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Brand new translation, same old story? The perpetuation of female and racial stereotypes in (re)translation

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CHAPTER 2

A beautiful little fool? Retranslating Daisy Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby*

This chapter explores how ideas about gender are captured in literary works, and how such ideas are reinforced, revised or rejected in (re)translation. It does so by examining the two Dutch translations of *The Great Gatsby*, focusing on the characterization of Daisy Buchanan. The analysis draws attention to the influence that translators may – either consciously or unwittingly – have on gender stereotyping. By cataloguing the differences in the portrayal of Daisy Buchanan between the first translation and the retranslation, this chapter sheds light on the ideological implications of translation choices and the way they affect how readers perceive characters and their gender roles. The analysis shows that both translations, but the older translation in particular, paint a more negative picture of Daisy than the original does: both make Daisy more manipulative and emphasize her perceived seductiveness. The comparison shows that translation decisions may have serious impact on the way in which female characters are portrayed, and how preconceived ideas about gender may be reinforced as a result of a (mis)reading of the original.

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2.1 Gender in The Great Gatsby

"One is not born, but rather becomes woman" (De Beauvoir, 1949). Gender roles, identities and stereotypes are debated as heatedly today as when De Beauvoir wrote this famous sentence in 1949, the year that *The Second Sex* sold over 20,000 copies in a single week. This chapter will explore how ideas about gender are captured in literary works, and how such ideas are reinforced, revised or rejected in translations that may be quite far removed from the source text both temporally and culturally. It will do so by conducting a case study of the two Dutch translations of *The Great Gatsby* (widely recognized as one of the most important American novels of all times) and focusing on the characterization of one of the main female characters in this novel, Daisy Buchanan.

Though canonical classics have been the subject of studies on retranslation before, the focus of research so far has mainly been on the reasons for retranslation while the study of the effects and consequences of retranslation has been largely neglected (Alvstad & Assis Rosa, 2015, p. 15). And while feminist translation

scholars (e.g. Flotow, 2011; Leonardi & Taronna, 2011; Massardier-Kenney, 2015; Simon 1996) have extensively written on translation and gender as a cultural construct, most of their research has focused on feminist translations and the translation of feminist texts. This chapter does not propose feminist readings of literary classics like *The Great Gatsby*, nor does it champion the production of feminist-interventionist translations of such works. Rather, it aims to draw attention to the influence that translators may – either consciously or unwittingly – have on gender stereotyping.

When aiming to explore the possible effects of translator decisions on characterization and gender stereotyping, *The Great Gatsby* is an ideal candidate for a case study for a number of reasons. Firstly, one of the main themes of the novel is relationships between the sexes. Secondly, the narrative structure of the novel is based on the use of a male narrator – Nick Carraway – whose comments and judgements on women cannot be taken at face value, as will be discussed in more detail in section 2 below. Finally, there is the setting: New York City in the Roaring Twenties, an era in which gender roles were being openly challenged.

The story takes place only a few years after the First World War, which had triggered major changes in American society, with women obtaining the right to vote, joining the workforce in increasing numbers, and enjoying greater personal freedom than before. The predicaments of two of the main female characters in *The Great Gatsby* (Daisy Buchanan and Jordan Baker), however, suggest that women's liberation was far from complete. Though Daisy and Jordan may seem to be the prototypical 'flapper' (confident, assertive and sexually liberated), they are clearly held back by social conventions, some of which are connected to their elite ('old money') background. Jordan appears to succeed in being a free agent, but only at the cost of holding up a façade, while Daisy is a Southern belle who is expected to marry within her own class. Though Daisy was genuinely in love with Jay Gatsby and did go out with him (despite her parents objecting to her seeing a man below her standing), their relationship was cut short by him going off to war. She ends up marrying Tom Buchanan, who comes from a wealthy background. Tom is a bully, has sexual affairs, and is quite indiscrete about them to boot.

It is easy to see why some may regard Gatsby as a wonderful romantic living the American Dream. Yet one could also argue that Gatsby is more in love with what Daisy represents, i.e. the world of wealthy socialites that she inhabits, than with Daisy as a person. One's perspective depends on whether one buys into Nick's

account of Gatsby's and Daisy's characters and actions. When the story culminates in the death of Tom's mistress Myrtle in a car accident with Daisy behind the wheel and Gatsby, who is willing to take the blame, getting killed by Myrtle's husband, the picture Nick presents is too simplistic: Gatsby is a tragic hero whose flaws are easily forgiven, whereas Daisy is cold-hearted and chooses money (Tom) over love (Gatsby). The theme of relationships between the sexes in *The Great Gatsby* is thus not only inextricably linked to its setting, but also to the narrator's subjective point of view. The three narrative elements discussed above (theme, setting and point of view), in turn, have an impact on characterization in the novel (the focus of this chapter) and on potential gender stereotyping by readers – including translators.

In addition to the narrative itself, there are also extra-textual factors that make characterization and gender stereotyping in *The Great Gatsby* and its (re-) translations an interesting topic for research. One such factor is the availability of the author's personal correspondence, in which Fitzgerald describes his own mind as "half feminine" (Scott Fitzgerald quoted in Turnbull, 1964, p. 259). Then there is the radical change in reception and appreciation of the novel, from its initial lack of success in 1925 to becoming a contender for the epithet 'The Great American Novel' after it gained wide-spread popularity after World War II. The novel has generated numerous academic articles, books and dissertations over the decades (e.g. Fetterley, 1978; Settle, 1985; Kerr, 1996; Preston, 1997; Sanderson, 2006; Turner, 2015) as well as non-academic publications – mainly reviews – on both sides of the Atlantic commenting on its female characters (e.g. Hitchens, 2008; Geoghegan, 2011; Steinz, 2011; Etty, 2012). In addition, there is the fact that *The Great Gatsby* has been translated into over 40 languages, with re-translations having been published for a number of languages. This yields a very promising area for future cross-linguistic follow-up comparisons of how Daisy Buchanan's character (and female characters more generally) has been translated and retranslated into different languages, at different times, and against different socio-cultural backgrounds.

Following Culpeper's (2001) model for characterization, the present study investigates how Daisy Buchanan's character is constructed through the linguistic choices made in the source text, and subsequently translated in the two Dutch translations of *The Great Gatsby*. The first translation, by Lili Cornils, was published in 1948 by G.A. Van Oorschot. The second translation, by Susan Janssen, was published in 1985 by Agathon, with a revised translation by Janssen

in 1999 by Atlas Contact. It is important to note here that retranslations are not common in the Netherlands. Even great classics, like *The Great Gatsby*, *Pride and Prejudice, Mrs Dalloway* or *The Fire Next Time*, often yield no more than 2 or 3 retranslations. This is very different from the situation in countries such as France or Italy, as evidenced by the 15 Italian translations of *The Great Gatsby* used by Wardle (2018) in her analysis of the translation of culture-specific references and stylistic devices by Italian translators and the reception of the text in Italy.

By cataloguing the linguistic differences in the characterization of Daisy Buchanan between the first translation and the retranslation (in its revised edition of 1999), this chapter will shed light on the ideological implications of translation choices and the way they affect how readers perceive characters and their gender roles. Starting from the premise that although retranslations are "more or less temporarily sequential, their interpretative motions are not" (Deane-Cox, 2014, p. 189), the central question addressed will be: Does the more recent translation demonstrate a greater sensitivity regarding issues of gender stereotyping in its characterization of Daisy Buchanan? A key issue in the analyses below will be the frequent ambiguity of Fitzgerald's novel in this respect.

2.2 Characterization and the Voice of the Narrator

As pointed out by Culpeper (2001), gender is "one important way in which readers comprehend most [fictional] characters" (p. 12), and it is important to note that the impression readers have of male and female characters in a novel or play is largely constructed through their linguistic descriptions, a point also made by Van Peer (1989, p. 9):

> Character, it can hardly be denied, is what readers infer from words, sentences, paragraphs and textual composition depicting, describing or suggesting actions, thoughts, utterances or feelings of a protagonist. Thus the linguistic organization of a text will predetermine to a certain degree the kind of 'picture' one may compose of a protagonist. Therefore the particular forms by which this is achieved need to be studied in detail.

In Culpeper's (2001) model, this linguistic organization is studied by determining the different "characterization cues" (p. 164) in the text. This includes *explicit*

characterization cues ("where we find characters explicitly presenting themselves or others — that is, making character statements about themselves or others"), *implicit* characterization cues ("where we have to infer [via causal schemas, for example] character information from linguistic behavior"), and *authorial* cues ("where character information comes relatively directly from the author" [i.e. via stage directions in plays, via third-person narration in novels]).

This is where *The Great Gatsby* becomes particularly interesting, as Fitzgerald's views, his narrative technique, and the novel's societal context affect the way in which the female characters in *The Great Gatsby* are portrayed and perceived. In the case of *The Great Gatsby*, authorial characterization cues might lull readers into blindly accepting the narrator's views of other characters – views which are not always clear to begin with. For one thing, the narrator of the story is in many ways a bundle of contradictions: Nick Carraway is a sharp observer who is sometimes very naïve; he claims to have high moral standards but is himself morally ambiguous at times; he is given to reflection yet seems restless and drifting – the list of paradoxes is endless. And even the explicit cues used by Daisy and Jordan themselves may not always be sincere, given their position in a society where appearances are everything.

The idea that there may be more to an individual than what they wish to reveal about themselves is enhanced by the novel's narrative structure. The opening, in which Nick considers the value of reserving judgement, is, of course, telling in this respect. In a way, his introduction points forward to one of *The Great Gatsby's* main themes, namely that appearances can be deceptive. Although Fitzgerald and his narrator show us the world of New York socialites in the nineteen twenties through contrasts (appearance vs. reality, insiders vs. outsiders, old money vs. new money, honesty vs. dishonesty, innocence vs. immorality – to mention but a handful), these contrasts do not present a straightforward, black-and-white picture of the novels' characters, nor of the society they live in. Daisy, Tom, Jordan, Nick and, of course, Gatsby himself are complex characters who each unite paradoxical or seemingly paradoxical qualities, actions and comments.

Everything that is disclosed about the characters and events is told to us by Nick, who is both the narrator of the story and a participant, but a spectator rather than an actor. A key reference from the novel that ought to make us aware of the fact that the narrator´s observations present us with a limited point of view is Nick's own assertion that "life is much more successfully looked at from a single

window" (GG, ch. 1, p. 10). What we read is Nick's version of events and his – possibly biased – judgement of the other characters' behaviour and personalities, and it is important to bear this in mind when evaluating the descriptions of these characters – especially when it comes to comments made regarding the female protagonists.

What makes it so important to highlight the significance of *The Great Gatsby*'s narrative structure and the character of the narrator in relation to characterization in the novel is the fact that Nick's prejudices are an illustration of the two of the novel's central themes: class and gender, two attributes that form the hinge on which his criticism of Daisy and Jordan turns. And whenever Nick criticizes one of the other characters (and he is critical of almost everyone), the reader – or in this case, the translator – is faced with the fact that interpreting his words is not always a clear-cut exercise. Characterization in *The Great Gatsby*, in other words, is far from a straightforward matter, owing to the narrator´s subjectivity and the ambiguity of his words. These factors should be borne in mind when analyzing the characterization cues for the female characters and the translation of such cues into Dutch.

2.3 Translating Daisy into Dutch

2.3.1 Daisy in The Great Gatsby: textual and contextual voices

If ever a book showed the truth of the maxim that all translation is an act of interpretation, it is Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. While the reader of the original is presented with Nick´s limited point of view, the reader of a translation is presented with an even more limited point of view, that is, Nick´s observations seen through the "single window" opened by the translator. As Wardle (2018) puts it in the concluding paragraph of *Gatsby? Which Gatsby?*:

> Ultimately, we can say that, just as (narratively speaking) we discover Gatsby the character through the eyes of Nick Carraway—we must rely on him for our information—so we discover … the foreign language novel, through the words of the translator. Perhaps, rather than the words, we should say through the *voice* of the translator. (Wardle 2018, p. 231, italics added)

As for the "voice" of the translators of *The Great Gatsby*, the many ambiguities in the text are not the only reason why determining whether translator decisions are deliberate or unconscious will prove to be both an interesting and a difficult issue. For one thing, (re)translations, translation practices and translation traditions have, until fairly recently, been regarded as facts of life rather than topics worth describing, let alone as worthy of academic research (Van Poucke, 2017). It has only been over the past decade that retranslation has become a research area that is being fully explored (e.g. Jansen & Wegener, 2013; Taivalkoski-Shilov & Suchet, 2013; Deane-Cox, 2014; Alvstad & Assis Rosa, 2015; Koskinen & Paloposki, 2015; Cadera & Walsh, 2017; Van Poucke 2017).

Even where canonical works are concerned, very little information is usually available about what Alvstad and Assis Rosa refer to as 'contextual voices'; as Van Poucke observes in his survey of case studies on retranslation: "While the assumption that every generation deserves its own translation of canonical literary works is taken for granted, particularly by non-academic critics of literary (re) translations, this notion does not seem to be as prevalent in academia" (2017, p. 91). Unfortunately, the lack of academic interest is all the more true for the Dutch (re)translations of *The Great Gatsby*.

Outside academia, translation is often treated like the proverbial 'poor relation' compared to the original work – at least in the Netherlands (Bergsma, 2012). Written records such as interviews with translators hardly exist, and other extratextual (including paratextual) information about the Dutch translations is virtually non-existent. There is no *published* information on the reasons for the respective publishers to commission a (re)translation of *The Great Gatsby*, nor on the background of the translators: none of the editions contain introductions, and there are no translator's prefaces (only a one-line acknowledgement in the 1985 translation where Janssen thanks Bruccoli for his help in interpreting a number of expressions). The only other extratextual information available consists of the cover designs of the Dutch language editions, the blurbs on the covers, and a few non-academic reviews of the translations. We can therefore only guess at the reasons for the publication of the 1948 Dutch translation. With the Netherland's focus in terms of politics, economics and culture being on other European countries until 1945, it is possible that publishers saw no reason to publish a Dutch translation of a novel revolving primarily around American themes. The end of the Second World War sparked an interest in the US, and the influence of the US on the Netherlands on all fronts increased dramatically. It is

quite conceivable that this contributed to Van Oorschot's decision to commission a translation. Another factor that might have played a part in the publisher's decision is the film adaptation directed by Elliott Nugent (which, although it did not come out until 1949, had been in the pipeline since 1946).

What little we do know for certain that may help outline the context of the first translation is the peripheral position of the target language and culture, the canonical status of the source text, and scant information regarding the translator. Her identity could only be established because her private correspondence with her husband (Lou Lichtveld) during the Second World War was included in the archives of the Dutch Museum of Literature. As for the social context, the Netherlands in 1948 was very much a conservative society. It would take considerable time before the traditional roles of men and women would be challenged; the feminist movement in the Netherlands did not really take off until the nineteen sixties (Kool-Smit, 1984). It would be interesting to see whether Cornils' translation choices regarding gender stereotypes in any way reflect the traditional views still prevalent in the Netherlands in 1948. By the time the retranslation was published in 1985, Dutch society had certainly changed, but women's roles were still fairly traditional compared to emancipatory ideals, and general ideas about women and their place in society stereotypical – as is evident from the equal opportunities monitor published by the Dutch Department for the Coordination of Equality Policy (Dutch National Archives, 1994). Janssen was part of a progressive intellectual circle in Amsterdam in the nineteen sixties and seventies, but the group's focus was on (female) sexual liberation, rather than wider emancipatory issues.

To a certain extent the lack of contextual information also applies to Janssen's retranslation. In a personal interview, Janssen recounted that publisher Bert Bakker (whom she knew personally) had asked her whether she "fancied retranslating *The Great Gatsby*" (Janssen, 2020). There seems to have been no real rationale for the commission beyond Bakker's individual motive to enable Dutch readers to properly enjoy Fitzgerald's novel. According to Janssen, Bakker felt that the 1948 translation did not do justice to the original. The reason for retranslation appears to have been not so much that the first translation had aged, but its lack of quality. Before accepting "the challenge of recreating this magical tale for a new generation of Dutch readers" – as Janssen herself described it in a letter to Bruccoli (Janssen, 1984) – she asked for time to consider the offer and, once she did accept, for ample time to conduct proper research into the setting of the story.

When asked about her impression of Daisy, Janssen suggested that she may have had her own preconceptions prompted by her aversion of the type of woman she represented – that of a spoiled, class-conscious Southern belle – and that this may possibly have affected some of her translation choices, although 35 years on, she was not sure *if* – and if so to what extent – that may have been the case, adding that she had not made any conscious translation choices to present Daisy or any of the other female characters in any particular light. The degree to which Janssen's perception of Daisy may have been affected by her personal views or by views commonly held in society thus remains a matter of conjecture – even if there is slightly more extratextual information than is the case for Cornils' translation.

Although the lack of information on the 'contextual' voices (Alvstad & Assis Rosa, 2015) is limited, the current study will focus on 'textual' voices, i.e. on the explicit, implicit and authorial characterization cues that construct the female characters' identities in both the source text and its two Dutch translations. How these characterization cues have been translated may still give valuable clues in terms of the *effect* of the translators' decisions on the portrayal of female characters, if not on the (ideological) reasons behind these decisions.

So what *is* that effect? In other words: what is the impression that readers of a translation will get of the novel's female characters? Does Sanderson's claim that "Fitzgerald's early and widely publicized association with the flapper… has led many readers to misconstrue and to oversimplify the author's portraits of women and of relations between the sexes" (Sanderson, 2006, p. 143) apply equally to the Dutch readers and translators of *The Great Gatsby*, or even more so? Even if one is not convinced that translators may be influenced by such external factors, Deane-Cox' observation that "[a]ll literary translation in an act of interpretation which crystallizes a series of (un)conscious (mis)readings of a given source text" (Deane-Cox 2014, p. 18) will – given the many ambiguities in Fitzgerald's classic – undoubtedly go for its two Dutch translations as well.

Many scholars (male and female alike) have pointed out that the female characters in *The Great Gatsby* are often treated too harshly as a result of an over-simplistic reading of the novel. Person lists a number of critics who have done exactly that, especially where Daisy is concerned:

> … few, it seems, write about Daisy without entering the unofficial competition of maligning her character. Marius Bewley, for example, refers

> to Daisy's "vicious emptiness" and her "monstrous moral indifference." To Robert Ornstein she is "criminally amoral," and Alfred Kazin judges her "vulgar and inhuman." (Person, 1978, p. 250)

Over the past few decades, however, literary scholars (e.g. Fetterley, 1978; Fryer, 1989; Curnutt, 2007) have called for a more nuanced view of Daisy's character and behaviour. But whereas views in academic circles appear to have changed, Daisy often still gets a bad press in mainstream media. She has typically been characterized as shallow, materialistic, insincere, selfish, careless, weak, and as a seductress with a siren's voice. A number of these alleged qualities may be illustrated by a quote from an 2018 article in *The Atlantic*, one of a spate of recent articles devoted to parallels between the age of Trump and the world presented in *The Great Gatsby*:

Even Daisy, idealized as she is, demonstrates the relationship between money and its power to override reality. As Tom's wife, she personifies the kind of wealth that he possesses and other men can only pursue: In Gatsby's words, "Her voice is full of money," which is to say it's *seductive*, hard to catch, and compels her listeners to belief, though she rarely says anything she means. (Smith, 2018, italics added)

In another magazine article that discusses the issue of money and class in the US and observes the fact that the novel still feels relevant to contemporary readers, the author asks: "And is there anything in American fiction more frigid and careless than Daisy's treatment of the little daughter she appears to have?" (Hitchens, 2008).

Readers less likely to read magazines on current affairs or popular culture may well have been exposed to negative views about Daisy as teenagers: text guides for secondary school students suggests Daisy is "shallow and materialistic and… only attracted to Gatsby because of his expensive lifestyle" (CGP Text Guide, 2011), and that "Daisy is weak and easily controlled by material things" (E-notes 2020); the author of such a student text guide is quoted as follows: "Trying to buy that love shows the failed thinking of Gatsby and the shallowness of Daisy" (Dowling in Geoghegan, 2011). Wikipedia, arguably the most widely read information platform, attributes similar traits to Daisy, and describes her as "attractive, though shallow and self-absorbed".

2.3.2 Daisy in Translation

The following analysis compares Daisy's characterization cues in the original and the two Dutch translations, including the revised edition (1948 and 1985/1999). It is based on a selection of lines from the first chapter, in which Daisy is first introduced to the reader. These lines therefore play a key role in terms of Daisy's characterization and the impression she makes on the reader. The examples discussed concern a number of instances in which the decisions made by the translator(s) are likely to have an effect on the way in which readers perceive Daisy's character and behaviour. Although the possible reasons for these translation decisions will occasionally be discussed, they are not the focus of the analysis. The focus will be on how these decisions may influence the information readers infer about Daisy's character. The words and phrases from the translations discussed below were selected because of their potential effect on gender stereotyping. In Daisy's case, this stereotyping amounts to her being typecast as a shallow, weak, insincere and manipulative woman (as illustrated by the citations from mainstream media in the previous section).

One of the first scenes in *The Great Gatsby* shows Nick entering a room in the Buchanan residence, where his cousin Daisy and her friend Jordan Baker are lounging on a couch. When Nick greets Daisy, she does not get up, but she holds his hand for a moment "looking up into my face, promising that there was no one in the world she so much wanted to see" (GG, ch. 1, p. 14). Nick's subsequent comment is "That was a way she had." (GG, ch. 1, p. 14). The import of this phrase is that Daisy regularly acted in a similar manner, that is, she would give the person she was talking to the feeling that they were special (even if she did not necessarily mean it).

With no similar idiomatic expression in Dutch, there are different ways of tackling this phrase, one of which is to use a modulation such as '*Dat deed ze wel vaker*' or '*Zo deed ze wel vaker*' (EN 'She did this quite often' / 'She quite often acted like this.'). Both translators, however, chose to maintain the source text sentence structure, using a diminutive form of the noun '*manier*' (EN 'way', or 'manner'). The diminutive form (made by adding a suffix, in this case '*-tje*') is a feature of the Dutch language that can be used to indicate that something is small, adding either an endearing or deprecating connotation. In the case of '*maniertje*', the connotation is pejorative by default. It automatically turns the noun 'way'

into 'mannerism' or 'affectation'. There is no such connotation in the original; Fitzgerald leaves it to the reader to decide what to make of Daisy here – just as he leaves his narrator in two minds about his cousin. The diminutive chosen by both translators – '*maniertje*' (TT2, p. 17) and '*maniertjes*' (TT1, p. 11) instead of '*manier*' – therefore results in a more negative portrayal of Daisy, as it implies that she lacks sincerity and is habitually manipulative. By adding '*een van haar*' (EN 'one of her') TT1 (p. 11) makes her out to be even more disingenuous.

Another example from the two TTs that colours our perception of Daisy is her famous voice. As pointed out by Culpeper (2001, p. 215):

> There is a strong relationship between certain voices and certain personality types. The notion of vocal stereotypes, the idea that particular vocal characteristics are conventionally associated with particular personality traits, is a well-established finding (see for example Addington, 1968, p. 493; Scherer and Scherer, 1981, p. 131). The precise nature of this association is, however, still little understood.

Almost the first observation Nick makes about his cousin is about the quality of her voice, which he describes as 'low' and 'thrilling'. While 'low' in this collocation means that her voice is neither loud nor high-pitched, Dutch does not have a word with the same polysemous quality. Both translators therefore resort to '*zacht*' (EN: 'soft'), with an additional connotation of 'smooth', making Daisy's voice in translation more velvety and suave than in the original. The word 'thrilling' has several denotations ('exciting', 'animated', or 'vibrating'). In this context, 'thrilling' most likely refers to the rising and falling of Daisy's voice – a characteristic of a typical Southern belle like her, although perhaps going up and down more quickly than the usual languorous lilt of the American South (as Daisy desperately attempts to sound 'gay', if only to make herself believe that she is happy). After all, the phrase "in her low, thrilling voice" is immediately followed by "It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down" (GG, ch. 1, p. 14).

Other occurrences of 'thrilling' in the novel include "those breathless, thrilling words" (GG, ch. 1, p. 19) and "thrilling scorn" (GG, ch. 1, p. 22), which are both evidence that 'animated' and 'vibrating' are legitimate contenders when it comes to the interpretation of 'thrilling'. Finally, "the excitement in her voice" (GG, ch.

1, p. 14) points to the possibility that Daisy sounds 'animated'. Whereas readers of the original are left to interpret what Daisy sounds like by themselves, the readers of a Dutch translation are dependent on the way in which the ambiguity has been tackled by a translator, and they will be unaware of the fact that the original contained an ambiguity that could not be preserved in Dutch. Both translators opted for "*opwindend*" (TT1, p. 12; TT2, p. 18) (EN: 'exciting', with connotations of 'erotic' and 'titillating') rather than '*levendig*' (EN 'animated', 'lively') or '*trillend*' (EN 'quivering'), leaving the reader of the Dutch translations with the impression that Daisy's voice is beguiling rather than perhaps exuberantly cheerful ('gay') or typically Southern, and not realizing that the narrator may have given mixed messages when describing Daisy.

The image of Daisy as an enchantress is also foregrounded by both translators as a result of the decision to translate 'a singing compulsion' with '*een zingende bekoring*' (TT1, p. 12) (EN 'a singing charm / temptation') and '*een onweerstaanbare zangerigheid*' (TT2, p. 18) (EN 'an irresistible lilt') respectively. When Nick continues: "there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered 'Listen'" (GG, ch. 1, pp. 14-15), with the 'singing compulsion' wedged in between the reference to the fact that men found it difficult to forget the excitement in Daisy's voice and the whispered 'Listen', it may be tempting to immediately assume that it is the men who are being compelled by Daisy's voice. This idea is certainly hinted at, but the 'singing compulsion' is more ambiguous than either TT suggests. After all, the word 'compulsion' means 'urge', 'impulse', implying that it is in the very nature of Daisy's voice to 'sing': her voice cannot help but go up and down. Apart from the effect that Daisy's voice has on Nick (and undoubtedly on other men), the word 'compulsion' also hints at her voice sounding bubbly, even if Daisy's excitement may come across as artificial, as a result of her acting in such an over-the-top way in her attempt to make herself cling on to the idea that she is 'gay' instead of sad.

The 1948 translation reinforces the impression of Daisy as a siren, when her voice is described as "glowing and singing" (GG, ch. 1, p. 19), which TT1 has down as '*haar bedwelmende stem*' (TT1, p. 16) (EN 'her intoxicating voice'), as opposed to TT2, which is a direct translation of the more neutral observation of the original '*haar stem gloeiend en zangerig*' (TT2, p. 24) (EN 'her voice glowing and singing'). True, Fitzgerald gives Daisy a voice that is enthralling, but

TT1's implication that Daisy's voice is clearly a siren-like voice of a seductress ('temptation' and 'intoxicating'), and TT2's focus on the effect Daisy has on others ('irresistible') both disregard the fact that the inflection in Daisy's speech are also a natural characteristic of her southern accent – and *not* necessarily a calculating way to make people do what she wants. Even if she used the sing-song quality of her voice to charm them, the source text never explicitly states that Daisy uses it to manipulate or seduce. The translations' interpretations therefore seem rather simplistic, or at least too one-sided, especially in TT1. Given the fact that different (types of) voices, and especially Daisy's voice, play a prominent role in *The Great Gatsby*, the translation decisions in these examples will have an impact on the reader's perception of Daisy. The tone in the 1948 translation has been set: Daisy is a temptress.

Besides the motif of voices another recurring feature in the novel is the appearance of faces. In the same paragraph where Nick talks about Daisy's voice, he also comments on Daisy's face: 'Her face was sad and lovely' (GG, ch. 1, p. 14). The translation issue to be dealt with in this sentence is a common one: a source text word ('lovely', in this case) has two or more different denotations, and the target language lacks a word that comprises the same multiple meanings. In other words, the translator is forced to make a choice (as was the case with 'thrilling'). According to TT1 her face is '*droevig en mooi*' (TT1, p. 16) (EN 'sad and beautiful'); in TT2 it is '*triest en lieflijk*' (TT2, p. 24) (EN 'sad and lovely'). The 1948 translation draws the attention to Daisy's physical appearance, something the 1985 translation does not.

Neither lexical ambiguity nor semantic ambiguity play a role in the following example, which shows Daisy's reaction to Nick telling her that a dozen of her old friends and acquaintances from Chicago sent their love: "'Do they miss me?' she cried ecstatically." (GG, ch. 1, p. 15). The addition of '*Denk je*' (TT1, p. 12) (EN: 'Do you believe/suppose…') in TT1 results in Daisy expressing herself in a way that is thought of as typically female (Holmes 1998): women's language is characterized as more tentative, which, in turn, is often seen as a sign of insecurity. This may well contribute to Daisy's characterization as a weak and needy person. Yet insecurity would seem incongruous with the (pretend) elation implied by 'ecstatically'. A lack of confidence certainly is not consistent with the assertiveness Daisy displays in this chapter, evidenced by verbs like "retorted", "insisted" (GG, ch. 1, p. 16), "objected" and "insisted" (GG, ch. 1, p. 17), the way she banters

when talking to Nick or Jordan, and the way she rebels against Tom by getting under his skin on more than one occasion in this scene. Nick's unease with Daisy's cool and casual conversation at the table expressed by his remark "'You make me feel uncivilized, Daisy,' I confessed" (GG, ch. 1, p. 17) shows that Daisy is a great deal more self-assured than a superficial reading suggests.

Nevertheless, Daisy does feel vulnerable. She is thrown off balance by Tom's mistress calling mid-dinner, despite the fact that this probably happens so often that she "shook her head decisively at Tom" (GG, ch. 1, p. 20) when the phone rings a second time. It makes her act with "tense gayety" (GG, ch. 1, p. 20), and Nick can see that she is perturbed: "I saw that turbulent emotions possessed her" (GG, ch. 1, p. 21). As Fryer noted, such reactions are not the behaviour of a cold woman without feelings (Fryer 1989). Nor are they 'proof' of insecurity or weakness. Daisy's banter, her sarcasm, her exaggerated delight are all part of the façade she tries to put up to hide her feelings – to herself as much as to the outside world.

With regard to her attempts to keep up the appearance of carefree happiness Daisy finds an ally in Jordan. Both women emanate an air of indifference, but this indifference is largely feigned. The languidness and ennui exhibited by Daisy and Jordan and the banter that includes jokes like Jordan's remark about her being "absolutely in training" (GG, ch. 1, p. 16) when she turns down a cocktail that is brought in before dinner are reminiscent of characters in an Oscar Wilde play. When Jordan gets up from the couch saying "I've been lying on that sofa for as long as I can remember" (GG, ch. 1, p. 16), one can imagine Daisy rolling her eyes in mock-exasperation when she shoots back a quick repartee: "Don't look at me, Daisy retorted"(GG, ch. 1, p. 16). Unfortunately, Dutch does not have a verb with the same range of connotations carried by 'retort' (sharp, angry, witty). In any case, neither translator seems to have caught the pretend-seriousness of Daisy's reply: TT1's 'vinnig' (p. 13) (EN: 'sharply', 'cuttingly', 'caustically') bears connotations of bickering or being catty, which is generally associated with women (Danner & Walsh 2009); TT2's transposition that makes use of the verb '*van zich afbijten*' (p. 20) (EN: 'to give as good as one gets') implies over-assertiveness and aggressiveness (the expression derives from the verb *bijten,* meaning 'to bite'). Perhaps a better option would have been to translate 'retorted' with '*schoot Daisy terug*' (EN: 'Daisy shot back') to capture the sense of Daisy making a short, clever response that does not characterize her as bitchy and callous, as TT1 in particular makes her out to be.

Daisy's vulnerability does not exempt her from judgements about her behaviour: she can indeed be unpleasant. When Daisy – out of the blue – draws attention to her bruised knuckle, her "awed expression" (GG, ch. 1, p. 17) is so completely over the top that the reader feels she is ridiculing herself to get her own back at Tom by ostensibly acting 'the helpless female'. This is the one instance in this first chapter where Daisy is shown to be calculating. But instead of reproducing Daisy's 'performance', TT1's '*angstig*' (p. 15) (EN: 'scared') turns Daisy into a frightened little girl; TT2's '*met ontzetting vervuld*' (p. 21) (EN: 'filled with awe'), like the original, portrays Daisy as bitter and cynical. Daisy may be unsympathetic, but she is not weak and helpless.

Daisy's bitterness and cynicism is once again best reflected by TT2 in the following three examples, each of which demonstrates her intelligence and vulnerability rather than the indifference and shallowness that is so often attributed to her. Firstly, this translation uses the patronizing expression "*dom gansje*" (TT2, p. 27) (EN 'silly little goose'), which, owing to the use of the diminutive form, amounts to what in English would be referred to as 'just a pretty face', exactly what Daisy is getting at by exclaiming that she hopes her daughter will grow up to be "a beautiful little fool" (GG, ch. 1, p. 22). This implicit cue demonstrates that Daisy knows very well what position women are in, and that she is not free – despite, or perhaps because of, her money and class.

Similarly, the explicit cue "*Mondain – mijn God, wat ben ik mondain*!" in TT2 (p. 27) mirrors "Sophisticated – God, I'm sophisticated" (GG, ch. 1, p. 22). TT1's more literal translation "*een mooie, kleine dwaas*" (p. 18) does not include the connotations of "*dom gansje*" (attractive, but lacking intelligence) that so aptly capture the implied meaning of Daisy's words, nor does "*Mijn God, ik ben een snob – een echte snob!*" (TT1, p. 18) (EN: 'I'm a snob – a real snob!') have the same acerbic quality as the original. Therefore, neither phrase in TT1 reflects Daisy's sardonic remarks. TT2 hits the nail on the head in both instances. Finally, the different connotations carried by the cues "*koel*" (TT1, p. 19) ('cool', 'impassive') and "*kil*" (TT2, p. 29) ('icy', 'haughty', 'hostile') respectively characterize Daisy as indifferent in TT1 and strong and defiant in TT2. Daisy is not uncaring and unfeeling, but she is very bitter. She has every reason to be, trapped as she is in her marriage and restricted by society. Daisy is a realist more than anything else.

2.4 Conclusion

Summing up the effects of the translation decisions in this scene, the conclusion is that both translations – but the older translation in particular – paint a more negative picture of Daisy, one that does not reflect Fitzgerald's subtle portrayal of Daisy. Both translations make Daisy more manipulative. Both translations give more prominence to Daisy's perceived seductiveness, but only the first translation truly emphasizes the image of that of a temptress. The first translation also makes Daisy more impassive than the original. Finally, the idea that Daisy is weak persists in the 1948 translation, but not in the 1985 translation and the 1999 revised edition.

In most respects the 1985 translation and 1999 revision could be considered to do more justice to the nuanced picture of Daisy that Fitzgerald's characterization cues present to his readers: that of a woman who may be bitter and self-centered, perhaps lacking in courage, but who certainly is not shallow and devoid of feelings. Daisy feigns indifference to protect herself and uses her charm and cynicism to be able to stay afloat in a marriage in which she is cheated on and within a male-dominated society that prevents her from being truly autonomous. In the light of this milder and more forgiving perspective, the novel's ending and the part that Daisy plays in it are even more tragic.

Of course the perceived 'fidelity' (or lack of it) of a translation depends on how closely it resembles both our own interpretation of the text and general views on what constitutes a 'faithful' translation in a given context. But notwithstanding the fact that contemporary translations might well appear to be more faithful than previous ones that address different readers and meet different expectations, this case study does show that the translation decisions made for characterization cues – even a few seemingly minor ones – may impact the way in which female characters are portrayed, and how preconceived ideas about gender may be reinforced as a result of too simplistic a reading of the original. Though the aim of this chapter was not to determine to what extent the translator's decisions were ideologically motivated or a result of the cultural context, the findings hopefully show that such decisions nevertheless do have ideological implications.

The 1948 translation, which does not preserve the ambiguities in the language of *The Great Gatsby* in the fragments studied, makes Daisy come across as more unequivocally manipulative and callous than her original maker intended. She is

cast as the stereotype she was made out to be by many academics well up to the nineteen eighties and still is by critics in mainstream media. On the whole, the 1985 translation deals more skillfully with the subtleties and ambiguities in the source text that allow readers to make up their own minds about Daisy. This means that in 1985, 'rich plus female' no longer automatically equals 'shallow, careless and weak.' Whether or not this implies that a more recent translation necessarily means a greater sensitivity regarding issues of (gender) stereotyping is a question that may be answered only after a series of case studies into retranslations – both of *The Great Gatsby* in other languages and of other literary classics in Dutch.