

Guide to reading *Man into Woman*, ed. Niels Hoyer (1933)

1. Note any similarities between this narrative and the case studies we've read. What similar experiences are narrated? What similar motifs are used? Also note how MIW differs from the case studies.
2. Note how this narrative is told to us—who speaks? what formats are used to convey the story? (both will vary throughout)

See Narrative Terminology in Sakai/Resources:

The **narrating agency** is the medium by which events are narrated, including the one telling the story, or the narrator, and the linguistic medium of the story, how it's told.

Focalization, or point of view, is the perspective from which events are narrated. Narrative agency refers to who supplies the narration, point of view refers to whose vision determines what is being narrated.

3. The subtitle, "An Authentic Record of a Change of Sex," suggests this story is factual. How does the narrative attempt to present itself as an "authentic record"? Where does the story seem to be fictional?
 4. Note places where pronouns seem to falter as characters and even narrators wrestle with what gender to attribute to the subject of the narrative.
 5. Missing in MIW is any critique of gender as a cultural concept or a social category of experience; instead, gender is ontology, and destiny. Note places where gender is accepted as "natural."
 6. In the genre of "sex change stories" in the popular press in the 1930s, "appropriate gender role behavior and heterosexuality were both key tests of true sex" (Alison Oram, *Her Husband Was a Woman* 116). Note places in MIW where we see proper gender role behavior. What makes a woman, according to this narrative?
 7. How does Lili Elbe perceive Professor Kreutz, the doctor who treats her?
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1. How does the Gipsy Bar scene in chapter VII (which is not in the Danish first edition) function? What's its purpose? Consider the manager's comment: "'Monsieur will admit that his partner of yesterday cannot be compared in the least with Mademoiselle.'" (86). Consider as well the proposal from the Count and the visit to Andreas's parents (also missing in the Danish edition). What purpose do these scenes serve?
 2. "'It often happens,' she continued excitedly, 'that when she poses for me as a model a strange feeling comes over me that it is she whom I am creating and forming rather than the girl whom I am

representing on my canvas. Sometimes it seems to me that here is something which is stronger than we are, something which makes us powerless and will thrust us aside, as if, indeed, it wanted to be revenged on us for having played with it.'" (93)

These lines recall Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), a Gothic novel in which an artist paints a portrait of Dorian Gray, a beautiful man who, wanting to stay young and beautiful, makes a devil's bargain that the portrait will age, not him. Dorian lives a profligate life, committing many sins, including murder, as the picture grows more and more hideous. At last, worried that the portrait betrays his ugly conscience, Dorian slashes the painting, and then a scream is heard on the street. When the police enter Dorian's room, they find a dead withered old man with a knife in his heart. The portrait has returned to its original beauty.