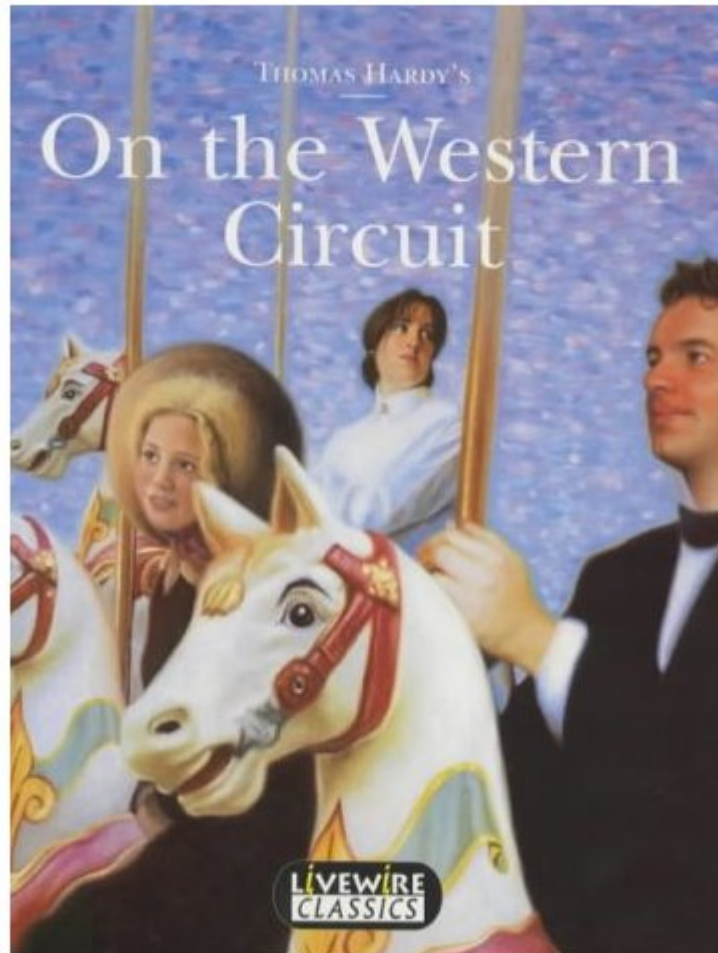


Hardy's Little Ironies

Translating Thomas Hardy's "On the Western Circuit"



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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Thomas Hardy	4
<i>Life's Little Ironies</i>	6
“On the Western Circuit”	7
Translation Problems	10
Conclusion	17
Works Cited	18
Appendix A: Translation	21
Appendix B: Original Text	34

Introduction

In England Thomas Hardy, despite the amount of criticism he had to endure, is regarded as a great author of both prose and poetry. Notwithstanding his popularity in the United Kingdom, he never achieved much fame in the Netherlands and this truly is a great pity. With classic works such as *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and his most famous novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, but also his many collections of poems and short stories, Hardy has contributed considerably to the canon of great English literature. His writing is often profoundly pessimistic and, set in the Victorian English countryside, gives a good impression of how Hardy experienced the industrialization of his country and the social and economic circumstances of 19th-century rural society. "On the Western Circuit," one of Hardy's short stories, is a perfect example of this.

Because Hardy is not a well-known author in the Netherlands, there are only few Dutch translations of his work available, most of them of poems. Translations of his novels are scarcer; the most recent ones are Renée Bos's *De burgemeester van Casterbridge* published in 1979 (Hardy), Ernst van Altena's *Tess van de D'Urbervilles: een zuivere vrouw*, 1991 ("Literatuurplein") and the Frisian *Tess fan de D'Urbervilles*, 2010 by Geart van der Meer ("Uitgeverij"). I wanted to break new ground by trying to translate one of his short stories into Dutch and see what problems I would encounter. This thesis will therefore focus on my translation of a fragment of 3000 words from "On the Western Circuit," one of his many and often overlooked short stories and part of the collection *Life's Little Ironies*, which offers a great challenge for a translator. The wordy descriptions Hardy uses to create the memorable 19th-century rural setting are a trademark in "On the Western Circuit" and pose numerous problems for the translation, because both the English local feeling and the long sentences have to be maintained, while the text has to remain readable for the Dutch public.

The mock commission I have set myself is from the Flemish publishing house “Just Publishers” that republished Bos’s translation of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in 2007 in combination with a 1978 BBC film adaptation of the novel. The translation of “On the Western Circuit” will be combined with the film *The Day After the Fair* (1987), the film adaptation of the Harold Pinter play that is based on Hardy’s story. The aim is to maintain the feeling of the English 19th-century rural setting that is so important in Hardy’s work.

Thomas Hardy

Thomas Hardy was born on June 2, 1840 in the village of Higher Bockhampton near Dorchester in the Dorset countryside. Hardy grew up in an England that was changing drastically due to the technological progress of the Industrial Revolution; a transformation that would feature as a major theme in his fiction. His father, a master-mason, played the violin in the local church choir and thereby introduced him to the art of music, whereas his mother Jemima Hand initiated him into the folk tales of Dorset. The fact that Hardy’s poems and novels are filled with references to country superstitions, songs and dances, but also the ballad qualities that his stories show, have often been linked to the influence of his parents (Davidson 368-9).

As a young boy Hardy felt at home in the traditional rural culture of southern England. He was able to attend Isaac Last’s school, where he became acquainted with the works of Vergil and Lucretius and was encouraged to learn more of the classics through self-education. At sixteen Hardy was taken out of school for financial reasons and became the apprentice of Dorchester architect John Hicks. It was during these years that Hardy started to appreciate church architecture, and the Gothic in particular. This admiration can for instance be found in his novel *Jude the Obscure*, but also in the opening lines of “On the Western Circuit.”

Hicks, who had a knowledge of the classics, and Horace Moule, the educated son of a local clergyman, helped Hardy to take up Greek and to learn more of philosophy and theology. Local poet William Barnes turned him to intellectual life and taught him that “the life of obscure country people could provide a sufficient subject [...] for writing poetry” (Howe 8), a conviction that proved to be vital to Hardy’s fiction, considering his novels and poems all cover life in Dorset.

In 1862 Hardy had finished his architectural training and went to London to work for the architect Bloomfield. During the years he spent in the capitol, a whole new world opened up for him and he started to read Greek tragedies, works that Hardy admitted have been influential to his own tragic plots, and writers such as John Stuart Mill, Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer and Thomas Henry Huxley, all of whose ideas proved damaging to his faith and resulted in his view of an indifferent universe in which misfortune can strike anyone, anywhere.

Despite all the knowledge he gathered and the many modern attractions London life offered him, he never felt at home there, so in 1867 Hardy returned to Bockhampton. His years in London had put him into an advantageous position. From birth he had witnessed the provincial scene around him and had been part of it, but his studies in London had introduced him to “Victorian thought [...] and the doctrine of progress” (Tate 303), which made him someone who lived both inside and outside of rural culture; a perspective that lead to the ironic commentary on the rural community that is at the heart of his stories (Tate 303). He went back to Hicks and started to write his first novel, *The Poor Man and the Lady*, which has unfortunately not been preserved, but a letter to his publisher gives the idea that the story contains one of Hardy’s major themes: the city contrasted with country life.

In 1870 Hardy met Emma Lavinia Gifford, whom he married in 1874. The marriage was not a happy one and the theme of unfortunate marriages can be found in several of his

works, including “On the Western Circuit.” Meanwhile, Hardy wrote the novel *Desperate Remedies*, which came out in 1871, and from 1872 to 1896 seventeen works of prose from his pen were published, including *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* (1891), short story collection *Life’s Little Ironies* (1894) and his final novel *Jude the Obscure* (1896).

All of Hardy’s novels are set in Wessex, a fictional version of Dorset, and focus on country life. Each and every story is part of the same world and is connected with the rest of his oeuvre through its setting, characters and themes. With his descriptions of the passions and even sexual relationships of his characters, Hardy shocked many of his contemporaries and he became the target of severe criticism.

Because the reactions to *Jude* were disappointing Hardy abandoned prose and focussed on his poetry. His first wife died in 1912 and he remarried Florence Dugale in 1914. In 1928 Hardy died at his self-designed Victorian home Max Gate in Dorchester, where he had lived for over forty years.

Life’s Little Ironies

Thomas Hardy wrote nearly fifty short stories during his lifetime. Most of them were written for American and British periodicals and appeared in a bowdlerized form; magazine editors often considered Hardy’s work as too sexually explicit and shocking for their readers, and demanded that he made alterations to his manuscript before they would publish it. Hardy collected thirty-seven stories in four volumes, namely *Wessex Tales* (1888), *A Group of Noble Dames* (1891), *Life’s Little Ironies* (1894) and *A Changed Man* (1913). Hardy took great pains to collect his stories in volumes that were coherent in the inclusion of narratives that were thematically drawn together.

The short story volume *Life's Little Ironies* consists of eight different stories, of which "The Fiddler of the Reels" has often been regarded as Hardy's finest short story. In its final form two pieces that were originally included in this book were transferred to a different volume and replaced by "An Imaginative Woman," because, as Hardy explains, that was "where [these stories] more naturally belong" (Hardy 3). This is a perfect example of Hardy's awareness of the degree of internal unity that his short stories show in technique and themes.

All the different narratives in this volume share the theme of irony and tragedy as a result of the interactions of the characters and their society (Brady x). The ironic voice offers commentary on the subjects of love, marriage and the church and conveys to the reader Hardy's unique perspective of being at the same time an insider and an outsider in the Wessex countryside. The irony can be in the situation itself, the frame or in realizations the characters have in retrospect (Cassis).

The subjects deal with contemporary social conventions and morality that determine the fate of his characters and show Hardy's frustration at the restrictiveness of the Victorian age he lived in (Brady 95). Tragedies are created by using farcical situations in which "the human suffering" is explored; they are 'tragedies of circumstance' in which the raised sympathy inverts the effect of the comical situation, turning the reactions from amusement into pity (Brady 98). These ironic situations are 'life's ironies', the tricks of fate or the consequences of their own "unwitting agency" that humans have to suffer during their lifetime (Hardy xxv). Coincidences are usually at the center of these ironies.

"On the Western Circuit"

In "On the Western Circuit" a young barrister named Charles Bradford Raye from London visits the rural city of Melchester. He is lured into visiting the local fair where he meets Anna, a local servant girl who is riding one of the modern roundabouts, and he seduces her. Anna's

mistress Edith Harnham comes to fetch her and, stuck in a loveless marriage, becomes intrigued by this stranger. Raye enters into a correspondence with Anna, which he expects to be short due to his obligations and her low birth. Instead, he falls in love with her when her letters show her as an intelligent young woman. The reader, however, learns that it is not the illiterate Anna who writes these letters, but Mrs. Harnham, who falls in love with her correspondent as well. Knowing that he made her pregnant and under the impression that he is in love with a bright woman who will not hold back his career, Raye marries Anna. When Edith finally reveals the truth it is already too late. They share one kiss, after which they both resign themselves to their fate.

At the center of the style and ideas of Hardy's writing, and this story is no exception, is the setting of the Wessex countryside. Wessex is the Anglo-Saxon name for Dorset, recreated by Hardy into the idealized world of his youth in which there were barely any signs of modern inventions. His trademark style can be found in the elaborate descriptive scenes that depict this landscape in a way that the reader can see it in his mind's eye. Despite criticism on his writing style, which has been called "high-falutin" (Tate 304) and "lack[ing] elegance" (Porter 300), it is generally agreed that these descriptions are his literary strength. Another aspect of his style is that the voices in his short stories, in this case an ironic voice, approximate the spoken word (Brady 200).

Central themes in the story are sexual desire, deceit in love and disastrous marriage. The sexuality can be found in Edith's longing for the stranger Raye. Her position in a loveless marriage leaves her passions unfulfilled. When she touches Raye's hand she feels "an erotic thrill" (Hardy xvi) and starts a correspondence with him which slowly "takes on the complexion of a kind of epistolary adultery" (Hardy xvi). The deceit in love is of course Edith's ghost-writing Anna's letters. This deceit is already foreshadowed in the imagery. "The eighth chasm of the Inferno" to which the fair is compared, refers to the part of hell in Dante's

Divina Comedia in which frauds are imprisoned. The theme of disastrous marriage may have been influenced by the deterioration of Hardy's own marriage at the time of writing. Edith is trapped in a marriage of convenience to an elderly wine salesman, whereas Raye is lured into a marriage with Anna by deceit. Both are forever tied to someone they do not love nor respect.

According to Kristen Brady, author of *The Short Stories of Thomas Hardy*, this narrative also includes a legal theme. By using legal language throughout the story the reader is invited to "analyse events as though in a court room" (125). Words such as "claim," "document," "judgment," and "counsel" can be found in the text and the two marriages are referred to as "contracts." Edith takes on the role of Anna's counselor by representing her in the exchange of letters with Raye. All these legal terms are used to give an objective account of the personal issues of the characters. The reader has the opportunity to consider the legal and the personal side and see that social conventions and people's humanity are incompatible when it comes to sexual choices (Brady 125-7).

Other themes are the conflict between rural and urban, and conservative and modern; themes that are often explored in Hardy's work. As in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, a "country beauty" is seduced by an urban man, which leads to an unsatisfying fate. The appearance of the fair with its modern carrousel and loud noises shows a contrast with the rustic landscape it is set in. These modern machines create the illusion of love between Raye and Anna and set the dramatic events in motion, suggesting the idea of people who are "moved by machinery," i.e. the roundabout is responsible for the actions of the main characters; the kaleidoscopic way in which Raye and Anna see each other results into a "visual phantasm" (Plotz 375) and "they have confused the thrill of motion with the thrill of romance" (Plotz 379).

Finally, there is the central theme of irony. There are different levels of irony in this story. There is irony of circumstance and irony of form. The "bizarre web of events and

motives” (Brady 120) with its “stereotyped characters (Brady 120) creates a farcical situation, but since the focus is on its effects on Raye and Edith (and to some extent Anna) it is actually a tragedy. Furthermore, the reader is made aware by the objective voice that the view the different characters have of each other is distorted; Anna is not as bright as Raye thinks she is and Raye is not as noble as Anna and Edith think he is. The reader learns of the reasoning behind Raye’s marriage and thereby dramatic irony is created. It is by misfortune as a principle of the universe they live in that they are put in this situation. To Hardy irony is the only perspective that can show the farcical and the tragic of this position at the same time (Brady 156).

Translation Problems

Before a text can be translated, it is necessary for the translator to analyse the source text. The translator should be aware of the target audience and thereby the purpose of the translation he is about to deliver. In this particular case the source text is a literary text full of different themes. By going deeply into the history of the author and the thematic values of the story it becomes clear what elements are important to maintain for the reader of the target text, after which the translator can make conscious choices during the translation process.

The next step is to identify and categorize the translation problems that the source text offers, because it is the presence of these problems and the trouble it takes to overcome them that shows the degree of complexity of translating the analyzed text. There are different models of text analysis that can be used, but the one that will be used here is the model in Christiane Nord’s “Tekstanalyse en de moeilijkheidsgraad van een vertaling” in which she distinguishes between pragmatic problems, socio-cultural problems, linguistic problems and source text specific problems (Nord 147).

Pragmatic problems

The pragmatic level covers “problems due to differences in the communicative situations in which source text and target text are embedded” (Nord 147). It is assumed that the target public knows that the story was written during the Victorian era and thus expects a 19th-century literary text. However, there is of course a gap between a 21st-century Dutch and a 19th-century English mindset, and the translator has to consider to what extent he will meet modern wishes.

It has often been argued that Hardy has an archaic mind, which not only shows in his preference for pre-industrial England, but also in his use of archaic words; when “On the Western Circuit” is analysed one does indeed find that words such as “thitherward,” “athwart” and “to draw near” are used. Despite the fact that these are considered as archaic nowadays, they should not be translated into archaic Dutch for the sole reason that they were not considered as archaic (though maybe a bit old-fashioned) at the time when the story was written.

Another aspect that should be considered is the difference in connotation. For instance, the phrase “this young thing,” referring to Anna, cannot be translated into ‘dit jonge ding’. To the modern Dutch person using the word “ding” would sound disparaging, even sexist. This kind of connotation should be avoided at all cost, for it is definitely not the one meant here.

Socio-cultural problems

On the socio-cultural level there are the “problems due to the differences concerning norms and conventions between source and target cultures – culture-specific phenomena” (Nord 147). Several of these type of problems can be found in the source text, primarily those known as culture-specific elements. As the analysis of the author and this specific text shows, the setting of 19th-century Dorset is an essential aspect of this short story. Consequent to this

notion the conclusion can be drawn that in the translation the elements of the setting have to be preserved where possible.

The first culture-specific element can be found in the title “On the Western Circuit.” The ‘Western Circuit’ indicates both a legal process and a setting. At the time the story was written England had a legal system that was established in the 13th century (and was used until 1971). There was not one permanent court, but there were several periodic ones, known as ‘assizes’. Counties were grouped together in different ‘circuits’ and judges were sent from London to journey to these counties and hold court (United Kingdom). The described legal system thus differs from the modern British and the Dutch system. The Western Circuit covered several counties, among which Dorset. Translating the title thus poses a considerable challenge, because both the legal aspect and the setting are important in this particular work and ideally these would both be maintained in the translation. Furthermore, the commercial aspect should be considered, for if a title becomes too complex this could put off potential readers. The solution that has been chosen for this translation is “In het Westelijke Arrondissement,” a choice that will be elaborated on in the footnote of the translation.

The title is not the only translation problem that the legal aspect of the story offers. The word “stuff-gownsmen” is a word used rarely, and describes a junior counsel. ‘Gownsmen’ is not an official title and ‘stuff’ describes the material of the gown the counsel is wearing, indicating he is not yet a fully-qualified barrister. Both aspects should be taken into account when this culture-specific element is translated. Another legal element is “called to the Bar at Lincoln’s-Inn,” the process of being accepted into a specific order of counsels.

Furthermore, there are the translation problems of culture-specific elements such as names of persons and locations and monetary terms. The setting of the English countryside is created by these elements, so the aim is to maintain them in the Dutch text whenever possible and where this cannot be achieved to stay as close to utterances of the original. “Mrs.

Harnham” will therefore become ‘mevrouw Harnham’, the names of Melchester and Wintoncester will not be changed and “fifteen and ninepence” becomes ‘vijftien shilling en negen pence’. An exception to this strategy is when a standard is used as an expression, which is the case in “[t]heir faces were within a few inches of each other”; to maintain the word “inch” would have an awkward effect, so it is translated into ‘niet ver verwijderd van,’ which conveys the same image of faces close to each other as the original text.

Another culture-specific element is the existence of different classes. Though the Netherlands has known and to an extent still knows a distinction between classes, when it comes to the class system the United Kingdom beats everything. In this story in particular this system plays an important role, because it defines the distinction between Raye and Anna. Both the “professional class” and the “middle-class” are used to describe Raye, placing him in the Dutch ‘hogere middenklasse.’

Finally, there are the fair attractions. Among those mentioned are “steam barrel-organs,” “swings,” “see-saws,” “flying-leaps” and of course “steam roundabouts.” The “steam barrel-organ” is odd, because a steam organ is driven by steam, whereas a barrel-organ, a ‘draaiorgel,’ is driven by hand. Because it is later stated that its sounds are coming from the steam roundabouts, the ‘stoomdraaimolens,’ the word is translated into ‘stoomorgel.’ The most important consideration during the translation of these attractions should be that the attraction existed at the end of the 19th century, so the see-saw cannot be translated into ‘schommelschip,’ for instance, which is a 20th-century fair attraction.

Linguistic problems

The problems on the linguistic level are “problems due to the differences between the linguistic systems of source and target languages” (Nord 147). One of the problems that fall under this category is something that immediately catches the attention when the text is

scrutinized: the extremely long descriptions of the environment and actions that surround the characters of Charles Raye and Edith Harnham. Hardy's observations are always expert in detail, turning this stylistic feature into one of his trademarks. It is therefore advisable to maintain these elaborate sentence structures in many cases, especially when the context demands this. This does put the translator's skill to test; a literal translation of an English sentence structure will not always be grammatical in Dutch, in which case the word order in the different clauses has to be changed. In addition, some clauses prove to be problematic because they do not work the same way in the target language, which is the case with the non-finite subordinate clause. In some instances it is possible to translate the non-finite verb without any additions: "dreading the moment" becomes 'het moment vrezend', but using the same tactic for the clause "having finally selected her" results in an awkward Dutch sentence. 'Nu hij haar eindelijk had uitgekozen' is the natural and therefore preferred solution. An example of a sentence whose context demands that the structure is maintained is "Then the pleasure-machine started again, and, to the light-hearted girl, the figure of the handsome young man, the market-square with its lights and crowd, the houses beyond, and the world at large, began moving round as before, countermoving in the revolving mirrors on her right hand, she being as it were the fixed point in an undulating, dazzling, lurid universe, in which loomed forward most prominently of all the form of her late interlocutor." It would normally make sense to use a period after the word "hand," but the entire sentence conveys the flow of one action, the ride on the roundabout, so instead the co-ordinating conjunction 'en' is used to avoid splitting the sentence.

Furthermore, there is the difference in the distribution of the personal pronoun 'you', which can be translated into the Dutch 'jij' (informal), 'u' (formal) or 'jullie' (plural). The choice depends on the context in which it is used. For instance, when Charles addresses Anna at the fair they are not acquainted with each other. Considering the social context of Victorian

England, it is logical that in their conversations the formal ‘u’ is used. Mr. and Mrs. Harnham, on the other hand, are married and thus closely related, so it makes sense that they address each other with the informal ‘jij’.

Moreover, in the English language there are many words that do not indicate a specific gender, whereas the Dutch equivalent of this word does. An example of this in the text is the word “friend,” which can be translated into the male version ‘vriend’ or the female version ‘vriendin’. Which option is used is determined by the gender of the person the word refers to. In this case the friend that is meant is Edith, so in the translation the word ‘vriendin’ is used.

Finally, the use of certain verbs in the original text can prove to be problematic for the translator. These particular verbs are used to describe more than one action, where in Dutch there are more verbs needed to achieve the same, for there is no equivalent that can be used in the same situation. This is for instance the case in the sentence “clad in the rough pea-jacket and wideawake that he had put on for his stroll” in which ‘to put on’ refers to the pea-jacket and the wideawake. The Dutch translation of this verb can be either ‘aantrekken’/’aandoen’ or ‘opzetten’, of which the first can only refer to clothes and the second to glasses or a hat. The pea-jacket and the wideawake fall into the two different categories, so in Dutch two verbs are used to describe the action of putting them on.

Source text specific problems

The source text specific level contains problems “due to the difficulties in transferring textual elements specific to the source text in question” (Nord 147). The aim for this text is to maintain as much of the thematic material and the setting of this text as possible. These two intentions come together in the name of Charles Bradford Raye. Maintaining the setting demands to leave the name unchanged, but this does entail the loss of its symbolism; Raye is the ray of light that “penetrates the darkness of [Edith’s] life” (Brady 123). However, since

this text is adult literature, a genre in which names are never translated, this problem can be disregarded, for translating his name is not an option.

Another aspect that is source text specific is Anna's language. Anna is described as an innocent and illiterate country beauty; all of these character traits play an important part in the plot. Her innocence and beauty attract the attention of Raye, and her illiteracy is what leads her to deceit. To make this plot credible, the translator has to pay attention to the language Anna uses. When there are several different translations possible for a word or sentence, the simplest or most frivolous one is preferable, because it would not suit her character to use high register language. For example, when she says "plenty of money" this is translated into 'veel geld' instead of 'volop geld' or 'geld in overvloed,' and "if I didn't mind" is translated into 'als ik het niet erg vond' instead of 'als ik er geen bezwaar tegen had' or 'als ik er niets op tegen had.'

The last aspect that will be discussed is the irony in the text. Irony is one of the most difficult stylistic devices to translate, because it depends on the understanding of the reader. It is important to know to what extent the reader comprehends that the narrator knows how the story ends and that he foreshadows what will happen to characters; that he sees that the characters are slowly ensnared by the universe, sometimes by their own actions. Examples of this are Raye being described as "the disturbing part in the two quiet feminine lives," the haphazard way in which Raye selects his "country beauty," the remark that "they gazed at each other with...that unmistakable expression which...often leads up to...discontent, resignation and despair," and the description of Edith's internal conflict; she adores Raye "in spite of general principles" and finds him at the same time "wicked and nice." The translator needs to stay very close to the text in these passages in order to preserve the ironic tone. The "disturbing part" is meant strongly, so he is not simply a 'verstorende factor,' but he puts their lives upside down; the way Raye selects his country beauty Anna show he does this by

haphazard, with its “not the one that,” but her “and—no, not even she; but,” which is an aspect that should be preserved; and the contrast between “wicked” and “nice” is clearly shown by using ‘onfatsoenlijk’ en ‘vriendelijk.’

Conclusion

When “On the Western Circuit” is analysed, Thomas Hardy’s sense of style, which he developed during his lifetime, becomes clear. His ‘little ironies’ are evidently present in the text and his love for nature comes across in his elaborate descriptions. The many themes of the text are to be reckoned with when the different translation options are considered. Furthermore, the translator has to realize that, while it is important to maintain as much of these themes as possible, this will not always work out because of practical reasons. Moreover, the text poses many issues in terms of pragmatic problems, such as the use of archaic language, socio-cultural problems, for instance those that deal with the British legal system, linguistic problems such as extremely long sentences, and finally source text specific problems in the form of irony and word choice. It can be concluded that there are many problems that the translator has to deal with in order to deliver a decent and faithful Dutch translation. “On the Western Circuit” thus poses a great challenge and it is the task of the translator to avoid the fate of its characters who were ensnared by the web of little ironies that Thomas Hardy has spun.

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Appendix A: Translation

In het Westelijke Arrondissement¹

Hoofdstuk 1

De man die de rustige levens van de twee vrouwen die verderop in dit verhaal beschreven worden op hun kop zette - overigens geen groot man, in welk opzicht dan ook - leerde hen kennen op een oktoberavond in de stad Melchester. Hij stond op het terrein van de kathedraal waar hij omgeven door duisternis een glimp trachtte op te vangen van de meest homogene schepping van middeleeuwse architectuur in Engeland, die met haar spits toelopende gestalte oprees vanaf het vochtige, vlakke² grastapijt dat voor hem lag. Terwijl hij daar stond werd hij de aanwezigheid van de kathedraalmuren eerder door het oor dan door het oog gewaar, omdat

¹ As indicated in the analysis of the translation problems, the title entails both the legal theme and the setting. To an English reader the setting is clear immediately, for even though the legal system has changed, the Western Circuit does still exist and covers the same area; nowadays the circuits are used “for the purposes of the administration of justice” (“Bar”). To maintain the setting, the title should include a reference to Dorset or at least indicate that this Circuit is located in the west (of England). The legal aspect of the title could be covered by translating “the Western Circuit” into “het Westelijke Arrondissement,” since the word ‘arrondissement’ can mean “area that falls under the jurisdiction of a court” (“Arrondissement”) and ‘westelijke’ means ‘situated in the west,’ which conveniently covers the setting. To explain matters further, a short definition of ‘on circuit’ should be included, such as ‘de periodieke rondgang van rechtbanken’. This would, however, make the title much too long; the original title is short and catchy and from the commercial perspective of the mock assignment this should also go for the translation. After all these considerations I eventually chose for the translation “In het Westelijke Arrondissement”, which is short enough to avoid frightening off the reader and at the same time covers the setting (Westelijke) and the legal theme (Arrondissement). Furthermore, since the sentence “now going the Western Circuit” appears later in the text, the further explanation of ‘on circuit’ is added in its translation.

² The original text reads “which towered and tapered from the damp and level sward”. Given that Hardy puts great effort in phrasing things, it can be assumed that this alliteration is intentional. The sound of this alliteration provides this phrase with a sense of threat; a sense that an observer stands in awe of this gigantic ancient, sacred building. Unfortunately, whereas ‘to tower’ can be translated into a Dutch verb such as ‘uittorenen’ or ‘oprijzen,’ ‘to taper’ can in this context only be translated into ‘spits toelopen’. To create an equivalent alliteration was not possible; moreover, translating “tapered” into an adverbial adjunct makes the sentence flow better and conveys a better mental image of the scene than “zij rees op en liep spits toe.” To compensate for the loss of the alliteration, “the damp and level sward” is translated into the alliteration “het vochtige, vlakke grastapijt” in which the meaning of the original stays intact.

hij ze niet kon zien maar ze wel helder het enorme lawaai weerkaatsten dat het terrein via een straat die tussen het stadsplein en de kathedraalgrond liep bereikte en dat zich, nadat het tegen het gebouw sloeg, over hem heen stortte.

Hij stelde zijn poging het verlaten gebouw te onderzoeken tot de volgende dag uit en richtte zijn aandacht op het lawaai. Het was samengesteld uit stoomorgels, het galmen van gongs, het rinkelen van handbellen, het klepperen van ratels en het tumult van geschreeuw door mannen. Een fel licht hing in de lucht van waar het tumult vandaan kwam. Onder een halfronde toegangspoort en via een rechte straat liep hij in die richting en betrad tenslotte het plein.

Hij had heel Europa kunnen afzoeken naar een groter contrast tussen twee zich naast elkaar afspelende taferelen. Het schouwspel was dat van de achtste kring van de Hel wat betreft de kleur en gloed en wat betreft vrolijkheid dat van de Homerische hemel. Een op rook lijkende gloed met de kleur van kopervijlsel steeg op van de vurige tongen van de naftalampen die aan stalletjes, kramen en andere tijdelijke constructies die het ruime marktplein volledig vulden waren gemonteerd. Tegen de achtergrond van deze verlichting snelden talloze menselijke gestalten, min of meer en profil, heen en weer, omhoog, omlaag en om elkaar heen, als muggen tegen een zonsondergang.

Hun bewegingen waren zo ritmisch dat het leek of ze door machines werden aangedreven. En op dat moment scheen het zelfs zo dat ze daadwerkelijk door machines voortbewogen werden, want de gestalten waren die van de uitbaters van schommels, wipwappen, trampolines³, en bovenal van drie stoomdraaimolens die te midden van de opstelling stonden. Het lawaai van de stoomorgels was dáárvan afkomstig.

³ The attraction in the source text is a “flying-leap,” also known as a running jump. The Dutch translation would then be ‘sprong met aanloop.’ Yet the word follows in an enumeration of fair attractions and, what’s more, they all involve machines; the mentioned translation does not fit with both of these characteristics. The word ‘trampoline’ is both an attraction that

Het gewoel van de mensheid in het volle licht was, bij nader inzien, beter dan architectuur in het donker. De jongeman stak een pijp op, zette zijn hoed scheef op z'n hoofd en stak een hand in zijn zak om in harmonie te komen met zijn nieuwe omgeving en hij liep naar de grootste en drukst bezochte van de stoomcircussen (zoals de draaimolens door hun eigenaren werden genoemd). Deze draaimolen was prachtig afgewerkt en draaide nu in volle vaart. Het muziekinstrument waaromheen de passagiers draaiden vulde de lucht met klanken die hen daarbij begeleidden en richtte zijn koperen trompetmonden op de jonge man, terwijl de lange, schuin geplaatste glazen spiegels, die met de machine meedraaiden, de ronddraaiende figuren en carrouselpaarden op caleidoscopische wijze in zijn ogen deden weerkaatsen.

Het was nu duidelijk te zien dat hij verschilde van het merendeel van de menigte. Hij was een keurige jonge vent, één van het soort dat alleen in grote steden voorkomt, en in Londen in het bijzonder, fijn gebouwd, netjes, ofschoon niet modieus gekleed en hij leek te behoren tot de hogere middenklasse. Toch was er in zijn uiterlijk niets stevigs of praktisch te vinden, maar juist veel dat zacht en zinnenstrelend was. In feite zouden sommigen hem betiteld hebben als een man die niet geheel paste in het beeld van de burgerman uit een eeuw waarin de traditionele plaats van de liefde vooral wordt ingenomen door zelfzuchtige ambitie.

Hij zag de figuren met een onverwachte en stille gratie ronddraaien in een assemblage die doorgaans met haar natuurlijke bewegingen geen elegantie of rust deed vermoeden. Elk draaimolenpaard werd door een bepaald mechaniek aangedreven waardoor een beweging werd gerealiseerd die de triomf en perfectie van de vernuftigheid van de draaimolen belichaamde: het paard ging galopperend omhoog en omlaag en de carrousel was zo ingesteld dat per ieder tweetal paarden er tegelijkertijd steeds één naar boven ging en de ander naar

could be found on a 19th-century fair, is a machine and is used by people to jump after they take a run-up.

beneden. De berijders waren diep onder de indruk van deze op en neer bewegende paarden van deze meest fantastische attractie van onze tijd. De leeftijd van deze passagiers varieerde van jong tot oud, van zes tot zestig jaar.⁴ In eerste instantie was het moeilijk om het kaf van het koren te scheiden⁵, maar na een tijdje viel het oog van de toeschouwer op het knapste meisje van de verscheidene rondwentelende knappe meisjes.

Het was niet dat meisje met de lichtgekleurde jurk en hoed die het eerst zijn aandacht had getrokken, nee, het was degene met de bruine cape, karmozijnrode rok, lichtgekleurde handschoentjes en - nee, zelfs zij niet, maar degene achter haar, met de zwarte rok, het grijze jasje, de zwart-witte hoed en witte katoenen handschoentjes.⁶ Dat was overduidelijk het knapste meisje.

Nu hij haar eindelijk had uitgekozen, bestudeerde deze rondkuierende waarnemer haar zo goed hij kon tijdens de korte momenten dat ze zijn blikveld passeerde. Ze had geheel en al nergens enig besef van behalve van het rijden zelf. Ze bevond zich in een droomtoestand en was zich op dat moment niet bewust van haar leeftijd of haar verleden of haar uiterlijk, laat staan haar problemen. Hijzelf was vol van vage dagelijkse beslommeringen en een modieuze neerslachtigheid en het was een verfrissende ervaring om deze jonge meid, die zich, alsof ze in paradijselijke toestand was, volmaakt gelukkig voelde, daar op dat moment te aanschouwen.

Hij wachtte telkens op haar terugkeer, het moment vrezend dat de onverbiddelijke, bezoedelde stoker, die zich schuilhield achter de in rococostijl ontworpen attractie, zou beslissen dat deze groep berijders waar voor hun geld had gekregen en vervolgens het hele

⁴ “De leeftijd varieerde van...tot...” is a common Dutch expression to state that the ages of the discussed persons vary from the first number to the last. By using this expression the sentence is more natural to a Dutch reader than when the original structure was maintained.

⁵ “To catch a personality” means to find a special or unique person. Raye tries to do this while being in the thick of the crowd, so basically he is trying to sort out the good from the bad. This same meaning is attached to the Dutch expression ‘het kaf van het koren scheiden.’

⁶ The affix ‘-(t)je’ is a Dutch diminutive. This affix is not only used to put across that something is small, but also to emphasize that something is feminine.

gevaarte met zijn stoommachine, paarden, spiegels, trompetten, trommels, cimbalen en dergelijke tot stilstand en tot zwijgen zou brengen, terwijl hij ondertussen onverschillig de overige gedaantes gadesloeg, waaronder de twee eenvoudigere meisjes, de oude vrouw en het kind, de twee jongeren, het pasgetrouwde stel, de oude man met een stenen pijp, de elegante jongeling met een ring, de jongedames in de triomfwagen, de twee timmermansknechten en anderen, totdat zijn verkozen plattelandsjuweel weer voorbijkwam. Hij had nog nooit een creatie van de natuur gezien die mooier was dan zij en met ieder rondje liet ze een diepere indruk op hem achter. Toen ze stopten, werden de verzuchtingen van de berijders duidelijk hoorbaar.⁷

Hij liep om de draaimolen heen naar de plek waar hij vermoedde dat ze af zou stijgen, maar ze bleef op haar plaats zitten. De lege zadels raakten weer gevuld en het was duidelijk dat ze had besloten ook met de volgende ronde mee te doen. De jongeman ging naast haar paard staan en vroeg vrolijk of ze van het ritje had genoten.

‘Oh ja!’ zei ze, met glimmende ogen. ‘Ik heb nog nooit van mijn leven zoiets meegemaakt!’

Het was niet moeilijk om een gesprek met haar aan te knopen. Ze was van nature openhartig— tò openhartig — en niet ervaren genoeg om terughoudendheid aangeleerd te hebben⁸, waardoor ze, nadat hij haar een poosje vleidend had toegesproken, zonder enige aarzeling zijn vragen beantwoordde. Ze was van een dorp op het kalkplateau Great Plain⁹ naar

⁷ My interpretation of the sentence is the following: the riders were sighing during the time it took the roundabout to come to a halt. These sighs only became audible when the carousel had come to a full halt and its noise had stopped.

⁸ In the source text there is a contrast between “unreserved by nature” and “reserved by art”. I translated the antonyms “unreserved” and “reserved” into the Dutch antonyms “openhartig” and “terughoudend”; “by nature” and “by art” were, influenced by the modern concept of nature vs. nurture, translated into “van nature” and “aangeleerd”.

⁹ “The Great Plain” is the Wessex equivalent of Salisbury Plain (Hardy 239). The English reader who is aware of this will know what kind of plain this is, but a Dutch reader will not. In order to maintain the English name and thereby the English setting, the addition

Melchester verhuisd en dit was de eerste keer dat ze ooit een stoomcircus had gezien. Ze kon niet begrijpen hoe zulke prachtige machines gemaakt werden. Ze was naar de stad gekomen op uitnodiging van mevrouw Harnham, die haar in haar huishouden had opgenomen om haar op te leiden tot een dienstbode, indien ze hier enige aanleg voor toonde. Mevrouw Harnham was een jonge vrouw die zo aardig voor haar was omdat ze haar al kende sinds haar kindertijd, want voor ze trouwde ging ze door het leven als Mejuffrouw Edith White en woonde ze in de streek nabij het huisje van de spreker. Ze nam zelfs de moeite om haar te onderwijzen. Mevrouw Harnham was haar enige vriendin op deze wereld en had, aangezien ze kinderloos was, haar gezelschap begeerd boven dat van alle anderen, hoewel ze nog maar kortgeleden was gearriveerd en ze stond haar grotendeels toe om haar eigen gang te gaan en gaf haar een vrije dag wanneer ze daar maar om vroeg. De echtgenoot van deze lieve jonge vrouw was een rijke wijnkoopman uit de stad, maar mevrouw Harnham voelde maar weinig voor hem. Overdag kon je het huis zien vanaf de plek waar ze stonden te praten. Zij, de spreker, vond Melchester aangenamer dan het eenzame platteland en ze zou een nieuwe hoed gaan kopen voor aanstaande zondag die vijftien shilling en negen pence zou gaan kosten.

Toen vroeg ze aan haar kennis waar hij woonde en hij antwoordde in Londen, die oude rokerige stad, waar iedereen die überhaupt leefde, leefde en doodging omdat ze daar niet konden leven. Hij bezocht Wessex twee of drie keer per jaar voor beroepsredenen, was gisteren vanuit Wintoncester aangekomen en zou over een dag of twee naar het volgende gewest gaan. Verder vond hij het platteland aangenamer dan de stad en dat kwam doordat er meisjes woonden zoals zij.

Toen startte de pleziermachine weer en net als daarvoor begonnen, vanuit het perspectief van het opgewekte meisje, de gedaante van de knappe jongeman, het marktplein met zijn lichten en mensenmassa, de huizen verderop en de hele wereld rond te draaien,

“kalkplateau” was made, to give the Dutch reader an idea of the environment in which Anna was born.

terwijl ze in de roterende spiegels aan haar rechterhand in tegengestelde richting draaiden en ze was als het ware het vaste punt in een deinende, verbluffende, sensationele wereld, waarin de gestalte van haar gesprekspartner van kort daarvoor er van alles het meest uitsprong. Iedere keer dat ze dichterbij de helft van haar rondje kwam die haar het dichtst bij hem bracht keken ze elkaar met een glimlach aan en met die onmiskenbare blik die op dat moment zo weinig betekent, maar zo vaak resulteert in passie, hartzeer, eendracht, tweespalt, toewijding, overbevolking, slaafsheid, ongenoegen, berusting en wanhoop.

Toen de paarden opnieuw snelheid minderden ging hij naast haar staan en stelde hij haar voor nog een rondje te rijden. ‘Vergeet de kosten voor een keer,’ zei hij. ‘Ik betaal!’

Ze lachte tot de tranen in haar ogen stonden.

‘Waarom lach je, lieve meid?’ zei hij.

‘Nu ja —omdat u zó deftig bent dat u wel veel geld moet hebben en dat dus alleen maar voor de grap zegt!’ antwoordde ze.

‘Ha-ha!’ lachte de jongeman met haar mee, waarna hij galant zijn geld te voorschijn haalde zodat ze weer verder kon met ronddraaien.

Wie had kunnen denken, terwijl hij glimlachend tussen de bonte verzameling mensen stond, met zijn pijp in zijn hand en gekleed in zijn wandelkledij bestaande uit de van ruw materiaal gemaakte wambuis en flambard, dat dit Heer¹⁰ Charles Bradford Raye was, junior strafpleiter¹¹, geschoold in Wintoncester, als advocaat toegelaten in de orde van Lincoln’s Inn, die momenteel deelnam aan de periodieke rondgang van rechters en advocaten door het Westelijke Arrondissement en enkel door een kleine arbitragezaak in Melchester had moeten

¹⁰ “Esquire” is an English title that is always mentioned after the name of the person it applies to. Its Dutch equivalent “Heer” is always mentioned before the name, which is why it is put before “Charles”.

¹¹ “Stuff-gownsmen” could be translated into ‘advocaat’. This would, however, depict the character as a fully-qualified counsel, which he is not, so the option ‘junior advocaat’ is preferable. Since “stuff-gownsmen” is not an official title but rather a nickname, the translation ‘junior strafpleiter’ is used.

achterblijven nadat zijn collega's alvast door waren gegaan naar de volgende provinciehoofdplaats?

Hoofdstuk 2

Het huis waarover het jonge meisje had gesproken, een statig herenhuis van aanzienlijk formaat met verscheidene ramen op elke verdieping, keek vanuit een ver gelegen hoek uit op het plein. Op de eerste verdieping, waar een grote zitkamer het hele vertrek besloeg, zat achter één van deze ramen een dame met het uiterlijk van iemand tussen de achtentwintig en dertig jaar oud. De gordijnen waren nog niet neergelaten en de dame overzag afwezig het schouwspel dat zich buiten afspeelde, terwijl haar wang op haar hand rustte. De kamer was van binnen niet verlicht, maar er drong genoeg van de gloed van de marktplaats binnen om het gezicht van de dame te onthullen. Ze was eerder een zogenoemd interessant wezen dan een knappe vrouw, met haar donkere ogen, peinzende blik en haar tere lippen.

Achter haar slenterde een man de kamer in en liep naar voren.

‘O, Edith— ik had je niet gezien,’ zei hij. ‘Waarom zit je hier in het donker?’

‘Ik ben naar de kermis aan het kijken,’ antwoordde de dame met een futloze stem.

‘Oh? Wat een narigheid, ieder jaar weer! Ik zou graag zien dat het geheel opgedoekt werd.’

‘Ik hou ervan.’

‘Hm. Over smaak valt niet te twisten.’ Hij staaarde voor een ogenblik met haar uit het raam omdat dat nu eenmaal beleefd was en liep vervolgens de kamer weer uit.

Na een paar minuten rinkelde ze de bel. ‘Is Anna nog niet terug?’, vroeg mevrouw Harnham.

‘Nee mevrouw.’

‘Ze had nu wel terug moeten zijn. Het was de bedoeling dat ze maar tien minuten weg zou blijven.’

‘Zal ik erheen gaan en haar zoeken, mevrouw?’ zei het dienstmeisje vlug.

‘Nee. Dat is niet nodig. Het is een braaf meisje en ze zal spoedig komen.’

Toen de bediende echter de kamer had verlaten stond mevrouw Harnham op, liep naar haar kamer, trok een mantel aan, zette haar hoed op en ging naar beneden, waar ze haar echtgenoot aantrof.

‘Ik wil de kermis zien,’ zei ze, ‘en ik ga op zoek naar Anna. Ik heb mezelf voor haar verantwoordelijk gesteld en moet erop toezien dat haar niets overkomt. Ze zou binnen moeten zijn. Kom je met me mee?’

‘Oh, alles gaat prima met haar. Ik zag haar op één van die carrousel-dingen, druk pratend met haar jongeman toen ik thuiskwam. Maar ik zal mee gaan als je dat wilt, ookal zou ik liever honderd mijl de andere kant op gaan.’

‘Je gaat je gang maar.¹² Er zal mij niets overkomen als ik alleen ga.’

Ze verliet het huis en ging op in de drommen mensen die het markplein vulden, waar ze al snel Anna opmerkte, zittend op het ronddraaiende paard. Zodra het paard was gestopt stapte mevrouw Harnham naar voren en zei streng, ‘Anna, hoe kun je zo onbezonnen zijn? Je zou maar tien minuten naar buiten gaan.’

Anna keek beteuterd en de jongeman, intussen op de achtergrond getreden, schoot haar te hulp bij het afstijgen.

‘Geeft u haar alstublieft niet de schuld,’ zei hij beleefd. ‘Het is mijn schuld dat zij is gebleven. Ze zag er zo gracieus uit op het paard dat ik haar heb overgehaald om nog een rondje te rijden. Ik verzeker u dat ze in geen enkel gevaar is geweest.’

¹² To translate Edith’s statement into “doe dat dan alsjeblieft” would not feel natural to the reader, for it is not a remark that would be made in a Dutch daily conversation. Instead, I translated it into the more common “je gaat je gang maar.”

‘In dat geval laat ik haar aan u over,’ zei mevrouw Harnham, waarna ze zich omdraaide om weer terug te lopen.

Maar dit was op dat moment niet goed mogelijk. Iets had de aandacht van het publiek gevestigd op het achterste gedeelte, waardoor de vrouw van de wijnkoopman, gevangen in het gedrang, tegen Anna’s kennis werd gedrukt zonder mogelijkheid om terug te wijken. Hun gezichten waren niet ver van elkaar verwijderd, zijn adem blies over haar wang evenals die van Anna. Ze konden niets anders doen dan glimlachen om de situatie. Geen van beiden sprak, maar wachtte ieder rustig af. Mevrouw Harnham voelde toen ineens dat haar vingers werden gegrepen door de hand van een man. Uit de bewuste blik op het gezicht van de jongeman maakte ze op dat dit zijn hand was. Daarnaast maakte ze uit de positie van het meisje op dat hij niet beter wist dan dat hij Anna’s hand omsloot. Wat haar ertoe bewoog om hem in de waan te laten¹³ wist ze eigenlijk niet. Niet tevreden met alleen het vasthouden van de hand liet hij speels twee van zijn vingers in haar handschoen glijden, tegen haar handpalm. De situatie hield zo nog enige tijd aan tot de drukte afnam, maar het duurde zeker enige minuten voordat de menigte genoeg was uitgedund voor mevrouw Harnham om zich terug te trekken.

‘Hoe hebben ze elkaar leren kennen, vraag ik me af?’ mijmerde ze terwijl ze terugliep. ‘Anna is wel erg vrijpostig—en hij erg onfatsoenlijk en vriendelijk.’

Ze was zo getroffen door de houding en stem van de vreemdeling, door de tederheid van zijn lichtzinnige aanraking, dat ze in plaats van het huis opnieuw binnen te gaan zich omdraaide en het paar observeerde vanuit een verborgen plekje. Echt, zo stelde ze (waarmee ze niet veel minder impulsief was dan Anna zelf) het was Anna niet kwalijk te nemen dat ze

¹³ The phrase “to refrain from undecieving him” consists of two negative actions, i.e. it tells what Edith leaves undone. I translated this into the active “hem in de waan laten,” which has the same meaning but shows even more that her deceit is an unwitting action; that it is something that she does that leads to tragedy, which is often the case in Hardy’s ironic universe.

hem aanmoedigde, op welke manier ze dan ook kennis met hem heeft weten te maken, want hij was zo fatsoenlijk, zo fascinerend, had zulke mooie ogen. De gedachte dat hij enkele jaren jonger was dan zij bracht een irrationele zucht teweeg.

Na lange tijd lieten ze de draaimolen achter zich en liepen ze richting de deur van het huis van mevrouw Harnham. Ze hoorde de jongeman zeggen dat hij haar naar huis zou begeleiden. Anna had dus een aanbidder gevonden, blijkbaar één die zeer toegewijd was. Mevrouw Harnham was erg in hem geïnteresseerd. Toen ze bijna de deur van het huis van de wijnkoopman hadden bereikt, rond deze tijd een relatief verlaten plek, stonden ze een tijdje verborgen in de schaduw van een muur, waarna hun wegen scheidden, waarbij Anna doorliep naar de ingang en haar kennis terugliep over het plein.

‘Anna,’ zei mevrouw Harnham terwijl ze naderbij kwam. ‘Ik heb je van veraf bekeken! Die jongeman kuste je bij zijn afscheid, ik weet het welhaast zeker.’

‘Wel,’ stamelde Anna, ‘hij zei dat, als ik het niet erg vond—het me geen kwaad zou doen, en, en, hem heel veel goeds.’

‘Ah, dat dacht ik al! En was hij een vreemdeling tot deze avond?’

‘Ja mevrouw.’

‘En toch gaf je hem, daar ben ik van overtuigd, je naam en alle informatie over jezelf?’

‘Daar vroeg hij me om.’

‘Maar hij gaf jou zijn naam niet?’

‘Jawel, mevrouw, dat deed hij wel!’ riep Anna triomfantelijk. ‘Hij heet Charles Bradford en komt uit Londen.’

‘Goed, als hij fatsoenlijk is heb ik er natuurlijk niets op tegen dat je met hem omgaat,’ merkte haar werkgeefster op, omdat ze, ondanks algemene gedragscodes, in positieve zin bevooroordeeld was ten opzichte van de jongeman. ‘Maar ik moet op dit alles terugkomen wanneer hij een poging doet jullie kennismaking te hervatten. Een geboren en getogen

plattelandsmeid als jij, die tot deze maand nooit eerder in Melchester heeft gewoond, die eigenlijk nooit een belezen man¹⁴ heeft ontmoet tot je hier kwam, al zo gewieksts dat je een jonge Londenaar als hem hebt veroverd!’

‘Ik heb hem niet veroverd. Ik heb helemaal niets gedaan,’ zei Anna onsteld.

Toen ze weer binnenshuis en alleen was liet mevrouw Harnham haar gedachten gaan over wat een welgemanierde en galante jongeman Anna’s metgezel haar had geleken. Er was een magie voelbaar geweest in zijn verleidende aanraking van haar hand en ze vroeg zich af hoe het meisje zijn aandacht had getrokken.

De volgende morgen bezocht de emotionele Edith Harnham de gebruikelijke doordeweekse kerkdienst in de kathedraal van Melchester. Toen ze in de mist het terrein van de kathedraal doorkruiste zag ze opnieuw de man die de avond daarvoor haar belangstelling had gewekt. Hij staarde peinzend omhoog naar de hoog reikende architectuur van het schip van de kerk en zodra ze haar stoel had ingenomen liep hij naar binnen en ging zitten op een plaats tegenover die van haar.

Hij besteedde geen aandacht aan haar in het bijzonder, maar mevrouw Harnham hield hem contant in de gaten en vroeg zich meer dan ooit af wat het was dat hij in haar nog onvolwassen dienstmeisje had gezien. De werkgeefster was deze moderne jongeman bijna net zo min gewend als het dienstmeisje zelf, want anders had ze zich hier minder over verbaasd. Nadat Raye een tijdje om zich heen had gekeken verliet hij de kathedraal abrupt, zonder enige aandacht te schenken aan de dienst die op dat moment plaatsvond. Mevrouw Harnham, eenzaam, beïnvloedbaar mens dat ze was, was niet langer geïnteresseerd in het

¹⁴ A “black-coated man” can either mean “wearing a black coat” or “designating a clerical or professional person” (“Oxford”); in this context the first definition can be ruled out and since Raye is in fact a junior barrister it is clear that “professional person” is the intended meaning. The kind of man Edith is trying to depict here is one who has studied to become engaged in a profession. I chose for the translation “een belezen man” because this both shows this man had studied and that he is knowledgeable, in contrast with the men Anna has met before moving to Melchester.

prijzen van de Heer. Ze wenste dat ze met een man uit Londen was getrouwd die net zo bekend was met de kneepjes van de hofmakerij als hij die per vergissing haar hand had gestreeld dat zo duidelijk was.

Appendix B: Original Text

On the Western Circuit

Chapter I

The man who played the disturbing part in the two quiet feminine lives hereunder depicted—no great man, in any sense, by the way—first had knowledge of them on an October evening, in the city of Melchester. He had been standing in the Close, vainly endeavouring to gain amid the darkness a glimpse of the most homogeneous pile of mediaeval architecture in England, which towered and tapered from the damp and level sward in front of him. While he stood the presence of the Cathedral walls was revealed rather by the ear than by the eyes; he could not see them, but they reflected sharply a roar of sound which entered the Close by a street leading from the city square, and, falling upon the building, was flung back upon him.

He postponed till the morrow his attempt to examine the deserted edifice, and turned his attention to the noise. It was compounded of steam barrel-organs, the clanging of gongs, the ringing of hand-bells, the clack of rattles, and the undistinguishable shouts of men. A lurid light hung in the air in the direction of the tumult. Thitherward he went, passing under the arched gateway, along a straight street, and into the square.

He might have searched Europe over for a greater contrast between juxtaposed scenes. The spectacle was that of the eighth chasm of the Inferno as to colour and flame, and, as to mirth, a development of the Homeric heaven. A smoky glare, of the complexion of brass-filings, ascended from the fiery tongues of innumerable naphtha lamps affixed to booths, stalls, and other temporary erections which crowded the spacious market-square. In front of this irradiation scores of human figures, more or less in profile, were darting athwart and across, up, down, and around, like gnats against a sunset.

Their motions were so rhythmical that they seemed to be moved by machinery. And it presently appeared that they were moved by machinery indeed; the figures being those of the

patrons of swings, see-saws, flying-leaps, above all of the three steam roundabouts which occupied the centre of the position. It was from the latter that the din of steam-organs came.

Throbbing humanity in full light was, on second thoughts, better than architecture in the dark. The young man, lighting a short pipe and putting his hat on one side and one hand in his pocket, to throw himself into harmony with his new environment, drew near to the largest and most patronized of the steam circuses (as the roundabouts were called by their owners). This was one of brilliant finish, and it was now in full revolution. The musical instrument in the midst, to whose tones the riders revolved, directed its trumpet-mouths of brass upon the young man, and the long plate-glass mirrors set at angles, which revolved with the machine, flashed the gyrating personages and hobby-horses kaleidoscopically into his eyes.

It could now be seen that he was unlike the majority of the crowd. He was a gentlemanly young fellow, one of the species found in large towns only, and London particularly, built on delicate lines, well, though not fashionably dressed, and appeared to belong to the professional class. Yet he had nothing square or practical about his look, much that was curvilinear and sensuous. Indeed, some would have called him a man not altogether typical of the middle-class male of a century wherein sordid ambition is the master-passion that seems to be taking the time-honoured place of love.

The revolving figures passed before his eyes with an unexpected and quiet grace in a throng whose natural movements did not suggest gracefulness or quietude as a rule. By some contrivance there was imparted to each of the hobby-horses a motion which was really the triumph and perfection of roundabout inventiveness—a galloping rise and fall, so timed that, of each pair of steeds, one was on the spring while the other was on the pitch. The riders were quite fascinated by these equine undulations in this most delightful fair-day-game of our times. There were riders as young as six, and as old as sixty years, with every age between.

At first it was difficult to catch a personality, but by and by the observer's eyes centred on the prettiest girl out of the several pretty ones revolving.

It was not that one with the light frock and light hat whom he had been at first attracted by; no, it was the one with the brown cape, crimson skirt, light gloves and—no, not even she; but the one behind her; she with the black skirt, grey jacket, black and white hat and white cotton gloves. Unmistakably that was the prettiest girl.

Having finally selected her this idle spectator studied her as well as he was able during each of her brief transits across his visual field. She was absolutely unconscious of everything save the act of riding: her features were rapt in an ecstatic dreaminess; for the moment she did not know her age or her history or her lineaments, much less her troubles. He himself was full of vague latter-day glooms and popular melancholies, and it was a refreshing sensation to behold this young thing then and there, absolutely as happy as if she were in a Paradise.

Dreading the moment when the inexorable stoker, grimly lurking behind the glittering rococo-work, should decide that this set of riders had had their pennyworth, and bring the whole concern of steam-engine, horses, mirrors, trumpets, drums, cymbals, and such-like to pause and silence, he waited for her every reappearance, glancing indifferently over the intervening series, including the two plainer girls, the old woman and child, the two youngsters, the newly-married couple, the old man with a clay pipe, the sparkish youth with a ring, the young ladies in the chariot, the pair of journeyman-carpenters, and others, till his select country beauty followed on again in her place. He had never seen a fairer product of nature, and at each round she made a deeper mark in his sentiments. The stoppage then came, and the sighs of the riders were audible.

He moved round to the place at which he reckoned she would alight, but she retained her seat. The empty saddles began to refill, and she plainly was deciding to have another turn.

The young man drew up to the side of her steed, and pleasantly asked her if she had enjoyed her ride.

‘O yes!’ she said, with dancing eyes. ‘It has been quite unlike anything I have ever felt in my life before!’

It was not difficult to fall into conversation with her. Unreserved—too unreserved—by nature, she was not experienced enough to be reserved by art, and after a little coaxing she answered his remarks readily. She had come to live in Melchester from a village on the Great Plain, and this was the first time that she had ever seen a steam-circus; she could not understand how such wonderful machines were made. She had come to the city on the invitation of Mrs. Harnham, who had taken her into her household to train her as a servant if she showed any aptitude. Mrs. Harnham was a young lady who before she married had been Miss Edith White, living in the country near the speaker’s cottage; and was now very kind to her through knowing her in childhood so well. She was even taking the trouble to educate her. Mrs. Harnham was the only friend she had in the world, and being without children had wished to have her near her in preference to anybody else, though she had only lately come; allowed her to do almost as she liked, and to have a holiday whenever she asked for it. The husband of this kind young lady was a rich wine-merchant of the town, but Mrs. Harnham did not care much about him. In the daytime you could see the house from where they were talking. She, the speaker, liked Melchester better than the lonely country, and she was going to have a new hat for next Sunday that was to cost fifteen and ninepence.

Then she inquired of her acquaintance where he lived, and he told her in London, that ancient and smoky city, where everybody lived who lived at all, and died because they could not live there. He came into Wessex two or three times a year for professional reasons; he had arrived from Wintoncester yesterday, and was going on into the next county in a day or two.

For one thing he did like the country better than the town, and it was because it contained such girls as herself.

Then the pleasure-machine started again, and, to the light-hearted girl, the figure of the handsome young man, the market-square with its lights and crowd, the houses beyond, and the world at large, began moving round as before, countermoving in the revolving mirrors on her right hand, she being as it were the fixed point in an undulating, dazzling, lurid universe, in which loomed forward most prominently of all the form of her late interlocutor. Each time that she approached the half of her orbit that lay nearest him they gazed at each other with smiles, and with that unmistakable expression which means so little at the moment, yet so often leads up to passion, heart-ache, union, disunion, devotion, overpopulation, drudgery, discontent, resignation, despair.

When the horses slowed anew he stepped to her side and proposed another heat. 'Hang the expense for once,' he said. 'I'll pay!'

She laughed till the tears came.

'Why do you laugh, dear?' said he.

'Because—you are so genteel that you must have plenty o' money, and only say that for fun!' she returned.

'Ha-ha!' laughed the young man in unison, and gallantly producing his money she was enabled to whirl on again.

As he stood smiling there in the motley crowd, with his pipe in his hand, and clad in the rough pea-jacket and wideawake that he had put on for his stroll, who would have supposed him to be Charles Bradford Raye, Esquire, stuff-gownsmen, educated at Wintonchester, called to the Bar at Lincoln's-Inn, now going the Western Circuit, merely detained in Melchester by a small arbitration after his brethren had moved on to the next county-town?

Chapter II

The square was overlooked from its remoter corner by the house of which the young girl had spoken—a dignified residence of considerable size, having several windows on each floor. Inside one of these, on the first floor, the apartment being a large drawing-room, sat a lady, in appearance from twenty-eight to thirty years of age. The blinds were still undrawn, and the lady was absently surveying the weird scene without, her cheek resting on her hand. The room was unlit from within, but enough of the glare from the market-place entered it to reveal the lady's face. She was what is called an interesting creature rather than a handsome woman; dark-eyed, thoughtful, and with sensitive lips.

A man sauntered into the room from behind and came forward.

'O, Edith—I didn't see you,' he said. 'Why are you sitting here in the dark?'

'I am looking at the fair,' replied the lady in a languid voice.

'Oh? Horrid nuisance every year! I wish it could be put a stop to.'

'I like it.'

'H'm. There's no accounting for taste.' For a moment he gazed from the window with her, for politeness sake, and then went out again.

In a few minutes she rang. 'Hasn't Anna come in?' asked Mrs. Harnham.

'No m'm.'

'She ought to be in by this time. I meant her to go for ten minutes only.'

'Shall I go and look for her, m'm?' said the house-maid alertly.

'No. It is not necessary. She is a good girl and will come soon.'

However, when the servant had gone Mrs. Harnham arose, went up to her room, cloaked and bonneted herself, and proceeded downstairs, where she found her husband.

‘I want to see the fair,’ she said; ‘and I am going to look for Anna. I have made myself responsible for her, and must see she comes to no harm. She ought to be indoors. Will you come with me?’

‘Oh—she’s all right. I saw her on one of those whirligig things, talking to her young man as I came in. But I’ll go if you wish, though I’d rather go a hundred miles the other way.’

‘Then please do so. I shall come to no harm alone.’

She left the house and entered the crowd which thronged the market-place, where she soon discerned Anna, seated on the revolving horse. As soon as it stopped Mrs. Harnham advanced and said severely, ‘Anna, how can you be such a wild girl? You were only to be out for ten minutes.’

Anna looked blank, and the young man, who had dropped into the background, came to help her alight. ‘Please don’t blame her,’ he said politely. ‘It is my fault that she has stayed. She looked so graceful on the horse that I induced her to go round again. I assure you that she has been quite safe.’

‘In that case I’ll leave her in your hands,’ said Mrs. Harnham, turning to retrace her steps. But this, for the moment, it was not so easy to do. Something had attracted the crowd to a spot in their rear, and the wine-merchant’s wife, caught by its sway, found herself pressed against Anna’s acquaintance without power to move away. Their faces were within a few inches of each other, his breath fanned her cheek as well as Anna’s. They could do no other than smile at the accident; but neither spoke, and each waited passively. Mrs. Harnham then felt a man’s hand clasping her fingers, and from the look of consciousness on the young fellow’s face she knew the hand to be his: she also knew that from the position of the girl he had no other thought than that the imprisoned hand was Anna’s. What prompted her to refrain from undeceiving him she could hardly tell. Not content with holding the hand, he playfully slipped two of his fingers inside her glove, against her palm. Thus matters continued till the

pressure lessened; but several minutes passed before the crowd thinned sufficiently to allow Mrs. Harnham to withdraw.

‘How did they get to know each other, I wonder?’ she mused as she retreated. ‘Anna is really very forward—and he very wicked and nice.’

She was so gently stirred with the stranger’s manner and voice, with the tenderness of his idle touch, that instead of re-entering the house she turned back again and observed the pair from a screened nook. Really she argued (being little less impulsive than Anna herself) it was very excusable in Anna to encourage him, however she might have contrived to make his acquaintance; he was so gentlemanly, so fascinating, had such beautiful eyes. The thought that he was several years her junior produced a reasonless sigh.

At length the couple turned from the roundabout towards the door of Mrs. Harnham’s house and the young man could be heard saying that he would accompany her home. Anna, then, had found a lover, apparently a very devoted one. Mrs. Harnham was quite interested in him. When they drew near the door of the wine-merchant’s house, a comparatively deserted spot by this time, they stood invisible for a little while in the shadow of a wall, where they separated, Anna going on to the entrance, and her acquaintance returning across the square.

‘Anna,’ said Mrs. Harnham, coming up. ‘I’ve been looking at you! That young man kissed you at parting, I am almost sure.’

‘Well,’ stammered Anna; ‘he said, if I didn’t mind—it would do me no harm, and, and, him a great deal of good.’

‘Ah, I thought so! And he was a stranger till to-night?’

‘Yes ma’am.’

‘Yet I warrant you told him your name and everything about yourself?’

‘He asked me.’

‘But he didn’t tell you his?’

‘Yes ma’am, he did!’ cried Anna victoriously. ‘It is Charles Bradford of London.’

‘Well, if he’s respectable, of course I’ve nothing to say against your knowing him,’ remarked her mistress, prepossessed, in spite of general principles, in the young man’s favour. ‘But I must reconsider all that, if he attempts to renew your acquaintance. A country-bred girl like you, who has never lived in Melchester till this month, who had hardly ever seen a black-coated man till you came here, to be so sharp as to capture a young Londoner like him!’

‘I didn’t capture him. I didn’t do anything,’ said Anna, in confusion.

When she was indoors and alone Mrs. Harnham thought what a well-bred and chivalrous young man Anna’s companion had seemed. There had been a magic in his wooing touch of her hand; and she wondered how he had come to be attracted by the girl.

The next morning the emotional Edith Harnham went to the usual week-day service in Melchester cathedral. In crossing the Close through the fog she again perceived him who had interested her the previous evening, gazing up thoughtfully at the high-piled architecture of the nave: and as soon as she had taken her seat he entered and sat down in a stall opposite hers.

He did not particularly heed her; but Mrs. Harnham was continually occupying her eyes with him, and wondered more than ever what had attracted him in her unfledged maidservant. The mistress was almost as unaccustomed as the maiden herself to the end-of-the-age young man, or she might have wondered less. Raye, having looked about him awhile, left abruptly, without regard to the service that was proceeding; and Mrs. Harnham, lonely, impressionable creature that she was, took no further interest in praising the Lord. She wished she had married a London man who knew the subtleties of love-making as they were evidently known to him who had mistakenly caressed her hand.