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When Dorian Gray Speaks Chinese: Cosmopolitanism in Wang Dahong's Translation*

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ABSTRACT

"The world is my home." With these five words Oscar Wilde succinctly defined his fin-de-siècle cosmopolitanism. As an intriguing example of this cosmopolitanism, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* celebrates an aesthetic detached from locality and morality, and criticizes contemporaneous British Philistinism. By translating and rewriting Dorian Gray as Du Liankui (杜連魁), Taiwanese architect-novelist Wang Dahong transformed the Wildean fin-de-siècle aesthetic cosmopolitanism, replacing it with his own cosmopolitan and metropolitan visions. Wang's manipulative modification of the novel's tempo-spatial settings serves as a key to this transformation: Wilde's focus on the London-Paris relationship in the source text is ingeniously rendered into Taipei's relationships with other cities, including New York, Washington, San Francisco, and Paris. Wang's rewriting can be seen as the product of a kind of global imagination emphasizing the superiority of cosmopolitan urban aesthetics, its main tenet being that Taiwanese provincialism should be replaced by an openness, a desire to learn from other cultures. Though Wilde's aesthetic cosmopolitanism is lost in the process of Wang's rewriting, the

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translation gives us what the original novel could not have possibly provided—an urban cosmopolitanism which predicts the problems of today's Taipei.

KEYWORDS: Fin-de-siècle, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Du Liankui, translation as rewriting, aesthetic cosmopolitanism, London/Paris relationship, the East/West districts in Taipei

I. Introduction

Translations of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (hereafter cited as *Dorian Gray*) into Chinese can be traced back to as early as 1921. According to Hu Yuzhi (胡愈之), the editor of the Chinese literary magazine *Eastern Miscellany* (*Dongfang Zazhi*, 東方雜誌) in the early 1920s, this novel had already been translated when he was writing his comprehensive article entitled "A Survey of Modern English Literature" (*Jindai yingguo wenxue gaiguan*. 近代英國文學概觀) (McDougall 85). Following the nationalist Kuomintang government's relocation to Taiwan, many more Chinese translations have appeared. This study, however, will just focus on *Du Liankui* (杜連魁, *Dorian Gray*), though in fact it is not the only translation which is also a rewriting. For example, in 2002, the British writer Will Self published his rewriting of *Dorian Gray*, now renamed *Dorian: An Imitation*, adapting the original story against the background of queer culture in Britain in the 1980s and 90s. As is shown clearly in the case of Will Self, such a rewriting allows an author to partly alter or redirect the overall meaning or significance of a novel. Thus we return to the question: What is primarily the new range of meaning(s) of *Du Liankui*?

Wang Dahong (王大閎) was a master architect in postwar Taiwan, one who designed many famous buildings and published some works of fiction. When his "translation" of Wilde's novel appeared in 1977, many readers were surprised to discover that not only had the novel's title become "Chinese," but also that the setting had been shifted from 1890s London to 1970s Taipei in the 1970s, the characters now representing Taipei's postwar society. Thus while Wilde's novel was really a product of the literary culture of *fin-de-siècle* Anglo-French cosmopolitanism, in Wang's rewriting the extra-textual context, as well as the text itself, was transformed. Thus *Du Liankui*'s cosmopolitanism can no longer be Anglo-French; it has been replaced by the cosmopolitanism inherent in Taipei's relationships with other (mainly Western) cities.

The purpose of this study is threefold. First, before exploring Wang's own version of cosmopolitanism, due attention will be given to the extra-textual environment in which *Dorian Gray* was produced: that of Modernism and the literary culture of cosmopolitanism. In the following sections, the *spatial* aspects of Modernist cosmopolitanism in literature will be dealt with first. Next, the spatial aspects of *Dorian Gray* will be elaborated and the impossibility of translating them explained. Finally, the two different

versions of cosmopolitanism we get with Wilde and Wang will be further elaborated, in order to show how Wang's translation transforms the original novel into a story with distinctively different teachings.

According to Shyu Ming-song and Ni Ann-yue, the authors of one of Wang's biographies, when asked in an interview about why he had chosen to translate *Dorian Gray*, Wang answered humbly by stating that he had translated the novel primarily to polish his Chinese writing skills. And he also said that the choice had been quite fortuitous, as he could have chosen the works of Goethe or Thomas Mann and talked about the problem of corrupted souls. In their co-written biography, Shyu and Ni make it clear that they believe the choice was not such a casual or accidental one. They believe Wang strongly sympathizes with Wilde, at least insofar as he shares with him similar ideas about the problems of aestheticism and morality (Shyu and Ni 86-90).

I also consider Wang's answer to be doubtful, but my interpretation differs from that of Shyu and Ni. It is my contention that, for Wang, *Dorian Gray* is a novel that truly allows him to reflect on, further develop, and put into practice his own ideas about cosmopolitanism, being himself essentially an artist and not a moralist, through translation and rewriting. And this is also what differentiates my study from previous academic works about *Du Liankui*. In the past, literary scholars have tried to determine whether Wang's "translation" is "successful" or not. On the whole, their answers have been positive, and Wang Chong's "On the Tempo-spatial Shifts in Literary Translation: The Case of *Du Liankui*" (*Cong duliankui yishu tan wenxue fanyi de shikong zhuanyi*, 從杜連魁一書談文學翻譯的時空轉移) and Leo Tak-hung Chan's "The Poetics of Recontextualization: Intertextuality in a Chinese Adaptive Translation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*" are representative works in this category.

Furthermore, architecture scholars tend to assume that *Du Liankui* is not unlike the buildings designed by Wang Dahong, as both his translation and his buildings can be seen as conveying his sophisticated ideas about architecture and urban planning, which seem to be marked by the unexpected joining or intersection of two very different approaches—the traditional Chinese and the modern Western. In this regard, in addition to Wang's own works we also have Lo Shih-wei's "Taipei Fable: Wang Dahong's Re-writing of Modernity with *The Picture of Dorian Gray*" (*Taibei yuyan: wangdahong*

zai duliankui zhong de xiandaixing zaishuxie 台北寓言：王大閎在杜連魁中的現代性再書寫) and Chiang Ya-chun's "Eccentric Parabiosis in an Oriental Aura and Western Constitution: Wang, Ta-Hung's translation of 'Du, Lian-kue'" (*Dongfang shenyun yu xifangtizhi zhi guijue gongsheng: wangdahong yixie duliankui* 東方神韻與西方體質之詭譎共生——王大閎譯寫杜連魁).

"London-Taipei: Life and Death of *Du Liankui*" (*Lundun taibei: duliankui de sheng yu si* 倫敦台北：杜連魁的生與死), an intriguing article written by literary scholar Teng Yi-ching, proves itself to be insightful because, on the one hand, the author deems *Du Liankui* to be "a dynamic translation" (140), while on the other hand she also proposes that Wang "either simplifies or omits late nineteenth-century aesthetic ideas, such as '*l'art pour l'art*,' and their references to historical situations" in the book (原著十九世紀晚期「為藝術而藝術」等特定美學思潮與相關歷史情境的指涉，在譯寫本不是簡化便是刪除) (my translation; 152). One of the main reasons for Teng's contention is that Wang Dahong omitted the original novel's Preface and largely rewrote Chapter Eleven, while for her these two parts are indispensable to Wilde's narrative of *fin-de-siècle* decadent aestheticism. In this study, however, I will argue against Teng's belief that Wang "downplays the aesthetic aspects of the original novel, or allows them to become secondary" ([王大閎譯寫本中] 美學面向的減弱甚至淪為陪襯) (my translation; 152). Not only will I show that Wang transforms Wilde's fine-arts aestheticism into some sort of "aesthetic cosmopolitanism," but I will also go one step further by showing that there is a major difference between the novelist's and the translator's respective versions of "cosmopolitanism": while the former emphasizes both its aesthetic and its ethical aspects, the latter consists mainly of cosmopolitan urban visions which focus on the beauty of cities.

II. Modernism and the Literary Culture of Cosmopolitanism

"When was Modernism?" Raymond Williams once asked this question at his famous lecture at the University of Bristol in 1987 (31). During the last two decades or so, however, this pivotal question has lost ground to the question of "Where was Modernism?" Partial support for my point comes from the fact that, in 2005, two anthologies focusing on the geographical aspects of Modernism

were published: one was *Geographies of Modernism: Literatures, Cultures, Spaces* (edited by Peter Brooker), and the other was *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity* (edited by Laura Doyle).

As a matter of fact, as early as 1976, Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane had already contributed to the discussion of the geographical aspects of Modernism by editing the anthology *Modernism: 1890-1930*, in which a section called "A Geography of Modernism" focus on "the cities of Modernism," which include Berlin, Vienna, Chicago, New York, and the two most often juxtaposed from a comparative perspective: Paris and London (Bradbury and McFarlane 95-190). In "The Cities of Modernism," an article included in the anthology, Bradbury claims that Modernism is an art of cities ("a metropolitan art"), one whose birth, development, and themes are all closely related to our modern metropolitan world (Bradbury 101). But Bradbury then went on to claim that Modernism is cosmopolitan as well as metropolitan: that is, many Modernist stories tend to deal with at least two cities in two different countries, rather than with just one city. Moreover, Modernism is a form of "aesthetic internationalism": "one city leads to another in the distinctive aesthetic voyage into the metamorphosis of form," and expatriate writers such as Joyce, Hemingway, Wilde, and Pound all perceive their worlds from the distance of an expatriate perspective (Bradbury 101).

Indeed, many British writers have taken on this international theme, but current studies largely fail to appreciate this essential feature of Modernism. The usual way in which literary scholars approach two cities from a comparative perspective is to compare the works of two different authors. For example, in "A Tale of Two Cities," Chapter Two of *Atlas of the European Novel: 1800-1900*, the author Franco Moretti deals with the London of Jane Austen and of Charles Dickens, and the Paris of Balzac and of Eugène Sue. Or, in *Imagined Cities: Urban Experience and the Language of the Novel*, Robert Alter compares the Paris of Flaubert and the London of Dickens, and also compares Andrei Bely's St. Petersburg with Virginia Woolf's London. A third example would be Richard Maxwell's *The Mysteries of Paris and London*, which analyzes mainly the London of Dickens and the Paris of Victor Hugo.

As a matter of fact, quite a few novelists deal with two different cities in their works. For example, eight British novels are set in both London and Paris, from *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) by Dickens to Somerset Maugham's

Christmas Holiday (1939), a span of eighty years. The following chart shows this clearly (see table 1):

Table 1

Year of Publication	Title	Author
1859	*A Tale of Two Cities*	Charles Dickens
1885	*The Princess Casamassima*	Henry James
1888	*Confessions of a Young Man*	George Moore
1890	*The Picture of Dorian Gray*	Oscar Wilde
1894	*Trilby*	George Du Maurier
1906	*The Secret Agent*	Joseph Conrad
1933	*Down and Out in Paris and London*	George Orwell
1939	*Christmas Holiday* (reissued in 1949 under the title *Stranger in Paris*)	Somerset Maugham

What then are the implications of the "international theme" explored by these eight novels? It may be helpful to focus on two early Modernist novels, Henry James' *The Princess Casamassima* and Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray.* These two works share a common theme: the pursuit of aesthetic beauty. While the two protagonists have different backgrounds and environments, they are both seeking to define beauty in their own ways. To catch the feeling of their respective "pursuits," the novels' plots both have a dynamic, rather than static, urban-spatial structure. The events take place in both London and Paris, and as the storylines develop, the protagonists travel from one city to the other, and from one part of a city to another part, thus giving us a vivid and dynamic representation of the urban world.

The two protagonists—a bookbinder and a young member of upper-class London society—live in London, and their lives will become related to these two cities for different reasons. As dedicated aesthetes, they both absorb ideas and impressions each day and seek to exemplify their aesthetic ideals in their

actions. One might contend that this is how Modernist novels combine the elements of "the urban" and "the beautiful": followed by Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and many other Modernists of the later phase, James and Wilde are pioneers in this regard.

For example, in Chapter Four of *Dorian Gray*, leaving his daily living environment in the West End, Dorian embarked on a journey searching for beauty, for him "the poisonous secret of life," and ended up losing his way "in a labyrinth of grimy streets and black, grassless squares" (39). After inadvertently discovering a third-rate theater in the Holborn district of Central London, Dorian did find an embodiment of true beauty: the actress Sibyl Vane, who had played the role of Juliet in Shakespeare's classic tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* in the theater that evening. All of Dorian's adventures in West End and East End London, be they decadent, scandalous, or even murderous, were somehow related to the search for beauty, and *Dorian Gray* is of course considered to be one of Wilde's polemical works about aestheticism and the aesthetic.

As Janet Lyon says in her splendidly-written essay "Cosmopolitanism and Modernism," in order to be cosmopolitan, turn-of-the-century literary Modernism had to be detached from its own "culture of origin." It had to be engaged with, to belong to "parts of the world other than one's nation," for it was/is an "active repudiation of parochialism" (389). What made this type of literary cosmopolitanism possible was its "strong geographical inflection," and so the story settings tend to be "zones of sustained intercultural contact" such as metropoles, international cities, or bohemian quarters (389).

III. Spatial Aspects of *Dorian Gray* and their Untranslatability

(I) The Motif of "The Double" and the City Structure in *Dorian Gray*

Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray* was first published with only thirteen chapters in the July 1890 issue of the American journal *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*. Later, in 1891, *Dorian Gray* was revised, extended to twenty chapters and published in book form. This tragic gothic story combines the destinies of three young upper-class men in *fin de siècle* London in the 1890s: Henry Wotten the nobleman, Dorian Gray the well-off young man, and Basil Hallward the painter. The portrait by Basil becomes Gray's "double": as time goes by, the painted Gray ages in place of the real Gray.

After Gray's lover Sybil Vane, a young diva in a third-rate theater in London, is driven to commit suicide due to Gray's cruelty, he remains young and good-looking for twenty years after being painted, but gradually becomes more wicked and more infamous, increasingly surrounded by scandals and rumors. Gray's decadent life of sensual enjoyment finally dissolves into self-destruction: after he kills Basil for keeping the secret of his own ageless youth and the secret of how ugly and sinister the painter's portrait of Gray has become, he comes to see this portrait as the only proof of his crimes, and uses the knife he killed Basil with to stab and destroy this portrait. However, in so doing he also brings about his own unexpected demise, killing himself in the end.

This motif of the "double" is of course found in many eighteenth- and nineteenth- century novels, and beyond the "double" of identity—for example, Robert Louis Stevenson's infamous Jekyll/Hyde "double"—the "double" (or "doubling") of setting is perhaps even more important, for it serves as a device for novelists to depict the fragmented selves of their protagonists. In *Dorian Gray*, for example, where Dorian lives two lives, his West End life is always associated with a cozy and wealthy, upper-class society existence, while his East End life signifies the process of his moral decay and predetermined self-annihilation. Therefore, in order to understand how Wilde uses London as the setting of his story, it will be helpful to keep in mind the ways in which these different settings work on the structural level of plot development.

It has to be noted, however, that this "doubling" or duality does not only take the form of horizontal division. In discussing the motif of "literary doubles" in the genre of modern gothic novels, Linda Dryden pays close attention to this duality and notes that, for example, in *The Time Machine* of H. G. Wells, the duality is represented by a city "that literally has its upper and its lower worlds, a vertically divided metropolis reflecting the terrible division in humanity," while the lower classes are "sustaining a nightmarish subterranean industrial world" (Dryden 159). A more crucial point made by Dryden is that the physical geography of the metropolis is inevitably also social, and for this reason the plot will be greatly influenced by the urban space:

> As a physical environment, divided along its East/West axis, the city mirrors the dreadful duality of some of its inhabitants, and provides apt locations for these dual individuals. Dorian's double existence as the aristocrat of Grosvenor Place and the debauched

> opium smoker of the London docks exemplifies how the geographical divide underpins, and enables, the divided self. (67)

With the "literary double" motif, then, novels' protagonists can be characterized by an urban duality and their lives conditioned by the structure of cities. Therefore, in Jean-Yves Tadié's words, the city either organizes or disorganizes the novel, and the narration corresponds to the map of the city (150-51).

(II) Spatio-Temporal Displacement in Wang Dahong's *Du Liankui*

Many commentators suggest that, if read against the cultural and urban background of Taipei in around 1977, the book translated and rewritten by Wang is indeed prophetic of a Taipei which had not yet come into existence. The foreword by Gao Xinjiang (高信疆), a famous Taiwanese publisher and critic in Taiwan, can serve as an example:

> Wang Dahong used his delicate sensibility to adapt this classic by Oscar Wilde. He imitated and remodeled, localized and modernized *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, so that the nineteenth-century *fin-de-siècle* European bourgeois life of hypocrisy in the novel was transformed into a fable about the upper-class Vanity Fair of twentieth-century Taiwan. . . . Even before Taiwan strove to become more fully industrialized and commercialized, drawing on his artistic sensibility and his fruitful life experience in the West as well as Taiwan, Wang clearly foresaw the psycho-neurotic complications of Taipei City that would follow from its over-development. (my translation; Gao 1)

> 王大閎用他的巧思妙想，傳擬模寫，為《格雷的畫像》作了大量本土化、現代化的努力，使得這一見證十九世紀末歐洲資產階級虛矯生活的小說，搖身一變，成為二十世紀末臺灣上層社會浮華世態的寓言。……在臺灣剛剛由素樸的小農經濟裏，掙扎著蛻變到工商業掛帥的前夕，王大閎憑著他藝術的敏銳知覺，憑著他多年來從歐洲到美洲到臺灣的豐富閱歷，清晰的掌握並且預見了高度成長後，臺北的「精神官能併發症」。

According to many studies of Taipei's urbanization, it was only after the mid-1970s that a great transformation began to take place in the Taipei, so that the city center was gradually diversifying and shifting from the Western District to the Eastern District. This is also why it was not until the 1980s that a real urban culture began to take shape in Taiwan, so that an "urban literary scene" finally emerged in the early 1990s (Chi 14, 26).

Due to this local history, Wang's *Du Liankui* has always been treated as a kind of prophetic fable. Wang started to translate his novel in the second half of the 1960s, before the actual emergence of Taipei's Eastern District, but somehow he managed to tell a story about the rise of this Eastern District and the descent of the Western District from its former glories. Wang, with his architect's professional insights, seemed to foresee the development of the Eastern District as a locus of the city's economic and political activities and the place where people from the "higher order" could reside. Many of this district's most iconic areas appear in the translation; Du Liankui (杜連魁, the Sinicized Dorian Gray) lives on Hangzhou South Road (杭州南路); Wu Teng (吳騰, or Lord Henry Wotten) and his Uncle, Fei Mowen (費模文, or Uncle George Fermor), live on Renai Road (仁愛路); and Wu's Aunt Jia (賈姑媽, or Aunt Agatha, lives in the area around the East Gate (東門) of Taipei, also not very far from Section 1 of Renai Road.

While, in *Du Liankui*, those dwelling places of and for the higher order are located in the Eastern District of Taipei, the aristocratic characters in *Dorian Gray* live in a variety of places in (or, at least near) Mayfair. For example, Dorian Gray's house is at Grosvenor Square, Lord Henry Wotten lives on Curzon street, Henry's Aunt Agatha's place is at Berkeley Square, and, finally, Henry's Uncle Fermor lives in Albany, a bachelors' apartment off Piccadilly. Since Mayfair is in the Borough of Westminster, where Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament are also located, these characters' proximity to the political core of London metaphorically signifies that they belong to the ruling class. Apart from being a political metaphor, I think Wang's use of spatial (dis)placement is more significant than that of Oscar Wilde, and due attention should be paid to the nature of this arrangement. It is not only about characterization for Wang, and the fact that some of these characters' residences are placed along Renai Road does not only show how he was predicting the development of this part of Taipei, but also how he thought Taipei should be

inter-connected with other world metropolises. This point will be treated more fully in one of the following sections.

To conclude this section, it is very important to note that the displacement in *Du Liankui* is not just spatial but also tempo-spatial, so that the temporal setting (the 1970s) is actually an added dimension, one carrying Wang's specific message to his Taiwanese readers. Wang's friend Gao Xinjiang's statement that Wang "foresaw clearly the psychoneurotic complications of Taipei City due to its over-development" gives us access to this architect-translator's insights: in *Du Liankui*, Wang is talking about the spiritual corruption of Taipei in the 1970s, even before the rise of the Eastern District became an urban reality. In "Pursuing a Beautiful Line" (*Zhuiqiu yige piaoliang de xiantiao* 追求一個漂亮的線條), an article published in the *China Daily News* (*Zhonghua ribao* 中華日報), Wang insinuates that Taipei is both "ugly and vulgar," containing nothing but "those broad avenues." He asks, "Where will those avenues lead us to? Are there any memorable places [in Taipei] for us to appreciate, to make our lives both cheerful and fulfilled?" (就拿台北來講，除了些寬大的道路以外，一無內容。這些大道把我們引導到哪裡去？有些什麼值得欣賞，可以回味的去處能使我們的生活愉快和充實？) (my translation; 12). Therefore, it becomes quite clear that, although *Du Liankui* shares with *Dorian Gray* a dichotomous story setting and structure, one based on an East-West division of the city, for Wang this division is delineated and enhanced so as to criticize the problems of corruption and vulgarity that have arisen from the rapid over-development of the Eastern District in Taipei, where most of the new "broad avenues" are located. Unlike Wang's East-West division of Taipei, Oscar Wilde's West End/East End dichotomy does not imply an emerging East District and a deteriorating West District. During Wilde's eighteen-year stay in London (from 1879 to 1897), the West End did undergo many drastic changes, but unlike Taipei's Eastern District it was not a newly-developed urban area.

(III) The Untranslatability of *Dorian Gray*

Wang's originality lies not only in his Sinicization of *Dorian Gray*, but also in his rendering of the novel's settings into those in *Du Liankui*. In fact, this "translation" is only possible due to the structural similarities between Taipei and London, similarities which are not only based on the more general East-West pattern but also on the role played by the surrounding rural area in

both cases. For example, Dorian's country estate, Royal Selby, is located in Nottinghamshire, and Du's villa is on Yangming Mountain (陽明山) in the nearby countryside.

Apart from these structural similarities, Wang also tried to re-structure the urban world in/of the novel and inserted many of his own opinions into his translation. For example, Paris, which is always referred to as the counterpart of London in *Dorian Gray*, seems to lose its original function in *Du Liankui*. Therefore, the "translation" is not a mere transplantation from one cultural environment to another. Traditionally, at least since the appearance of *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, London and Paris have been seen as being closely related or intertwined; however, in order to transform London into Taipei, Wang had to use New York as Taipei's counterpart, for New York and Taipei have long had a profound relationship in the domains of politics, economics and culture. However, here we should also note that in *Du Liankui*, Wang Dahong complicates the London/Paris relationship in Wilde's novel by writing extensively about cities other than Taipei and New York in his translation—including Paris, Washington, and San Francisco. Thus Wang's Taipei/New York relationship does not carry quite the same weight or same significance as Wilde's original London/Paris relationship.

In fact, the traditional pairing of London and Paris, from at least the time of Dickens, may be to a certain degree untranslatable, as we may see in at least two passages in *Dorian Gray*. Before Dorian murders Basil, the latter tells him that "Georges Petit" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 92) is going to collect all his best pictures for a special exhibition in the Rue de Sèze in Paris. Georges Petit was actually the French art dealer who founded a popular gallery there, *Galerie Georges Petit*, in 1882, which was famous for its close connections with the French Impressionist painters. Yet in *Du Liankui*, this gallery became the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and so the London-Paris connection with its French impressionist aura was lost in the process of Wang's rewriting.

The second example can serve as an illustration of how *Dorian Gray* became uprooted from its original context in *Du Liankui*. Wilde's novel, as we know, was produced from within the *fin-de-siècle* ambience of Decadentism and Aestheticism in London, and the influence on *Dorian Grey* of French novelist Joris-Karl Huysmans' *À rebours* (1884) has often been noted. In a letter written to an unidentified correspondent named "E. W. Pratt," Wilde contends

that his "yellow book" was "partly suggested by *À rebours*" (Wilde, *Letters* 313), and in *Dorian Gray* that book is described as:

> a novel without a plot, and with only one character, being, indeed, simply a psychological study of a certain young Parisian, who spent his life trying to realize in the nineteenth century all the passions and modes of thought that belonged to every century except his own . . . . (102-03)

This "certain young Parisian" is Huysmans's famous protagonist, the physically fragile but perceptually and artistically sensitive Des Esseintes. From this passage we may see how Wilde's London is related to Paris both intra-textually and intertextually, for Paris serves not only as part of the setting of the story but also as a reminder of how Wilde was influenced by Huysmans's work.

As mentioned earlier, however, since London is rewritten as Taipei, and New York replaces Paris functionally, the original role Paris plays in *Dorian Gray* is completely omitted. This omission, however, results in an instance of subsequent untranslatabilty with respect to the intertextual allusion to *À rebours* in the source text. The reason why *À rebours* is an intertext for *Dorian Gray* is not only that the former is mentioned in the story or it partly suggests the latter. Rather, Wilde made *Dorian Gray* inherit the anti-bourgeois implications of aristocratic valuation of art as a sacred realm that are clear in *À rebours* by making his protagonists either noblemen or members of the upper-classes, just like the "Duc Des Esseintes." Therefore, according to the criteria provided by Raymond Williams, both works are modernist novels (34). But in *Du Liankui*, since the temporal setting is the 1970s, Wang is not able to assume the aesthetic detachment of a nobleman in order to criticize Taipei as being too commercialized and industrialized.

Such criticisms are ubiquitous in *À rebours* and *Dorian Gray*. For example, Paris is regarded by Des Esseintes as having become a "terrifying world of commerce" (Huysmans 134) and the dominant spirit of the age turned to "commercialism" (176). Industrialization also brought in its wake the new tendency of people to cheat one another throughout Paris: "From east to west and north to south, there stretched an unbroken network of confidence tricks, a chain of organized thefts acting one upon the other . . ." (Huysmans 177).

Therefore, toward the end of the novel, Des Esseintes cries: "crumble then, society! Perish, old world!" (Huysmans 218).

The witty conversations between Lord Henry Wotten and his interlocutors also serve as acute attacks upon the philistinism of the British bourgeoisie. From the perspective of thematics, Henry's words are free motifs. In contrast to bound motifs which can determine the causal-chronological course of events, free motifs are "presented so that the tale may be told artistically," and "each literary school has its characteristic stock" which serves as free motifs (Tomashevsky 66). Wilde inherits this free motif from Huysmans, but he uses it in the form of humorous aphorisms rather than Huysmansian direct moral judgments of the bourgeois society.

Examples are everywhere to be found throughout the book. In Chapter One, Basil tells Henry: "With an evening coat and a white-tie, as you told me once, anybody, even a stock-broker, can gain a reputation for being civilized" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 5). Or, in Chapter Twelve, Henry tells Dorian: "The middle classes air their moral prejudices over their gross dinner-tables, and whisper about what they call the profligacies of their betters in order to try and pretend that they are in smart society and on intimate terms with the people they slander" (124). For Henry, those of the middle class do not deserve a decent reputation, nor are they even "modern" (124). According to Henry's New Hedonism as practiced by Dorian, "the modern" seems to be equivalent to "the beautiful," so Dorian's "dandyism" is "an attempt to assert the absolute modernity of beauty" (106). According to the novel's depiction, however, it seems that the middle class lacks both the ability and willingness to care for beauty.

IV. The Ethical and Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism(s) in *Dorian Gray* and *Du Liankui*

(I) Wilde's Cosmopolitanism as a Critique of British Culture

Cosmopolitanism as a term that is often related to Modernism has been a profoundly misunderstood concept. Since Modernism is difficult to separate conceptually from the historical frame of so-called imperialist experience and colonial discourse, it follows that it is necessarily a political stance aimed at imposing the values produced by the discourse of the imperial center upon the empire's heterogeneous peripheral colonies. This kind of universalizing claim

of homogeneity, however, is exactly what many modernist writers try to reject. Just as Melba Cuddy-Keane's defense of Modernism has shown very clearly, despite "late twentieth-century claims that modernist aesthetics evinces universalizing, totalizing strategies, situating modernism in its own time remind us that in fact many, if not most, modernist writers wrote in resistance to the moral, political, and religious fundamentalisms of the previous era" (561).

If cosmopolitanism is not Imperialism's accomplice, then how are we to evaluate its implications and achievements? First of all, it is important to note that the conjunction of "*cosmo*" (world) and "*polis*" (city) in the word "cosmopolitanism" may imply that according to this philosophy, "the world is my city and home.") For Tanya Agathocleous, cosmopolitanism is a way to interpret the interconnectedness between the world and its cities, and it is mainly an aesthetic vision which presents the city as a "borderless space that spills exuberantly out onto the world" (126).

More importantly, what's stressed in cosmopolitanism is the individual's freedom to detach him/herself from locality and political practice; it is an aesthetic and ethical experience rather than a utopian ideal which would threaten literary modernism's anti-totalizing ideas (Fokemma and Ibsch 185). One of Wilde's most famous witticisms may be used here to define cosmopolitanism. In January 1882, Wilde left London for the United States for a one-year visit. During his short encounter with Henry James in Washington, it is said, after hearing James was nostalgic for London, Wilde declared, "You care for places? The world is my home" (qtd. in Berman 47). As a Modernist novelist writing extremely cosmopolitan works of fiction, James, who came from New York, was understandably infatuated with London. As an Irishman, Wilde's attitude toward London differed greatly from that of his fellow expatriate writer James. Yet how might we relate Wilde's cosmopolitanism to his urban visions? The answer might come from his aesthetic contentions. In 1891, the year *Dorian Gray* was published, Wilde also published his seminal essay "The Critic as Artist" in the anthology *Intentions*, claiming that "it is only by contact with the art of foreign nations that the art of a country gains that individual and separate life that we call nationality" (Wilde, *Artist* 373).

In the same vein, according to Jessica Berman's interpretation, Wilde's "cosmopolitanism of the future" shows that creativity grows from heredity and the weight of local experience as much as from the experience of uprooting oneself (47). In Chapter One of *Dorian Gray*, Basil expresses his disapproval

of Lord Henry's ethical and political dandyism, his severe criticism of English democracy, and Henry retorts, "How English you are, Basil!" (7). As a member of English aristocratic society, Henry always betrays his own identity by saying things like this. Thus we might suppose that Wilde was using Henry as his mouthpiece in order to elaborate his aestheticism and philosophy of cosmopolitanism.

Moreover, in Chapter Eight, Henry tells Dorian to steer clear of the scandal that followed in the wake of Sybil Vane's death by saying:

> Things like that make a man fashionable in Paris. But in London people are so prejudiced. Here, one should never make one's *début* with a scandal. One should reserve that to give an interest to one's old age. (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 80)

This judgment gives us Wilde's thoughts about the two cities, about their different cultures. Therefore, it is not surprising that, in his letter to the editor of the *St. James's Gazette*, Wilde doesn't seem hesitant to show his dissatisfaction with the cultural ambience of London: "Were I a French author, and my book brought out in Paris, there is not a single literary critic in France, on any paper of high standing, who would think for a moment of criticizing it from an ethical standpoint" (Wilde, *Letters* 260-61). For Wilde, Paris is a better place than London in which to live by his ideal of "art for art's sake."

(II) Wang's Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism: The Beauty of Cities

Wang's cosmopolitanism is also undoubtedly aesthetic, but he sets his *Du Liankui* in a cosmopolitan environment by having his protagonists live along Renai Road, which had been constructed before WWII but became immensely important after the KMT government's relocation to Taipei. The communication route from Taipei's Songshan Airport (松山機場) to the Office of the President (總統府), namely Tun Hua North Road, used to be the most international part of Taipei because, prior to the construction of Taoyuan International Airport (桃園國際機場) in 1979, it was a route along which most foreigners arriving at Taipei had passed. Before 1967, around the time Wang started to translate and rewrite *Dorian Gray*, the eastern border of Renai Road was Dun Hua South Road, on which Wu Teng lived and along which one can

drive all the way north to Songshan Airport, at that time the only international airport in Taipei. Travelling westward on Renai Road, Fei Mowen's and Du's residences can be reached, and finally there will be Aunt Jia's residence at the East Gate of Taipei, which is also the western border of Renai Road.

This reading (or "mapping") shows us Wang's eagerness to present Taipei's East District (台北東區) as an internationalized area. And, just like Lord Henry Wotten, Wu Teng also shows his "uprootedness" from "locality" by criticizing Taipei: "it is said that there are restaurants everywhere in the streets of Taipei, but bookstores can hardly be found. What this suggests is that we care only for eating, and no mental nourishment is needed . . ." (有人說過臺北滿街是餐廳，書店卻很少。這表示我們只注重吃，而不需要精神上的糧食……) (my translation; Wang, *Du Liankui* 53). And in Chapter Eleven, after the death of Du's lover, he and Wu travel together to practice Wu's so-called "New Hedonism", while Wang gives us his vision of the city by depicting trips to Paris, New York, and San Francisco:

> In Du's first trip to the States, he felt that, if New York was compared with Paris, it was like a flashy mansion owned by the *nouveau riche* and Paris an elegant house of a scholarly family . . . The capital of the States is in many ways similar to Paris, for Washington D.C. was designed by a certain Frenchman. *Du Liankui*, however, couldn't get used to seeing architecture that mimics Greek and Roman forms . . . When they arrived at the West Coast, his first impression was that San Francisco is even worse than New York in terms of its cultural standards. (, my translation; Wang, *Du Liankui* 137-38)
>
> 杜連魁第一次到美國，便感到拿紐約和巴黎相比，紐約像是一座俗麗的暴發戶的大住宅，而巴黎卻是一幢高貴的書香之家。……美國首都的布置和巴黎不無相像之處，因為華盛頓市是法國人計畫的。但杜連魁看不慣那些仿羅馬或仿希臘式的建築物。……到了西岸，杜連魁第一個印象就是舊金山的文化水準還不及紐約。

From this added passage, which is non-existent in the source text *Dorian Gray*, we can see that Wang's major interest and concern in his translation and

rewriting is to convey his "urban aesthetic." As an architect and an urban planner, this rewritten story seems to agree with Wilde's claim that his story is "an essay on decorative art" (Wilde, *Letters* 264), but Wang perhaps cares more about whether the city is well-planned than about the decorative art of its interior.

Furthermore, in Chapter Seventeen, Henry mentions that he had a plan for "rechristening everything" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 159). In Wang's rewriting, Wu Teng talks about a "rechristening" which focuses on things such as street names, literary works, perfumes, cars, and paintings, etc. He compares the street names in Taipei with those in New York, Washington D.C., and, most significantly, Paris:

> I want to change those street names: the names in Taipei are as boring as those in New York, such as the Fifth Avenue or the Seventeenth Avenue. Look, are the names such as Mingshen Road, Shinyi Road, and Renai Road any better than the Constitution Avenue in Washington, DC? Of course, we also have beautiful street names such as Lian-yun, Wolong, and Chifeng . . . . Look, how many Lovers' Lanes are there in Britain? You still remember, Liankui? There's the famous narrow street in Paris named "Rue du Chat-qui-Pêche." How interesting it is! (my translation; Wang, *Du Liankui* 194)

> 我是在想改掉那些街道的名字。臺北街道的名字和紐約的第五街、第十七街等同樣地單調乏味。你看，民生路、信義路、仁愛路不比華盛頓的憲法大道要高多少。當然，我們也有幾條比較美的路名像連雲街、臥龍街、赤峰街等等……你看，英國有多少條情人巷。連魁，你記得吧，巴黎還有一條著名的小街叫釣魚的貓街？多有趣的街名啊！

For Wang, Taipei can be compared with other great metropoles in the world, as long as it fulfills his aesthetic principle of street-naming. New York and Washington D.C. are not necessarily much better than Taipei: Taipei's street-naming is trapped within a traditional moral system and political doctrine, because Mingshen Road (民生路) is named according to one of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People (*Sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義; and, literally,

Mingshen means "people's welfare"), and Renai (仁愛) and Shinyi (信義) mean "brotherhood" and "fidelity" respectively, and together these form four of the "Eight Morals" (*Bade* 八德) of Confucianism. Likewise, the street names in Washington D.C. also have a political-ideological basis, for Constitution Avenue is named after the American Constitution, thus emphasizing the political importance of Washington D.C. in the United States. Also, for Wu Teng, the way New York names its avenues and streets in a numerical fashion is obviously dull, lacking in creativity.

Finally, we should note that while in *Dorian Gray,* Paris is in many ways a far better place than London, in *Du Liankui*, Wang Dahong criticizes both Taipei and New York vehemently for their urban vulgarity, dullness and ugliness. This can be seen quite clearly from the two above quotations. On the contrary, judging from Wang's standard of aesthetic cosmopolitanism, Paris can serve as a role model for both Taipei and New York. Indeed, Wang refers to Paris metaphorically as "an elegant house of a scholarly family" (137), and more specifically to the "Rue du Chat-qui-Pêche" [the Street of the Fishing Cat] in Paris is an example *par excellence* of street-naming which is interesting and graceful.

As a matter of fact, Wang criticizes not just New York but the United States as a whole, as we see in "Pursuing a Beautiful Line" (*Zhuiqiu yige piaoliang de xiantiao* 追求一個漂亮的線條), the aforementioned *China Daily News* article about aesthetic cosmopolitanism: "I had spent eight years in Europe before I went to the New World to continue my learning, and one of my very first thoughts after arriving there was that the two places differed from each other greatly regarding the aspects of material life. To this day, the material civilization in the States is still quite vulgar and unrefined . . ." (我在歐洲生活了八年多，再到新大陸去繼續我的學業，第一個感觸就是物質生活上的區別。美國人的物質文明到今天仍是相當粗陋……) (my translation; Wang 15).

Let us not be mistaken here, however, about Wang's version of aesthetic cosmopolitanism: in all his writings, he never praises European culture and civilization while not also recognizing the better elements in Taiwan's local Chinese culture. For example, in *Du Liankui*, by using Wu Teng as his mouthpiece, Wang claims in an added passage that "the most pathetic thing is that we repudiate what's splendid in our own culture, while readily accepting the most vulgar and unrefined elements from the material civilization of the

West" (最可悲的是我們排斥了自己優秀的文化，而吸收的卻是西方最粗劣的物質文明) (my translation; Wang 137). Therefore, the aesthetic cosmopolitanism of Wang Dahong, a Chinese intellectual in constant contact with Western culture, is not unlike the scholar Gerard Delanty's so-called "critical cosmopolitanism" (2-3) in his book *The Cosmopolitan Imagination*. Wang's ideas in *Du Liankui* amount to "the problematization of one's own assumptions as well as those of the Other" (16): that is, while Wang "self-problematizes" the urban realities of Taipei, he also "problematizes" the Other of American cities like New York, Washington D.C., and San Francisco, for they are also vulgar and crude in his eyes. Also, just as Delanty's cosmopolitanism is a reflexive and critical "self-understanding" (68), Wang's aesthetic cosmopolitanism is one though which we reflect on how to make sense of Taipei's rapid development, and on how to seek a better way out for our city in the future.

V. Conclusion: The Loss and Gain in Wang's Cosmopolitanism

For decades there has been a continuing debate as to whether Wang Dahong's *Du Liankui*, his Chinese translation and rendering of Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray*, is a "proper" or "improper" translation. Indeed, some may contend that because Wang uproots the *fin-de-siècle* context of Wilde's novel, the readers of *Du Liankui* will fail to understand Wilde's acute attacks on the philistinism of London's Victorian society and the bourgeois morality of his day. Since this *fin-de-siècle* context is uprooted, when translating one passage in Chapter Fifteen about the problem of marriage, Wang must omit a very important allusion to the "*fin de siècle*" and only translate Wilde's allusion to "*fin du globe*" as "the end of the world as depicted in the Bible" (聖經上所說的世界末日) (my translation; Wang, *Du Liankui* 179).

In what he has achieved via his translation and rewriting, however, we can still see Wang's cosmopolitan and metropolitan visions. Therefore, his rewritten work does still clearly reflect his key interests and concerns. Wilde's focus on the London-Paris relationship in the original text is replaced by Wang's concern with the relationships between Taipei and some major American and European cities including New York, Washington D.C., San Francisco, and Paris, all of which are compared with Taipei in *Du Liankui*. As one of the earliest Modernist architects in postwar Taiwan, Wang uses this method of translation and

rewriting to manifest the ideals of his urban aestheticism and cosmopolitanism: *Du Liankui* not only brings a new life to *Dorian Gray* but also creates another version of cosmopolitanism, one completely different from Wilde's original aesthetic cosmopolitanism, itself a part of the late nineteenth-century Anglo-French cosmopolitan culture and literature. Thus Wang's rewriting can be seen as the product of a global imagination, one that emphasizes the superiority of cosmopolitan urban aesthetics, and whose main tenet is that Taiwanese localism should be replaced by a greater openness, a desire to learn from other cultures.

From the above discussion it should be clear that *Du Liankui* can serve as a shining example of cosmopolitanism. As Gerard Delanty asserts in his insightful book *The Cosmopolitan Imagination*, cosmopolitanism exhibits a kind of post-universalistic "world openness" which is created out of the encounter between the local with the global (27). *Du Liankui* appears to be localized through Wang's replacement of London by Taipei, but the aesthetic and ethical cosmopolitanism found in his rewriting are grounded in both the global and the local. In his *Du Liankui*, a translated and rewritten novel, Wang created a certain "openness" to the world, one which could be drawn in his Taiwanese readers at a time when Taiwan was not nearly so internationalized and globalized as it is today.

Delanty also asserts that translation is no longer just about communication. He feels that in our age of cosmopolitanism, the translation itself "is altered in the process of translation and something new is created," because "every translation is at the same time an evaluation" (79). Since Wang's "translation" of *Dorian Gray* includes many of his (re)evaluative rewritings, we can say that, although Oscar Wilde's aesthetic cosmopolitanism may to a certain degree be lost in this translational rewriting, *Du Liankui* gives us something new, something which *Dorian Gray* could not possibly have provided.

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