=  lagt – og mor oprevet. Lili  blev uenig med mor over  en lille biting – og sa[[13]](#footnote-13) havde  mor sagt, at så måtte Lili  hellere flytte.  Lili tog det imidlertid  roligt – og det kom ikke til  brud. –  7.  - - Mor været[[14]](#footnote-14) modstander af  operationen – og forfærdet og  uforstående overfor det hele  - - sorgeligt[[15]](#footnote-15) og tragisk, at  hendes bror, som hun holdt  så meget af,– er bleven  et pjanket, forfængeligt væsen.  - - Også navnet “Lili” finder  hun forfærdeligt. Det havde  hans mor aldrig kaldt  ham, hvis han havde be=  gyndt som pige. - -  23/8  Gerda var her. Hun er  stadig sløj ovenpå operationen  – og bekymringer over Lili.  Lili har lavet hende de  8  frygteligste scener over sit  udseende, og snakket om  selvmord, hvis hun ikke hur=  tigt kom til at se godt ud.  Gerda bad os søge at  gøre Lili mindre selvoptaget,  og se at få hende til  at skrive på sin bog.  24/8  Talt med Lili. Nu er hun  godt i gange med at skrive  på sin bog. Lod hende be=  gynde inde hos mig –  medens jeg sad og læste  anatomi. Arbejdsatmosfæren  påvirkede hende – og hun  vilde ikke forstyrre mig  9.  eller risikere min utilfreshed,  hvis hun var doven.  25/8.  Mor kom grædende ind til  Lili kl 7 og vækkede hende.  Lili tabte tålmodigheden og  fortalte - -    18/9. Lili bor nu her og  skriver på sin bog.  Gerda fortæller mig, at alle  deres venner søger at få  hende til at skilles – ikke  alene formelt – men også  reelt fra Lili.[[16]](#footnote-16) –  10.  Hun er uhyre forfengelig[[17]](#footnote-17) og  hævder at “skønhed er en  kvindes existens berettigelse”!![[18]](#footnote-18)  Når vi skal gå en tur,  spørger hun, om man kan  “se noget”. – I betragtning  af den enorme mængde  “kosmetik” anvendt,– er dette  som regel umuligt. – Svarer  jeg[[19]](#footnote-19) benægtende – tror hun  mig ikke – men binder  et silke lommetørklæde om  underansigtet, som havde  hun tandpine.[[20]](#footnote-20)  Den første tid hun  var her – var hun virkelig  sky af sig – og holdt ikke  af at møde mennesker, – og  jeg tog hende derfor ad[[21]](#footnote-21)  11  biveje. – Nu er det bleven  mindre – og hun koketterer  endog med det![[22]](#footnote-22)  Hun er meget interesseret  i mænd – og fortæller med alle tegn på fryd,– hvor  “væmmeligt” det er, at de  ser efter hende![[23]](#footnote-23)  Hun elsker at tro sig  selv en “skælvende due”  forfulgt af store, interesserede  mandfolk. –  6/10.  Hun holder ikke på kvindens  frigørelse. Hun siger,– at hvis  hun bliver gift, vil hun elske  sin mand, gøre det hvad han[[24]](#footnote-24)  12  siger – og hun tænke[[25]](#footnote-25) på at  være så smuk som mulig –  glæde ham – og opmuntre  ham, når han kommer fra  kontoret. – [[26]](#footnote-26)    Hun holder meget af  kærtegn og af at kærtegne.  Far tillader hende at kysse ham farvel om  morgenen og godnat om  aftenen.[[27]](#footnote-27)  Jeg vil ikke.  Hun gør stadig, spøgende  tilløb til det,– og kilder  mig katteagtigt op ad armen.  Men jeg afværger venligt  og fast. – og det respekterer  hun – og kalder mig  13  “den strenge Hr. Doktor” –    Overfor far og jeg er hun  skikkelig: – Gerda laver hun  ofte hysteriske scener – med  hysterisk tøsestemme – og  ender med at tude. –  Nå – ovenpå hvad hun  har ~~ha[[28]](#footnote-28)~~ gået igennem, er det  ikke så mærkeligt[[29]](#footnote-29) – at hendes  sind er vanskeligt.    I dag blev Gerdas og Lilis  ægteskab omstødt.  Jeg spurgte Lili:  – Var det civilretten?  – Ja, sagde Lilli.[[30]](#footnote-30)  – Hvor ved du det fra?  – Dommeren var i civil![[31]](#footnote-31)    14.  Hun omtaler ofte sig selv som  “stakkels lille Lili” – og ønsker  at blive trøstet og kælet for  - - - . Men i det store og  hele er hun i godt humør.  og gouterer en vittighed –  selvom den går ud over  hende selv – når blot den  er god![[32]](#footnote-32)  Hun er rar og venlig og  optager alt i bedste mening.    Den ene dag taler hun  om at gå i kloster. Den  næste om at gå i harem.[[33]](#footnote-33)  – Lige efter operationen havde  hun en “nonneperiode” siger  hun. –  15.  Hun er meget forfængelig af  sin figur og ben – og mangler  i nogen grad blufærdighed –  der dog vist delvis skyldes  hendes mangel på øvelse i  at sidde – etc. – i kvinde=  tøj. – [[34]](#footnote-34)      Psykisk – som kvinde,[[35]](#footnote-35) har  hun to aldre . – Når hun  kan bruge den viden som  Einar havde – og det af hans  karakter, – der er almen=  menneskeligt – er hun en  godmodig, klog og vittig kvinde  – godt op i fyrrene! men  når hun taler om “mænd”  eller “klæder”. – er hun en  pjanket pige på sejsten! [[36]](#footnote-36) –    NB!  13/6 16.  Tænker jeg tilbage – og skal  sige noget om hendes ud=  vikling siden operationen. –  må det være dette. –  Hendes skyhed overfor  mennesker i almindelighed og  mænd i særdeleshed er  total forsvunden, – og hendes  glæde over den opsigt  hun vækker hos mændene,  er lidt pralende – og hen=  føres til en “mystisk til=  trækning kraft”[[37]](#footnote-37) – og ikke til  hendes umådeholdne brug  af pudder. og rødt – o.s.v. –  I begyndelsen var  hun slankere, virkede næsten[[38]](#footnote-38)  mere feminin sjæleligt end[[39]](#footnote-39)  17  nu, – hvor så meget er forceret  og uægte, – og besad virkelig  en egen indtagende “jomfrue=  lighed” – der nu desværre  ganske er forsvunden.[[40]](#footnote-40)  At hendes venner har  svigtet hende, har gjort hende  ondt – men ikke bitter, – de  hun har en så venlig ∧ forstående[[41]](#footnote-41) natur.[[42]](#footnote-42)    Jeg håber at de[[43]](#footnote-43) kan have  nogen fornøjelse af dette.  En dag jeg er inde i  byen, vil jeg gerne have lov  til at hente den bog de[[44]](#footnote-44)  var så venlig at tilbyde  at låne mig. – Jeg ringer  i forvejen.  Igen tak for sidst.  deres[[45]](#footnote-45) ærbødige.  Sigurd Thomsen[[46]](#footnote-46) | SIGURD WEGENER THOMSEN  STUD. MED.  GENTOFTEGADE 14.  GENTOFTE  15. 6. 31  Dear Ed. Harthern!  Thank you for last time – and thank you for letting me borrow your book – which I unfortunately forgot as a result of our interesting conversation.  I had gotten the impression that you wanted to write the book rough and crude – and it made me extraordinarily happy to see that you do not want that – but make it real, true, and human – and  2.  “Germanize” the book’s atmosphere.  I agree with you in your thinking about how the book should be written – and am sincerely sorry that you are bound by an unsatisfactory reason and by personal regard – because the book should be written now. –  I would like to help you as much as I can – by explaining her reactions during the first time she was here in Denmark, because I am quite sure about your discretion. –    Because I – as a doctor in waiting, have a great interest in the anatomical and  3.  physiological, I have some notes concerning these matters – Since you pointed out that you were not interested herein I will skip over them – or include them in an abbreviated form – if they will contribute to understanding her psyche. –    16/8 – 31.  Lili and Gerda came here this morning. Lili will live here. She is here in Copenhagen to get her facial skin feminized.  Her psyche is quite womanly - -  - - . A weak point is her face. Her hair is: a wig! And her lower face is still mas-  4  culine. – However, the brown eyes are decidedly womanly and quite beautiful, with pretty eyebrows and lashes.  I took a walk in the garden – and along Gentofte lake, and talked with her. Her human atmosphere is fully feminine.  - - He and Gerda had never really been married: only been good friends and complemented each other.  [The description of Einar’s planned suicide.] This she told me in a silly tone, but I have the impression that Bé was serious. –  5.  18/8.  Lili and I have talked a lot together on our little walks by Gentofte lake – which she finds “utterly adorable”.  Behind the silly girl, there is a very clearly thinking, understanding and feeling soul. It is namely mother we have discussed. Lili thinks mother’s deficiencies consist of  1. - - - - - - If one really wants to tell about one’s sickness and so on, one should do it lively and jokingly – and only one time!  - - - -  4. Neglected her appearance  6.  Lili and I have become very fine friends, – and I value her more and more.  22/8  Mother has now told Lili the whole story – and Lili has patiently sacrificed the necessary afternoon. Afterwards she was quite destroyed – and mother upset. Lili quarreled with mother about a little detail – and then mother had said that Lili had better move.  Lili took it, however, quietly – and it did not come to a break up. –  7.  - - Mother was an opponent of the operation – and terrified and uncomprehending about it all  - - sad and tragic that her brother, whom she loved so much, - has become a giddy, vain creature.  - - Also the name “Lili” – she finds terrible. His mother would never have called him this, if he had started as a girl. - -  23/8  Gerda was here. She is still not feeling well after the operation – and worries about Lili.    Lili has made the  8  most horrible scenes over her appearance, and talked about suicide, if she could not look good quickly.  Gerda asked us to try to help Lili be less self-absorbed, and get her to write on her book.  24/8  Talked with Lili. Now she is doing well with writing on her book. I let her begin at my house – while I studied anatomy. The work atmosphere affected her – and she did not want to disturb me  9.  or to risk my discontent, if she was lazy.  25/8.  Mother came crying to Lili’s room at 7 o’clock and woke her. Lili lost her patience and told - -    18/9. Lili lives here now and writes on her book.  Gerda tells me that all their friends seek to get her to get a divorce – not just formally – but also in actual fact from Lili. –  10.  She is extremely vain and claims that “beauty is a woman’s reason for existence”!!  When we go for a walk, she asks if one can “see something”. – In consideration of the enormous amount of “cosmetics” used, – this is usually impossible. – If I answer negatively – she does not believe me – but binds a silk handkerchief around her lower face as if she had a toothache.  In the beginning when she was here – she was really shy – and was uncomfortable meeting people, – and that’s why I took her along  11  the side roads. – Now it is less – and she even flirts with it!  She is very interested in men – and tells me with all signs of joy, – how “nasty” it is that they look at her!  She loves to think herself a “trembling dove” persecuted by big, interested menfolk. –  6/10.  She does not agree with women’s liberation. She says, – that if she gets married, she will love her husband, do everything that he  12  says – and only think of being as beautiful as possible – making him happy – and cheering him up, when he comes from the office. –    She likes caresses and to caress. Father allows her to kiss him goodbye in the morning and goodnight in the evening.  I don’t want that.  She continues to jokingly make attempts,– and tickles me catlike up my arm. But I fend her off kindly and firmly. – and she respects that – and calls me  \  13  “the strict Mr. Doctor” –    Towards father and me she is good natured: towards Gerda she often makes hysterical scenes – with hysterical girly voice – and ends with crying. –  Well – after what she has ~~belief~~ gone through it is not so odd – that her mind is difficult.    Today Gerda’s and Lili’s marriage was revoked.  I asked Lili:  – Was it the civil court?   * – Yes, said Lilli. * – How do you know that? * – The judge was in civil!     14.  She often refers to herself as “poor little Lili” – and wishes to be comforted and cuddled - - - . But overall she is in good humor. And appreciates a joke – even though it is at her expense – as long as it is good!  She is nice and friendly and takes everything in the best way.    One day she talks about going to a convent. The next about going to a harem. – Just after the operation she said she had a “nun period.” –  15.  She is very vain about her figure and legs – and to some degree lacks modesty – partially owing to her lack of practice in sitting – etc. – in woman’s clothing.    Mentally – as a woman, she has two ages . – When she can use the knowledge that Einar had – and that of his character, – that is only human – she is a good-natured, smart and witty woman – well up in her forties! – but when she talks about “men” or “clothes”. – she is a giddy girl of sixteen!–    NB!  13/6 16.  When I think back – and should say something about her development since the operation,– it must be this.  Her shyness towards people in general and men in particular has totally disappeared, – and her joy over the stir she causes among the men, is a little boastful – and is being attributed to a “mysterious power of attraction” – and not to her excessive use of powder. and rouge – and so on –    In the beginning she was slimmer, seemed almost more feminine mentally than  17  now, where so much is forced and fake, – and she really possessed her own endearing “virginity” – which unfortunately has quite gone.  That her friends have betrayed her, has caused her pain – but not bitterness, – as she has such a friendly, understanding nature.    I hope that you can have some pleasure of this.    One day when I am in town, I would like to pick up the book you were so kind to offer to lend me. I will call beforehand.      Again, thank you for last time.  Yours sincerely.  Sigurd Thomsen |
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1. Red. is the abbreviation for Redaktør, or Editor in English. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The de should be capitalized since it is being used as the formal version of you. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Again, de should be capitalized. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Again, de should be capitalized. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The implied word “are” is included in the translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Small flourish. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The word “ting,” which is “matters” in English, is written above the line. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The word should be maskulin rather than maskulint. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The word should be vores rather than vore. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Should be en. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The out-of-sequence 4 not a mistake but what is written in the letter. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Mor, which is Mother in English, refers to Sigurd’s mother, who is Lili’s sister. It is unclear to which story Sigurd is referring, but it is most likely an event from Lili’s childhood rather than her surgery. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Should be så. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Should be har været. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The word should be sørgeligt rather than sorgeligt. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. A vertical red line has been drawn to the left of the paragraph. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The word should be “forfængelig” rather than “forfengelig.” [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. A vertical red line has been drawn to the left of the paragraph. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. There is an implied “if” here, i.e. “If I answer negatively….” [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. A vertical red line has been drawn to the left of first three lines, seventh line, and last three lines of the paragraph. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Two vertical red lines have been drawn to the left of the paragraph. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Two vertical red lines have been drawn to the left of the paragraph. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Two vertical red lines have been drawn to the left of the paragraph. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. A vertical red line has been drawn to the left of the paragraph. The underlining is in red. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Should be tænker. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. A vertical red line has been drawn to the left of the paragraph. The underlining is in red. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. A vertical red line has been drawn to the left of the paragraph. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Appears to be the beginning of the Danish word har that was crossed out because it was repeated. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The underlining is in red. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. “Lilli” is the spelling written in the letter. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Lili is both playing dumb and playing on words. The phrase “in civil” is understood to mean clothing but also implies the court. A vertical red line and 6/10 has been written to the left of the paragraph. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. The underlining is in red. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The underlining is in red. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. A vertical red squiggle has been drawn to the left of the paragraph. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Above “kvinde” another hand has written “kvinde/”. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Should be “seksten” to indicate sixteen years of age. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Should be “tiltrækningskraft” as one word. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. The underlining is in red. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. A red vertical line has been drawn to the left of all three paragraphs on the page. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. The underlining is in red. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. The word “forstående” is written above the line. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. The underlining is in red. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. The “de” should be capitalized since it is being used as the formal version of “you.” [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Again, the “de” should be capitalized. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. The word “deres” should be capitalized because it is used in the formal sense. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Sigurd has written a flourish under the signature. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)