"A DROP OF BLOOD":

THE TRANSLATION OF SUBVERSIVE WORDPLAY IN SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER'S *LOLLY WILLOWES*

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It was not till the retreat from the Renaissance that the extraneous vibration was heard as so very jarring. By then, many women had learned to read and write, so a literate woman was no longer an ornament to society. Kept in bounds, she had her uses. She could keep the account books and transcribe recipes for puddings and horse pills. But she must be kept within bounds; she must subserve.

[W]omen have entered literature - breathless, unequipped, and with nothing but their wits to trust to. A few minutes ago, or a few centuries ago, they were writing a letter about an apoplexy, or a recipe for custard. Now they are inside the palace, writing with great clearness what they have in mind to say . . .

Sylvia Townsend Warner, "Women as Writers" 379, 383.

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INTRODUCTION:

Wordplay, Translation and *Lolly Willowes*

Wordplay is rather like the centre of a Venn diagram; a complex overlapping of multiple dimensions that often hinges on the idiosyncratic possibilities of a particular language. As such, it frequently poses a particular challenge for the translator. It constitutes a site where multiple meanings intersect, making it a particularly dense translation unit, often forcing the translator to make choices, to leave out one aspect to maintain another (Delabastita *Traductio* 11). This requires the translator to evaluate the various features of wordplay in order to select the perceived essence and will often reveal something about the translator's interpretation and beliefs about translation (11). Wordplay translation makes for a significant field of study, not just for the retrospective study of translations, but also for translation-oriented analyses as it provides structure, overview, and useful lines of approach and examples. The theoretical framework on wordplay used in this analysis will follow Dirk Delabastita's study of wordplay, which, according to Josep Marco, "has gained currency in translation studies and found its way into several analyses" (267). Several scholars who base their research on Delabastita will also be discussed. The following definition of wordplay by Delabastita will utilised throughout the analysis of *Lolly Willowes:*

> Wordplay is the general name for the various *textual* phenomena in which *structural features* of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a *communicatively significant confrontation* of two (or more) linguistic structures with *more or less similar forms* and *more or less different meanings*. (*Translator* 128)

Wordplay is a stylistic device that is particularly well-suited to expressing criticism due to its contrastive abilities; by contrasting both similar and opposite facts wordplay can invite the deconstruction of general beliefs and practices. Its often striking and humorous character furthermore underlines and makes memorable any meaning the reader obtains from it. In *Lolly Willowes*, aptly described as a "parody of Victorian

domestic realism" (Winick 575), plenty of examples of such witty confrontations can be found, but not all of them may be of equal importance to the translator. Nor should instances of wordplay be considered in complete isolation; as Ida Klitgård argues, "literary translators and translation scholars need to pay greater attention to clusters of wordplay rather than distinguishing puns [wordplay] as individual, separate brain-teasers. . . . Historical, social and other contextual and intertextual factors must also be taken into consideration" (71). Since *LW* has widely (and rightfully) come to be regarded as a feminist work[1], my focus will lie on what I consider to be subversive, 'sociocritical' wordplay, or those examples of wordplay that contribute to the overall emancipatory theme of the novel by commenting on the position of women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Aim and Outline of the Analysis and Translation

The analysis below is a preparation for the translation of several passages from *Lolly Willowes* (hereafter *LW*) containing wordplay, particularly subversive wordplay with sociocritical significance, and my translation strategy will be guided by the interrelation of style (wordplay) and function (social or political critique). In my reading of the work, the life of the protagonist Laura reflects many contemporary social issues, particularly the obstacles faced by unmarried women in Britain in the 1920's. The novel engages critically with these issues and wordplay, I would argue, makes an important contribution to the novel's subtle and comical exposure of such issues and the pressure put on unmarried women. As critical reflection forms an integral part of my reading of the work, my aim is to translate any instance of wordplay that contributes to such critical reflection in a way that renders it equally effective in the target text. As such, my analysis will explore the precise nature and effect of sociocritical wordplay in *LW* and discuss possible translation techniques in order to determine how subversive sociocritical wordplay in *LW* should be translated if the critical effect, which I deem

[1] The work has, amongst others, been termed a "revolutionary feminist text," a "feminist fantasy novel" and a "feminist manifesto" (Lurie qtd. in Shin 709; Marcus 92; Caserio qtd. Bruton 88).

central to the work as a whole, is to be reproduced in the target text. This requires several steps. The first chapter will provide relevant contexts for the analysis and translation of sociocritical wordplay in *LW*. This includes a summary of the plot and a discussion of important themes in the novel, a short autobiography of Sylvia Townsend Warner and a discussion of the reception of *LW*, in which I will suggest several explanations for the fact that, as of yet, no Dutch translation of the work has been published. Finally, relevant insights from several studies that discuss the relation between Warner's style and criticism will be summarised. Chapter two will look deeper into the nature of wordplay and the translation of wordplay, paying special attention to the relation between linguistic features and the production of meaning and its relevance for translators. The second half of this second chapter will discuss possible solutions or techniques for the translator of wordplay. The insights and information of chapters one and two will be applied in the third chapter, in which several examples from the novel will be selected and analysed in detail in order to map out their structure and establish their effect on the "text-world;" that is: the "mental representations of the discourse [constructed by listeners or readers]. . . in which the language being produced can be conceptualised and understood" (Gavins 10). These insights will then be used to identify and discuss any translation problems resulting from the constraints of wordplay. In the fourth chapter I will outline and explain my general strategy for the translation of the wordplay examples and select and illustrate solutions for the translation problems identified in chapter three. In the fifth and final chapter a translation of several passages rich in wordplay will be presented; translation problems and choices not discussed in the analysis will be explained in footnotes. The choices made and strategies used to translate the examples will be reviewed and discussed one final time in a conclusion. This conclusion will also serve as an invitation for debate surrounding the translation of these particular examples of wordplay and sociocritical wordplay more generally. Finally, several suggestions for further research will be given.

CHAPTER 1: CONTEXT AND RECEPTION OF *LOLLY WILLOWES*

Lolly Willowes **and Sylvia Townsend Warner**

"When her father died," the narrator remarks, "Laura Willowes went to live in London with her elder brother and his family" (5). This rather casual observation describes a turning point in the life of Laura 'Lolly' Willowes, the protagonist of Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly Willowes, or The Loving Huntsman* (1926). Having lost her beloved father and her home, twenty-eight-year old, unmarried Laura is discussing her future with her sister-in-law, Caroline:

> 'Of course,' said Caroline, 'you will come to us.'
>
> 'But it will upset all your plans. It will give you so much trouble. Are you sure you really want me?'
>
> 'Oh *dear*, yes.'
>
> Caroline spoke affectionately, but her thoughts were elsewhere. (5)

Caroline's thoughts are *indeed* elsewhere; what follows is an elaborate interior monologue in which Caroline lists all the furnishings necessary to make the small spare-room habitable, paying special consideration to all the nice furniture Laura would bring from her ancestral home, furniture that would thus escape the grasp of Laura's other sister-in-law, Sybil. Caroline concludes that "Laura was a gentle creature, and the little girls loved her; she would soon fit into her new home" (6). To Caroline, Laura *herself* has become a piece of furniture to be moved around, a thought that is confirmed by Laura, three pages later: "And Laura, feeling rather as if she were a piece of family property forgotten in the will, was ready to be disposed of as they [her family] should think best" (9). Laura's feelings perfectly summarise the position she finds herself in and for the duration of the novel the demure but steadfast Laura tries to find her own way in life and get rid of her family's interference. Her methods, however, are unconventional: Laura moves to the countryside, makes a deal with the Devil and ends up becoming a witch. Yet this turn from realism to the supernatural is not a denial but a *subversion* of reality:

> . . . Townsend Warner has woven threads of the supernatural into a realistic, even mundane setting. But these threads and the turn to the supernatural have an important purpose-they serve not only to turn the novel away from a realistic setting, which Showalter interprets as an evasion of reality, but also to bring an element of instability into the plot . . . . With this shift away from realism Townsend Warner protests the pre-defined roles of men and women, as does Laura by moving outside their conventionality. (Knoll 357)

The witch, in particular, is a device often used for feminist criticism: "witches always resist this imprisonment and categorisation. Despite the attempts of patriarchy to control witches and women, witches written by women always initiate some sort of subversion" (Bruton 5). In a long and impassioned monologue at the end of the novel, the usually soft-spoken Laura sketches the bleak and unfulfilled lives women generally lead as opposed to the liberties of being a witch:

> One doesn't become a witch to run around being harmful, or to run around being helpful either, a district visitor on a broomstick. It's to escape all that – to have *a life of one's own*, not an existence doled out to you by others . . . . (197, emphasis added).

By having Laura stress the need for women "to have a life one's own," Warner in fact anticipates both the title and the feminist message of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, published three years later (Ellmann 80; Bruton 88; Lurie qtd. in Shin 709). The supernatural elements of *LW* are subdued – stated rather than demonstrated; no incantations are muttered above the boiling and bubbling contents of a cauldron. And yet in this work of "narrative witchcraft" (Shin 724), words are shown to be a powerful, transformative force; especially so in wordplay.

Warner, born in 1893 in Harrow, initially prepared for a career in music but showed talent not only for the composition of music but also for the composition of words. She became involved with the Tudor Church Music project, joining a panel of esteemed editors and earning a small salary that ensured her independence. In 1922, "a visit to

the Essex marshes. . . [propelled] her in the direction of literature" (Waters ix), it was her experience of that wild, wonderful landscape that made her realise that "it was possible to write poetry" (Harman 53). A book of poems was published in 1925, which then led to the publication of *LW*, one year later. The novel was a success and was even shortlisted for the Prix Femina. But Warner was not always pleased with the praise bestowed on her novel, which "could all to easily be misinterpreted as whimsy" (Waters xi). "Though *Lolly Willowes* set out to overturn 'the bugaboo surmises of the public' about witches, and about the single woman, that too common phenomenon of the post-war years," biographer Claire Harman writes, "it amused people more than it startled them" (65). In a letter to her friend David Garnett, Warner describes her frustration at such responses to her first novel and gratefully receives Garnett's appreciation, which is of a different kind:

> Other people who have seen *Lolly* have told me that it was charming, that it was distinguished, and my mother said it was almost as good Galsworthy. And my heart sank lower and lower, I felt as though I had tried to make a sword only to be told what a pretty pattern there was on the blade. But you have sent me a drop of blood. (Warner qtd. in Waters xi)

Warner, it seems, did not write to please audiences, nor did she live her life according to convention. After a seventeen-year long affair with her older, married music master at Harrow, Percy Buck, Warner met her life partner Valentine Ackland in 1930 (Hopkins 342-343). They not only shared poetic and literary ambitions and a cottage in rural Dorset (343), but also a commitment to political activism. They joined the Communist Party of Great Britain and devoted themselves to the fight against rising fascism (343). Warner's activism is reflected in her fiction, which "engages critically with the everyday realities of dominant political and cultural ideologies" (Plock and Murray 728). When Warner died in 1978 she left a large and varied body of works but despite her prodigious and remarkable life and career, she is not widely recognised these days, leading contemporary author Sarah Waters to name her "one of the most shamefully under-read great British authors of the past hundred years" (vii).

Translations and Dutch Reception

Despite its immediate success, *LW* was slow to reach non-English speaking audiences. The novel was first translated into French in 1933 by A.M. Denham and J. Champ-Renaud, followed by a fifty-year lull. It is only after (and perhaps because of) Warner's death that the translation of the novel begins to pick up speed: a German translation by Ann Anders appearing in 1980, a second French translation by Florence Lévy-Paolini in 1987 and an Italian translation by Grazia Gatti in 1990. This decade-long peak could be explained by a revived interest in Warner after a period of relative silence:

> Her reputation was re-established to a certain extent in the late 1970s, when she was first championed by the Virago Modern Classics list. It was given another boost in the '80s and '90s, which saw the publication of biographical studies by Wendy Mulford and Claire Harman, along with sensitive editions of Townsend Warner's diaries and letters. (Waters vii)

A second translation peak occurs in the year 2016 with the publication of a Spanish translation by Celia Montolío, a Catalan translation by Marta Hernández and Zahara Méndez and a Hebrew translation by Rene Werbin. This short and sudden spike might in part be explained by the pioneering efforts of award-winning and widely translated author Sarah Waters, who wrote a praising introduction for the 2012 edition by Virago Press and expressed her insights into and admiration for Warner's works in an article for *The Guardian* appearing that same year[2]. As of today, no Dutch translation has appeared despite the fact that the Dutch and Flemish media did discuss Warner's work. A comparison with Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) and Els Andringa's study of the Dutch reception and translation of Woolf will shed some light on Warner's relative obscurity. Both Woolf and Warner were active during roughly the same period, although Warner survived Woolf by thirty-seven years. During the interbellum, Woolf's

[2] The article has since been removed from the website of *The Guardian*. It was titled "Sylvia Townsend Warner: The Neglected Writer," published on March 2, 2012.

works were discussed (and received mixed reviews written) by relatively minor Dutch critics:

> The reviews and essays appeared in places that, in hindsight, belong to the center of the polysystem. However, they were written by critics who were respected but not the most prominent at the time, the ones whose fame became firmly established after the war. Apparently therefore, Woolf 's reputation remained at the periphery of the central subsystem . . . . (Andringa 528)

Incidentally, three out of the four critics who discussed Woolf also discussed Warner during the interbellum: Elisabeth de Roos, Ada Geyl en Jos Panhuysen. The total sum of reviews of literary works by Warner by these and other critics (5)[3], however, is considerably lower than the number of reviews of Woolf found by Andringa (13). It would seem, then, that Warner was discussed in the same Dutch circles as Woolf but to a lesser extent. The first Dutch translation of Woolf's work appeared in 1948 but the translation of her work did not really take off until after 1976 (538). Andringa explains the slow translation of Woolf as follows:

> a conservative and probably market-oriented translation *strategy*, which is evidently part of the booksellers' *repertoire* too, aims to publish

[3] A short mention (in *Caecilia & Het Muziekcollege* form 1930) of a chapter by Warner in *The Oxford History of Music* has not been included as it is not a literary work but a piece on musicology, nor the mention STW in *Nieuwsblad voor den boekhandel* in 1929 which is unrelated to any of her work. Both these mentions do, however, show that STW was a somewhat familiar name.

The five reviews were mostly found through Delpher, a database of Dutch print materials, and the library of the University of Utrecht. This number may not be conclusive as I was reliant on digital sources:

1931: review of *Opus 7* by Jos Panhuysen in *De Tijd*, 6 June 1931.
1933: review of *The Salutation* by Elisabeth de Roos in *Groot Nederland* 31 1933.
1934: review of the 1933 French translation of *Lolly Willowes* in *Dietsche Warande &Belfort* 1934 by 'L.D.' (Interestingly, according to the reviewer's reading of *LW*, Laura gradually descends into 'madness.' Her meetings with the Devil and her witchhood are nothing but hallucinations.)
1934: review of *Whether a Dove or a Seagull* (STW and Valentine Ackland) by Jos Panhuysen in *De Tijd*, 23 April 1934. (In which Ackland is mistaken for a man because of the sensual nature of the poetic conversation between Warner and Ackland.)
1937: review of *Summer Will Show* by Ada Geyl in *Het Vaderland* 4 July 1937.

> highly canonical classics and popular modern writers for a broad audience, whereas 'highbrow' modern foreign literature is read and discussed by an intellectual elite that keeps to the original language. (542)

Only in the seventies, when modernist literature became more established as a genre, did the number of translations of Woolf (and other modernists) increase. Warner was not one of them. Besides apparently being less well-known in the Dutch-speaking world (considering the number of reviews), a possible reason for the exclusion of Warner from the modernist translation boom could be the debate surrounding Warner's status as a modernist author in the English-speaking world. Maud Ellmann decries "the long-standing over-valuation of experimental Modernism" that has led to "Warner's neglect in academia"(83). Over-valued or not, experimental modernism does not describe Warner on all fronts: "Although Warner constantly experiments with form and content . . . her grammar and sentence structure remain too orthodox to count as 'modernist'" (83). Could Warner's traditional syntax have prevented her from being among the modernist works translated into Dutch? Harman offers another reason for Warner's neglect: "It . . . seemed that Sylvia was incapable of producing any two books the same. There is remarkably little consistency – except in a prevailing intelligence – between one of her novels and the next, a fact which partly explains why she has escaped the close attention of literary critics" (175). Warner's writing could simply have been too slippery to pin down to any specific literary genre. Politics, too, may have played a part:

> Warner's record of Communist activism did her reputation no good at all with reviewers and post-war literary historians. She was aware of this herself; asked in 1975 whether her Communist activism had affected her literary standing, Warner replied: "Oh, it affected it very badly. I usually had two or three amazingly good reviews, but I never had reviews from the sort of reviewers that *sell* books." (Montefiore 21)

If Warner's Communism during the cold-war era hampered her literary standing in the English-speaking world, it may have affected her visibility and status in the Dutch-speaking world. Her relationship with a woman may likewise have been a reason for censorship (22). There were many reasons why Warner did not fit the mould and which could subsequently have led to her relative neglect, which may in turn have affected her exclusion from the Dutch translation boom of the seventies and eighties.

Secondary Research on Style and Criticism in Warner

Despite the present focus on wordplay, it will prove worthwhile for the present analysis to mention several earlier analyses of Warner's style to serve as analytical context. Since they share a focus on the interrelation of style and social or political criticism, these analyses may illustrate the various ways in which literary style can convey such criticism or invite a critical reading, thereby providing context for the present analysis. They furthermore justify a focus on the interconnection between style and criticism and may occasionally serve as an example for my own research or as arguments for my interpretation. Yet despite the range of stylistic subjects and focusses found in these studies, no study so far has specifically covered the use of wordplay in *LW* or any other work by Warner. Nor do any of these stylistic studies approach their subject from a translational point of view. They may, however, still serve as a fruitful starting point for a stylistic study of *LW* for the purposes of creating a translation as they facilitate a greater stylistic awareness, which is so very crucial for the translator of literature.

Observing that modernist literature generally makes use of narrative techniques that enable an extensive representation of the characters' thoughts, James Harker points out the vastly different technique employed by Warner when portraying Laura's mental activity; he calls this technique "cognitive minimalism." Citing the example of the first pages of *LW*, where Caroline's thoughts are extensively portrayed, Harker states that "[w]hen the narration then turns to the protagonist's inner life, it is a void:

‘While these thoughts passed through Caroline's mind, Laura was not thinking at all’” (Harker 45-46). More examples can be found throughout the novel:

> After her move to Great Mop, “Laura sighed for happiness. She had no thoughts; her mind was swept as clean and empty as the heavens” (102). Later, on a walk in the forest, “Her mind was almost a blank” (152). In a conversation with Satan, he asks what she thinks of him. “’I don't know,’ she said honestly. ‘I don’t think I do think’” (216). At another point in the conversation, “She gazed at the Maulgrave Folly with what she could feel to be a pensive expression. But her mind was a blank” (218). For a character whose decisions are the crux of the plot, Laura's “thoughtlessness" is prominently displayed. (Harker 46).

Rather than drawing the conclusion that *LW* is therefore *not* a modernist work, Harker instead argues that the novel *does* take a special interest in human consciousness and the portrayal of thought (or the lack of it), an important feature of modernism, and goes on to relate the novel’s narrative and stylistic features to social identity and a critique of oppressive political structures:

> While modernist experimentation has often been aligned with a murky inner life and depth models of consciousness, *LW* serves as *a resource for a new account of the modernist mind*. The novel's orientation is cognitive rather than psychoanalytic, focusing on the temporally minimal, the immediate and basic, the processes of insight, and the mental operations at the core of consciousness itself. The form of the novel, its sustained deployment of the fantastic, bears little outward relation to better known stream-of-consciousness styles, but they *share an emphasis on thinking in a radically narrowed band of time*. But most important of all, Warner shows the inseparability of even the most foundational cognitive acts and our social selves. Laura's “not thinking” is *a rethinking of both literary form and political critique*. (60, emphasis added)

The relation between narration and style and critique, in particular, will be a linchpin in the present, translation-oriented analysis of *LW*. That is not to say that modernism and its literary characteristics are entirely irrelevant; as stated earlier, Warner's status as a modernist is much debated. Moreover the slow appreciation of modernist works by Dutch publishers and audiences, as described by Andringa, could partly be responsible for the fact that until now no Dutch translation of *LW* has been published.

A second study that offers relevant insights is David James's exploration of Warner's narrative presence in her own works, most notably two novels written in the late thirties during the rise of fascism in Europe. James sketches Warner's interaction with late and high modernism and realist writing, focusing on the development of what he calls "authorial depersonalization" (112), a stylistic strategy employed by Warner to highlight "contemporary social oppression" by offering bare, indifferent descriptions without narrative intervention or commentary (124):

> Such is the unsparing immediacy of Warner's "realist" focalization: it is brutal and unimpeded when picturing brutal acts as normalized and mundane. Moreover, her glacial tone is not merely used to foreground as a kind of objective report the ethical travesty enacted within the scene. Reader and narrator alike are brought to account by the impersonality through which the horror of events is conveyed and left largely unexamined. Warner's unnerving withdrawal from humane commentary reveals precisely how she renders impassive an exterior perceiver so as to intensify our attention to the inhumanity of events perceived. (117)

Such bare narration of shocking events arose in Warner's later prose and is not overtly present in *LW*, but that is not to say that the earlier novel is void of socio-political criticism. Contemporary social mores are subtly criticised and one of the ways in which this criticism is expressed is through wordplay. James's research shows how the way events or facts are described or narrated can impact our understanding of them and how choosing certain stylistic variants can enable a critical reading of the events and

circumstances portrayed. Such research supports a further examination of the use of style and its potential for critical framing in other works by Warner.

A final study to be considered is Peter Swaab's analysis of Warner's idiosyncratic use of similes. Swaab discusses a range of similes taken from different works from different decades. He concludes that Warner's similes are "catachretic" rather than "illustrative" (774), that is to say: the tenor of the simile is tied to an unexpected and unlikely vehicle that confuses rather than clarifies the subject, resulting in similes that are "unpredictable, challenging and unusual" (774). According to Swaab, Warner's "queer practice of simile" often relies on natural imagery to offer a new perspective on sexuality (774, 770). "Warner," Swaab argues, "tends to be consistently pro-sex" and her "similes around sexuality tend to be at once celebratory and disconcerting" (770). Even though Warner wrote in a time when open views on ('deviant') sexuality were restricted, sexual taboos, too, are described in an unusual but unjudging manner: "In writing about sex . . . Warner often devises phrases that remove the coupling from the realm of blame. She is especially disinclined to link unconventional or illicit sex with wrongdoing" (770). Swaab gives an example from one of Warner's short stories:

> In . . . 'A Love Match', [Warner] describes the first sexual encounter between a brother and sister: "They rushed into the escape of love like winter-starved cattle rushing into a spring pasture" . . . . It would be hard to stop cattle on the charge, and why would anybody want to? They have the logic of the seasons and the claims of the confined on their side, and reflectiveness doesn't enter into the bovine question. . . . [A] matter-of-fact urgency about creaturely need is the heart of the matter here rather than an interest in subverting taboos. Warner's similes around sexuality tend to be at once celebratory and disconcerting, like these cattle. They evoke sex as an ungainsayable vitality and also see human appetite in a levelling context of other organic forms, both flora and fauna. (770)

Drawing on such examples, Swaab concludes that these new, surprising and sometimes shocking perspectives provide insight into the narrator's own views:

> *A simile is an act of interpretation*; it asserts a relationship of affinity where we might not have expected one. To that extent, it *opens a window onto the narrating mind that perceives the relationship*; this may be a character in the story, but sometimes also, depending on the management of point of view, the narrator herself. (774, emphasis added)

Warner's similes could thus testify to an unjudging, fresh perspective on sexuality and taboo of the narrator. The deconstructing of sexual taboos furthermore corresponds to one of the possible functions ascribed to wordplay by Delabastita, namely the "deceiving [of a] socially conditioned reflex against sexual and other taboo themes" (*Translator* 129). The deconstructing potential of the simile is also on display in Laura's final speech towards the end of *LW*, where she states: "'When I think of witches, I seem to see all over England, all over Europe, women living and growing old, as common as blackberries, and as unregarded'" (193). Swaab argues that the unusual coupling of women and blackberries enables an alternative interpretation of the usually negative terms 'common,' which "has a range of depreciatory meanings, from vulgar to commonplace to undistinctive," and 'unregarded,' or "not given consideration, as Laura wasn't by her relatives, or simply not noticed" (767). The simile, by establishing a connection with the natural world Laura favours, shows how to Laura these terms are in fact positive (767): ". . . the blackberry simile rescues the state of being 'unregarded' from the idea of malign neglect and moves it towards the reclusive ideal that Laura embraces. It aligns Laura's state with the normal processes of a free, flourishing and serendipitous natural world" (767). Swaab furthermore argues that "[b]y its implications, the simile calmly repudiates the stigmas usually visited on the witchcraft and spinsterism that the story celebrates. . ." (767). This stylistic devise can thus be read as a force that may prompt readers to reconsider commonly-held social views.

As can be gleaned from their studies, both James and Swaab to some extend seem to identify the narrator of the works they discuss as Warner herself and often make no distinction between the narrator's views and Warner's. Swaab argues that "her similes often tell us how Warner thinks" (774). James, meanwhile, is concerned with the way Warner "[utilises] narrative perception as a vehicle for examining metafictionally her own polemic" and how "[f]or her, the depersonalization of narratorial voice was set to reinvigorate the placing and execution of social commentary in fiction" (115). My own analysis, however, will be conducted on the basis of a distinction between narrator and author, not the least because of my focus on translation, whereby the translator is concerned first and foremost with the text and its *implied* author, rather than with the real-life author.

Chapter 2: Wordplay: Form, Function and Translation

Wordplay and the Interaction between Linguistic Features and Meaning

Before looking deeper into the wordplay in *LW*, one has to know what to look for. The definition adopted for the purpose of analysing and translating certain textual phenomena in *LW* will be grounded in the definition by Delabastita, provided in the introduction:

> Wordplay is the general name for the various *textual* phenomena in which *structural features* of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a *communicatively significant confrontation* of two (or more) linguistic structures with *more or less similar forms* and *more or less different meanings*. (*Translator* 128)

Although Delabastita proceeds to narrow down his understanding of wordplay, arguing that "[t]he pun contrasts linguistic structures with **different meanings** on the basis of their **formal similarity**" (128), many textual phenomena that would not neatly fit into Delabastita's more specific understanding of wordplay do constitute relevant and meaningful problems for the translator, the definition adopted for the present analysis will deliberately be kept broad, maintaining the earlier modification "more or less," which allows for a wider variety of phenomena. Specifically, my aim is to include wordplay reliant on more ambiguous formal similarity based on the use of alliteration or the use of antonyms, both of which constitute some form of formal repetition, hence some degree of similarity. The use of antonyms in wordplay is furthermore mentioned explicitly by Ritva Leppihalme (201). With these considerations in mind, some of Delabastita's further elaborations on wordplay will be discussed as they provide a sound understanding of the makeup of wordplay. He writes, for instance, that the linguistic structures that make up wordplay can be either "co-present in the same portion of text (vertical wordplay), or . . . in a relation of contiguity by occurring one after another in the text (horizontal wordplay)" (128). He then distinguishes four types of similarity, depending on their degree of phonological and/or graphical

Homonymy	Homophony	Homography	Paronymy
VERTICAL Pyromania: a burning passion	VERTICAL Wedding belles	VERTICAL MessAge [name of mid-1990s rap band]	VERTICAL Come in for a faith lift [slogan on church]
HORIZONTAL Carry on dancing carries Carry to the top [article on ambi-tious young dancer named Carry]	HORIZONTAL Counsel for Council home buyers	HORIZONTAL How the US put US to shame	HORIZONTAL It's G.B. for the Beegees [article on pop band touring Britain]

Figure 1: Wordplay categories (from: Delabastita Translator *128)*

similarity (see Fig. 1). The distinction between vertical and horizontal wordplay in particular will prove useful for outlining the structure of the wordplay used in *LW*. Delabastita points out that wordplay does not simply *exist* in the text, it has a "*function* within [the text]" (129): "Possible functions include adding to the thematic coherence of the text, producing humour, forcing the reader/listener into greater attention, adding persuasive force to the statement, deceiving our socially conditioned reflex against sexual and other taboo themes, and so forth" (129). As will become clear, identifying the function(s) of the wordplay in *LW* is a crucial step in the translation process as function forms a major determining factor for selecting a suitable translation strategy. Delabastita further distinguishes five types of linguistic structures that may be "exploited" in wordplay (129), three of which shall be sketched out here. First there is the "*[p]honological and graphological structure*" (130), for instance when words with different meanings have a "similar or even identical form" or "sound" (130). Then there is the "*[l]exical structure (polysemy)*" (130): words may have multiple related but ultimately "different meanings" for example because of "metonymy . . . , metaphor . . . , or specialization" (130). The third structure mentioned by Delabastita is the "*[l]exical structure (idiom)*" (130), where the idiomatic use of certain groups of words is not immediately evident from "the combination of their component uses" (130). This means that the contrast between the individual meaning of a word and its

meaning as part of an idiomatic phrase may be used to create wordplay (130). Apart from these technical aspects of the pun (Delabastita uses the words 'pun' and 'wordplay' interchangeably), there is what Delabastita calls the "*[c]ommunicative significance*" (131): when is wordplay meaningful (or perhaps intentional) and when is it merely coincidence (or perhaps accidental) (131)? Delabastita acknowledges that this question is "impossible to answer" (132):

> Where does the borderline lie between perceptive reading and perversely ingenious punhunting? Can one trust there to be a safe *via media* between underreading and overreading? . . . . In the final analysis, I believe one must come to the conclusion that puns are not necessarily given once and for all. Their recognition and appreciation largely depend on the reading habits of the text user, which are in their turn closely linked to genre conventions and conceptions of language. (132)

According to Delabastita then, the presence of wordplay is not fixed but relies on individual readers and their specific histories and backgrounds, something that he connects to certain literary and linguistic norms. Delabastita thus seems to position himself somewhere between the belief in an objectively identifiable, stable presence of wordplay and complete relativism where every individual reader may find something different in a text. Readers from the same literary and linguistic background will after all have some interpretative strategies in common. The translator's position differs from those of other readers; there is something at stake for her as she has to decide whether or not (and how) to acknowledge (perceived) wordplay in her translation of the source text. Deciding whether or not some textual phenomenon should be considered wordplay remains a complicated and personal matter. Delabastita points out elsewhere that "[t]raditional wordplay criticism has tended to ignore this issue by focussing on the 'safe' cases where the pun is clearly signalled and plain to see" (*Traductio* 6). While Delabastita's concern here is with finding a way to "[differentiate] between wordplay and non-wordplay" (6), my main concern lies with the *translation* of wordplay rather than with the *identification*. I will therefore not go

deeper into the boundaries between wordplay and non-wordplay. Keeping my understanding of wordplay broad so as to encompass a wider variety of meaningful confrontations between linguistic structure and meaning, my main criterium for the selection of a set of examples will be the relevance of specific instances of (perceived) wordplay for the text as a whole, thus taking my cue from Marco, who argues that "[a]n instance of wordplay is most significant when it is seen to contribute to the work's plot, characterisation or theme" (281). My set will therefore consist of a variety of examples of wordplay that interact with the general view or text-world as constructed in my reading of *LW*, in which social criticism plays a key role.

What Delabastita describes above as wordplay is an interaction between linguistic features such as sound, form or syntax on the one hand and meaning or text-world on the other. Writing about this interaction more generally, Short and Leech discuss a number of ways in which the interaction between style and meaning can be made sense of. Three conceptions of the relation between text style, which Leech and Short define as "the linguistic characteristics of a particular text" (11), and content are put forward: the dualist conception presupposes a distinct separation between content (what is said) and style (how it is said) (13), whereas the monist conception is based on the assumption that style and content cannot be separated and are one (13), and finally, pluralism, which poses that

> . . . language performs a number of different functions, and any piece of language is likely to be the result of choices made on different functional levels. Hence the pluralist is not content with the dualist's division between 'expression' and 'content': he wants to distinguish various strands of meaning according to the various functions. (24)

According to this view, a phrase or utterance can have multiple functions and it is therefore incorrect to speak of a single, unambiguous meaning (25). These different meanings can subsequently be foregrounded by "different kinds of writing" (25). Some of the conclusions Leech and Short draw on style and stylistics are that "[s]tyle is a way in which language is *used*" and "[t]herefore . . . consists in *choices* made from the

repertoire of the language" and that "[l]iterary stylistics is typically . . . concerned with *explaining the relation between* style and literary or aesthetic function" (31). But perhaps the most important conclusion Leech and Short draw is that "[s]tylistic choice is limited to those aspects of linguistic choice which concern *alternative ways of rendering the same subject matter*" (31). "This means," they argue, "that the study of the literary function of language can be directed towards the STYLISTIC VALUES associated with STYLISTIC VARIANTS; that is, with forms of language which can be seen as equivalent in terms of the 'referential reality' they describe" (32). This insight is particularly relevant for translation, as translation is concerned with finding 'stylistic variants' in the target language to express the stylistic value of the source-text element:

> . . . in principe geldt voor de vertaler hetzelfde als voor de schrijver: dat stijl een gevolg is van de keuzes die worden gemaakt met het oog op een te bereiken literair effect. Het wáre vertaalprobleem bestaat er dan uit dat de middelen gevonden moeten worden bij een bepaald beoogd effect. Het vertaalprobleem ligt dus niet per se in de middelen of de effecten op zich, maar in de relatie tussen de twee. (Koster)

To overcome translation problems the translator must use the linguistic means of the target language to recreate the desired effect from the source text.

Overview of Possible Translation Techniques

In his introduction to *Wordplay and Translation* Delabastita presents a comprehensive list of techniques for the translation of wordplay. This list will be supplemented with reflections by other translation scholars and serve as the basis for my own translation process. Delabastita describes a variety of techniques that may be combined or used separately (*Translator* 134):

PUN > PUN: the source-text pun in translated by a target-language pun, which may be more or less different from the original wordplay in terms of formal structure, semantic structure, or textual function

PUN > NON-PUN: the pun is rendered by a non-punning phrase which may salvage both senses of the wordplay but in a non-punning conjunction, or select one of the senses at the cost of suppressing the other; of course, it may also occur that both components of the pun are translated 'beyond recognition'

PUN > RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE: the pun is replaced by some wordplay-related rhetorical device (repetition, alliteration, rhyme, referential vagueness, irony, paradox, etc.) which aims to recapture the effect of the source-text pun

PUN > ZERO: the portion of text containing the pun is simply omitted

PUN ST > PUN TT: the translator reproduces the source-text pun and possibly its immediate environment in its original formulation, i.e. without actually 'translating' it

NON-PUN > PUN: the translator introduces a pun in textual positions where the original text has no wordplay, by way of compensation to make up for source-text puns lost elsewhere, or for any other reason

ZERO > PUN: totally new textual material is added, which contains wordplay and which has no apparent precedent or justification in the source text except as a compensatory device

EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES: explanatory footnotes or endnotes, comments provided in translators' forewords, the 'anthological' presentation of different, supposedly complementary solutions to one and the same source-text problem, and so forth. (133-34)

The list offers a complete and general overview of possible strategies but my own analysis can nevertheless benefit from further specification; a modification proposed by Marco which I, too, will adopt is the subdivision of the first technique (PUN > PUN), into two distinct techniques: "technique 1 (pun → pun) will be broken down into two separate techniques depending on whether the translation output is relatively similar to the ST pun or not: pun → similar pun and pun → different pun" (269). Marco justifies this distinction by arguing that the two techniques he distinguishes require a different kind of effort:

> This distinction is arguably warranted by the assumption that the attitude underlying the use of each of these techniques may be quite different: whereas pun → similar pun may be the result of isomorphism across languages, it seems clear that pun → different pun requires a deliberate effort at recreation on the translator's part. (269)

According to Marco, the difference or similarity between languages, or the degree of isomorphism, may play a role in choosing between either technique. Yet the absence or presence of isomorphism will not dictate the solution ultimately chosen, as the translations of the examples will show.

CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS: WORDPLAY IN *LOLLY WILLOWES*

Selecting Critical Wordplay Examples from *Lolly Willowes*

As none of the stylistic studies summarised in chapter one dealt with wordplay, the next step will be to discuss wordplay in *LW* and its potential functions. Strikingly, the majority of the wordplay in *LW* can be found in the first of the novel's three parts. This first part gives an overview of Laura's family history, her youth and the dreary years leading up to her awakening. In fact, Laura only becomes a witch about three quarters into the book and has by that time already reached middle age. That is not to say that the neglect Laura feels she has suffered is made overly explicit or is commented on directly by the narrator, who remains mostly distant, in a way that appears to foreshadow the more extreme distance that James distinguishes in Warner's later works in what he calls "authorial depersonalization" (112). Still a certain wry humour can be detected in the tone of *LW*'s narrator, described as a "storyteller's voice, droll, discomfiting, serene and implacable" (Beer qtd. in Shin 724). This tone is perhaps most obvious in the use of wordplay. In her study of the visual image in *LW*, Jacqueline Shin argues that "Warner . . . animates the fixed pictorial image. Transposed out of their two-dimensional plane, paintings or prints escape the boundaries of their frame or original context and take on a new narrative life that mischievously unsettles and disrupts their original" (724). This description of the use of images in *LW* can be extended to wordplay. Another characteristic of *LW*, identified by Mimi Winick, can likewise be related to wordplay, namely 'fancy,' which

> . . . emerges as a common formal principle of Warner's fantasy novel . . . . [Warner employs] fancy as a mode of creation, one long defined in English letters by its contrast to the imagination. Unlike the imagination, fancy creates through *recombination* rather than through original inspiration and is often associated with women, especially as inferior and derivative. (575, emphasis added)

Warner's wordplay relies heavily on the use of repetition, both of sounds or of individual syllables through alliteration, as well as of entire words. Certain words are repeated and combined with different contexts, particularly words that have multiple meanings. Words are also 'repeated' through the use of their antonyms in the same sentence or the following one. As repetition entails the side-by-side presence of two or more elements that are both similar and different from each other, the wordplay in *LW* can generally be described as "horizontal wordplay" (Delabastita *Translator* 128). In many cases the wordplay is aimed at social practices, beliefs, family values, people or institutions that (try to) keep Laura from discovering herself. Social critique, then, is an important, if not the *main* function of these particular instances of wordplay. Already, Harker, James and Swaab, have shown that social critique is a central feature of Warner's work more generally. Instances of subversive wordplay that offer subtle social commentary, then, will make up the examples of the present analysis, which has as its aim the production of a Dutch translation that maintains the critical function of the wordplay. I have selected three such examples from a wider range of (perceived) wordplay:

> **Example 1:**
>
> The point of view was old-fashioned, but the Willoweses were a conservative family and kept to old-fashioned ways. Preference, not prejudice, made them faithful to their past. They slept in beds and sat upon chairs whose comfort insensibly persuaded them into respect for the good sense of their forbears. Finding that *well-chosen wood* and *well-chosen wine* improved with keeping, they believed that the same law applied to *well-chosen ways*. Moderation, civil speaking, leasure of the mind and a handsome simplicity were canons of behaviour imposed upon them by the example of their ancestors. (9, emphasis added)
>
> **Example 2:**
>
> Sooner or later she must be subdued into young-ladyhood; and it seemed befitting that the change should come gravely rather than with

> the conventional polite uproar and fuss of "*coming-out*"- which odd term meant as far as she could see, and when once the champagne bottles were emptied and the flimsy ball-dress lifted off the thin shoulders, *going in*. (18, emphasis added)
>
> **Example 3:**
>
> But Everard kept silence for distress. He believed in good faith that his relief at seeing Laura's *budding* suitors nipped in their *bud* was due to the conviction that not one of them was good enough for her. As innocently as the unconcerned Laura might have done, but did not, he waited for the ideal wooer. (25, emphasis added)

These examples, the effect and structure of the wordplay, their critical effects and the translation problems they give rise to will be analysed in detail below.

Analysing the Examples: Structure, Effect and Translation Problems

As was discussed in chapter two, translation problems can be overcome by making use of the linguistic means of the target language in order to recreate the effect of the source-text element established beforehand. This is easier said than done in the case of wordplay. Since it is characterised by the interplay of multiple factors, such as form, sound and meaning, wordplay frequently poses a problem for translators. This has led some scholars over the course of the centuries to claim that wordplay is in fact untranslatable (Delabastita, *Traductio* 9-10). Delabastita modifies this view by stating "that wordplay (*certain types of it more than others*) tend to resist (*to a greater or lesser extent, depending on many circumstances*) certain kinds of translation" (10). Such circumstances include for example the medium (e.g. written or spoken) or genre in which the wordplay is embedded (10), but also the distance between source and target language and or culture. English and Dutch, for example, share many linguistic features and their respective cultures, too, share similarities. But this is not always the case. Since a variety of factors are involved in a relatively small space, the translator is

generally forced to “prioritize” (11), which requires the identification of (what the translator considers to be) the most crucial element(s) of the wordplay, elements necessary to attain the desired effect in the target text. It is therefore vital that the translator never loses sight of the desired effect of the wordplay. With these ideas in mind, each wordplay example will be analysed below; first in order to establish its effect and, secondly, to identify elements of resistance, the translation problems.

I.

In order to determine the effect of the wordplay in the first example, more context is needed. Following her father’s death, Laura quits her ancestral home and, rather than living independently, moves in with a brother and his family. In doing so, she complies with the expectations of her tradition-loving relatives. The narrator offers an explanation for their headstrong adherence to tradition, but by using wordplay the narrator invites an ironic and critical reading:

> The point of view was old-fashioned, but the Willoweses were a conservative family and kept to old-fashioned ways. Preference, not prejudice, made them faithful to their past. They slept in beds and sat upon chairs whose comfort insensibly persuaded them into respect for the good sense of their forbears. Finding that *well-chosen wood* and *well-chosen wine* improved with keeping, they believed that the same law applied to *well-chosen ways*. Moderation, civil speaking, leasure of the mind and a handsome simplicity were canons of behaviour imposed upon them by the example of their ancestors. (9, emphasis added)

Threads of partial repetition run through the passage; from “preference, not prejudice” to “insensibly . . . sense,” culminating in the striking, rhythmic core of the narrator’s explanation, the Willoweses’ dubious syllogistic thinking: “Finding that well-chosen wood and well-chosen wine improved with keeping, they believed that the same law applied to well-chosen ways” (9). The Willowes’ comparison is dubious because it conflates material goods such as wood and wine with intangible norms, two

vastly different categories. The linguistic structuring of the sentence undermines the comparison by ironically supporting it through the use of both full and partial repetition in "well-chosen wood . . . well-chosen wine . . . well-chosen ways." Besides the full repetition of "well-chosen," the three single-syllable nouns alliterate, resulting in a repetition that is both formal and rhythmic. Since the wordplay relies on multiple different yet more or less similar elements appearing side by side, this instance of wordplay can be described as "horizontal paronymy" (Delabastita 128). The formal and rhythmic similarities between "wood" and "wine" on the one hand and "ways" on the other, interact meaningfully with the semantic gap between the conflated categories. The formal similarity is ironic in that it in fact underlines the fundamental difference between material goods and social beliefs, exposing the comparison as a rather silly one. Moreover, the repetition is iconic in that its mimics what goes on in the heads of the Willowes family, who keep repeating the same old ideas, seemingly unable to entertain new ones. The narrator mirrors this repetition of ideas through an ironic repetition of linguistic elements. The wordplay functions both as a description of Laura's family and as a critical reflection on certain social norms and a window on the narrator's view of the narrated subjects. These last two functions are achieved through the parodic mimicry and irony of the wordplay. In fact, the presence of the wordplay plays a key role in effecting the subjectivity of what would otherwise be a more or less neutral description. The criticism of the wordplay is directed not just at the Willoweses but also at English society more generally; in her discussion of this particular passage Jennifer L. Lauren argues:

> Not only does Warner use the Willowes family *to expose* the function of material wealth in the novel but she also uses the family to expose the function of the class system in England in the early twentieth century. Warner's narrator takes care to describe the Willowes family line, whose strongest characteristics is an insistence upon and devotion to tradition, another element of English culture that Warner implicates in *confining* Laura in the novel. (132, emphasis added)

By mimicking the family's syllogistic beliefs through repetition, the passage and its wordplay "expose" the institutions that hold Laura back: conservatism, family and class values, patriarchy, etc. As she grows older, Laura herself begins to realise the role such institutions played in her early life:

> There was no question of forgiving [her family]. She had not, in any case a forgiving nature; and the injury they had done to her *was not done by them*. If she were to start forgiving she must needs forgive Society, the Law, the Church, the History of Europe, the Old Testament, great-great-Aunt Salome and her prayer book, the Bank of England, Prostitution, the Architect of Apsley Terrace, and half a dozen useful props of civilization. (124, emphasis added)

In light of this later realisation, the Willoweses are just a product of their environment. The subtle ironic criticism of the Willowes family implicit in the narrator's wordplay is ultimately directed towards the social structures that gave rise to families such as the Willoweses. The effect is a subversive parody of British social conservatism in the early twentieth century, realised through the exploitation of the linguistic similarities (both rhythmic and alliterative) between two ultimately different categories: household goods and social norms. As Laura's later reflections demonstrate, the "well-chosen" wordplay, even though it occurs at the beginning of the novel, contributes to fundamental themes of *LW* that occur throughout the novel: the obstacles that prevent women from leading a life of their own.

With the structure and effect of the first wordplay example mapped out, its translation problems can now be identified. Semantically speaking, the wordplay elements "well-chosen wood . . . well-chosen wine . . . well-chosen ways" refer to specific commodities and norms that paint a certain picture of the Willowes family, thus contributing to the establishing of the text-world. At the same time, however, the alliterative and rhythmic repetition realise a certain ironic and iconic effect. Besides finding translations that accurately describe the elements compared by the narrator, the translator, if she decides to recreate this particular form of wordplay in the source

text, will be hard-pressed to find translations that have a reasonable degree of linguistic similarity and bring about a similar comic and critical effect, translations that work both semantically and formally within a limited space and within the context of the larger whole. The translator must juggle multiple "conflicting restraints" and here the importance of prioritising comes into play:

> What makes the case of translating puns special is that here *so many* different and usually *conflicting* constraints (formal ones as well as semantic and pragmatic ones) crowd in on the translator in the narrow textual space of a few words that the need to **prioritize** becomes much more acute than in 'ordinary' translation. Being so 'overdetermined' as they are, puns hamper the easy compromise between source vs. target, word-for-word vs. free, form vs. function, content vs. expression, and so on, and often bring the customary and approved negotiation strategies to a grinding halt. (Delabastita *Traductio* 11)

In order to translate wordplay, the translator will often be forced to formulate new translation strategies because the strategies she employs for the translation of non-wordplay no longer suffice. But sometimes the "customary and approved negotiation strategies" will suffice to translate wordplay (as the final example will show).

II.

The second instance of wordplay occurs further into the novel but describes earlier events in Laura's life. Laura's introduction to society is set in motion by the death of her sickly mother. As the new lady of the house, the teenaged Laura is suddenly expected to behave with decorum and must give up her wild rambles, the freedoms of childhood, in favour of long black skirts and the constraints of being a young woman. Laura's transformation differs from those of most other debutantes in that it is marked by mourning and solemnity, which young Laura finds rather appropriate as she is reluctant to give up her old life. Musing on Laura's transformation, the narrator, taking on Laura's perspective, makes a pregnant observation:

> Sooner or later she must be subdued into young-ladyhood; and it seemed befitting that the change should come gravely rather than with the conventional polite uproar and fuss of "*coming-out*"— which odd term meant as far as she could see, and when once the champagne bottles were emptied and the flimsy ball-dress lifted off the thin shoulders, *going in*. (18, emphasis added)

The term 'coming-out' will be familiar to avid readers of Jane Austen and other nineteenth-century romance novels. It describes the formal introduction of a young woman or girl of the upper class to high society and marks her availability on the marriage market (Vanden Bossche 83). After this formal introduction, often accompanied by a ball or other festivities, young women were thought to enjoy greater freedom of movement:

> "Coming out" [for women] and "coming of age" [for men] were rituals intended to indicate that an individual had crossed the threshold into adulthood. The change from cloistered adolescent to debutante was often compared to the butterfly's emerging from its chrysalis, and the corresponding notion *of a metamorphosis from dependency to autonomy* was at the heart of the Victorian idea of adolescence. (83, emphasis added)

However, Laura, whose coming-out takes place towards the conclusion of the Victorian era (1837-1901), in the late nineteenth century, does not agree that becoming a young woman entails a shift "from dependency to autonomy." In fact, she turns this assumption on its head by wittily observing that "coming-out" could more accurately be described as "going in," as the young debutante enters a strict, rule-governed, house-bound society that hampers her freedom of movement and is thus more like a confinement. Laura wistfully ponders the fact that she can no longer roam about the countryside; both her range of movement and her way of movement (as well as her freedom of speech) have become restricted, as she must now "move sedately and think before she [speaks]" (*Lolly* 19). 'Coming-out,' with its liberating sound, could in

that respect be more aptly replaced with the more confining formulation of 'going-in.' A Victorian rite of passage for young women has been cleverly deconstructed through wordplay. Like the similes discussed by Swaab wordplay seems to have a deconstructive potential and it is on full display in this particular passage. As observed in chapter one, Warners relies on several kinds of repetition, including what might be called 'repetition through the use of an antonym' or "a semantic opposite" (Leppihalme 201). The present example too, makes use of such 'antonymic repetition,' considering the one hundred and eighty-degree turn from 'coming' to 'going' and from 'out' to 'in,' and since the two contrasted terms are similar yet ultimately different, the resulting wordplay can likewise be described as horizontal paronymy. Despite their opposite directions, 'coming-out' and 'going in' are still closely related to one another as they mark two ends of the same binary, a binary that is soon proven to be less than stable. Moreover, there are strong formal and phonetic parallels between the two terms: they share the same number of syllables, the same rhythm and the same structure (both end in '-ing' and are followed by a single-syllable preposition). In short, Laura, through the narrator, contrasts two formally and phonetically similar linguistic structures, in order to complicate the supposed semantic difference, thus making a significant point about a rite of passage and the position of young (privileged) women in British society around 1900. The wordplay in this fragment and its inherent criticism of the confinement of young women touches upon a subject that forms the ideological basis of the novel. Laura's story is a quest for independence, a quest that is only successful once she turns her back on polite society and her overbearing family. Laura's real coming-out only takes place when she finally discovers herself by becoming a witch. Laura's witty observation in this fragment already shows a spark of rebellion and forms a step towards her ultimate emancipation. It is therefore a key moment of the novel. The way Laura delivers her critical reflection, through wordplay, is equally important; Laura is not an outspoken person, especially not at this stage in the novel. She is, however, funny and clever. It is fitting that she delivers her criticism in a subtle, witty manner in the privacy if her own thoughts. The narrator too, is subtle and does not provide any outright criticism of the social obstacles faced by Laura.

Rather, the narrator's voice is often wrapped up in clever wordplay and can only be detected through careful reading. Two characteristics of the wordplay in this fragment, then, are fundamental to the text-world: subtlety and criticism.

The deconstruction of this Victorian rite of passage consists of two similar yet different parts and relies on (what Laura considers to be) a tension between the literal meaning or formulation of "coming-out" and its actual significance. Laura exposes this tension by turning the formulation on its head to 'correct' the mismatch between formulation and significance. In doing so, she critically assesses the freedom of movement of young women in her society. In short, the wordplay relies on a specific relationship between the *form* and *meaning* of the term in the English language. The term frequently turns up in English literature from the nineteenth century, in works by Jane Austen, Anne Brontë and Charles Dickens for example. In Dutch literature such a rite of passage for young, wealthy women is mentioned in Louis Couperus's *Eline Vere:*

> - Dank je Otto, ik wil niets meer eten, zeide Frédérique aan tafel, ik kan nooit eten, als ik naar een bal ga, dat weet je wel.
>
> - Nog altijd? vroeg Otto. Ik dacht alleen, dat een jong meisje niet at bij *haar allereerste entree in de wereld*. Ben je nog altijd zoo nerveus? Arme meid! (64, emphasis added)

Written roughly around the time (1889) when Laura would have had her coming-out, this Dutch novel describes a young woman's entrance into society as an "entree," which would therefore be a logical choice as a translation of "coming-out." But this is where the structure of the wordplay complicates matters; since 'entree' already entails 'going in,' turning this particular formulation on its head would in fact lead to the opposite of what Laura is trying to say with her wordplay. Another possible translation of "coming-out," 'debuut,' leads to similar problems as it does not have any clear spatial direction at all. There is a mismatch between the form-meaning relationships of the source and target language, meaning that using the source-text structure of the wordplay will not have the intended effect of critical reflection on the position of women.

III.

The final wordplay example occurs several pages later, after aunt Emmy brings up Laura's unmarried status to Laura's father. She wonders why Laura hasn't married yet and offers to take her on a tour to India where she can meet potential suitors. She attempts to seduce Laura into joining her with her exotic descriptions of colonial life in India. Her scheming reflects not just her own desire to see Laura married, but a wider, societal desire to get rid of unmarried women: "Warner's reference to the romantic tales of Indian life as a harmless enticement to marriage alludes heavily to the common practice of government-sponsored emigration for dangerous British spinsters in order to find them husbands or occupation as governesses" (Bruton 100-101). But Everard, Laura's father, is taken aback by Emmy's plan and answers evasively, pondering over his reluctance to see Laura married during a walk in the orchard:

> But Everard kept silence for distress. He believed in good faith that his relief at seeing Laura's *budding* suitors nipped in their *bud* was due to the conviction that not one of them was good enough for her. As innocently as the unconcerned Laura might have done, but did not, he waited for the ideal wooer. (25, emphasis added)

As with the previous cases, the wordplay above is an example of horizontal paronymy. Two idiomatic expressions containing the stem 'bud' are combined to form a highly visual metaphor for the failed attempts of Laura's would-be husbands. The punning metaphor expands through time, covering the moment where the suitors' hope begins to blossom to the moment this hope shrivels, since Laura "[has] no mind to quit her father's company for theirs" (24). The two formally similar idioms cover two virtually opposite processes: those of birth ("budding") and premature death ("nipped in their bud"), together describing a tragically short life cycle. The effect of the wordplay is again rather ironic; in a play on traditional gender roles, the "budding" suitors are pictured as delicate little flowers. Moreover, the passage plays with the notion of fertility; the squashing of young blossoms ruins the prospect of pollination. Likewise, the suitors' attempts to tempt Laura into matrimony, itself an institution regarded as a

promise of fertility, prove infertile. This irony is heightened by the fact that the scene takes place in an orchard where the ground is littered with ripe apples, the result of successful reproduction. Taken as a whole, the wordplay in this passage can be read as a destabilising of the expectation for Laura, and young Victorian women in general, to marry. The expectation of marriage, and its obligatory sexual fertility, are quite literally squashed. Sexual reproduction, after all, is not Laura's *only* change at self-expression and a productive life. At a pivotal moment in the novel, Laura has an epiphany and pictures a new life for herself, a fruitful and fulfilling life, despite (or perhaps rather because of) her spinsterhood, through her solitary connection with nature:

> She seemed to be standing *alone* in a darkening orchard*, her feet in the grass*, her arms stretched up to the pattern of *leaves and fruit*, her fingers seeking the *rounded ovals of the leaves*. The air about her was cool and moist. . . . No sound, except sometimes the soft thud of *a ripe plum falling into the grass* . . . . (73, emphasis added)

These sensuous, serene meditations offer a different, independent kind of fertility[4], springing from an intimate relationship with nature rather than with a husband, an alternative to the thwarted future discussed in that earlier orchard scene. A parallel can furthermore be drawn between the 'budding' wordplay and the simile used by Laura to describe witches: "as common as blackberries, and as unregarded" (*Lolly* 193). According to Swaab, this simile "rescues the state of being 'unregarded' from the idea of malign neglect and moves it towards the reclusive ideal that Laura embraces. It aligns Laura's state with the normal processes of a free, flourishing and serendipitous natural world" (767). This idea resonates with Laura's idyllic orchard visions; a solitary, fruitful life in harmony with the natural world. Quite the opposite can be said for the unlucky suitors; the natural imagery used in the 'budding' wordplay ultimately sketches an ironically barren picture rather than a fertile one, a picture that, by relying

[4] Fruit and flower imagery in *LW* have been associated with Laura's (homo)sexuality in several studies. See for example: Garrity, Jane. "Encoding Bi-location: Sylvia Townsend Warner and the Primitive Erotics of Sapphic Dissimulation." *Step-daughters of England: British Women Modernists and the National Imaginary*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2003.

on two formally similar yet semantically different idioms, comically destabilises both traditional gender roles and expectations of marriage and sexual fertility.

Idiom-based wordplay, such as the one described above, frequently raises constraints for the translator. Idioms, "word combinations that have a sum meaning that is historically based on, but can no longer be reduced to the combination of their component meanings" (Delabastita *Translator* 130), are particularly well-suited for wordplay since their wider, idiomatic meaning can be contrasted with their more specific, original meaning (130). Such wordplay may oppose translation with a target-text idiom with a similar meaning but different imagery as the source-text image may be 'fixed' in the semantic context of the source-text passage. In this case, there are *two* idioms that are connected and confronted with one another through the use of similar imagery (opening flower buds versus dying flower buds). Additionally, the flower bud imagery fits the setting of the scene in which the wordplay occurs (an orchard) and the topic of the reflection in which it occurs (marriage). Together, these circumstances may pose serious constraints for the translator, as opting for a translation without floral imagery will impact intratextuality and cohesion. This is however not the case here; similar idioms using flower-bud imagery can be found in Dutch and as such, the translation of this wordplay example will not prove to be a major translation problem. A possible reasons for this apparent similarity between source and target language with regards to the idioms in question arises from the fact that idioms, as Delabastita pointed out, are originally rooted in a narrower but more literal interpretation of the word combination in question (130); furthermore, wordplay based on polysemy "is somehow rooted in extralingual reality" and therefore "wordplay based on it can occasionally be reduplicated [in another language] with little loss…" (135). The same situation may occur when translating idioms; both source and target language may have developed a similar idiomatic use for a similar word (combination). In both Dutch and English, a specific verb used to describe the growth of plants ('to bud' versus 'ontkiemen' or 'ontluiken') can be used to describe growth or development in a broader sense ('budding' versus 'ontkiemend' or 'ontluikend') and has been incorporated in an idiomatic expression describing premature death or

disruption (‘nipped in the bud’ versus ‘in de kiem gesmoord’). As such, this final wordplay example does not appear to yield any major translation problems.

CHAPTER 4: TRANSLATION: STRATEGY AND SOLUTIONS

Establishing a Translation Strategy

Several concerns have played a part in my choice of translation strategy. The first is an idea put forward by Marco, who converts the 'loss-gain' model into a cline: "the *punning balance*," or "the relationship between the ST and TT segments in terms of loss, preservation or gain" (270). According to Marco the translation of wordplay must be guided by the aim of at least maintaining a "neutral . . . punning balance" (294):

> . . . wordplay translation techniques involving either a neutral or even a positive punning balance (by way of compensation, perhaps) will be preferable to those entailing a negative balance, as the latter will never afford the reader the possibility to engage in the discovery process and experience its rewarding effects. (294)

Marco thus argues that the translator ought to prevent an overall loss of wordplay. A second concern involves the quality and overall significance of wordplay rather than the quantity and forms a relevant addition to Marco's position. In her discussion of the Danish translations of Joyce, Ida Klitgård, "[i]n answering the . . . questions of how far a translator should go in translating all puns as creatively and meaningfully as in the original" (81), argues that the translation of wordplay should not lose sight of the overall picture or the "larger political and social contexts and intertextuality" (81): "the translator cannot go very far in the associative calls of the wordplay here without losing sight of a fundamental thematic motivation in the text" (81). According to Klitgård, translating wordplay for the sake of preserving wordplay without considering and conveying its source-text function, is inadvisable in the case of Joyce's politically charged texts. Whereas Marco warns against an overall loss of wordplay in translation, Klitgård warns against a loss of relevance and content in translated wordplay. Some final concerns are taken from Luise Von Flotow's analysis of a German translation of Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology*, an example of radical feminist writing from the seventies. Although it would be anachronistic to equate *LW* with radical feminist writing, certain

parallels can be found. The function Von Flotow ascribes to wordplay in radical feminist writing is similar to that of some of the wordplay in my own set of examples:

> Deconstructive activity enabled women to flex their linguistic muscles and participate in the wrecking job on an oppressive language; it enabled them to clear a space for the construction of new forms of language by and for women to 'give voice to' their different experiences, intuitions and knowledge. . . . And wordplay was an important instrument in both the deconstructive and the creative dimensions of this work. (47)

Von Flotow emphasises wordplay's deconstructive abilities; abilities that can likewise be found in the present set of examples. Discussing the German translation of *Gyn/Ecology*, Von Flotow argues that the translation is unsuccessful for three reasons, two of which will be relevant here. First, "the translator's apparent awe in the face of Daly's virtuosic display of language misuse, and also . . . her feelings of inadequacy, even pain at her impossible task" (54). The second reason is "intentionality," or "the function ascribed to the text in translation, the translator's agenda" (54); as Von Flotow concludes: "the desire to educate the German reader – a feminist urge to popularize, even proselytize – may well lie at the heart of the problem" (54). Part of this problem is the large number of footnotes in which the translator "generally accentuated the fact that the English pun is 'untranslatable'" (55), combined with an in-depth explanation of the English wordplay. Thus, the resulting translation "does more to alienate than 'educate' the reader" (59). Awe for the author will be unproductive if it leads to feelings of inadequacy and despair. It will not do to focus on impossibilities, rather the translator ought to focus on the *possibilities* of her own language. Moreover, Von Flotow describes how explanatory translation techniques may (unintentionally) undermine the wordplay through misplaced emphasis (60). While Von Flotow also some finds praiseworthy solutions in the German translation, it may prove worthwhile to consider her criticisms in particular when producing my own translation of sociocritical wordplay.

With these concerns in mind, some of the translation solutions for wordplay offered by Delabastita I quickly dismissed as being unsuitable for my particular selection wordplay; for example, to neutralise the wordplay through a non-punning translation, erasure or the use of explanatory footnotes. This would after all result in a negative punning balance and change the witty nature of the work in a way that seemed objectionable to me. That is not to say that these techniques are always unsuitable. As such a wide variety of techniques is employed by translators of wordplay, it could be argued that in some cases the resulting translation no longer corresponds to the norm formulated in the Dutch standard contract: "een naar inhoud en stijl getrouwe en onberispelijke Nederlandse vertaling rechtstreeks uit het oorspronkelijke werk" ("Modelcontract" 2). If the source-text wordplay is replaced with a different kind of wordplay based on entirely different imagery and subjects is it still "true to the original content?" And if the translator uses neologism or deliberate misspellings, is the translation still written in "faultless Dutch?" Yet these solution *are* used; and successfully. The translation of wordplay is governed by its own rules and norms. According to Delabastita, it is in the translation of wordplay, with all its complexities, that translators are "forced to show their cards" (*Traductio* 11). As such, a translator's treatment of wordplay provides insight into "their understanding of the original text" and "the layers of meaning and the textual devices they regard as most central" (11). Moreover, "[t]the translation of wordplay can even document the translator's politics insofar as wordplay often has a subversive quality about it . . ." (11). For me, as a result of my critical reading of the novel, this means prioritising the critical value of the wordplay examples even though other translators, focussed on different aspects of the text, may prioritise different aspects of the wordplay or may even choose a neutralising strategy. Nevertheless, I have tried not to let my own politics become too obvious, taking to heart the observations made by Von Flotow about misplaced emphasis. After all, one of the qualities I deemed characteristic of the wordplay examples, besides their critical function, was their simple elegance and subtlety. A balance had to be found between obscurity and overemphasis, between complete neutrality and blunt politics. This proved difficult; especially as my preferred

translation solution was to create a similar pun, that is: to produce wordplay containing the same or similar elements and imagery. The three examples all rely on imagery or themes that are central to my reading of the novel: conservatism, a woman's place in society, marriage and fertility. I wanted to preserve these topics rather than produce entirely new wordplay with different imagery. As such, my strategy may in fact correspond to the model contract norm. However, the importance I attached to the exact source-text image did result in multiple priorities that were not always easily reconciled.

Translating the Wordplay Examples

The challenge with translating the first example, "well-chosen wood . . . well-chosen wine . . . well-chosen ways," was recreating the repetitive effect of the alliteration within the semantic framework of the passage (it had to fit the original text-world I was trying to recreate). My insistence on maintaining a form of repetition stems from its iconic reflection of conservative practices. A first tactic to achieve repetition, to create an ironic tension between material goods and social norms and to produce a translation that accurately described the text-world of the source text was to find more specific translations of "wood" and "wine" that would share formal and rhythmic features with my initial translation of "ways:" "'manieren.' This resulted in 'goedgekozen mahonie . . . goedgekozen madera.' I was unhappy with this translation for two reasons. First of all, I felt that both specifications ('mahonie' and 'madera') sounded too opulent for the middle-class, pragmatic Willoweses and thus didn't fit the text-world. Secondly, it sounded forced and the use of such specific names attracted undue attention. I therefore started looking for another, more natural way to incorporate repetition and tension. I ended up solving the problem by adding an umbrella term for "wood" and "wine," 'goederen:'

> Het juiste hout en de juiste wijn bleken met de jaren beter te worden en wat voor goedgekozen goederen gold moest, zo meende de familie Willowes, evenzeer gelden voor goedgekozen gebruiken.

This translation largely recreates the alliterative and rhythmic repetitions ('goederen' and 'gebruiken' share the same number of syllables but are stressed differently). This solution also allowed me to use the simple, natural terms 'hout' and 'wijn,' thus avoiding forcedness and complication.

The second example ("coming-out" . . . "going in") was particularly challenging to translate, because many of the constraints – formal, semantic as well as pragmatic ones – weighed heavily for me and seemed equally important. The wordplay's semantic substance is firmly embedded in both the direct context (the circumstances surrounding Laura's maturation) and the wider context (the novel as a whole describes Laura's true 'coming-out' in her late forties). At the same time, the literal phrasing of "coming-out" and its spatial and dynamic properties were significant because they allow Laura to make her point about the restriction of young women's freedom of movement to the domestic sphere. Finally, the structure of the wordplay was significant because the formal inversion mirrors the deconstructive inversion of a social practice. Since the wordplay on "coming-out" is pivotal in my reading of *LW*, I decided that my preferred solution would be to again translate the wordplay with a "similar pun" (Marco 269). A "different pun" was not a preferable option for me (269); it would result in changing the context that I deemed so very vital and would risk resulting in the forced and unrelated wordplay that Klitgård warns against (81). A similar pun may, however, be equally forced. One of the things about the source-text wordplay that struck me, was the ease and simplicity, qualities I found appropriate since Laura is still a girl. For this reason I dismissed my initial translation, a play on the similar phonetic structure of 'introductie' (a rather vague translation of "coming-out") and 'interdictie' (decidedly different from "going in" but also suggestive of confinement). Since I deemed this translation too complex for a girl of Laura's age and too forced, I decided to look further. Another translation I considered but almost immediately dismissed was 'eerste bal-in de val' as I felt, remembering Von Flotow's warning against misplaced emphasis and, that this translation was too sinister. In my final translation the structure of the wordplay has slightly shifted, but it covers all the elements that I strove to recreate:

> Vroeg of laat zou ze nu eenmaal afgericht moeten worden tot een echte jongedame en het leek dan ook passend dat die transformatie gepaard ging met somberheid in plaats van de gebruikelijke beschaafde ophef en poespas rondom de eerste entree in 'de buitenwereld' — een merkwaardige formulering waarmee men, voor zover ze kon zien en zodra de flessen champagne waren leeggedronken en de fijne, dunne baljurk weer over de smalle schouders was gehesen, doelde op 'de binnen-wereld'.

This translation contains the term for 'coming-out' found in a parallel text, *Eline Vere*, and accurately describes the theme. The opposition 'buiten-binnen' furthermore accurately describes Laura's sense of confinement, it is a common opposition and is both simple and unforced, which makes young Laura's witty reasoning seem logical and natural. In the source text, "coming-out" appears in single quotation marks, used by the narrator to signify that the meaning of the word itself is the subject of the following reflection (and the subsequent wordplay). Since the subject of the reflection and its wordplay has slightly shifted in my translation, I have transferred the quotation marks to this new subject, 'buitenwereld.' One downside to my translation is the fact that 'binnenwereld' is an existing word describing a person's private mental sphere, which would interfere with the socio-critical function of the wordplay. I have tried to solve this by inserting a hyphen to distinguish my translation from the conventional meaning of 'binnenwereld,' which, together with the context, should guide the reader towards a deconstructed reading[5].

Although it did, in the end, require some prioritising, the final wordplay example initially proved easier to translate than its complex structure and intratextual relevance would suggest due to the aforementioned existence of equivalent idioms in the Dutch language. According to Marco, such isomorphism facilitates a similar-pun translation: "The technique pun → similar pun is only possible when there is

[5] This strategy was inspired by Mary Daly, who would deconstruct the conventional meaning of words by adding a single hyphen: "'Often I unmask deceptive words by dividing them and employing alternate meanings for prefixes (for example, *re-cover* actually says "cover again")'" (Daly qtd. in Von Flotow 56).

isomorphism. If the linguistic structure on which wordplay operates is an idiom, then isomorphism involves availability in the target language of another idiom which is similar both in form and function to the ST one . . .” (277)[6]. A similar-pun solution thus seemed fitting. The choice for ‘in de kiem gesmoord’ was an obvious one, but for “budding” I focused on two similar choices: ‘ontkiemend’ and ‘ontluikend.’ In the end, I decided to use ‘ontluikend:’

> Maar Everard bleef uit ontsteltenis stil. Hij geloofde oprecht dat de opluchting die hij voelde wanneer Laura’s ontluikende vrijers in de kiem gesmoord werden, voortkwam uit de overtuiging dat geen van hen goed genoeg was voor haar. Hij wachtte net zo onschuldig als de onbezorgde Laura had kunnen doen — maar niet deed — op de ideale huwelijkskandidaat.

The benefit of selecting ‘ontkiemend’ would be its formal correspondence to ‘in de kiem gesmoord,’ which would make the wordplay more obvious. However, I felt that ‘ontkiemende vrijers’ sounded more unnatural than “budding suitors” and that its strangeness might make the wordplay sound forced. In my experience ‘ontkiemend’ is not used in a broader figurative sense as often as ‘ontluikend,’ in fact, ‘ontluikend’ is frequently paired with ‘liefde,’ making it a fitting choice for a pairing with ‘vrijers.’ The downside, of course, is the fact that there is no formal similarity between ‘ontluikende-kiem’ as with “budding-bud,” only a semantic similarity. This is where prioritising came into play; I felt that the natural flow and feeling of the text were more important even though it meant scaling down the visibility and power of wordplay. Besides, one of the characteristics of wordplay in *LW* I noticed and valued is its subtlety and natural ease. I therefore felt that scaling down would be preferable to intensifying the wordplay.

[6] This claim by Marco seems to contradict his earlier statement that “pun → similar pun *may* be the result of isomorphism across languages” (269, emphasis added). I do not fully agree with Marco’s second claim that the similar-pun solution is possible *if and only if* there is an isomorphic connection between source and target language. I will therefore adhere to his earlier remark that isomorphism “may” facilitate the similar pun solution, which would suggest that the similar-pun solution may also be possible in other, non-isomorphic scenario’s.

Ironically, the example that at first did not appear to be much of a translation problem turned out to be the one where I had to prioritise the most.

With these translation problems sorted out, the translation of several passages taken from the first part of *LW* will be presented below. The passages sketch a picture of Laura's family background, her early years and her confrontation with social conventions and obligations. Moreover, the passages have been selected on the basis of their relevance to wordplay and social criticism; besides the examples above more (subtle or less socially relevant) instances of wordplay can be found in these passages. These instances will be analysed and discussed in footnotes.

CHAPTER 5: ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

Zelfs in 1902 was er een aantal vooruitstrevende geesten dat zich afvroeg waarom die juffrouw Willowes, die immers redelijk bemiddeld was en waarschijnlijk ongehuwd zou blijven, niet op zichzelf ging wonen en iets artistieks of geëmancipeerds ging doen met haar tijd. Dergelijke mogelijkheden kwamen niet op bij Laura's familieleden. Voor hen was het vanzelfsprekend dat ze, nu haar vader dood was, opgenomen zou worden in het huishouden van een van haar broers. En Laura, die toch wel het gevoel had alsof ze een meubelstuk was dat bij het opmaken van het testament over het hoofd was gezien, stond gereed om te worden weggeborgen naar hun goeddunken.

Het waren ouderwetse opvattingen maar de familie Willowes was conservatief en hield er ouderwetse manieren op na. Het was uit voor*keur*, niet uit voor*oordeel*[1] dat ze trouw bleven aan hun verleden. Het comfort van de bedden waar ze in sliepen en de stoelen waar ze in zaten, had hen eenvoudigweg overtuigd het gezonde verstand van hun voorvaderen te eerbiedigen. Het juiste hout en de juiste wijn bleken met de jaren beter te worden en wat voor goedgekozen goederen gold moest, zo meende de familie Willowes, evenzeer gelden voor goedgekozen gebruiken. Matigheid, beschaafd taalgebruik, een ongebonden geest en gepaste eenvoud vormden het dogma van gedragsregels dat hen door het voorbeeld van hun voorouders was opgelegd.

Het naleven van dit dogma had niemand van de familie Willowes tot roemrijke hoogten gebracht. Wellicht dat oud-oudtante Salomé nog het dichts in de buurt van roem was gekomen. De familie pronkte graag met het eerzame feit dat Koning George III zich lovend had uitgelaten over oud-oudtante Salomées feuilleteedeeg. En het

[1] Ik heb "preference, not prejudice" opgevat als woordspeling aangezien beide woorden sterke formele overeenkomsten vertonen (maar semantisch verschillend zijn) en ze een ironisch beeld geven van de familie Willowes en hun motieven. Met deze sterke overeenkomsten lijkt de verteller te suggereren dat het niet uitmaakt *hoe* de familie tot bepaalde ideeën is gekomen, het resultaat is immers hetzelfde. Gelukkig hebben de meest voor de hand liggende Nederlandse vertalingen van beide woorden ook formele overeenkomsten ('voorkeur' en 'vooroordeel'), hoewel het aantal lettergrepen, in tegenstelling tot in de brontaal, verschillend is. Om de overeenkomst tussen beide woorden in het Nederlands weer te geven en iets van de ironie uit de brontekst over te brengen, heb ik de vertalingen gedeeltelijk gecursiveerd. Zo krijgen de formele overeenkomsten meer nadruk en kan de lezer de ironische houding van de verteller uit de vertaling opmaken.

gebedenboek van oud-oudtante Salomé met daarin de erediensten voor Koning Karel de Martelaar en de Restauratie van de Monarchie en het welzijn van het Huis Hanover — een mooi voorbeeld van onpartijdige piëteit[2] — werd altijd gebruikt door de echtgenote van het familiehoofd. Hoewel ze getrouwd was met een kanunnik van de kathedraal van Salisbury, had Salomé haar geborduurde glacéhandschoentjes uitgetrokken, haar mouwen opgestroopt en was ze naar de keuken gegaan om zelf het deeg voor het maal van Zijne Majesteit te bereiden, waarbij de uiteinden van haar Gros Point de Venise-kanten fichu boven de deegkom bungelden. Ze was een trouwe onderdaan, een vroom kerkganger en een goede huisvrouw en de familie Willowes was dan ook betamelijk trots[3] op haar. Titus, haar vader, had een reis naar Indië gemaakt en had een groene parkiet mee teruggebracht, de eerste van zijn soort in Dorset. De parkiet droeg de naam Rataffie en stierf in zijn vijftiende levensjaar. Na zijn dood werd hij opgezet; gezeten op zijn ringschommel, hing hij, net als toen hij nog in leven was, schommelend aan de kroonlijst van de servieskast en hield hij een glazen oogje in het zeil op vier generaties van het geslacht Willowes. Ergens in het begin van de negentiende eeuw viel een van zijn ogen uit zijn kas en raakte zoek. Het oog waarmee het vervangen werd was weliswaar groter maar deed in zowel glans als

[2] "impartial piety" is een opvallende en ongebruikelijke combinatie van woorden die ik als zeer kenmerkend voor de stijl van Warner beschouw. (Zie bijvoorbeeld ook het artikel van Swaab over Warner's ongebruikelijke vergelijkingen.) Daarnaast vond ik deze combinatie licht ironisch door de paradoxale spanning tussen beide woorden ("piety" impliceert een soort religieuze trouw terwijl "impartial" juist ongebondenheid suggereert). Beide deugden lijken elkaar op te heffen waardoor het resultaat in feite negatief is en wellicht een subtiele vorm van kritiek omvat; alsof de verteller op een komische en verholen manier suggereert dat de familie van twee walletjes eet. De combinatie valt nog meer op door de klankherhalingen ('p' en 't') en het vloeiende ritme. Dit alles heeft mij ervan overtuigd om de opvallende combinatie opvallend te houden. Ook hier geldt dat er Nederlandse synoniemen zijn die vergelijkbare formele overeenkomsten vertonen, hoewel 'piëteit' wellicht een ongebruikelijkere keuze is dan bijvoorbeeld 'vroomheid.' Omdat de brontekstcombinatie ook opvallend is, leek het mij echter niet storend om voor zo'n opvallend, vrij archaïsch woord te kiezen. Bovendien sluit het archaïsche karakter van 'piëteit' goed aan op het historische karakter van de tekstwereld van het werk.

[3] Nog een opvallende combinatie; zowel "[proper]" als "proud" zijn passende termen om de traditionele en trotse familie Willowes mee te omschrijven. De combinatie is echter, net als het geval hierboven, ongebruikelijk en opvallend vanwege de sterke formele overeenkomsten en het poëtische karakter van de combinatie. De vertalingen die ik heb overwogen hadden elk een minder sterke formele overeenkomst. Ik heb 'gepaste trots' overwogen maar uiteindelijk niet gekozen omdat dit een vrij gangbare combinatie is (die ook in *Van Dale* wordt genoemd) en daarom niet zo verrassend zou zijn als de brontekstcombinatie. Ik heb gekozen voor 'betamelijk trots' omdat hier een herhaling van de 't'-klank in zit, beide woorden toepasselijk zijn voor de familie Willowes en omdat de combinatie een vloeiend ritme heeft en net iets meer eruit springt dan mijn eerdere vertalingen.

expressiviteit onder voor het origineel. Het gevolg was dat Rataffie een nogal loerende blik kreeg, maar dat deed geen afbreuk aan de achting die men voor hem koesterde. Het vogeltje had een bescheiden plek in de geschiedenis van het graafschap weten te behalen en de familie erkende deze prestatie en gaf hem plek in hun eigen geschiedenis.

Naast de servieskast en onder Rataffie stond Emma's harp, een groene harp versierd met verguld rolwerk en acanthusbladeren in de neoklassieke stijl van David[4]. Als klein meisje glipte Laura soms de verlaten salon binnen om aan de laatste ongebroken snaren te plukken. Ze antwoordden haar met hun melancholische, afwezige stem en bij wijze van griezelig vermaak beeldde Laura zich in dat de geest van Emma was teruggekeerd om muziek te maken met haar koude vingers en even geruisloos de salon binnenglipte als Laura daarnet had gedaan. Maar Emma was een zachtaardige geest. Ze was gestorven aan tuberculose en toen ze opgebaard lag met een bosje sneeuwklokjes onder haar samengevouwen handpalmen had men een van haar lokken afgeknipt om in een geborduurde afbeelding te verwerken; een wilg die zijn takken uitwasemde over een witte graftombe, opgetrokken uit verhoogde satijnsteken. "Dat," zei Laura's moeder, "is een erfstuk van je oudtante Emma die overleden is." En Laura had medelijden met de arme jongedame die, zo leek het, als enige binnen haar familie zo onfortuinlijk was geweest om te overlijden.

Henry, geboren in 1818, de grootvader van Laura en het neefje van Emma, werd toen hij slechts vierentwintig jaar oud was het hoofd van de familie Willowes, nadat binnen twee weken zowel zijn vader als zijn ongehuwde oudere broer aan de pokken overleden was. Aangezien Henry als jongeman bewezen had over een rusteloos en onorthodox karakter te beschikken, was het een zegen dat hij als jongere telg het privilege genoot om zijn eigen gang te kunnen gaan. Hij had deze vrijheid benut door een Welshe dame te trouwen en zich in de buurt van Yeovil te vestigen, waar zijn vader een aandeel in een brouwerij voor hem kocht. De verwachting was uiteraard dat

[4] Het gebruik van enkel het woord 'David' zal voor de doorsnee lezer, die niet thuis is in kunstgeschiedenis, te vaag zijn. Jacques Louis David was een van de pioniers van het neoclassicisme; de aanvulling 'neoklassieke' geeft de lezer waarschijnlijk een beter beeld van welke stijl en welke tijdsperiode hier bedoeld worden.

hij, nu hij familiehoofd was, misschien dan niet zijn Welshe echtgenote en de brouwerij, maar toch in elk geval Somerset zou verlaten en naar zijn geboortegrond zou terugkeren. Maar dat zinde hem absoluut niet. Allereerst was hij bijzonder gesteld geraakt op de streek waarin hij de eerste jaren van zijn huwelijk had doorgebracht; een ongelukkige scherts van zijn oom de Admiraal, dat de Welshe vrouw die Henry het hof maakte een zwarte, spitse[5] hoed droeg, net als Moedertje Shipton, de beroemde waarzegster[6], en naar de kerk ging met haar schoenen[7] in de handen, had hem daarnaast, zonder hun weten, afkerig gemaakt van zijn familie; maar de voornaamste reden was dat Lady Place, een klein, degelijk herenhuis waar hij reeds lang geleden zijn zinnen op had gezet juist op dat moment te koop werd aangeboden. Hij had zich namelijk voorgenomen om, als hij ooit rijk genoeg was, zijn echtgenote er de vrouw des huizes van te maken. De karakteristieke halsstarrigheid van de familie Willowes had lange tijd elke vorm van aanpassing aan het huis in Dorset belet maar vormde nu juist de aanleiding voor de verhuizing naar een ander graafschap. Het oude huis werd verkocht, het meubilair en de familie-eigendommen werden overgebracht naar Lady Place. Een aantal snaren van Emma's harp knapte, er vlogen wat veren uit Rataffie's staart en Mevrouw Willowes, die een Evangelische opvoeding had genoten, was enkele zondagen lang verontrust geweest over de feiten die ze aantrof in het gebedenboek van Salomé. Maar alles welbeschouwd hadden de familietradities de verhuizing goed doorstaan. De tafels en stoelen en pronkkasten stonden in dezelfde

[5] Hier wordt een zogeheten 'Welsh hat' bedoeld; een zwarte hoge hoed die spits afloopt en daarom nogal op een heksenhoed lijkt. Een vertaling met 'hoge' zou verwarring scheppen, bovendien is hier de overeenkomst met de heksenhoed belangrijk (zie volgende noot), vandaar dat ik 'zwarte, spitse hoed' heb vertaald.

[6] Mother Shipton was een beroemde zestiende-eeuwse waarzegster. Ze was ook bijzonder lelijk en oud. Vandaar dat de grap waarschijnlijk slecht viel. Ik heb 'Mother' vertaald met 'Moedertje' om haar hoge leeftijd te benadrukken voor het doelpubliek dat over het algemeen niet bekend zal zijn met deze bijzondere vrouw. Verder heb ik 'waarzegster' aangevuld omdat ik denk dat de connotatie met hekserij en magie hier belangrijk is (ze werd immers regelmatig afgebeeld met een heksenhoed), aangezien het vooruitwijst naar Laura's eigen levenspad. Het eerste, 'realistische' deel van Lolly Willowes bevat een aantal van dit soort voortuitwijzingen en ze vormen wat mij betreft een belangrijk onderdeel van het plot; het stelt lezers namelijk in staat om achteraf verbanden te leggen tussen dit soort kleine knipogen en de ontwikkeling van het plot, waar lezers plezier in kunnen scheppen.

[7] Wellicht een plagerige verwijzing naar het feit dat evangelische christenen, zoals de Welshe dame, meer gezag toekennen aan de evangeliën.
In Lukas 10:4 staat:
"Draagt geen buidel, noch male, noch schoenen; en groet niemand op den weg."

verhouding opgesteld als voorheen; de schilderijen hingen in dezelfde volgorde maar aan nieuwe muren; en de heuvels van Dorset konden nog steeds vanuit de ramen worden waargenomen, nu echter vanuit ramen die over het zuiden uitkeken in plaats van over het noorden. Zelfs de brouwerij, hoe onorthodox ze ook mocht zijn, raakte al gauw ingesleten en versmolt met de levenswijze van de familie Willowes.

…

Mevrouw Willowes was de geboorte van Laura nooit werkelijk te boven gekomen. Ze werd in de loop der tijd steeds ziekelijker, hoewel ze altijd luchthartig bleef. Aangezien ze maar zelden in staat was om gasten te ontvangen, groeide Laura op in een stil huishouden. Van tijd tot tijd kwamen er dames op visite, gehuld in mantels van zijde of zeehondenbont, afhankelijk van het jaargetijde, die plaatsnamen naast de sofa. “Laura is een grote meid aan het worden. Ik neem aan dat u haar binnenkort wel naar een school zult sturen,” zeiden ze dan. Mevrouw Willowes hoorde hen met halfgesloten ogen aan. Ze liet haar hoofd afkeurend opzij hangen en ontweek hun vragen met vage antwoorden. Als ze hen dan, door haar ogen nu helemaal te sluiten, overtuigd had om weer te vertrekken, riep ze Laura bij zich en zei: “Worden je rokken niet wat kort, lieverd?”

Dan stikte Nannie de omgeslagen zomen van Laura’s Ginghamkatoenen en Merinowollen rokken weer iets lager en gingen er enkele maanden voorbij voordat de dames hun aanval hervatten. Ze mochten Mevrouw Willowes allen graag maar waren onderling tot de conclusie gekomen dat ze dringend behoefte had aan wat aanmoediging om haar verantwoordelijkheden onder ogen te komen, en dan met name haar verantwoordelijkheden tegenover Laura. Het was volstrekt ongepast dat ze Laura zo haar eigen gang liet gaan. Juffrouw Taylor — die goede, arme ziel! — was een voorbeeldige gouvernante[8]. Had ze tenslotte niet bij alle respectabele scholen in de

[8] Hier heb ik de opbouw van de zin aangepast om in het Nederlands het spreektalige ritme van het origineel te reproduceren. Deze zin en de zinnen eromheen zijn namelijk (min of meer) vrije indirecte rede en geven dus een directe weergave van de woorden van de nette dames. Ik heb mijn woordgebruik daarop afgestemd. Omdat er hier voornamelijk naar Miss Taylors kwaliteiten als docente en opvoedster wordt verwezen en omdat ik eerder al ‘ziel’ heb gebruikt, heb ik ervoor gekozen om voor “excellent creature” een vertaling met ‘gouvernante’ te kiezen.

omgeving navraag gedaan naar schiereilanden? Maar drie uur per dag Juffrouw Taylor en Madame Brevets danslessen in de winter was niet voldoende, kon niet voldoende zijn om Laura in al haar behoeften te voorzien. Ze zou met meisjes van haar eigen leeftijd moeten omgaan, anders zou ze later wellicht zonderling worden. Nog een paar subtiele woorden aan Mevrouw Willowes en ze zouden die arme dame beslist de ogen openen[9]. Maar hoewel Mevrouw Willowes hun goede raad ontving met een vleiende houding die de schijn wekte dat ze elk moment kon zwichten en hoewel ze hun theekopjes rijkelijk vulde met verrukkelijke room, vonden de subtiele woorden van de zijde-en-zeehondenbontdames geen gehoor; Laura zat nog altijd thuis toen haar moeder overleed.

In haar laatste levensjaren werd Mevrouw Willowes steeds kundiger in het ontlopen van haar verantwoordelijkheden; zelfs haar dood leek een laatste, ultieme demonstratie van deze kundigheid. Het was alsof ze, onder het gapen van een verfijnde kattengaap, had gezegd: “ik denk dat ik mij nu maar zal terugtrekken in mijn graf,” en de kamer had verlaten en haar witte omslagdoek achter zich aan had gesleept.

Laura rouwde om het verlies van haar moeder in rokken die bijna tot de grond kwamen, want Juffrouw Boddle, de naaister van de familie, was bijzonder fijngevoelig en geloofde niet dat benen er somber uit konden zien. Laura’s benen waren ook zeer dun en dartel; ze klommen graag in bomen en sprongen graag over hooistapels en ze waren niet genegen een teruggetrokken leven te gaan leiden en toe te behoren aan een jongedame. Maar zodra Laura de nieuwe kleding die zo vreemd rook had aangetrokken en ze zichzelf droef en volwassen in de spiegel had bekeken, aanvaardde ze het onvermijdelijke. Vroeg of laat zou ze nu eenmaal afgericht moeten worden tot een echte jongedame en het leek dan ook passend dat die transformatie gepaard ging met somberheid in plaats van de gebruikelijke beschaafde ophef en poespas rondom de eerste entree in ‘de buitenwereld’ — een merkwaardige formulering waarmee men, voor zover ze kon zien en zodra de flessen champagne waren leeggedronken en

[9] Hier heb ik het idioom met ‘ogen openen’ behouden omdat het op komische wijze terugverwijst naar de dichtvallende ogen van Mevrouw Willowes.

de fijne, dunne baljurk weer over de smalle schouders was gehesen, doelde op 'de binnen-wereld'.

Alles welbeschouwd stond er één lichtpuntje tegenover het verlies van haar vrijheid. Everard had namelijk behoefte aan de troost die alleen een vrouw kon bieden en bijgestaan door Juffrouw Boddle en haar subtiele beïnvloeding, wist Laura hem er spoedig van te overtuigen dat haar troost van het onvervalste vrouwelijke soort was. Het was makkelijk, veel makkelijker dan ze had verwacht, om volwassen te zijn; om helder en waakzaam te zijn, om haar bewegingen ingetogen te houden en na te denken voor ze iets zei. Haar handen zagen er al veel witter uit op haar zwarte schoot. Ze kon haar moeders plek niet innemen en het was al even onmogelijk om haar moeders behendigheid op de piano te evenaren, want Mevrouw Willowes had les gehad van een oud-leerling van John Field[10] en had wat men *jeu perlé*[11] noemde; maar ze kon wél een eigen plek innemen. Laura gedroeg zich voorbeeldig[12] — zo zeiden de relaties van de familie Willowes, die onderling hun unanieme goedkeurig uitspraken — en ging haar eigen gang en huilde enkel wanneer ze alleen in de tuinschuur was, waar een oud paar tuinhandschoenen de vorm van haar moeders hand weer bij haar opriep.

[10] John Field (1782-1837) was een bekende Ierse componist en pianist die de mentor is geweest van vele grote talenten waaronder Mikhail Glinka en Charles Mayer. Omdat deze componist buiten de Engelssprekende wereld wellicht minder bekend is, heb ik de volledige naam gegeven zodat de kans groter is dat de lezers hem alsnog herkennen. Verder heb ik geen pogingen gedaan om de connotatie van deze verwijzing te verduidelijken, namelijk het prestige waarmee de naam vergezeld gaat, omdat reeds uit de context blijkt dat deze John Field een belangrijke naam is binnen de pianowereld. Ook voor degenen die niet bekend zijn met John Field zal dit duidelijk genoeg zijn.

[11] Ik heb deze term onvertaald overgenomen omdat het gebruik van het Frans iets gedistingeerds en gespecialiseerds heeft, wat goed past bij het prestige dat deze regel moet uitgedragen. Net als bij de verwijzing naar Field geldt dat uit de context kan worden opgemaakt wat de functie van dit vakjargon is: het toekennen van prestige en talent aan Mevrouw Willowes. Bovendien vraag ik mij af de jonge Laura, vanuit wiens perspectief hier waarschijnlijk verteld wordt, zelf wel weet wat deze namen en termen inhouden. Mogelijk krijgen we hier het perspectief van een alwetende verteller te zien maar het is lastig om de twee uit elkaar te houden.

[12] Hier is iets interessants aan de hand. Omdat de zin begint met "So" lijkt de verteller hier aan het woord te zijn, maar omdat deze regel gevolgd wordt door "said the Willowes connection" is het gedeelte na "So" een redelijk directe weergave van de woorden van de kennissen. "So Laura behaved very well" is dus een combinatie van de woorden van de verteller en die van de kennissen. Omdat de zinsvolgorde in het Nederlands verandert wanneer er 'dus' of 'zodoende' wordt gebruikt en de rest van de zin niet meer klopt met de min of meer directe verwoording van de kennissen, heb ik 'So' hier onvertaald gelaten. Een zin als 'En dus gedroeg Laura zich voorbeeldig' overlapt namelijk niet met een uitspraak als 'Laura gedroeg zich voorbeeldig!' "Laura gedroeg zich voorbeeldig" werkt wel zonder enige toevoegingen.

Haar gedrag woog des te zwaarder aangezien geen van haar broers thuis was toen Mevrouw Willowes overleed. Henry, die nu lid was van het rechtsgenootschap[13] van de Inner Temple, had zojuist ene juffrouw Caroline Fawcett ten huwelijk gevraagd. Toen hij na de begrafenis terugkeerde naar Londen, kon men niet aan de indruk ontkomen dat hij de schaduw die over Lady Place hing achter zich liet om te zwelgen in zijn persoonlijke glorie; een gunstige verloving.

Hij liet zijn vader en zuster troost vinden in het troosten van elkaar. Want hoewel James bij hen was en hoewel *zijn* verdriet niet te ontkennen viel, leek het er niet op dat ze veel hulp van James konden verwachten. Hij verbleef destijds in Duitsland waar hij scheikunde studeerde en toen ze het telegram verzonden, rekenden Everard en Laura uit hoe lang hij over de reis naar Lady Place zou doen en bedachten ze hoe ze zijn ontvangst zo bemoedigend mogelijk konden maken, want ze waren reeds begonnen met het weven van een dikker kleed van familiegenegenheid om de kou van het verlies tegen te gaan. Zodra ze het geknars van de brik in de oprijlaan hoorden en het geruis van de natte rododendrons, keken ze elkaar behartigend aan en stelden ze zich gerust met de gedachte aan het helder brandende haardvuur in zijn kamer, het zorgvuldig uitgekozen avondmaal dat hem wachtte. Maar toen hij voor hen stond en ze zijn rode, vertrokken gezicht zagen, deed de ernst van een verdriet dat zo anders gedragen werd dan dat van henzelf al hun moed zinken. Niets wat zij te bieden hadden kon dat zielsverdriet wegnemen. Ze lieten hem met rust en zochten steun bij elkaar om niet alleen hun eigen verdriet te vergeten maar evenzeer dat van hem, en in zijn aanwezigheid bleven ze stilzwijgend zitten, als twee brave kinderen die geconfronteerd worden met een volwassener soort verdriet dat hun begrip te boven gaat.

…

[13] Voor Nederlandstalige lezers is de verwijzing naar de Inner Temple waarschijnlijk niet erg veelzeggend. Vandaar dat ik een zeer korte inhoudelijke omschrijving heb toegevoegd. Belangrijk is vooral dat de lezer weet dat Henry de kant van het recht op is gegaan omdat dit later nog terugkomt in het verhaal en omdat het bijdraagt aan de karakterisering van Henry.

Hoewel mede-eigenaarschap van de brouwerij daarom een voor de hand liggende bestemming leek voor James, voelde Everard zich zeer gevleid door de keuze van zijn zoon en voerde hij haastig elke wetenschappelijke verbetering door die zijn zoon voorstelde. Hoewel hij van nature wantrouwig stond tegenover vernieuwing, hoopte hij dat James in deze belangstelling een onschuldige vorm van afleiding van zijn verdriet vond en gaf hij hem een nieuw brouwersvat met dezelfde vaderlijke gedachte als toen hij hem zijn eerste[14] jachtgeweer had gegeven. James was zeer tevreden over de prestaties van het brouwersvat. Maar het was onmogelijk om te achterhalen of het zijn verdriet verlichtte want hij hield zijn gevoelens nu eenmaal zo goed verborgen dat hij zich, als een hyperbool van terughoudendheid, zelfs gesloten begon op te stellen over zijn geslotenheid, met als resultaat dat hij ogenschijnlijk slechts een weinig communicatieve jongeman met een rood gezicht was.

Everard en Laura verwierven nooit de mate van vertrouwdheid met James waarmee leden van dezelfde familie elkaar kunnen accepteren zonder de ander werkelijk te doorgronden. De liefde die ze voor hem voelden was vermengd met ontzag; het soort ontzag dat de liefde leert kennen zodra ze merkt dat ze vergeefs is. Toch waren ze blij met zijn aanwezigheid, vooral Everard, die nu oud genoeg werd om verheugd te zijn met het vooruitzicht om zijn verantwoordelijkheden, zelfs de aangeboren verantwoordelijkheid om een Willowes te zijn, op een jeugdiger stel schouders af te leggen. Er bestond geen beter gekwalificeerde kandidaat om deze last op zich te nemen dan James. Alles aan hem, van zijn zit op een paard tot zijn smaak in leren boekbanden, getuigde van een geheel van goede smaak en gezond verstand; zonder veel vertoon, hooghartig en kieskeurig.

De leren boekbanden belandden al gauw in Laura's handen. Nieuwe boeken waren juist nu zeer welkom want ze was bijna door de boeken in de bibliotheek van Lady Place heen. Als ze het geweten hadden, zouden de zijde-en-zeehondenbontdames met

[14] De 'rook-rifle' is een klein single-shot jachtgeweer uit de late Victoriaanse tijd. Het was speciaal ontworpen voor de jacht op roeken en konijnen (klein wild). Het zou een logische keuze zijn voor een eerste geweer (voor een Victoriaanse jongen), wat hier naar mijn idee ook geïmpliceerd wordt. Vandaar mijn toevoeging 'eerste'. Het illustreert het opgroeien en de opvoeding van James en de band tussen vader en zoon.

zelfs nog meer ontsteltenis het hoofd hebben geschud om haar opvoeding. Maar het was, uiteraard, nooit in hen opgekomen dat een jongedame uit hun kennissenkring vrijelijk, zonder enige beperking, van alles mocht lezen en Mevrouw Willowes had geen reden gezien om hen van dit feit op de hoogte te brengen.

En dus las Laura in alle rust[15] en zonder iemand te verontrusten want de gesprekken tijdens theevisites en de plaatselijke bals gaven haar nooit de gelegenheid om met anderen te delen wat ze van John Locke over het Menselijk Begripsvermogen en van Joseph Glanvill[16] over Heksen had geleerd. Sterker nog, omdat ze doorgaans niks afwist van de boeken die *hun* meisjes[17] lazen, vonden de plaatselijke moeders haar nogal onwetend. Toch mochten ze haar er niet minder om, want ook al was haar onwetendheid niet zo onaantrekkelijk voor het andere geslacht als geleerdheid, was ze tevens zo onverfijnd dat er absoluut niets verleidelijks aan was. Wat betreft haar uiterlijk hadden ze evenmin reden tot klagen. Wat ze aan lichamelijke schoonheid bezat, was even onverfijnd als wat ze aan geestelijke schoonheid had en haar plechtige[18] houding en manier van doen deden haar ouder lijken dan ze in werkelijkheid was.

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[15] Ik heb deze regel als een woordspeling gelezen. De vertaling “in alle rust” is wat vager dan ‘undisturbed’ maar de context maakt duidelijk dat het hier opgevat moet worden als ‘ongestoord:’ omdat de nette dames niet weten wat Laura allemaal leest, kunnen ze haar niet verhinderen. Door een formulering met ‘rust’ (en later ‘verontrusten’) te gebruiken, kan ik het komische en ironische effect van de herhaling van de brontekstregel behouden.

[16] In de brontekst staat de naam verkeerd gespeld (met één ‘l’). Ik heb de naam gecorrigeerd en voluit geschreven (met voornaam), zodat lezers gemakkelijker meer informatie kunnen opzoeken, mochten ze dat willen. Voor het begrip van dit fragment zelf is het naar mijn mening niet nodig dat de lezer precies weet wie deze man was en waar zijn werk over ging; de belangrijkste informatie is reeds gegeven (‘Witches’/’Heksen’). Bovendien denk ik dat het feit dat dit werk (Nederlandse én Engelse) lezers waarschijnlijk maar weinig zegt, nog eens benadrukt dat Laura ongebruikelijke, obscure en complexe boeken leest in vergelijking met andere meisjes.
Voor het evenwicht in de zin heb ik de veel bekendere John Locke ook voluit genoemd om te voorkomen dat een van de twee meer nadruk krijgt dan de andere. Het punt is juist dat deze twee boeken, die radicaal van elkaar verschillen (de een is een van de steunpilaren van het empirisme, de ander een werk vol geloof en bijgeloof), zo terloops naast elkaar genoemd worden.

[17] ‘mamas’ heeft in het Engels iets stijfs en deftigs en daarom ook iets licht spottends in deze context. Hetzelfde kan echter niet gezegd worden van ‘mama’s’ in het Nederlands. Door ‘meisjes’ in plaats van ‘dochters’ te kiezen, wil ik proberen om de licht ironische toon in mijn vertaling te behouden.

[18] Deze interpretatie van “air of fine breeding” sluit beter aan bij Laura’s bescheiden, teruggetrokken karakter dan woorden als ‘statig,’ ‘verfijnd’ of ‘hooghartig.’

Laura was van gemiddelde lengte, dun en nogal spits. Haar huid was bruinig, bijna vaalgeel, maar ze leek nog bruiner door het contrast met haar ogen, die groot waren en wijd uiteen stonden en waarvan het grijs niet naar blauw of groen neigt maar slechts een sterk verdund soort zwart leek. Dit soort ogen is in zeldzaam in welk gezicht dan ook, maar is zelfs nog zeldzamer in combinatie met een bruinige huidskleur. In Laura's geval was het effect te markant om fraai te zijn. Vreemdelingen vonden haar uiterlijk opvallend, meer dan dat konden ze niet zeggen, en degenen die haar beter kenden vonden haar onbeduidend. Alleen Everard en James zouden haar wellicht mooi noemen, als ze om hun mening gevraagd was. Dit antwoord zou niet slechts een blijk zijn van hun familiaire vooringenomenheid ten gunste van andere leden van de familie Willowes. Ze hadden haar thuis gezien, waar opgewektheid kleur in haar wangen en vitaliteit in haar houding bracht. Buitenshuis en in gezelschap was ze niet opgewekt. Ze ging niet graag uit, ze bezocht bijna uitsluitend formele festiviteiten waar de aanwezigheid van Juffrouw Willowes van Lady Place een vereiste uiting van beleefdheid was; en ze vond er maar weinig reden om opgewekt te zijn. Aangezien ze geen verlangen had om te behagen, voelde ze zich niet gedwongen om een mate van vermaak te veinzen die ze niet werkelijk ervaarde en vanwege hetzelfde gebrek was ze ongevoelig voor de plicht van elke huwbare jonge vrouw om charmant te zijn, of haar charme nu een specifiek doelwit had of, bij gebrek aan dergelijke doelwitten, gelijk verdeeld was over de hele wereld in de vorm van een onbaatzuchtige liefde voor de mensheid. Dit zou te wijten kunnen zijn aan haar opvoeding, zo luide de verklaring in de naburige kringen. Maar haar opvoeding had slechts een reeds aangeboren onverschilligheid ten opzichte van de noodzaak om te trouwen bevorderd – of om in het algemeen ook maar iets te doen wat juist was – en deze onverschilligheid werd nog eens versterkt door de omstandigheden die haar zo zeer haar vaders steun en toeverlaat hadden gemaakt.

Niets is gevaarlijker voor de normale aantrekkingskracht van jonge mannen op een jonge vrouw dan een hechte band met een man die twee keer zo oud is als zij. Laura vergeleek alle jonge mannen met haar vader; mannen die ze anders, zonder enige vergelijking, mogelijk wél geaccepteerd zou hebben als geschikte objecten voor haar

belangstelling. Haar bevinding was dat deze vergelijking niet bepaald flatteus was voor de jonge mannen. Ze waren energiek, knap en bedreven in de fazantenjacht; of ze waren geestig, elegant gekleed en gingen naar een Londense herensociëteit. Toch was ze niet van plan om haar vaders gezelschap te verruilen voor dat van hen, zelfs al zouden ze duidelijk laten merken dat dat van haar verlangd werd, en tot die tijd schonk ze hen maar weinig aandacht, zowel in gedachte als in daad.

Toen tante Emmie uit India terugkeerde en de logeerkamer met cederhouten kisten vulde, sprak ze haar broer vastberaden toe: “Everard, het wordt hoog tijd dat Laura trouwt! Hoe kan het dat ze nog niet getrouwd is?” Toen ze een vlaag van lichte paniek over zijn gezicht zag trekken na dit frontale offensief, voegde ze eraan toe: “Een meisje als Laura hoeft slechts haar keuze te maken. Die Welshe ogen . . . Elke keer als ze me aankijken moet ik aan moeder denken. Everard! Laat haar bij mij in India het seizoen[19] bijwonen.”

“Dat moet je aan Laura vragen,” zei Everard. En ze wandelden de boomgaard in, waar Emmie de valappels opraapte en opat met de gretigheid van een banneling. Een moment lang werd er geen woord gesproken. Emmie was zich bewust van haar faux-pas. Beschaamd over haar overtreding van de Willowes-etiquette omtrent inmenging, greep ze maar al te graag de kans aan om weer bij haar broer in de gratie te komen door herinneringen op te halen aan hun jeugd onder dezelfde bomen.

Maar Everard bleef uit ontsteltenis stil. Hij geloofde oprecht dat de opluchting die hij voelde wanneer Laura’s ontluikende vrijers in de kiem gesmoord werden, voortkwam uit de overtuiging dat geen van hen goed genoeg was voor haar. Hij wachtte net zo onschuldig als de onbezorgde Laura had kunnen doen – maar niet deed

[19] Met “season” wordt in deze context niet zozeer een jaargetijde bedoeld maar wat men in het Engeland van de 19e eeuw ‘the (social) season’ noemde: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Season_(society) In Nederlandse vertalingen van boeken van Jane Austen, die dit woord ook veelvuldig gebruikte, vind ik simpelweg de vertaling ‘seizoen’. Om duidelijk te maken dat het om een ‘sociaal seizoen’ gaat, zonder dit expliciet te vermelden (wat me in de context van deze zin vreemd zou lijken aangezien broer en zus allebei vertrouwd zijn met de term en geen nodeloze toelichting zouden gebruiken), heb ik ‘het’ en ‘bijwonen’ aangevuld. Dit benadrukt dat het om een specifieke, jaarlijkse periode gaat, waarin verschillende soorten evenementen plaatsvinden die Laura zou moeten meemaken. (En waar ze een geschikte man zou moeten vinden).

– op de ideale huwelijkskandidaat. Nu had Emmie's tactloze bezorgdheid echter een koude schaduw op de toekomst na zijn dood geworpen. En had ze, wat betreft de nabijere toekomst, niet voorgesteld om Laura mee te nemen naar India? Hij zou nobel zijn. Hij zou geen woord uitspreken om haar te weerhouden van een besluit waar ze uiteindelijk profijt van zou kunnen hebben. Maar bij de gedachte dat ze hem zou verlaten voor een land dat zo ver weg lag, voor een manier van leven die zo vreemd was, verloren zijn dagen al hun warmte.

Emmie ontvouwde Laura haar plan; of liever gezegd, ze ontvouwde de buitenste lagen. Mango's en ommuurde villa's[20], vroege ochtendritjes langs de Kilpauk-weg[21], het zwoegende gezang van de dragers die *memsahibs*[22] in draagbaren naar de hoger gelegen heuvelposten brachten, papegaaien die door de jungle vlogen, *ayahs* met robijntjes in hun neusvleugels, glacéhandschoenen bewaard in glazen potten[23] met schroefdeksels – alle statige en eenvoudige pracht van het antieke Madras wenkte haar, wenkte als de donkere armen[24] met rammelende armbanden van zacht goud en gekleurd glas. Maar toen dit wenken de vorm aannam van tante Emmie's terloopse uitnodiging, hield Laura de boot af, draaide er links en rechts omheen en verwoordde

[20] Ik heb de woordvolgorde aangepast omdat 'ommuurde villa's en mango's' minder goed loopt en omdat het mogelijk tot het lezen van 'ommuurde . . . mango's' leidt, wat wellicht als storend kan worden ervaren.

[21] 'Kilpauk' is de correcte (moderne) spelling.

[22] Ik heb hier exotiserend vertaald; zowel 'memsahibs' als 'ayahs' heb ik behouden en gecursiveerd omdat dit naar mijn idee het beste past in deze exotiserende, koloniale fantasie. Emmie probeert Laura te lokken en nieuwsgierig te maken met prikkelende, vreemde beelden; vertalingen als 'Britse dames' en 'kindermeisjes' verliezen hun koloniale, Indiase karakter en zouden afdoen aan de couleur locale van deze beschrijving.

[23] Waarschijnlijk duidt deze beschrijving op een manier om de handschoenen schoon te maken, niet op een pot met sterk water en handschoenen:

"A good way to clean kid gloves is to have a deep jar and put a good quantity of lump ammonia at the bottom. Suspend the gloves within the jar and close tightly. Leave for five days, after which the gloves will be fresh and clean again" (29).

"The Australian Woman's Mirror." 1.22 (21 April 1925). *The National Library of Australia.* Web. 8 June 2019.

[24] In mijn editie van *LW* staat er een komma tussen "dark" en "arms" waardoor de zin anders leest en het donker een abstract op zichzelf staand gegeven is. Dit lijkt mij echter onlogisch omdat er in deze beschrijving juist hele concrete, prikkelende beelden worden geschetst. Bovendien passen de 'donkere armen' goed in de sensuele koloniale fantasie die hier beschreven wordt.

ten slotte de afwijzing die zich stilzwijgend in haar hoofd gevormd had zodra de uitnodiging werd uitgesproken.

Ze wilde haar vader niet verlaten; en Lady Place al evenmin. Haar leven beviel haar uitstekend. Ze had geen enkele behoefte aan andere gewoonten dan waarmee ze was opgegroeid. Ze vervulde haar rol als vrouw des huizes met ongedwongen toewijding, in alles bijgestaan door plattelandse bedienden met een lange staat van dienst die even gesteld waren op de gemakkelijke gang van dag naar dag als zij. Bepaalde jaargetijden werden gekenmerkt door een frisse harsige geur die door het huis dwaalde als een rustieke geest. Mevrouw Bonnet was dan de traditionele meubelwas van bijenwas aan het bereiden, het enige middel dat de juiste glans wist achter te laten op de elegant uitstulpende voorzijdes van de ladekasten en pronkkasten. De grauwe eerste dagen van februari namen een warmere tint[25] aan dankzij de tropische aroma's van het marmeladerecept van oud-oudtante Salomé; en in de middag van Goede Vrijdag, als het weer het tenminste toeliet, werden de opgezette vossen en otters uit hun glazen kabinetten tevoorschijn gehaald, geborsteld en op het gazon gezet om te luchten.

…

Na het ochtendmaal en nadat ze Henry bij de deur een goede dag hadden gewenst, begaf Caroline zich naar de keuken beneden en las Laura de achtergebleven *Times*. Vervolgens was het tijd voor boodschappen, brieven schrijven, bloemschikken, het verschonen van de kanariekooi en het wandelingetje van de meisjes. Taken als bloemschikken of het verschonen van de kanariekooi werden zo omzichtig verricht dat ze tegelijkertijd zowel een plechtig als een clandestien karakter leken te krijgen. De bloemen werden altijd geschikt in het wasvertrek op de begane grond, waar een gootsteentje was; vazen en ijzerdraad waren opgeborgen in een kast en er hing een

[25] De verwoording met kleur ('tinged') is behouden omdat ze mogelijk terugverwijst naar "grey" en zo een sprekend visueel beeld tot stand brengt: een kille grauwe kleur die langzaam de warme tinten van marmelade aanneemt.

schaar aan een spijker. Het voltooide werk werd voorzichtig langs de jassen gedragen die buiten in de hal hingen en werd op een uitverkozen locatie gezet.

Elke dinsdag werden de boeken omgeruild bij de bibliotheek.

Na het middagmaal was er een moment gereserveerd voor borduurwerk en nog meer *Times*. Als het weer het toeliet, ging Caroline op visite; zo niet, dan bleef ze binnen voor het geval dat zij zelf gasten ontving. Op zaterdagmiddag hadden de meisjes hun danslessen. Laura vergezelde haar nichtjes daarnaartoe en droeg hun dansmuiltjes in een tas. Gezeten tussen de andere ouders en begeleiders op een podium dat meetrilde met de beklemtoonde klanken van de pianist, keek ze toe hoe er quadrilles, polka's en walsen werden uitgevoerd en hoorde ze Juffrouw Parley zeggen: "En nu vanaf het begin." Zodra het dansen voorbij was, werd er afgesloten met een sierlijke promenade[26] door de zaal en nadat Fancy en Marion hun stuntelige reverences hadden gemaakt, omhulde Laura hun mousseline jurken en rode ellebogen met hun lange grijze jassen en voerde ze hen vlug naar huis.

De kinderen waren niet bijzonder scherp[27] maar dat weerhield hen er niet van om een schrille vloed aan conversatie voort te brengen. Hun gewoonten en gedachten werden beheerst door een zodiakale stoet van andere kleine meisjes en toen ze zich na de thee naar de salon begaven, kwam het Laura voor alsof ze de Wardours of de Wilkinsons of de De la Bottes hadden meegebracht.

Het avondmaal werd om half acht geserveerd. In navolging van een praktische regel van Caroline mochten er onder het avondmaal enkel eenvoudige zaken besproken worden. De perikelen van de dag (als zich die dag perikelen hadden voorgedaan) werden terzijde gelegd. Aan deze regel schreef Caroline Henry's uitmuntende spijsvertering toe. Als verdere waarborging werd Henry's spijsvertering

[26] Ik heb nergens kunnen vinden wat er in deze context concreet bedoeld wordt met "March of Grace" en hoe ik dat precies voor me moet zien. Ik stel mij voor dat het een (soort rituele) afsluiting van de dansles is waarbij de meisjes elegant en gracieus door de zaal bewegen en eindigen met een reverence.
[27] Ook deze regel lijkt mij een woordspeling te bevatten. Deze woordspeling , een komische tegenstelling tussen "dull" en "penetrating," is behouden door 'dull' te vertalen met 'niet scherp' en 'penetrating' met 'schril.' Deze woordspeling lijkt overigens verdere politieke of maatschappijkritishe implicaties te hebben in tegenstelling tot de woordspelingen die in de analyse besproken zijn.

na het avondmaal nog een uur van afzondering in de rooksalon gegund. Als hij het die dag druk had, werd dit uur van meditatie gevolgd door wat juridisch werk. Zo niet, dan sloot hij zich bij hen aan in de salon of bezocht hij zijn sociëteit. Wanneer ze in geval van het laatste alleen achterbleven, gingen Laura en Caroline vroeg naar bed, aangenaam vermoeid door de regelmatige dagen en regelmatige maaltijden. Later hoorde Laura dan, halfslapend, hoe Henry thuiskwam van de sociëteit. De doffe klik van de deur die achter hem werd dichtgetrokken weerklonk door het stille huis, gevolgd door het geluid van sloten en deurkettingen. Nu het huis ontdaan was van weer een dag, kraakte het nog één of twee keer en dommelde in; zijn stilte en veiligheid lagen achter slot en grendel in zijn binnenste opgeborgen als een soort moreel familiezilver. De restanten van de nacht werden overgelaten aan de staande klok in de hal die eerlijk en onpartijdig minuten en kwartieren en uren uitdeelde.

Elke zondagochtend wond Henry de klokken op. De trillende kettingen werden opgewonden – eerst de ene, dan de andere – totdat slechts nog de snuiten van de loden gewichten zichtbaar waren; neerslachtig hingen ze dan boven de afgrond van tijd waarin ze de komende zeven dagen zouden afdalen. Vervolgens ging de familie naar de kerk en werd daar op vrijwel dezelfde wijze opgewonden voor de komende week. Ze bezochten ook de avonddienst, maar die was minder grimmig. De kastijdende betogen klonken minder kastijdend; als een paraplu kletterend op de grond viel, was de daaropvolgende stilte minder verontwaardigd; de preek was, of leek in elk geval korter en slingerde[28] met meer vaart het “Want Uw is het Koninkrijk”[29] in.

[28] Ik heb ‘slingeren’ in het beeld behouden omdat het mooi aansluit op het klokkenthema van deze alinea.

[29] “And now to God the Father” is het begin van een veelvoorkomende afsluiting van een preek, ook wel lofprijzing, in de Engelse traditie (Church of England). Voor de vertaling heb ik gekozen voor een van meest gangbare lofprijzingen uit de herziene Statenbijbel van 1880. Ik vond het namelijk belangrijk dat de lezer dit korte fragment gemakkelijk als een afsluiting zou kunnen herkennen.

CONCLUSION:

Lolly Willowes is a work that touches upon many different themes. What starts out as a realist bildungsroman about a little wallflower turns into fantastical story of supernatural female empowerment. As such, it can be approached from many different angles, each of which may in turn result in different readings. My focus on social criticism and feminism is not an uncommon approach to Warner's work. Indeed, using a simile that Swaab would certainly appreciate, Warner herself has pointed out the moral dimensions of her work: "I sometimes think that I am alone in recognising what a moral writer I am . . . . I don't myself, while I am writing, but when I read myself afterwards I see my moral purpose shining out like a bad fish in a dark larder" (qtd. in Harman 192). Nor is the analysis of the relation between Warner's style and criticism a new invention. However, by focussing on wordplay I hope to have widened the view on Warner's critical use of style. The "pretty pattern" that Warner lamented was all critics cared about is in fact what gives her "blade" its edge (Waters xi). Furthermore, I hope to have added something to the debate surrounding the translation of (subversive) wordplay, particularly by adopting a broad definition of wordplay that accommodates a wider range of textual phenomena.

My preference for similar pun-solutions may be deemed safe and 'normal,' as it does not depart from the Dutch contract norms, begging the question whether my translation and analysis have really covered new ground and whether they provide sufficient insight into the wider range of translation solutions, particularly less conventional ones in comparison with the model contract norm. My response would be that the choice for similar puns was guided by what I considered to be major themes of the novel and the belief, put forward by Klitgård (71), that such wider themes and structures must be taken into account when translating wordplay. Changing the imagery of the wordplay was therefore not an option for me. I furthermore ascribe to the view of Marco that wordplay that contributes to (or foreshadows) major themes or the plot of the novel is highly relevant (281). As such, I

believe such thematically relevant wordplay can best be translated with solutions that preserve the relevant theme or content. Therefore, critical wordplay in a work generally understood as subversive and ground-breaking ought to be considered significant. However, since identifying major themes depends on one's reading of the work, these themes are not set in stone. It may well be that different readings foreground different kinds of wordplay in *Lolly Willowes* and support vastly different solutions for the translation of wordplay. It may therefore be interesting to compare the various existing translations of *Lolly Willowes* to see how translators from different linguistic backgrounds and decades have dealt with wordplay. Yet wordplay isn't the only translation problem for the translator; other fields not yet explored but central to the production of a Dutch translation are the unique blending of genres, the representation of thought, or the abundance of realia and references, to name just a few.

Although *Lolly Willowes* has not known mainstream success since its immediate success waned, the long translation history, stretched out over almost a century proves that the novel continues to captivate readers; like "well-chosen wood and well-chosen wine," it may even have "improved with keeping" (9). With three recent translations appearing in the same recent year, we seem to be at the start of another spike in interest. Perhaps the time has come for a Dutch translation.

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APPENDIX:

Source Text

Even in 1902, there were some forward spirits who wondered why that Miss Willowes, who was quite well off, and not likely to marry, did not make a home for herself and take up something artistic or emancipated. Such possibilities did not occur to any of Laura's relations. Her father being dead, they took it for granted that she should be absorbed into the household of one brother or the other. And Laura, feeling rather as if she were a piece of property forgotten in the will, was ready to be disposed of as they should think best.

The point of view was old-fashioned, but the Willoweses were a conservative family and kept to old-fashioned ways. Preference, not prejudice, made them faithful to their past. They slept in beds and sat upon chairs whose comfort insensibly persuaded them into respect for the good sense of their forbears. Finding that well-chosen wood and well-chosen wine improved with keeping, they believed that the same law applied to well-chosen ways. Moderation, civil speaking, leasure of the mind and a handsome simplicity were canons of behaviour imposed upon them by the example of their ancestors.

Observing those canons, no member of the Willowes family had risen to much eminence. Perhaps great-great-aunt Salome had made the nearest approach to fame. It was a decent family boast that great-great-aunt Salome’s puff-paste had been commended by King George III. And great-great-aunt Salome’s prayer-book, with the services for King Charles the Martyr and the Restoration of the Royal Family and the welfare of the House of Hanover—a nice example of impartial piety—was always used by the wife of the head of the family. Salome, though married to a Canon of Salisbury, had taken off her embroidered kid gloves, turned up her sleeves, and gone into the kitchen to mix the paste for His Majesty’s eating, her Venice-point lappets dangling above the floury bowl. She was a loyal subject, a devout churchwoman, and a good housewife, and the Willoweses were properly proud of her. Titus, her father, had

made a voyage to the Indies, and had brought back with him a green parrokeet, the first of its kind to be seen in Dorset. The parrokeet was named Ratafee, and lived for fifteen years. When he died he was stuffed; and perched as in life upon his ring, he swung from the cornice of the china-cupboard surveying four generations of the Willowes family with his glass eyes. Early in the nineteenth century one eye fell out and was lost. The eye which replaced it was larger, but inferior both in lustre and expressiveness. This gave Ratafee a rather leering look, but it did not compromise the esteem in which he was held. In a humble way the bird had made county history, and the family acknowledged it, and gave him a niche in their own.

Beside the china-cupboard and beneath Ratafee stood Emma's harp, a green harp ornamented with gilt scrolls and acanthus leaves in the David manner. When Laura was little she would sometimes steal into the empty drawing-room and pluck the strings which remained unbroken. They answered with a melancholy and distracted voice, and Laura would pleasantly frighten herself with the thought of Emma's ghost coming back to make music with cold fingers stealing into the empty drawing-room as noiselessly as she had done. But Emma's was a gentle ghost. Emma had died of decline, and when she lay dead with a bunch of snowdrops under her folded palms a lock of her hair was cut off to be embroidered into a picture of a willow tree exhaling its branches above a padded white satin tomb. 'That,' said Laura's mother, 'is an heirloom of your great-aunt Emma who died.' And Laura was sorry for the poor young lady who alone, it seemed to her, of all her relations had had the misfortune to die.

Henry, born in 1818, grandfather to Laura and nephew to Emma, became head of the house of Willowes when he was but twenty-four, his father and unmarried elder brother dying of smallpox within a fortnight of each other. As a young man Henry had shown a roving and untraditional temperament, so it was fortunate that he had the licence of a cadet to go his own way. He had taken advantage of this freedom to marry a Welsh lady, and to settle near Yeovil, where his father bought him a partnership in a brewery. It was natural to expect that upon becoming the head of the family Henry would abandon, if not the Welsh wife and the brewery, at least Somerset, and return to his native place. But this would not do. He had become attached to the

neighbourhood where he had spent the first years of his married life; the ill-considered jest of his uncle the Admiral, that Henry was courting a Welshwoman with a tall hat like Mother Shipton's who would carry her shoes to church, had secretly estranged him from his relations; and – most weighty reason of all – Lady Place, a small solid mansion, which he had long coveted – saying to himself that if ever he were rich enough he would make his wife the mistress of it – just then came into the market. The Willowes obstinacy, which had for so long kept unchanged the home in Dorset, was now to transfer that home across the county border. The old house was sold, and the furniture and family belongings were installed at Lady Place. Several strings of Emma's harp were broken, some feathers were jolted out of Ratafee's tail, and Mrs. Willowes, whose upbringing had been Evangelical, was distressed for several Sundays by the goings-on that she found in Salome's prayer-book. But in the main the Willowes tradition stood the move very well. The tables and chairs and cabinets stood in the same relation to each other as before; the pictures hung in the same order though on new walls; and the Dorset hills were still to be seen from the windows, though now from windows facing south instead of from windows facing north. Even the brewery, untraditional as it was, soon weathered and became indistinguishably part of the Willowes way of life.

…

Mrs Willowes made a poor recovery after Laura's birth; as time went on, she became more and more invalidish, though always pleasantly so. She was seldom well enough to entertain, so Laura grew up in a quiet household. Ladies in mantles of silk or of sealskin, according to the season of the year, would come to call, and sitting by the sofa would say: "Laura is growing a big girl now. I suppose before long you will be sending her to a school." Mrs Willowes heard them with half-shut eyes. Holding her head deprecatingly upon one side, she returned evasive answers. When by quite shutting her eyes she had persuaded them to go, she would call Laura and say: "Darling , aren't your skirts getting a little short?"

Then Nannie would let out another tuck in Laura's ginghams and merinos, and some months would pass before the ladies returned to the attack. They all liked Mrs Willowes, but they were agreed amongst themselves that she needed bracing up to a sense of her responsibilities, especially her responsibilities about Laura. It really was not right that Laura should be left so much to herself. Poor dear Miss Taylor was an excellent creature. Had she not inquired about peninsula's in all the neighbouring school-rooms of consequence? But Miss Taylor for three hours daily and Mme Brevet's dancing classes in winter did not, could not, supply all Laura's needs. She should have the companionship of girls her own age, or she might grow up eccentric. Another little hint to Mrs Willowes would surely open the poor lady's eyes. But though Mrs Willowes received their good counsel with a flattering air of being just about to become impressed by it, and filled up their tea-cups with a great deal of delicious cream, the silk and sealskin ladies hinted in vain, for Laura was still at home when her mother died.

During the last few years of her life Mrs Willowes grew continually more skilled in evading responsibilities, and her death seemed but the final perfected expression of this skill. It was as if she had said, yawning a delicate cat's yawn, "I think I will go to my grave now," and had left the room, her white shawl trailing behind her.

Laura mourned for her mother in skirts that almost reached the ground, for Miss Boddle, the family dressmaker, had nice sensibilities and did not think that legs could look sorrowful. Indeed, Laura's legs were very slim and frisky, they liked climbing trees and jumping over haycocks, they had no wish to retire from the world and belong to a young lady. But when she had put on the new clothes that smelt so queerly, and looking in the mirror saw herself sad and grown-up, Laura accepted the inevitable. Sooner or later she must be subdued into young-ladyhood; and it seemed befitting that the change should come gravely, rather than with the conventional polite uproar and fuss of 'coming-out' — which odd term meant, as far as she could see, and when once the champagne bottles were emptied and the flimsy ball-dress lifted off the thin shoulders, going-in.

As things were, she had a recompense for the loss of her liberty. For Everard needed comfort, he needed a woman to comfort him, and abetted by Miss Boddle's insinuations Laura was soon able to persuade him that her comfortings were of the legitimate womanly kind. It was easy, much easier than she had supposed, to be grown up; to be clearheaded and watchful, to move sedately and think before she spoke. Already her hands looked much whiter on the black lap. She could not take her mother's place — that was as impossible as to have her mother's touch on the piano, for Mrs Willowes had learnt from a former pupil of Field, she had the *jeu perlé*; but she could take a place of her own. So Laura behaved very well — said the Willowes connection, agreeing and approving amongst themselves — and went about her business, and only cried when alone in the potting-shed, where a pair of old gardening gloves repeated to her the shape of her mother's hand.

Her behaviour was the more important in that neither of her brothers was at home when Mrs Willowes died. Henry, now a member of the Inner Temple, had just proposed marriage to a Miss Caroline Fawcett. When he returned to London after the funeral it was impossible not to feel that he was travelling out of the shadow that rested upon Lady Place to bask in his private glory of a suitable engagement.

He left his father and sister to find consolation in consoling each other. For though James was with them, and though *his* sorrow was without qualification, they were not likely to get much help from James. He had been in Germany studying chemistry, and when they sent off the telegram Everard and Laura reckoned up how long he would take to reach Lady Place, and planned how they could most comfortingly receive him, for they had already begun to weave a thicker clothing of family kindness against the chill of bereavement. On hearing the crunch of the wagonette in the drive, and the swishing of the wet rhododendrons, they glances at each other reassuringly, taking heart at the thought of the bright fire in his bedroom, the carefully chosen supper that awaited him. But when he stood before them and they looked at his red twitching face, they were abashed before the austerity of a grief so differently sustained from their own. Nothing they had to offer could remedy that heart-ache. They left him to himself and sought refuge in each other's society, as much from his sorrow as theirs,

and in his company they sat quietly, like two good children in the presence of a more grown-up grief than they could understand.

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So though a partnership in the brewery seemed the natural destiny for James, Everard was much flattered by his decision, and hastened to put into practice the scientific improvements which his son suggested. Though by nature mistrustful of innovations he hoped James might be innocently distracted from his grief by these interests, and gave him a new hopper in the same paternal spirit as formerly he had given him a rook-rifle. James was quite satisfied with the working of the hopper. But it was not possible to discover if it had assuaged his grief, because he concealed his feelings too closely, becoming, by a hyperbole of reticence, reserved even about his reserve, so that to all appearances he was no more than a red-faced young man with a moderate flow of conversation.

Everard and Laura never reached that stage of familiarity with James which allows members of the same family to accept each other on surface values. Their love for him was tinged with awe, the awe that love learns in the moment of finding itself unavailing. But they were glad to have him with them, especially Everard, who was growing old enough to like the prospect of easing his responsibilities, even the inherent responsibility of being a Willowes, on to younger shoulders. No one was better fitted to take up this burden than James. Everything about him, from his seat on a horse to his taste in leather bindings, betokened an integrity of good taste and good sense, unostentatious, haughty, and discriminating.

The leather bindings were soon in Laura's hands. New books were just what she wanted, for she had almost come to the end of the books in the Lady Place library. Had they known this the silk and sealskin ladies would have shaken their heads over her upbringing even more deploringly. But, naturally, it had not occurred to them that a young lady of their acquaintance should be under no restrictions as to what she read, and Mrs Willowes had not seen any reason for making them better informed.

So Laura read undisturbed, and without disturbing anybody, for the conversation at local tea-parties and balls never happened to give her an opportunity of mentioning anything that she had learned from Locke on the Understanding or Glanvil on Witches. In fact, as she was generally ignorant of the books which *their* daughters were allowed to read, the neighbouring mamas considered her rather ignorant. However they did not like her any the worse for this, for her ignorance, if not so sexually displeasing as learning, was of so unsweetened a quality as to be wholly without attraction. Nor had they any more reason to be dissatisfied with her appearance. What beauties of person she had were as unsweetened as het beauties of mind, and her air of fine breeding made her look older than her age.

Laura was of middle height, thin, and rather pointed. Her skin was brown, inclining to sallowness; it seemed browner still by contrast with her eyes, which were large, set wide apart, and of that shade of grey which inclines neither to blue nor green, but seems only a much diluted black. Such eyes are rare in any face, and rarer still in conjunction with a brown colouring. In Laura's case the effect was too startling to be agreeable. Strangers thought her remarkable-looking, but got no further, and those more accustomed thought her plain. Only Everard and James might have called her pretty had they been asked for an opinion. This would not have been only the partiality of one Willowes for another. They had seen her at home, where animation brought colour into her cheeks and spirit into her bearing. Abroad, and in company, she was not animated. She disliked going out, she seldom attended any but those formal parties at which the attendance of Miss Willowes of Lady Place was an obligatory civility; and she found little reason for animation. Being without coquetry she did not feel herself bound to feign a degree of entertainment which she had not experienced, and the same deficiency made her insensible to the duty of every marriageable young woman to be charming, whether charm be directed towards one special object or, in default of that, universally distributed through a disinterested love of humanity. This may have been due to her upbringing – such was the local explanation. But her upbringing had only furthered a temperamental indifference to the need of getting

married – or, indeed, of doing anything positive – and this indifference was reinforced by the circumstances which had made her so closely her father's companion.

There is nothing more endangering to a young woman's normal inclination towards young men than an intimacy with a man twice her own age. Laura compared with her father all the young men whom otherwise she might have accepted without any comparisons whatever as suitable objects for her intentions, and she did not find them support the comparison at all well. They were energetic, good-looking, and shot pheasants with great skill; or they were witty, elegantly dressed and had a London club; but still she had no mind to quit her father's company for theirs, even if they should show clear signs of desiring her to do so, and till then she paid them little attention in thought or deed.

When Aunt Emmy came back from India and filled the spare-room with cedar-wood boxes, she exclaimed briskly to Everard: 'My dear, it's high time Laura married! Why isn't she married already?' Then, seeing a slight spasm of distress at this barrack-square trenchancy pass over her brother's face, she added: 'A girl like Laura has only to make her choice. Those Welsh eyes . . . Whenever they look at me I am reminded of Mamma. Everard! You must let me give her a season in India.'

'You must ask Laura,' said Everard. And they went out into the orchard together, where Emmy picked up the windfall apples and ate them with the greed of the exile. Nothing more was said just then. Emmy was aware of her false step. Ashamed at having exceeded a Willowes decorum of intervention she welcomed this chance to reinstate herself in her brother's good graces by an evocation of their childhood under these same trees.

But Everard kept silence for distress. He believed in good faith that his relief at seeing Laura's budding suitors nipped in their bud was due to the conviction that not one of them was good enough for her. As innocently as the unconcerned Laura might have done, but did not, he waited for the ideal wooer. Now Emmy's tactless concern had thrown a cold shadow over the remoter future after his death. And for the near future had she not spoken of taking Laura to India? He would be good. He would not

say a word to dissuade the girl from what might prove to be her advantage. But at the idea of her leaving him for a country so distant, for a manner of life so unfamiliar, the warmth went out of his days.

Emmy unfolded her plan to Laura; that is to say, unfolded the outer wrappings of it. Compounds and mangoes, the early morning rides along the Kilpawk Road, the grunting song of the porters who carried Mem Sahibs in litters up to the hill-stations, parrots flying through the jungle, ayahs with rubies in their nostrils, kid gloves preserved in pickle jars with screw tops – all the solemn and simple pomp of old-fashioned Madras beckoned to her, beckoned like the dark, arms tinkling with bangles of soft gold and coloured glass. But when the beckonings took the form of Aunt Emmy's circumstantial invitation, Laura held back, demurred this way and that, and pronounced at last the refusal which had been implicit in her mind from the moment the invitation was given.

She did not want to leave her father, nor did she want to leave Lady Place. Her life perfectly contented her. She had no wish for ways other than those she had grown up in. With an easy diligence she played her part as mistress of the house, abetted at every turn by country servants of long tenure, as enamoured of the comfortable amble of day by day as she was. At certain seasons a fresh resinous smell would haunt the house like some rustic spirit. It was Mrs Bonnet making the traditional beeswax polish that alone could be trusted to give the proper lustre to the elegantly bulging fronts of tallboys and cabinets. The grey days of early February were tinged with tropical odours by great-great-aunt Salome's recipe for marmalade; and on the afternoon of Good Friday, if it were fine, the stuffed foxes and otters were taken out of their glass cases, brushed, and set to sweeten on the lawn.

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After breakfast, and after Henry had been seen off, Caroline descended to the kitchen and Laura read the relinquished *Times*. Then came shopping, letter-writing, arranging the flowers, cleaning the canary-cage, and the girls' walk. Such things as arranging flowers or cleaning the canary-cage were done with a kind of precautious

routine which made them seem alike solemn and illicit. The flowers were always arranged in the ground-floor lavatory, where there was a small sink; vases and wire frames were kept in a cupboard, and a pair of scissors was strung to a nail. Then the completed affair was carried carefully past the coats that hung in the lobby outside and set down upon some established site.

Every Tuesday the books were exchanged at the library.

After lunch there was a spell of embroidery and more *Times*. If it was fine, Caroline paid calls; if wet, she sat at home on the chance of receiving them. On Saturday afternoons there was the girls' dancing-class. Laura accompanied her nieces thither, carrying their slippers in a bag. She sat among the other parents and guardians upon a dais which shook to the primary accents of the pianist, watching lancers and polkas and waltzes being performed, and hearing Miss Parley say: 'Now we will recommence'. After the dancing was over there was a March of Grace, and when Fancy and Marion had miscarried of their curtseys she would envelop their muslin dresses and their red elbows in the grey ulsters, and walk them briskly home again.

They were dull children, though their dullness did not prevent them from having a penetrating flow of conversation. Their ways and thoughts were governed by a sort of zodiacal procession of other little girls, and when they came down to the drawing-room after tea it seemed to Laura that they brought the Wardours or the Wilkinsons or the de la Bottes with them.

Dinner was at half-past seven. It was a sensible rule of Caroline's that at dinner only general topics should be discussed. The difficulties of the day (if the day had presented difficulties) were laid aside. To this rule Caroline attributed the excellence of Henry's digestion. Henry's digestion was further safeguarded by being left to itself in the smoking-room for an hour after dinner. If he was busy, this hour of meditation would be followed by some law-work. If not, he would join them in the drawing-room, or got to his club. When they were thus left by themselves Laura and Caroline went off to bed early, for they were pleasantly fatigued by their regular days and regular meals. Later on Laura, half asleep, would hear Henry's return from his club. The thud of the

front door pulled to after him drove through the silent house, and this was followed by the noise of bolts and chains. Then the house, emptied of another day, creaked once or twice, and fell into repose, its silence and security barred up within it like a kind of moral family plate. The remainder of the night was left at the disposal of the grandfather's clock in the hall, equitably dealing out minutes and quarters and hours.

On Sunday mornings Henry would wind the clocks. First one and then the other the quivering chains were wound up, till only the snouts of the leaden weights were visible, drooping sullenly over the abyss of time wherein they were to make their descent during the seven days following. After that the family went to church, and there were wound up for the week in much the same manner. They went to evening service too, but evening service was less austere. The vindictive sentiments sounded less vindictive; if an umbrella fell down with a crash the ensuing silence was less affronted; the sermon was shorter, or seemed so, and swung more robustly into 'And now to God the Father.'