



Migrant Identities and Translated Identities in the Translation of Taiwanese ‘*Tongzhi*’ and ‘*Ku-er*’ Fiction

Ming Chih WU*

University of Surrey, United Kingdom

In recent times Translation Studies has begun to address the effects of globalisation, in which sociological phenomena such as cosmopolitanism, migration and global hybridity are discussed alongside the process of translation. In addition, contemporary formations of global identities can also be considered to be facilitated by the translation process. Michael Cronin, in his study on identity and translation, for example, compares the identity of the migrant person with the “condition of the translated being” (2006: 45). To paraphrase Cronin, the mobility of the migrant identity is akin to a translated identity, where both are expected to ‘translate’ themselves from their home culture to their designated culture. Here, the word *translation* functions symbolically and practically, contributing to the changes in contemporary culture.

Using Cronin’s idea of translation as a starting point, the current study aims to look at the translation of Taiwanese *tongzhi* and *ku-er* fiction in the English language. The two Chinese terms 同志 [*tongzhi*] and 酷兒 [*ku-er*] are used to describe contemporary Asian homosexual identities that have come into formation in the last two decades. *Tongzhi* and *ku-er* culture in Taiwan take inspirations from local subcultures and global identity politic movements, most notably Western gay, lesbian and queer movements. In the translations of *tongzhi* and *ku-er* fiction therefore, the translators are not only dealing with a ‘niche’ form of Chinese literature, but also engaging with ‘glocal’ sexual culture. Looking at textual and paratextual examples from the two *tongzhi* and *ku-er* translations: *Notes of a Desolate Man* and *Angelwings: Contemporary Queer Fiction from Taiwan* (2003), the study argues that Taiwanese *tongzhi* and *ku-er* fiction are already in a culturally ‘migrant’ position, constantly moving between domestic and foreign influences. Their translations therefore, are not only transferences of information from one culture to another, but an engagement with multiple cultural frames: *translating from an already translated culture*.