TRANSLATING ENGLISH-LANGUAGE CHRISTIAN-THEMED FICTION IN TAIWAN (2000-)

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Abstract

This product- and process-oriented study looks into the translingual and transcultural phenomena surrounding the introduction of English-language Christian-themed literature into Taiwan after the year 2000. The texts chosen for this study are C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*, and William P. Young's *The Shack.* The empirical data for this research contains the translated texts and their source texts, various paratextual materials, my own observations, and the information obtained from my interviews and correspondence with translation agents in Taiwan. Polysystem theory is used to analyse my findings regarding the interaction of relevant cultural systems, such as the Christian and secular cultural systems in Taiwan and the U.S. My case studies show that the introduction of Christian-themed fiction from the Anglophone contexts into the Taiwanese context can be understood as systemic functioning. In the theoretical aspect, my discussion illustrates the continued usefulness of the polysystem approach for investigating translation phenomena if it is integrated with other theories to take into account of the weaknesses that criticism has pointed out: mainly its downplay of agents (or, institution) and its subjectiveness. I tackle these limitations by borrowing theoretical elements from two of the most known social theories in translation studies: Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of culture featuring 'field', 'habitus', and 'capital', and Niklas Luhmann's social systems theory. This study suggests that polysystem theory can be applied to examine literary and cultural phenomena in which the institution plays a major role, especially when the institutional efforts tend to adhere to a certain belief system. However, to weaken the mechanical tendency hinted by system-based theories, it would be helpful to incorporate Bourdieu's idea of habitus into the system-oriented theoretical framework. Luhmann's theorisation of social systems helps to strengthen my point on the structuralisation and self-containedness of the Christian literary polysystem and also enables me to critically reflect on the vantage points from which the systems are examined and described.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis, entitled *Translating English-language Christian-Themed Fiction in Taiwan (2000-)*, deals with an uncharted research topic in the area of translation studies. It looks into the translingual as well as the transcultural phenomena surrounding the *introduction* of English-language Christian-themed literature into Taiwan, the only electoral democracy in today's Chinese-speaking world that guarantees freedom of religious beliefs and expression. Taiwan's liberty of publishing and circulating cultural products provides an environment in which any religious community can function freely. I thus conduct a product- and process-oriented study on such an *introduction*. I use polysystem theory to analyse my findings regarding the interaction of relevant cultural systems, such as the Christian and secular cultural systems in Taiwan and the U.S.

My case studies show that the transfer of Christian-themed fiction from the Anglophone contexts into the Taiwanese context can be understood as systemic functioning. That is to say, certain patterns and norms can be discovered in the production and dissemination of such works. My discussion illustrates the continued usefulness of the polysystem approach for investigating translation phenomena if it is integrated with other theories to take into account of the weaknesses that criticism has pointed out: mainly its

downplay of agents and institution and its subjectiveness. In this thesis, I tackle these limitations by borrowing theoretical elements from two of the most known social theories in translation studies: Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of culture featuring 'field', 'habitus', and 'capital', and Niklas Luhmann's social systems theory.

My approach is particularly useful for examining the introduction of Christian-themed literature into non-Christian cultural contexts, such as Taiwan, for two reasons. Firstly, this type of text, which combines religious and literary features, is difficult to analyse by methods which cannot grasp its cultural and operative complexity (i.e. the Christian and literary aspects, and the interaction between different, competing agents and institutions). Secondly, the influence of different and partly competing cultural and religious systems, which interact in the process of introduction, can only be adequately mapped by the polysystem approach.

The cases examined in this study are all Christian-themed fiction works whose translations were published in Taiwan after the year 2000. I choose Christian-themed fiction as the texts for this study because this type of literature is a mix of sacred/religious and secular/literary, and agents and institutions within different systems have different perceptions towards them. Therefore, the dynamics/tensions between different systems are generated, which attests Even-Zohar's hypothesis of the hierarchical structures of systems in his polysystem theory. I consider the year 2000 an ideal cut-point since critics believe that this was the time when translated fiction works started

dominating Taiwan's literary market (Wang, 2010). By examining translation-related phenomena surrounding some representative Christian-themed fiction texts published after the year 2000, one can understand how the religious and secular cultural systems interact within contemporary Taiwan as well as how they interact with their counterparts in the U.S. In this way, my study hopes to offer a look at how the foreign discourses (particularly the Anglophone discourses) in terms of both literature and religion have been appropriated and deployed in Taiwan's contemporary cultural system. It observes how Christianity has been traveling from Anglophone contexts to the Taiwanese context in the literary and cultural domains, as well as how the indigenisation of Christianity may have occurred in the translation and circulation of Christian-themed literature in contemporary Taiwan.

1.2 Translation and evangelical Christianity

The translation of sacred texts has attracted great attention in the field of translation studies, which has developed abundant scholarly discussion on a wide variety of topics, such as philosophical debates on the translatability of the texts, the development of translation strategies, the power relation in the translation process of religious texts, pedagogical issues of translator training, etc. The Nida Institute, with the aim of carrying on the legacy of Eugene A. Nida, is an example of institutionalised efforts to provide professional programmes featuring religious translation on both practical and scholarly levels nowadays. In 'New Approaches to the Problem of Translation in the

Study of Religion', Williams (2004, p. 14) lists some 'overarching, high-level questions' that remain unsettled in translation studies, such as those about the nature of translation, the definitions of source texts and translated texts in the context of deconstructionism, the loss of 'original' elements in translation, translatability and untranslatability, etc. Williams states that all these unanswered enquiries into translation become even more 'acute' in the domain of religion, and he further proposes two questions that are directly linked to translation issues in religion: 1) What is not allowed to be translated? 2) Do sacralised languages begin being used as a tool of linguistic/cultural imperialism to the same degree as, or even more than, colonialist languages have been sustaining political and cultural imperialism?

The act of translating scriptures, in most cases, involves an intent to disseminate religious beliefs. Nevertheless, from the theist perspective, the sacredness and the mysteriousness of words of the deities inevitably make the texts themselves beyond the comprehension of human minds. This is why the process of translating sacred texts always involves a certain degree of human interpretation at both the producing and the receiving ends, opening up a space for the mingling between the sublime and the mundane as well as the negotiation between the divine and the earthly. Importantly, this interaction takes place not only on the textual level but also in activities surrounding the texts. A typical example of the latter can be any religious gathering that involves teaching and sharing based on their chosen scriptures. The community-based activities certainly provide many different ideas and leads

for us to investigate the formation and perception of religious texts within certain contexts in a more thorough way. Since many religious faiths demonstrate a fundamental characteristic to transmit their beliefs to different groups of people from various backgrounds, human interference constitutes an influential factor that directs this course of transmission.

The spread of religions can never be achieved without translation, through which religions are therefore able to cross borders of nations, languages and cultures and may change some of their original components or branch out into sub-religions due to the merging of cultural elements from the target and the source environments. Although the spread of religious beliefs cannot take place without the reproduction and circulation of scriptures or canonical writings, religious ideas or teachings are not only transferred through sacred texts but also through other cultural products that revolve around the tenets of the specific religions. In fact, in a modern society where secularism is prevalent, or a traditional society that closely adheres to a certain belief system, works that integrate religious and secular elements may be more influential in popularising foreign religions (although they cannot substitute for scriptures). As one of the major religions in the world, Christianity can offer us many examples worth investigating in this respect.

Spreading the gospel to every nation and every indigenous community around the world has been one of the pivotal concerns of Christian communities since the first church was established in Early Christianity, as this is the Great Commission instructed by Jesus: ‘Therefore go and make disciples

of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you' (*The Gospel of Matthew* 28:28-20).[1] This is even more true for evangelical Christians.

There are diverse interpretations of being 'evangelical'. The term 'evangelical' can be described as 'indexical' (Olson, 2003, p.77). As the term carries different meanings in different contexts, it is difficult to provide a fixed definition of 'evangelical' here. However, I consider the definition given by the largest online encyclopedia of theology *Theopedia* applicable to this present study. It states that 'modern evangelicals' usually refers to a collection of Protestant groups who believe in a certain, yet indefinite, set of Christian teachings, which generally includes 'an orthodox Christology and emphasis on Christ's atoning work and bodily Resurrection', the conviction that salvation can only be gained by the grace of God and not by human works, the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of the Bible, 'an emphasis on biblical preaching and teaching, an emphasis on the conversion experience, typically referred to as being "*born again*" or experiencing a "*new birth*", and an emphasis on evangelism and the importance of mission work, etc.' (2018, emphasis in original). Specifically, this thesis treats 'evangelical' as an overarching framework shared among different Protestant denominations. This is why the agents examined in this study are mostly affiliated with evangelical organisations that do not belong to specific denominations.

[1] All English Bible verses quoted in this thesis are from the *New International Version*.

Although I do not intend to confine this study to any Christian denomination, this thesis with a focus on Anglophone and Taiwanese contexts inevitably leans towards Protestantism due to the predominance of Protestantism in the Christian realms of the source and target cultural environments. As evangelical Protestants tend to make great efforts to engage in cultural and social affairs, most of the findings and observations presented in this thesis represent the evangelical perspective. In Chapters 3 and 4, I will give more detailed background information in this regard.

1.3 Christian-themed fiction and the three chosen cases: *Narnia*, *Gilead*, and *The Shack*

By stating 'Christian-themed fiction', I am talking about fiction works that contain themes and motifs based on Christian beliefs, and most importantly, in this thesis, the works that are recognised and defined by certain communities in both the target culture and the source culture as 'Christian-themed'. In nations such as Taiwan where Christianity is not a major religion, this type of work tends to stand out. While recognising Christian-themed texts is never easy and may seem arbitrary in some way, there do exist fundamental elements one can identify in Christian literary texts.

Besides straightforward depictions of eternity or the divine power of heaven, common literary elements in relation to Christianity include portrayals of man's sinful nature, temptations, trials and tribulations in human life, forgiveness, redemption, etc. While the above-mentioned themes do not only

appear in Christianity but also in Eastern religions such as Buddhism, some concepts do overtly differentiate Christianity from other religions; for example, redemption and salvation cannot be accomplished by one's self but only by God, and people should take an active role to fight against evil. In addition, the linear narrative in Christian-themed fiction can also be considered a derivation of the biblical tradition since the Christian story itself is revealed in the Bible in a straightforward, rectilinear way, i.e. from the creation of the world and the fall of man in the Old Testament to the birth and crucifixion of Jesus the Messiah that brings salvation and eternal life to human beings, and eventually to the coming of 'a new heaven and a new earth' in the New Testament.

However, as this thesis will show, the so-called 'Christian-themed literature' is in fact a concept constructed and shaped in dynamic cultural spheres. Therefore, one of the objectives of this study is to uncover the encoding-decoding processes of certain Christian-themed fiction works translated from English into Chinese in Taiwan after the year 2000 by examining them in both the Anglophone and Taiwanese contexts.

The texts chosen for this study are C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*, and William Paul Young's *The Shack.* These three authors are all known as Protestants. Each of these fiction works falls into a distinct category of 'Christian-themed fiction' framed by the definitions and interpretations given by Christian groups I have observed. *The Chronicles of Narnia* is a typical example of Christians' constant attempts to highlight the 'Christianness' in fiction works that are seemingly neutral in the religious

aspect, in the hope of proselytising. *Gilead* represents a special case where a novel with a conspicuous Christian thread is considered to bear literary merit and generally orthodox Christian teachings, hence is highly acclaimed not only among Christian communities but also in the mainstream literary world. The third case, *The Shack*, manifests the conceptualisation of Christian-themed literature in a dynamic arena where ideological tensions persist. While *Narnia* and *Gilead* contain less controversial elements in the religious sense, *The Shack* has aroused considerable debates in regard to its fictional portrayals of Christian doctrines.

The overall setting in which my research subjects are observed is the globalised contemporary commercial publishing realm in the 2000s where cultural products and religious ideas can be easily transferred from one end to the other. Importantly, both the source end (i.e. the Anglophone world) and the receiving end (i.e. Taiwan) examined in this study do not contain political censorship intervening in the production and dissemination process of the texts. Therefore, my findings reflect the outcomes of the cross-cultural contacts in a market-oriented environment. Since *Narnia*, *Gilead*, and *The Shack* were all published by non-religious publishing houses and circulated in the mainstream book market, the market for their original producers is one where economic gains are pursued. By contrast, there exists a different market where Christian agents, such as church groups, contend for their religious capital through their evangelistic efforts around the texts.

By looking at both the textual and paratextual phenomena in the three

representative cases, this study will show that literary translation creates a platform where Christianity is observed as an attempt to bring together the local and the foreign in Taiwan—although the degrees of attention Christian agents have paid to each of these cases vary and their missionary objective has been achieved to different extents. Meanwhile, as the above-mentioned literary activities are connected with the Christian community's evangelistic intent most of the time, they, altogether, reflect a vivid picture of what Terry Eagleton states about a capacity of religion that is somehow hard to be fully demonstrated by culture—'to unite theory and practice, elite and populace, spirit and senses' (2014, ix).

1.4 Key research questions

There are three research questions that I intend to inquire into in this thesis:

(1) Which factors affect the introduction into Taiwan of Western literary texts that have both a religious (Christian) and a literary dimension?

(2) How do religious and secularly cultural literary systems interact in this context?

(3) How does the dual dimension of the texts affect the way they are translated?

1.5 Methodologies

To answer the above research questions, I adopt the case study approach

for the exploration of the selected texts and their contexts. In each case, both textual and paratextual elements are analysed.

1.5.1 Empirical case study

The case study methodology in translation studies is where 'a unit of translation or interpreting-related activity, product, person, etc. in real life…[is] studied or understood in the context in which it is embedded' (Susam-Sarajeva, 2009, p. 40). Following this definition, I shall identify the context of my case study as the importation of Christian-themed literature in Taiwan from the year 2000 onwards, and the grand unit as Christian-themed fiction works translated from English into Chinese in Taiwan. The sub-units are the three selected texts and the phenomena related to their creation, publication, and dissemination.

Although C. S. Lewis first published his *Narnia* tales in the 1950s, and there have been several Chinese editions of the *Narnia* books published during the past few decades, the best-known Chinese translation of *Narnia* nowadays is Titan's (大田) version published in the 2000s. This is the version targeted in this study. As Susam-Sarajeva points out, while some texts studied might have been produced in earlier times, they 'exist in the here and now', so case studies carried out by translation scholars are usually "historical case studies" (ibid., emphasis in original). I include a brief publishing history of *Narnia* in Taiwan in Chapter 5 and present the book cover designs of some of these *Narnia* books in Chinese in Appendix 1 (as not all versions are accessible nowadays).

My investigation into the three chosen cases will include not only the

textual aspects but also the non-textual aspects, such as the agents and their activities. The empirical data for this research is thus composed of translations and their source texts, news articles on their publications, interviews of authors, publishers and translators, reviews on the texts, websites, videos, etc.[2] As this study deals with an unexplored topic, there are not many available scholarly sources that are directly linked to my research aim. This is why my discussion relies largely on non-academic data and only draws on academic publications when appropriate and where relevant academic sources are available.

In addition to data acquired through published materials, I also use my own observations and first-hand information obtained from interviews and correspondence with translation agents in Taiwan. Agents of translation, in a broader sense, refer to various types of intermediaries who are involved in introducing translations into the target environment. A more detailed exploration of the concept of 'agents' in translation studies and how it relates to this thesis will be presented in the theoretical discussion in Chapter 2. My interview subjects are Taiwanese theologian Lin Hong-Hsin (林鴻信), Christian editors Sean Ying (應仁祥) and Yang Fang-Chan (楊芳嬋), translator of *Gilead* Shih Ching-chen (施清真), and translator of *The Shack* Chen Jingmin (陳敬旻).[3] Each of them gives an account of his/her experience, observation or ideas, which allows me to access first-hand information that can enrich the empirical aspect in this study.

[2] All quotations from the 'Chinese sources' shown in the list of references for this thesis are my own translations.
[3] I conducted all these interviews in Chinese. In this thesis, all quotations from these interviewees are my own translations.

An important question pertinent to a case study method is how well the chosen cases can provide readers with insight into the general phenomenon or fact. In addressing the issue of generalisability, Susam-Sarajeva draws on social sciences scholars' ideas to clarify case study methodology in translation studies: '[t]he main objective of case study research should […] be generalizing *into theory*, not generalizing over onto other case studies' [2009, p. 49, italics in original]. Case studies should be mainly about 'replication', not 'sampling'. Every case should be carefully chosen with the aim of either estimating similar outcomes (a 'literal replication') or presenting contrasting outcomes but for estimable reasons (a 'theoretical replication') (Yin, 1994 cited in Susam-Sarajeva, 2009, p.50). When there are multiple cases, each case should serve a particular purpose within the overarching scope of the study (Susam-Sarajeva, 2009, p.50).

Due to the different characteristics of the three texts selected for this PhD research project, I consider the three case studies able to picture how different literary texts are appropriated within the Christian ideological contours in both the source and target cultural environments. A further analysis of the observations and findings offers readers a lens to understand the routes via which the mentioned appropriations occur and how. With these cases, I hope not only to adopt a deductive model by testing existing theories, but also to engage '*inductive* theorizing, i.e. making sense of what you find after you've found it' (Gillham, 2000 cited in Susam-Sarajeva, 2009, p.41, italics in original). The polysystem approach, therefore, will be proved to be viable and

also be able to be enriched by theories of Bourdieu and Luhmann in my analysis and theoretical discussion.

1.5.2 Paratextual analysis

Paratextual analysis plays a significant role in this study. As the chosen texts all straddle two realms, i.e. the secular and the Christian literary realms, Christian agents' efforts to Christianise these texts in order to evangelise readers can be observed in each case. Meanwhile, there can also be seen secular counterforces that are against such efforts. Paratextual evidence in this regard thus provides insight into how secular and religious cultural systems interact.

Paratext, as defined by Gérard Genette (1997), includes both 'peritext' and 'epitext'. In short, peritext denotes every element, be it in word or in image, that appears in a book volume along with the main text. Epitext refers to elements that surround the texts but are not presented in the published volume, such as interviews, commentaries, correspondence, etc. Although Genette's theory of paratext has inspired many translation researchers and attracted many scholarly enquiries, a commonly agreed definition of paratexts has somehow not yet been presented in the field of translation studies. This thesis thus adopts the definition of paratext given by Valerie Pellatt in her edited book *Text, Extratext, Metatext and Paratext in Translation*: it is any verbal or non-verbal material 'additional to, appended to or external to the core text which has functions of explaining, defining, instructing, or supporting, adding

background information, or the relevant opinions and attitudes of scholars, translators and reviewers' (2013, p.1).

A detailed discussion on the conceptualisation of paratexts in translation studies would be beyond the scope of this thesis. However, when this thesis was nearing completion, I noted the publication of *Translation and Paratexts* (Batchelor, 2018), which delves into the study of paratexts in translation-related research and provides a thorough account of theoretical and methodological frameworks for paratextual research in translation studies. Batchelor mentions two ways in which translation has been suggested in Genette's original framework: '[t]ranslation as paratexts [to their original texts]' and '[t]ranslation as text, with its own paratext'; while the former is overtly addressed by Genette, the latter is only indicated in his typology (pp. 19-22). When reviewing existing publications on paratextual studies by translation scholars, Batchelor points out that there is a tendency for translation scholars to neglect 'the aspects of Genette's definition of the paratext that stress its connection with authorial intention' (p.27). In the final part of the book, 'Towards a theory of paratextuality for translation', Batchelor defines a paratext as 'a consciously crafted threshold for a text which has the potential to influence the way(s) in which the text is received'; such 'text' can be 'any written or spoken words forming a connected piece of work' and 'may be in its original language or […] translated' (p.142).

I am aware that a large number of the paratextual references used in my case studies can be considered 'extratexts', especially when Şehnaz Tahir

Gürçağlar's definitions of 'extratexts' in translation research are taken into consideration: 'the general meta-discourse on translation circulating independently of individual translated texts' which can be 'general statements on translation, or…other socio-cultural phenomena that may have a bearing on how translations are produced and received' (2002 cited in Batchelor, 2018, pp.147-48). However, I consider it pragmatic enough to use 'paratexts' to refer to all materials and phenomena surrounding the making and spreading of the chosen texts in both the source and target environments, through adopting Pellatt's definition quoted in the previous page. As commented on by Batchelor, Pellatt's broad definition of paratext given in her edited volume seems to regard '*extratext* as a sub-category of *paratext*' (p.147, italics in original), although its title *Text, Extratext, Metatext and Paratext in Translation* somehow implies a distinction between the latter three types of text related to the core text. I choose to adopt this 'broad' definition in this study. For Batchelor, extratextual materials such as reviews 'fit comfortably within the domain of the paratext' in her definition and a separate term 'extratext' is not needed (p. 149). In a similar vein, I believe the concept of 'paratext' applies to all extratextual elements examined in my case studies.

The paratextual data I use in this study contains printed and recorded materials loaded with extratextual information that would potentially influence readers' interpretation of the core texts, particularly with regard to their religious themes. 'Core texts', in this thesis, can refer to both the source texts and their translations. When it comes to Christian agents' attempts to influence

the readers' interpretation of the selected fiction works, any materials they produce or any activities they hold that are linked with this evangelical intent can be regarded as 'paratexts'. As I am interested in the transfer of the paratextual phenomena seen in the Christian realm of the Anglophone contexts into that of the Taiwanese context, the 'core texts' refer to the original texts in English when I examine source environments, but they become the translated texts when I look at the Taiwanese context. In other words, the 'core texts' in this thesis should be described as denoting the 'fiction stories' whose contents have attracted the attention of Christian agents and thus have led to the making of various paratextual products in all kinds of verbal or non-verbal forms.

1.6 Chapter outline

This present chapter has introduced this thesis and explained why and how it investigates the translation of English-language Christian-themed fiction into Chinese in Taiwain after the year 2000. A methodological sketch has also been given in this chapter. Chapter 2 delineates the theoretical framework for this study and describes my attempt to integrate ideas of Bourdieu and Luhmann into the polysystem approach. In doing so, I hope to enrich the polysystem approach by tackling its text-bound characteristics and subjectiveness claimed by many scholars.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 mainly contain contextual facts that are related to the inquiries made in this thesis. Chapter 3 tells about Christianity and the Christian literary system in Taiwan; it introduces historical and socio-political

background giving the present peripheral status to Christianity and Christian literature in Taiwan, Taiwan's current publishing industry and translated publications, the close link between Taiwan and the U.S. in the cultural and religious realms, and so on. Chapter 4 describes the thriving evangelical culture in the U.S. and how this has contributed to the establishment of evangelical fiction as a genre specifically in the U.S.

The three case studies are presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Chapter 5 deals with several translation-related phenomena surrounding *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In addition to the translation of the *Narnia* books, I also touch upon the Disney film adaptation of *Narnia* and its effects on churches in both the Anglophone world and Taiwan, which leads to the discussion of the tensions observed between their Christian and the non-Christian literary systems. And then, I speak of *Narnia*'s relation to the repertoire of Taiwan's Christian literary system and introduce the canonisation of the Christianised Chinese version of *Narnia* in the Chinese-speaking Christian community.

Chapter 6 examines how *Gilead*, as a novel that demonstrates a twofold foreignness (i.e. Americanness and Christianness) to general readers in Taiwan, has been introduced into Taiwan through translation. In the case of *Gilead*, I note how the norms from the theological system and those from the literary system interact with each other and contribute to the critical reception of a Christian-themed literary work. Also, by comparing the translations of the first traditional Chinese character edition of *Gilead* and the revised edition, I note that adopting the standardised Christian terminology from the predominant

Chinese Bible, the Mandarin *Union Version* (和合本), when translating Christian-themed works into Chinese seems to be an unwritten rule. These two points manifest themselves even more clearly in the case of *The Shack*, a theologically controversial novel that is sometimes labelled as heretical. In Chapter 7, the tensions generated by opposite criticisms on the content of *The Shack* are discussed with some core concepts of polysystem theory. In addition, a comparative textual analysis of the two existing Chinese translations of the *Shack*, *Xiaowu* (小屋, 2009) and *Pengwu* (棚屋, 2010), are presented in order to demonstrate the Christianised language in *Xiaowu*. This corresponds to my discussion about the translator's habitus and the system's norms.

Chapter 8 offers a comprehensive discussion that brings my data and findings into the theoretical discussion. It delineates the contemporary Christian literary polysystem on a global scale as the macro systemic entity, within which the U.S. Christian literary system occupies a primary position and greatly influences that of Taiwan. It aims to summarise the empirical results in a systematic manner and propose a refined polysystem approach that negotiates between Evan-Zohar's original model, Bourdieu's and Luhmann's theories. This chapter also involves a self-reflective account of myself as a researcher by applying Luhmann's ideas and foreshadows the conclusions and prospects in Chapter 9.

Chapter 2

A System-Based Theoretical Approach: the Complementariness of Theories of Even-Zohar, Bourdieu, and Luhmann

In this chapter, I will introduce the theoretical tools that help me investigate my research questions from a holistic perspective and further construct the answers in a comprehensive manner. I frame my analytical discussion with Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory. Recognising the criticisms polysystem theory has received from many translation researchers during recent decades, I would like to revisit polysystem theory by demonstrating its applicability for studying literary translation with empirical efforts.

In translation studies, system theory is not merely about polysystem theory; 'the Manipulation paradigm also operates with system concepts of more recent and more flexible manufacture' (Hermans, 1999, p.120). There are four theoretical lines in translation studies that later appeared as the descriptive branch after polysystem theory: José Lambert's mass communication maps, André Lefevere's rewriting theory, Pierre Bourdieu's sociological model, and Niklas Luhmann's social systems theory (ibid.). The first two offer theoretical frames that go beyond the limits of polysystem theory in translation studies, and the latter two are built upon theories originally from the field of sociology. The sociological turn has emerged in translation studies since the early 2000s. Many researchers have employed the sociological approaches to tackle

translation issues that polysystem theory, or more broadly speaking, descriptive translation studies, is allegedly unable to deal with.

In this thesis, instead of turning away from polysystem theory, I propose a way to utilise the polysystem approach complemented by some of Bourdieu's and Luhmann's core ideas. In this chapter, those elements of the three sets of theories that are most relevant to this study will be introduced, and why the three theories are considered complementary in this study will be explained.

2.1 The polysystem approach

2.1.1 Polysystem theory

Polysystem theory is widely considered to have paved the way for the subsequent development of cultural approaches in translation studies. Proposed by the Israeli scholar Even-Zohar in the late 1970s, polysystem theory has its foundation in Russian Formalism, especially Jurij Tynjanov's concept of 'system'. A system, Tynjanov argued, is formed by multi-stratum structure of elements; the elements do not exist in a vacuum but always interrelate with each other (Shuttleworth, 2009, p.197). The idea was extended by Tynjanov to discuss literary traditions. As explained by Gentzler:

> Literary traditions composed different systems, literary genres formed systems, a literary work itself was also a unique system, and the entire social order comprised another system, all of which were interrelated, 'dialectically' interacting with each other, and conditioning how any specific formal element could function.

(2001, p. 112, emphasis in original)

Even-Zohar borrowed Tynjanov's notion of system to develop his polysystem model, through which the process of literary production and reception as well as the literary and cultural phenomena generated from it are expected to be studied systematically. According to Even-Zohar (1997b, pp.1-3), it had already been widely recognised (during the time when he introduced polysystem theory) that 'socio-semiotic phenomena, i.e., sign-governed human patterns of communication (such as culture, language, literature)' should be perceived as systems instead of combinations of separate elements. For Even-Zohar, any socio-semiotic system is 'a heterogeneous, open structure' and 'very rarely a uni-system'; hence, it is essential to regard such a system as 'a polysystem—a multiple system, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are interdependent'.

The above quote from Even-Zohar summarises the conceptualisation of 'system' in polysystem theory—a non-closed structure composed of multifarious elements that interrelate. A 'polysystem' is therefore an aggregate of different systems that is of heterogeneousness and interdependency. One can readily notice the impact of the Formalist idea of 'system' on Even-Zohar's theorisation of the polysystem. Based on this, Even-Zohar further states that fundamentally, 'any socio-semiotic activity (or field) is a component of a larger (poly)system – that of "culture", and therefore is inevitably correlated (or

constantly liable to correlation) with other systems pertaining to the same whole' (ibid., p.9).

As Even-Zohar suggests, the polysystem is essentially a hierarchical system in which the power relations between different elements operate dynamically. In terms of the practical application of polysystem model in literary studies, Even-Zohar's 'The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem' (1990c) offers an example of applying the centre-periphery model proposed in polysystem theory to examine the relation between translated literature and local literature within a nation's literary polysystem. As noted by Shuttleworth (2009, p.197), polysystem theory can be used to explore and explain multi-level phenomena in literary studies: the polysystem of a national literature, together with other polysystems (e.g. the artistic, the religious, the political), can all be regarded as components that constitute the larger sociocultural polysystem; in this way, 'literature', while being examined within the wider sociocultural context, should no longer be treated as 'just a collection of texts' but 'a set of factors governing the production, promotion and reception of these texts'.

To theorise the literary system, Even-Zohar borrowed Roman Jakobson's model of communication and language to schematise his own model, which aims to reflect 'the macro-factors involved with the function of the literary system' (1990a, p.32). In Jakobson's original model, there are six factors contributing to the communication process: context, code, addresser, addressee, channel, and message. Based on this, Even-Zohar introduces his own scheme

of the literary system, which is presented as the following diagram (ibid., p.31, the terms in capital letters are proposed by Even-Zohar as substitutes for Jakobson's original terms which are put in brackets):

INSTITUTION [context]

REPERTOIRE [code]

PRODUCER [addresser] ----------[addressee] CONSUMER

("writer") ("reader")

MARKET [contact/channel]

PRODUCT [message]

Even-Zohar stresses that his model is not a counterpart of Jakobson's since Jakobson deals with 'the *single* utterance observed from the point of view of its constraints' (ibid., p.31, italics in original). The main difference between the two models, according to Even-Zohar, lies in his idea of 'institution' as the replacement for Jakobson's 'CONTEXT', which 'referred to ("referent" in another, somewhat ambiguous, nomenclature), seizable by the addressee, and either verbal or capable of being verbalized' (Jakobson, 1960 cited in Even-Zohar, 1990a, p.31). While Jakobson states that 'a CODE fully, or at least partially, common' to both the addresser and the addressee may account for a successful communication (ibid.), Even-Zohar maintains that in order to enable the common code to function, there must be 'the interference of some

socio-cultural institutions' (1990a, p.32). The application of Even-Zohar's model of literary system featuring such institutional interference will be further illustrated with actual examples in Chapter 3 when I introduce Taiwan's Christian literary scene.

2.1.2 The application of 'system' in this study

In commenting on Even-Zohar's use of the term 'polysystem' to indicate the system's dynamic and heterogeneous nature, Hermans (1999, p.106) maintains that 'all literary and cultural systems of any size may be assumed to be dynamic and heterogeneous', hence they can all be considered as 'polysystems'. In this way, it is not necessary to keep 'poly-' when addressing systems since all systems are essentially 'poly-'. Hermans therefore adopts 'systems' as a general term and only uses 'polysystem' when specifically referring to Even-Zohar's ideas. Although considering Hermans' statement rather convincing, in my thesis I still use 'polysystem' to denote the broader system composed of multiple systems. Terms like 'mega-polysystem', 'macro-polysystem', 'system', and 'sub-system' will also be used where appropriate.

To justify my use of a system-oriented approach to investigate the actual functioning of the Christian literary scene, I shall clearly explain the definition and implication of 'system' adopted in this study. Although different systemic theorists conceptualise their own 'systems' in various ways, there can still be found some core principles in common. In this thesis, I argue that the Christian

literary and cultural polysystem sustained by the church operates on both abstract/conceptual and concrete levels in a structural manner. The literary activities within this polysystem are essentially maintained and governed through the reified structure (i.e. the universal church system) composed of the non-physical entities (i.e. the knowledge of God).

To begin with, I would like to borrow Skyttner's (2006, p. 57) definition of 'system' in his introduction to *General Systems Theory*, which explains systems theory through cross-disciplinary endeavors: '[a] system is a set of interacting units or elements that form an integrated whole intended to perform some function…any structure that exhibits *order*, *pattern*, and *purpose*' (italics in original). Skyttner addresses the universality, interdisciplinarity, and emphasis on laws in systemology, and notes that systems science creates a space where the divide between the sciences and the humanities can be bridged (p. 4). In terms of its use in research, Skyttner describes system as something with a focus on 'its subjective nature': '[a] system is not something presented to the observer, it is something to be recognised by him' (p. 56). That is to say, the observer's utterance does not refer to things that exist in the real world but rather to how the observer put together his/her perceptions of the real world (p. 57). This '*constructivist* view of reality' (Glaserfeld, 1990 cited in Skyttner, 2006, p. 57, italics in original) corresponds to the 'system' defined in the descriptive paradigm in translation studies.

In descriptive translation studies, 'the concept of "system" should be taken as no more than a heuristic model, a cognitive metaphor', and 'a map to

make sense of a territory' (Lefevere, 1984 cited in Hermans, 1999, p. 126). Even-Zohar's 'system' defined in his polysystem theory reflects a similar standpoint, which regards the systemic feature of literature as 'a working hypothesis whereby to deal with the hypothesised relations among a set of assumed observables, which do not necessarily correspond to any entity in reality' (Codde, 2003, p.107).

Although the analytical discussion presented in this thesis is built upon Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, in which 'system' is treated as a hypothetical model to approach reality, I contend that the Christian literary and cultural polysystem manifests its operation in both abstract and concrete ways. That is to say, while churches present themselves as religious organisations that embody specific ruling structures, the elements that underpin the church system exist at a conceptual level. In addition to the Christian gospel, the core beliefs bolstering the Christian community to call for unity among adherents of Christianity (e.g. Christians altogether form one body in Christ in Romans 12:5) are abstract ideas. In my case studies, church groups are observed to be the institutionalised 'system' that exercises power to judge or censor those texts, which has led to my discussion on the dynamic relations between the non-physical 'systems' of different cultures or beliefs.

2.1.3 Norms and the system

As an extension of Even-Zohar's idea of norms in polysystem theory, Gideon Toury's theorisation of norms in translation activities will be applied to

explain the norms found in my observation of the Christian literary polysystem. According to Toury (1995, pp. 54-55), translations are always influenced by socio-cultural constraints, which can be regarded as a continuum that has one end as 'relatively absolute *rules*' and the other 'pure *idiosyncrasies*' (italics in original). What exist between these two poles are *norms*, components that can be seen as relatively rule-like or idiosyncratic. Drawing on the definitions of the concept of 'norms' in sociolinguistics and social psychology, Toury describes norms

> as the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community—as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate—into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations, specifying what is prescribed and forbidden as well as what is tolerated and permitted in a certain behavioural dimension.
>
> (ibid., p.55)

For individuals, their familiarity of norms is gained through socialisation; for the community, norms function as criteria for judging behaviours. Toury further points out that the main function of norms is to maintain social order; moreover, behaviour that does not cohere with the norms is 'always possible' (ibid.).

Toury (1995, pp.56-59) proposes several different kinds of translational norms. 'Initial norms' are frequently addressed in discussing translation behaviours: whether the translators choose to abide by the textual features of the source text to obtain 'adequacy' or to follow the linguistic conventions of

the target language and culture to gain 'acceptability'. In addition to initial norms, which refer to the general tendency of translators' choices, there are two other categories of norms: 'preliminary norms' and 'operational norms'. Preliminary norms include 'translation policy' (i.e. factors that determine what works to be translated) and 'directness of translation' (i.e. whether indirect translations that are conducted through intermediate languages are accepted). 'Operational norms' demonstrate the initial norms through 'matricial norms' and 'textual-linguistic norms'. Matricial norms link with the degree to which the target texts correspond to the source texts; in other words, to what extent the target texts contain elements that are omitted, added, relocated, etc. 'Textual-linguistic norms' govern the translator's linguistic choices, such as those on the lexical or stylistic level.

In Taiwan's Christian literary and cultural system, the 'preliminary norms' that govern Christian groups' selection of books derive from the theological realm; they are different from the commercially-derived preliminary norms which the mainstream publishers that published the translations of these books adhere to. I am aware that Toury's norm theory mainly deals with the translation domain, which means that it may not be applicable in my discussion on the norms found in the Christian literary polysystem since the texts I examine were not published by Christian publishers. Yet, here I extend the notion of 'preliminary norms' to refer to the factors that determine whether certain books are accepted by Christian groups and further introduced to the readers as 'Christian works'.

As for the 'operational norms', the use of terms from the Mandarin *Union Version* (hereafter the Mandarin *UV*), the most predominant Chinese translation of the Bible, is the most salient example of 'textual-linguistic norms' found in this study. Apart from the Christian terminology standardised by the Mandarin *UV*, there are words and terms in the Chinese language that can be easily recognised as Christian. In many cases, these also serve as linguistic norms for translated Christian literature. The history behind this will be presented in Chapter 3. In my case study on *The Shack*, I discuss the textual-linguistic norms found in the comparative study on its two Chinese translations and situate such a norm discussion in the context of canonisation within the Chinese-language Christian literary system; I consider this an illustrative example of the systemicity that I aim to argue for in this study. Other findings that support my view on norms and systemicity in Taiwan's Christian literary system are presented in Chapter 8.

2.2 The dissatisfaction with polysystem theory

2.2.1 Norms and agents

Although polysystem theory helps to move researchers' attention from the merely linguistic aspects of translation to broader contextual issues, there are criticisms on its negligence of agents and focus on texts and norms (Hermans, 1999, p.118; Hanna, 2016, p. 21). 'Agents' of translation activities, in a commonly quoted definition, are individuals who are 'in an intermediary position between a translator and an end user of a translation' (Sager, 1994

cited in Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997, p.7). These people thus include 'text producers, mediators who modify the text such as those who produce abstracts, editors, revisors, and translators, commissioners and publishers' (Milton and Bandia, 2009, p.1). Building on this existing definition, Milton and Bandia in their introduction to *Agents of Translation* expand the list of agents of translation by taking in 'patrons of literature, Maecenas, salon organisers, politicians or companies which help to change cultural and linguistic policies'; magazines, journals and institutions are all included here (ibid.). Milton and Bandia also refer to Sager's point that the practice of an agent may be a combination of different roles.

A substantial part of this thesis is devoted to decoding how Taiwnaese Christian agents engage in the translation, production, and dissemination of the selected literary texts. In this study, the three main kinds of Christian agents are translators, publishing houses, and individuals or groups affiliated with churches that intend to engage in the process of promoting certain works as good Christian literature. With my research findings, I argue that in the Christian literary and cultural realm, norms play such a significant part that agents' decisions may be unwittingly made on some occasions. Nevertheless, recognising the seemingly passive role agents are assigned to in the polysystem approach, I will also explore the compatibility between the descriptive paradigm and the Bourdieusian approach in translation studies by reviewing some existing scholarship in Section 2.4.

2.2.2 The inevitable subjectiveness

The polysystem approach, or descriptive translation studies in general, is known for turning away from value judgments on the research subjects, which makes it differ from the prescriptive approach towards translation products. A main principle of the polysystem approach, as stated by Even-Zohar, is the avoidance of any 'value judgments of culture and cultural projects' (Salvador, 2002, p.4). This point has been reiterated by Even-Zohar in many other works. For example, in 'Polysystem Theory (Revised)', he clearly states that researchers who adopt the polysystem approach should shun 'biased elitism'; they must recognise that the historical investigation of any phenomena as polysystems should not only include 'the prestigious segments', even in cases where these segments are regarded as 'the only *raison d'être* of the relevant study (such as "literary studies") in the first place' (1997b, p.4).

This sense of inclusiveness is reflected in my text selection for this study. Obviously, the three cases I have chosen to examine in this thesis demonstrate different degrees of literariness and Christianness. My decision concerning text selection was not made according to their literary merit or prestige but rather based on the fact that these works have been regarded and promoted as 'Christian-themed' by certain (albeit not all) Christian agents. That is to say, I am fully aware of the fact that 'Christian-themed fiction' is a constructed concept. For one thing, whether the motif of a literary work is 'Christian' is determined through interpretation—first by the author, then by the agents, critics and readers; and for another, whether a text can be considered as 'proper

literature' also requires certain endorsements from an authoritative perspective.

While the polysystem theoretical framework is claimed to entail a more panoramic view of the research subjects, this seemingly all-inclusive and non-prescriptive approach has been challenged by many subsequent researchers for its negligence of the inevitable non-objective observer's position over the course of research. This criticism is not merely made on polysystem theory but the overall descriptive paradigm. For instance, as commented by Pym, '[d]escriptivist theory is unaware of its own historical position' (2014, p.85). Pym raises some translation issues that tend to remain unanswered within the descriptive paradigm. He maintains that in cases where the descriptive approach, which aims to compile 'neutral, transparent, objective knowledge about translation', is adopted, it is necessary to also consider the role of the person who is performing the task of describing. Pym also questions the descriptive translation scholars' way of defining translations, their unspecified usage of the descriptions of norms, the potentiality of different levels of description as 'translations of a kind', and the prevailing focus on context. For the last item, Pym specifies: 'if translations depend on context, why should this not be true of the way one describes translation?' (ibid.)

To critically reflect on such subjectivity, I would like to employ the framework of Luhmann's theory as the reflective tool to approach this system-oriented research. Although also a system-based theory, Luhmann's theory, described by Hermans (1999, p.146) as 'decidedly anti-foundational', calls researchers' attention to the fact that 'one cannot simultaneously observe

an object and one's observation of it'. This again challenges descriptive translation scholars' presumption that descriptive approaches to translation studies, unlike their prescriptive counterparts, are without bias. Hermans further explains that '[t]o be external the description must always belong to another system' (ibid., p.150). My use of Luhmann's theory intends to provide the possibility of a more holistic panoramic perspective for this system-based study. This will be explained in further detail in Section 2.5.

2.3 Rethinking polysystem theory

Before I proceed further, I would like to mention some publications that reclaim the practicability of the polysystem approach. There has been continued attention paid to polysystem theory in the midst of theoretical and methodological shifts during recent decades, which describes not only the significance but also the viability of polysystem theory in literary, cultural, and translation studies.

Chang Nam Fung (張南峰), whose 'In defence of polysystem theory' and 'Polysystem theory: Its prospect as a framework for translation research' were published respectively in 2011 and 2001, has been frequently quoted by translation researchers. Philippe Codde's 'Polysystem Theory Revisited: A New Comparative Introduction' (2003) is written from a comparative literature perspective and aims to 'rekindle' researchers' interest in polysystem theory; in 2007, he published *The Jewish American Novel*, which examines the success of Jewish novels in the U.S. literary system within the framework of polysystem

theory. Patrick Cattrysse extends the application of polysystem theory to adaptation studies in 'Film (Adaptation) as Translation: Some Methodological Proposals' (1992) and later developed his research onto *Descriptive Adaptation Studies: Epistemological and Methodological Issues* (2014).

I would like to specifically review Chang's refined polysystem model, which was proposed with the aim of strengthening certain areas of polysystem theory in order to make it deployable for a wider range of case studies. Taking the opposite route to Even-Zohar, whose 'revised outline' 'moves towards generality, getting rid of "huge nomenclatures and intricate classifications" on its way', Chang's augmented polysystem model 'moves towards particularity, with an increase in nomenclatures' (2011, p.339). In Chang's new model, there are six polysystems from which norms that chiefly govern the translation process and outcomes, particularly in literary translation, are generated: the political polysystem, the ideological polysystem, the economic polysystem, the linguistic polysystem, the literary polysystem, and the translational polysystem (ibid.).

Chang's expanded polysystem model will not be covered in my later discussion. My research findings, however, certainly attest to Chang's earlier statement put in 'Towards a macro-polysystem hypothesis': 'activities within a polysystem are governed not only by norms from within the polysystem itself, but also by a web of norms from many other polysystems' (2000, p.119). According to what I have found, the activities within the Christian literary polysystem are also influenced by norms from the Christian theological

polysystem and the non-Christian literary polysystem.

My response to the perceived inadequacy of polysystem theory is to bring in theories of Bourdieu and Luhmann to develop a possible meta-theorisation. In suggesting that polysystem theory can be complemented by some core ideas of these two sets of theories, I hope to invigorate the former and find a path to the intersection of the earlier cultural turn and the recent sociological turn in translation studies.

2.4 Applying Bourdieu

2.4.1 The field, capital, and habitus

Bourdieu's sociology of culture conceptualises a socio-cultural realm where the 'capital' is mobilised, and an individual's position within a particular 'field' is determined by how much capital he or she possesses. In Bourdieu's theory, society is composed of different fields, each of which represents a distinct arena of practice, such as literature, education, and religion. Every field sees a power struggle between those involved in the specific social activity—the agents. Fields may overlap, but each still operates in an autonomous way with its own set of norms and forms of capital. Capital, according to Bourdieu, denotes 'accumulated labour'; it constitutes both 'a force inscribed in objective or subjective structures' and 'the principle underlying the immanent regularities of the social world' (Bourdieu, 1986, p.15). That is to say, capital refers to not only the material or immaterial representations of labour given to or obtained by individuals or groups, but also 'the very logic' that contributes

to the maintenance of social activities as well as the dynamic relationship between the participants in each field (Hanna, 2016, p. 37). In Bourdieu's theory, capital can be categorised into the following kinds: 'economic capital' (e.g. money and other material assets), 'social capital' (e.g. interpersonal networks), 'cultural capital' (e.g. education and knowledge), and 'symbolic capital' (e.g. social status) (Bourdieu, 1986, pp.15-26).

Bourdieu's theory has been known for deviating from Structuralism, the predominant critical approach in the French intellectual field in the 1960s and 1970s (Boschetti, 2006). Bourdieu's definition of 'system of production and circulation of symbolic goods' is the actual system where there are 'objective relations among different institutions, functionally defined by their role in the division of labour of production, reproduction, and diffusion of symbolic goods' (Bourdieu, 1993, p.115). His emphasis on the empirical aspect makes him differentiate himself from system theorists. System theory, from Bourdieu's point of view, is grounded in 'an organicist, totalising philosophy' (Hermans, 1999, pp.131-32).

However, some equivalence can be found between Bourdieusian ideas and the key concepts in polysystem theory, such as the emphasis on the relational composition of both 'field' and 'system', and the regulatory nature of 'capital' and 'repertoire'. As Hermans (1999, pp.131-32) points out, the debate over the compatibility of Bourdieu's theory and system-based theories goes on; Hermans mentions Siegfried Schmidt and Alain Viala as two influential scholars who argue for the appropriateness of paralleling the components of

Bourdieu's theory and those of systems theory.

Although the relational feature and hierarchical structure shared by 'system' in polysystem theory and Bourdieu's 'field' constitute a striking similarity between the two theories, a significant difference between these two theories that is frequently brought up by scholars is that the latter presupposes a more active role that agents take in the making of cultural products. According to Bourdieu, every individual (i.e. agent) involved in social activities has his or her own 'habitus': 'the generative principle of responses more or less well adapted to the demands of a certain field, is the product of an individual history, but also, through the formative experiences of earliest infancy, of the whole collective history of family and class' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 91). The concept of habitus suggests that the behaviours of individuals or groups who partake in socio-cultural activities are not passively governed by norms or laws.

Yet, as this thesis continues to develop, the interrelation observed between agents' habitus and systemic norms is seen to be more complex, and the latter appears to play a greater role within the Christian context. It is my intention that the research findings in this study will serve as empirical evidence to bridge the presumed gap between polysystem theory and Bourdieu's ideas.

2.4.2 Why 'system' (not 'field')?

Both Bourdieu's 'field' and Even-Zohar's 'polysystem' presuppose a space of power relations. In literary and cultural studies, the dynamics of power relations are generated in the hypothetical spheres that centre on various

literary and cultural activities. For Bourdieu, to study a field is to '[construct] the space of positions and the space of the position-takings (*prises de position*) in which they are expressed'; therefore, any literary or artistic field is 'a field of forces' as well as 'a field of struggles' that is inclined to alter or maintain this field of forces (Bourdieu, 1983, p.312). This relational thinking can also be seen in Even-Zohar's polysystem theory. However, there is a main difference between Bourdieu's theory and Even-Zohar's polysystem theory: Even-Zohar focuses on the space within which products or elements contend for a more central position, while Bourdieu speaks of the space where social agents attempt to take up positions by acquiring a certain amount of particular capital (i.e. recognition) and also disseminating this particular capital. Bourdieu calls such space '*the space of literary or artistic position-takings*' (ibid., italics in original).

To approach Christian agents' behaviours with Bourdieusian ideas, I will need to first identify the 'field' as the object of investigation. The most straightforward way to designate the field being discussed in this study is to refer to it as the field of Christian literature, which would accord with the following statement by Bourdieu:

> The science of the literary field is a form of *analysis situs* which establishes each position—e.g. the one which corresponds to a genre such as the novel or, within this, to a sub-category such as the 'society novel' (*roman mondain*) or the 'popular' novel—is objectively defined by the system of distinctive properties by which it can be situated relative to

other positions […].

(Bourdieu, 1983, p.312, italics in original)

This suggests that genre can be used to define the boundary of a literary field.

Nevertheless, in each case studied in this thesis, there is the blurring of boundaries between the Christian literary field and the mainstream non-Christian literary field in Taiwan. This has brought some difficulties to my discussion when 'capital', another essential concept in Bourdieu's theory of cultural production, is taken into consideration. Bourdieu's conceptualisation of 'field' entails 'capital'. Capital, as the 'accumulated labour' represented in different materialised or non-physical forms, enables agents to mobilise (i.e. to take up positions) within a certain field. It embodies the laws and elements that maintain and govern the operation of the specific field; therefore, at the same time, it offers the set of standards that determine the success (i.e. the positions) of the agents (Bourdieu, 1986, p.15).

In using the Bourdieusian approach to studying Shakespeare translation in Egypt, Hanna writes that since the ongoing conflict over the collection of materialised or symbolic capital determines the structure and boundaries of the field as well as every individual's status within the field, one can therefore notice 'implications for the definition of *what is acceptable and what is not* in drama translation' (2016, p. 202, my emphasis). Likewise, Gouanvic describes 'field' as a 'place or context where a certain set of orientations, dispositions, and self-justifications are considered legitimate' (1997, cited in Hermans 1999, p.132). In this way, the notion of 'capital' does

imply a similar sense as regulatory norms and standards.

In the field of Christian literature, it can be observed that the more coherent the appropriation of certain literary works by an agent or a group of agents is with the agreed 'orthodox' belief by mainstream churches, the more significant the position of that certain agent or group of agents will be within the field. Considering the different types of agents in translation activities listed by Milton and Bandia (see Section 2.2.1), Christian authors, Christian translators, Christian editors, Christian literary groups, and Christian publishers can all be regarded as agents in the field of Christian literature.

In treating the texts examined in this study as cultural products that circulate in both the Christian literary field and the non-Christian/mainstream literary field in Taiwan, one can find that the distinction between the norms that Christian literary agents adhere to and those that non-Christian agents care about marks the boundary between the two fields. In my case studies, the books are all Christian-themed fiction works published by mainstream publishing houses and target a general readership rather than only the Christian community. However, the extra-textual factors that shape their Christianness essentially come from a separate field: the field of Christian literature.

Although the Christian literary realm and its non-Christian counterpart may be viewed as two fields co-existing with each other, an obstacle arises when one thinks of the key aspect translation scholars who use the Bourdieusian approach deal with: translators as agents. How do they take their role in the process of producing Christian-themed literary translations that

intend to sell in the mainstream market? As 'defining the boundaries of a particular field is about the inclusion/exclusion of individuals and groups' (Hanna, ibid., p.22), to which field does the capital accumulated by these translators belong? These questions can be considered with the concept of translator's habitus.

In the case of *The Shack*, where the translator of *Xiaowu*, its Chinese version published in Taiwan, employs highly Christianised language whose elements are visibly different from the daily language used by non-Christians, these questions somehow become more intriguing. Generally speaking, the use of standardised Christian terminology is an indicator of the ideal translation of Christian allusions. For translators who translate Christian-themed texts into Chinese, the use of this particular set of linguistic norms is important as it can be regarded as, in Bourdieu's terms, the cultural capital in the Chinese-language Christian literary field. Nevertheless, this factor appears to be less significant in the mainstream publishing realm, especially in the case of *The Shack*, a novel that was intended to appeal to the mainstream market and whose Christian terms in the original English manuscript have even been diluted on purpose. While *Xiaowu*'s translator, Chen Jingmin, can be considered as accumulating capital in the Chinese-language Christian literary field by using proper Christian terminology, this practice does not necessarily enable her to gain capital in the mainstream Chinese-language literary field where the book as a cultural product was produced. Yet, the non-Christian book market is targeted by the novel. Under such circumstances, one cannot clearly

identify which field Chen, as the agent, has attempted to gain a position within. This makes it difficult to further analyse the agent's mobilisation within a specific field, which should be a focus of the Bourdieusian approach. The very small scale of Taiwan's Christian literary publishing somehow also suggests the limitedness of the Christian literary field, even the lack of it, in Taiwan.

2.5 Applying Luhmann

Both Luhmann and Even-Zohar are considered system theorists. However, while Luhmann's theory targets modern society in particular, Even-Zohar's polysystem theory was first proposed to apply in the literary domain, and later extended to become a 'general theory of culture' (Chang, 2011, p.311). This is not to say that these two sets of theoretical models are incompatible. I hope to demonstrate how Luhmann's ideas may complement the polysystem approach in translation studies and lead to a more comprehensive analysis of system-based study of translation phenomena. I will mainly apply 'autopoiesis' and 'second-order observation', which are two essential concepts proposed in Luhmann's social systems theory, in my discussion. I suggest that this helps to not only summarise what I have found in my case studies but also answer how and why the agents within the Christian literary polysystem act in certain ways.

2.5.1 Luhmann's 'system' and 'environment'

Luhmann's social systems theory is interested in various systems (or subsystems) that have different functions in the real world; it views society as a

self-reproducing system within which there are subsystems such as that of law, economy, politics, religion, education, and art (Hermans, 1999, p.137; Tyulenev, 2012, p.1). Each of these functionally different systems constitutes a social system on its own; each of them is a system possessing autopoiesis. Even-Zohar's hypothesised system that intends to investigate socio-semiotic phenomena emphasises the relational nature of the system and the strata existing between the elements (subsystems) within it. Polysystem theory treats systems as open structures, but Luhmann delineates systems as autopoietic systems that are closed on the operational level.

However, Luhmann further states that each of the self-sustaining systems of different functions is surrounded by an environment from which the system receives essential elements when maintaining its self-reproduction (Tyulenev, 2012, p.3). In this sense, one may say that neither of the systems Even-Zohar and Luhmann depict works in a vacuum. In polysystem theory, multiple systems interact with and influence each other, and this interrelation can be observed within a broader (poly)system. The systems of distinct functions in Luhmann's theory altogether also form a larger system, i.e. society. As Luhmann speaks about autopoiesis of each social system, the interplay between different systems is seemingly unhighlighted; however, it should not be neglected that each system does interact and depends on its surrounding environment. Theoretically speaking, it seems impossible to reconcile the conceptual difference between Even-Zohar's 'polysystem', which is composed of various systems (and subsystems), and Luhmann's 'environment', by which

each system is surrounded. Nevertheless, I would like to suggest that there is a similarity between these two notions, which allows me to use Luhmann's ideas to form the meta-discussion in this thesis.

The concept of environment is important in Luhmann's social systems theory, but it appears to be rather intriguing and even abstract. In Luhmann's *Introduction to Systems Theory*, what one can learn about environment is that it is 'always more complex than the system' (p.121), while 'a system *is* the difference between system and environment' (p.44, italics in original). Succeeding researchers' elaborations offer a more concrete picture of how the environment and the system relates to each other. For example, La Cour (2006, p.41) delineates Luhmann's conceptualisation of the environment in two facets. On the one hand, the environment is an 'undefined' existence since it is 'a constitutive entity for every individual system, each representing its own unique unity of the distinction system/environment'; yet, on the other hand, it is also 'defined' since its existence results from the observations of a specific system.

A more practical way to access the application of Luhmann's environment in translation studies is to look at translation scholars' interpretations of it. Tyulenev (2012, p.227) describes environment as 'amorphous' and excluded from the system; it cannot operate by itself due to the lack of 'self-organizing ability'; it is viewed as a whole only by the system for which it exists as the environment and is able to interact with the system as it is composed of systems. Tyulenev's mention of the 'amorphousness' of the environment

suggests that the environment does not present itself in a definite shape, and he views the environment as being made up of different systems. Likewise, Hermans (1999, p.138) points out that in Luhmann's theory, each social system is 'differentiated from its environment, i.e. the collection of other systems, by the fact that within each system, communications are of a different intensity and quality as compared with the environment'. Here, the environment can thus be recognised as a wider context where various systems exist.

Although Luhmann's environment does not bear an exact likeness to a macro-system from the perspective of polysystem theory (since the latter is still delineated as a 'system' rather than an uncertain structure), a rough parallel can still be drawn between the two concepts. This sets the scene for my application of Luhmann to a further discussion on the Christian literary polysystem, in the hope of engaging a more critical viewpoint in this study carried out from a systemic perspective.

2.5.2 The Christian literary polysystem as an autopoietic system

In this section, I will explain how the Christian literary polysystem has appeared to be an autopoietic system from the Christian, mostly evangelical, perspective. To view the Christian literary polysystem through the evangelical lens is to see it through the eyes of the subjects within this polysystem; it also means to read literature according to the norms existing in the repertoire of the Christian literary polysystem, and further decide whether certain works can enter the polysystem as well as how close they are positioned to the centre of

the polysystem.

From the Christian angle, the Bible carries the authoritative and never-changing word of God. For conservative evangelicals, biblical messages are fixed. It is from these predetermined messages that a collection of norms upholding the Christian literary polysystem is generated. And it is with this already given set of norms that Christian agents react to certain texts. In this sense, we can describe the system as self-referential. This phenomenon well exemplifies Tyulenev's (2012, p. 5) illustration of Luhmann's notion of autopoiesis: while systems observe other systems' behaviors, they can only use their own binary standards to interpret the observed. Similarly, Hermans (1999, p.145) describes self-referencing as constantly returning to the prevailing patterns as the yardstick for legitimacy of the observed; such process is to build, to sustain, and to adjust the system. This is manifested in how Christian agents interpret literary texts.

Importantly, Luhmann makes this statement only applicable to institutions but not individuals (Tyulenev, 2012, p.5). Social systems are portrayed by Luhmann as essentially being made up of communications instead of individuals or collectives. The physical and psychic parts work together to maintain individuals' lives, but it is through communications that interpersonal and social systems are built up. Luhmann regards all social systems as *Sinn-systeme*, 'sense systems' or 'meaning systems': 'communicative signals, interpretive acts and connecting responses' form the system and further maintain it. Also, the borderlines between social systems are where meaning is

handled differently on one side when compared to the other side (Hermans, 1999, p.138).

Such theorisation can be exempified by the case of the Christian literary polysystem. The Christian literary polysystem is differentiated from its non-Christian counterpart due to the different meanings/interpretations about literary texts constructed within the two systems. Christian groups disseminate and reinforce the framework of these doctrine-based norms, and they also make the attempts to publicise the Christian reading of certain literary works. It is Christian agents, those who are affiliated with the church system, that carry out the above-mentioned 'duty'—in other words, they represent and work on behalf of the institution. The Christian literary polysystem thus continues to be strengthened by the agents through communicative and interpretive activities.

2.5.3 Second-order observation

Self-reference is an integral part of the autopoiesis of a system. Luhmann terms this process of observing *what* is observed as 'first-order observation'. 'The first-order observer lives in a world that seems both probable and true (*wahr-scheinlich*)' (Luhmann, 2000, p. 62). When *how* an observation is conducted is observed—'*how* what is observed is observed'—second-order observation occurs. While second-order observation recognises the impossibility of possessing an all-knowing perspective on the observed, they 'can at least thematize the improbability [*Unwahrscheinlichkeit*] of the first-order observation (including its own)' (ibid.). In this sense, my

investigation into the operation of the Christian literary polysystem can be considered as a second-order observation from the vantage point of a researcher.

The role I take as a second-order observer outside the observed Christian literary polysystem allows me to see what the subjects within the system do not always see. The most obvious example is the conservative Christian reading of literary texts. Situating the investigation within the framework of polysystem theory, I am able to outline the non-physical or concrete systems in which different meanings of texts are generated, and trace all the elements that contribute to the formation of such contexts. As a descriptive researcher, I try to position myself in an area where the different systems intersect, where I can observe *what* is (to be) observed. Yet, *how* my observation takes shape should also be considered, which will be presented as my reflective account in the concluding chapter in this thesis.

Chapter 3

Taiwan and the 'Foreign': the Past and Now

This chapter provides some essential background to the findings and discussion presented in this thesis. I will first present some crucial facts about the current status of Christianity as a world religion, in the hope of offering some ideas about why it would be worthwhile to look at the dissemination of Christian literature across national and cultural borders in the contemporary era. In doing so, I hope to point out the value of this study. Then, I will detail the contextual information pertinent to the translation of Christian-themed literature in Taiwan, including facts and statistics about Taiwan's mainstream and Christian book markets. I will also write about the historical and socio-political context that has led to the present status of Christianity in Taiwan. Finally, I will use Even-Zohar's model of literary system to elucidate Taiwan's Christian literary and cultural system.

3.1 The grand context: Christianity from the West to the Global South

Christianity has been commonly considered 'the religion of the West', which is why this study treats the translation of Christian-themed fiction as the transmission of a Western religion and a Western literary genre at the same time. The perception that Christianity belongs to the West was strengthened especially through the intense missionary movements accompanied by the expansion of Western colonial powers over Africa and Asia in the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries. Nowadays, in many parts of the world where Christianity is a 'foreign religion', there is a tendency for the populace to not recognise the fact that Christianity, with its roots in Jewish traditions, originated at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. This can also be observed in Taiwan, where Christianity is often regarded as 'the white people's religion'.

Christianity gradually gained many converts across and beyond the Mediterranean region with the missionary efforts of Jesus's disciples as well as the apostles after Jesus's death. It is widely claimed that the major reason for the spread and later the domination of Christianity in the West was the Roman Empire's legalisation and official adoption of Christianity (AD 313), which further led to the significance of Christianity in the formation of Western civilisation. The expansion of Islam to the southern and eastern Mediterranean areas from the Middle East since the seventh century is also believed to reinforce the historical impression that Christianity shifted its focus to the Western World, Europe (Jenkins, 2011, pp. 22-24). During the medieval period, the notion 'Christendom' in a geographical sense emerged in Europe and was used to refer to the clustering of countries dominated by Christianity (Jenkins, 2011; Brown, 2013). This long historical evolution of European Christendom, together with the Christian ideas inherent in the founding of the United States in the relatively recent period, have contributed to the common perception that Christianity is 'a religion of the West'.

Cross-cultural missionary activities, whether systematic or random, began when the early churches were established. The eighteenth century witnessed a

vast number of missionaries sent from Western countries to other countries, especially those in Asia and Africa. In the late eighteenth century, there came into existence many missionary organisations, most of which were based in the U.K. and the U.S. It was the Protestant Christians who first established the voluntarist model of missionary agency, through which evangelical Christians could practise their pursuit of Christendom with an Enlightenment sense of individual responsibility and the Pietist focus on 'the fellowship of the "renewed"' (Stanley, 2001, p. 14, emphasis in original). As such a missionary method proved to be successful for cross-cultural mission, Catholics also started adopting it. These voluntary societies mobilised Christian resources from the West and established a wide international network that involved church planting and the provision of medical, educational, industrial, social, and cultural resources (Walls, 1987, p.28).

In the twentieth century, Christianity spread rapidly in many parts of the world outside Europe and Northern America and gradually grew into 'a truly global religion' (Woodhead, 2009, p.206). Nowadays, while Europe and Northern America are still the main 'sources' of international missionary activities, a growing number of missionaries have been sent by countries in the Global South, which, in the United Nations' geopolitical terms, refers to Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania. According to *Christianity in its Global Context, 1970-2020* (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Center for the Study of Global Christianity, 2013, pp.7-9), in 2010 the U.S. was still the country that sent out the most missionaries, 127,000 in total, followed by

Brazil (34,000), France (21,000), Spain (21,000), Italy (20,000), South Korea (20,000), the U.K. (15,000), Germany (14,000), India (10,000), and Canada (8,500).[4] As can be seen, three countries on this top ten list are from the Global South.

The shift of Christianity from the Global North to the Global South has been studied by many scholars. Jenkins' *The Next Christendom: The Rise of Global Christianity* (2011) is one prominent work in this regard. As stated by Jenkins, 'Christendom' bears negative implications such as the bonding of state and in the more modern sense, 'a picture of Christianity as the religion of one part of the world—white, wealthy, and technologically advanced—spreading its faith as part of the package of imperial exploitation' (p.13). Jenkins presents a great amount of facts and statistics to argue for the rise of the new Christendom in the context of twenty-first century globalisation. He combs through historical evidence to clear up some misconceptions about the spread of Christianity and even objects to the concept of 'Western Christianity'. Jenkins maintains that Europe was not the main continent where the early expansion of Christianity took place; rather, Christianity had been evenly spreading across the three continents: Asia, Europe, and Africa (pp. 22-26).

As for the contemporary era, Jenkins overturns the widespread assumption that the Christian population is shrinking and Christianity is on course to disappear. Christendom, or the *Res Publica Christiana*, was 'a true overarching unity and a focus of loyalty transcending mere kingdoms or

[4] This Center defines 'Christians' as 'followers of Jesus Christ of all kinds; all traditions and confessions; and all degrees of commitment' (p. 9).

empires' for medieval people; however, while representing more in the cultural sense than as an actual political power, Christendom was later toppled by nationalism (p.14). Jenkins proposes that, with the gradual disappearance of the boundaries of nation-states in the context of twenty-first century globalisation, the Christianised parts of the Global South may unite because of their shared religious faith (p. 15).

The southward move of Christianity provides a wider context for my study. The rapid growth of Christianity in China certainly constitutes a part of this story. The Christian share of China's population went from 0.1% in 1970 to 7.9% in 2010, and it is expected to reach 10.6% in 2020 (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Center for the Study of Global Christianity, 2013, p.36). Due to its huge population, China was ranked fifth among the countries with the largest Christian populations in the world in 2010, and it may rise to the third in 2020 (ibid., p.15). Apart from stimulating research on Sino-Christianity, this has also caught mainstream media's attention. In April 2014 *The Telegraph* published a news article entitled 'China on course to become "world's most Christian nation" within 15 years' (Phillips, 2014). The tension between the state and church caused by the drastic growth of Christianity in China was reported by *The Guardian* in November 2015: 'Secretive conference to assess future of rapidly growing faith triggers concerns Communist party may seek to bring church in line with state agenda' (Phillips and Sherwood, 2015).

The spread of Christianity in China relies much on the Christian communities of Hong Kong and Taiwan in many aspects, including the

publication of pastoral and evangelistic resources and various kinds of Christian books. All these phenomena will be introduced in the following sections. I recognise the potential role that the Chinese-speaking world will play in the future scope of global Christianity, and the fact that Christianity has continually presented a platform for East-West cultural interaction in various facets. Therefore, this thesis is expected to contribute to the understanding of the dissemination of Christianity in such a context.

3.2 Taiwan's Chinese-language book market

The sociocultural complexity of the current Chinese-speaking world makes this study more interesting. While this thesis focuses on the Taiwanese context, it would be helpful to also take situations in Hong Kong and China into consideration, in order to better locate Taiwan's position in the whole Chinese-language Christian literary and cultural polysystem. As the three Christian-themed texts examined in this thesis were all published by non-Christian publishing houses and circulated in the mainstream book market, I should also state some background information on the introduction of foreign books into Taiwan.

Due to the use of the same language, the publishing industries of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China are highly interrelated. Although the official written script adopted in Hong Kong and Taiwan is traditional (complex) Chinese, which is different from the simplified Chinese system used in China, the book

markets in these three places overlap.[5] On the copyright pages of books published in Taiwan and Hong Kong, publishers normally use the English term 'complex Chinese edition' to refer to their products in the edition notices. However, in this thesis, I use 'traditional Chinese character edition' when mentioning such publications, in order to distinguish them from their counterparts published in simplified Chinese characters. Nowadays, with the increasing cross-Strait economic and cultural contacts, some Taiwanese publishing houses also produce simplified Chinese character versions of certain books in order to reach China's market. It is also common for publishing houses in China to buy copyrights from Taiwanese publishers and reproduce the books in simplified Chinese characters, and vice versa.

In addition, some publishers based in Hong Kong or Taiwan have expanded their business beyond the Greater China region and try to reach other smaller Chinese-speaking communities in countries like Malaysia and Singapore. A prominent example is Cité Publishing Limited (城邦文化事業), a Taiwan-based publishing group that currently has about forty publishing houses under its control. In 2001, Cité Publishing was bought by Tom Group, a media conglomerate headquartered in Hong Kong. Consequently, nowadays all publications by Cité Publishing are simultaneously circulated in both Taiwan and Hong Kong (with the prices in both New Taiwanese Dollars and Hong

[5] Simplified Chinese characters were developed by the government of the People's Republic of China through the Chinese Character Simplification Scheme in the 1950s. The aim of this scheme was to improve literacy in China by simplifying a proportion of traditional complex characters of the original Chinese writing system. The simplified Chinese writing system is currently used in China as well as the Chinese communities in Malaysia and Singapore, while the traditional (complex) Chinese writing system is used in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan.

Kong Dollars printed on the books' back covers). Another example is Crown Publishing Group (皇冠文化集團). Originating in Taiwan, Crown has also established its status as a leading publisher in Hong Kong and China. It has also extended its business activities to Singapore and Malaysia during recent years (Chiou, 2014). Both of these two major publishers are known for releasing a large number of new titles each year, including both local and translated books.

As a democratic state that guarantees freedom of expression and press, Taiwan has a thriving publishing landscape of great diversity. In general, approximately 40,000 book titles are released per year in Taiwan (Trentacosti, 2015). According to the International Publishers Association's latest annual report (International Publishers Association, 2014, p.17), in 2013 there were 42,118 new titles and new editions published in Taiwan. While this number does not seem to hold great significance in comparison to China's 444,000, the U.S.'s 304,912, and the U.K.'s 184,000, Taiwan is placed the second together with Slovenia on the top list of countries that publish the most titles per million inhabitants with 1,831, following the U.K.'s first place (2,875). Other countries on the top list include China, which releases 325 titles per million inhabitants, the U.S. 959, Japan 613, South Korea 795, etc.

According to Michelle Lin, a senior book agent, Taiwanese readers in general prefer non-fiction; the top three genres that the Taiwanese book market concentrates on nowadays are 'self-help (including health, fitness, and hobbies), religion and motivation, and business (including career business and personal

finance)' (Trentacosti, 2015). However, for more than a decade, there has been a rising trend for publishers in Taiwan to publish translated fiction due to its ongoing popularity among Taiwanese readers. Although it is hard to assert the exact starting point of this phenomenon, some critics have pointed out a critical timing for this flourishing market of translated fiction works: the year 2000 when the traditional Chinese character version of the first volume of *Harry Potter* was published in Taiwan and gained unprecedented popularity. For example, in 'War of the Words: Taiwan's Rough-and-Tumble Foreign Book Publishing Industry', Wang (2010) points out that following the success of *Harry Potter*, there came an array of international bestselling books translated and published in Taiwan.[6]

A rough estimate indicates that the proportion of translations among newly released books in Taiwan each year is 25% (Wang, 2010; Chen, 2013; Trentacosti, 2015). Taiwan has around the same proportion of translations to the overall production of books as South Korea and Canada (Chen, 2013). According to the official reports released by the National Central Library of Taiwan (國家圖書館), Japan and the U.S. are the two major source countries from where Taiwan's translated books originate. As shown in the exact publishing facts and figures for the years from 2012 to 2016, books from Japan comprise approximately 56% of Taiwan's translated books each year, while

[6] The English translation of Wang's article was last accessed by me via the website of *Taiwan Panorama Magazine* (台灣光華雜誌) in October 2015, but it is no longer available. Its original in Chinese can currently be found on the Magazine's website with registered membership at <https://www.taiwan-panorama.com/Articles/Details?Guid=5044b166-e35f-4e84-b9a0-d908c25c7a02&CatId=1>.

books from the U.S. constitute only around 22%. In contrast, the U.K., also an origin of Anglophone books, is the source country for only 6-7% of translated books in Taiwan and ranked almost equally with South Korea.[7]

Apart from Japan, which Taiwan is geographically and historically close to, the U.S. plays the most critical role in Taiwan's publishing industry. The major American bestseller lists, including those published by *Publishers Weekly*, *New York Times*, and Amazon.com, usually determine the choices of literary agents who stand on the frontline of the publication of foreign books in Taiwan (Wang, 2010). By looking at the advertising or even the cover designs of Taiwan's translated books, one can notice that these books tend to be featured not only for their popularity in their source countries but also the awards they have won with their original editions. Both factors, indeed, have significant impacts on their potential readership in the target market.

While having translations occupy a quarter of new titles released each year does not seem to indicate a threat to Taiwan's local book industry, it is a significant concern for many critics that translated books dominate the bestseller list. It is estimated that translated books constitute 50% of Taiwan's bestsellers (ibid.). However, as observed by the senior editor and cultural critic Chen Ying-ching (陳穎青), on the list of top 100 bestsellers in 2012 published by Taiwan's biggest online book retailer Books.com.tw (博客來網路書店),

[7] The figures mentioned cover not only fiction but all kinds of published books. The National Central Library of Taiwan compiles an official report on Taiwan's publishing industry every year. In this study, I mainly draw on the reports released from 2014 till 2016. More detailed statistics can be found on the Library's website at <http://isbn.ncl.edu.tw/NCL_ISBNNet/main_ProcessLevel3.php?PHPSESSID=huqlckb1e529fjd30tdron6on7&Ptarget=157>.

70% of the books were translations (Chen, 2013). Chen describes the disproportion between local publications and translations on Taiwan's bestseller list as 'the real trouble for Taiwan's publishing industry'. Neither Wang nor Chen specifically refers to literary works when presenting the figures; their points are drawn from the overall bestseller lists. Based on my own observation on the list of literary bestsellers published by Taiwan's major book retailers, roughly 60% of the items listed are translations.

3.3 Christian-themed fiction in Taiwan

This study treats Christian-themed fiction as a distinct genre, while recognising that the definition of the book category should be examined within different contexts. By 'Christian-themed fiction', I mean fiction works that contain themes and motifs reflecting a general Christian worldview and are defined or recognised as 'Christian' by Christian groups. As observed, no fixed description can be easily found for 'Christian-themed fiction' as a genre, and the definition given to it differs from case to case. The divergent interpretations of 'Christian-themed fiction' will be part of the discussion of this thesis.

In Taiwan's book market, 'Christian-themed fiction' appears to be a marginalised genre and even a non-existent book sector. This statement can be supported with my research findings in this study. To give a summarised account of the main contextual facts related to this observation here, I would like to point out the double marginalisation of Christian-themed fiction in Taiwan. First, 'Christian-themed fiction' does not present itself as a visible

book category in Taiwan's mainstream book market due to the peripheral status of Christianity. Secondly, in order to conform to Taiwanese Christian readers' general taste, Christian publishers tend to focus on books dealing with theology, training and discipleship, and self-help books providing guidance on personal development, spiritual growth, marriage and relationships, etc.

This twofold marginalisation is manifested in the fiction publishing of Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press (校園書房出版社, hereafter CEFP), one of the leading Christian publishing houses in Taiwan that is featured in this study. CEFP's publications have been mostly non-fiction, partly as a consequence of Taiwanese readers' preferences. From 2008 to 2011, five translated novels were published by CEFP under the umbrella title 'Fiction House' (小說館): the Newbery Medal winner *The Bronze Bow* (1961) by Elizabeth George Speare (translation published in 2008), *The Only Problem* (1984) and *Aiding and Abetting* (2000) by Muriel Spark (both translations published in 2009), *Saint Maybe* (1991) and *Noah's Compass* (2009) by Anne Tyler (translations published in 2009 and 2011, respectively). These novels were all written by highly acclaimed Western writers in the modern era and belong to the mainstream literary markets of their source cultures. Although their stories do not necessarily display explicit Christian motifs, CEFP does insert the religious interpretations of these novels in their paratextual materials, thus deliberately 'Christianising' these works to a certain extent.

During our interview conducted on 30 July 2015, CEFP's senior editor Sean Ying stated that the idea of translating and publishing mainstream literary

novels was first proposed by Hsu Cheng-te (徐成德), an experienced translator who had been working for CEFP for several years. Hsu, a pastor based in the U.S., is also a literature fan familiar with the contemporary Western literary scene. According to Ying, Hsu usually recommended some foreign literary books to CEFP to consider publishing. Although CEFP's aim of publishing fiction was to expand its publishing scope and reach a wider audience, its 'Fiction House' series did not turn out to be a success. The lack of attention paid to CEFP's fiction publications by the mainstream readership partly resulted from the absence of CEFP's publications in non-Christian book retailers, which is an indication of the separation of the Christian and non-Christian book markets in Taiwan. However, Tyler's *Saint Maybe* was an exception. Of all five 'Fiction House' books, it was the only one that successfully entered the non-Christian commercial book market and even won the 2009 Top 10 Translated Books Award held by *The China Times* (中國時報), one of the four major newspapers in Taiwan. Ying attributed this success mostly to Tyler's established reader base in Taiwan as well as the endorsements for the novel by some well-known figures in Taiwan's literary circle. By contrast, all the other four books did not achieve commercial success.

During our interview, Ying mentioned that CEFP would possibly discontinue the 'Fiction House' series due to low sales and its lack of popularity among CEFP's main target audience: the Christian community. Ying further pointed out that pastoral leaders played a critical role in publicising CEFP's publications; since fiction works were usually not prioritised or even

not listed in churches' recommended readings, CEFP had been struggling to popularise its fiction books among Christian readers. At the time of writing, CEFP's 'Fiction House' has already come to a halt, with most of the books out of print. Spark's *Abiding and Abetting* was an exception: it has a reprint edition in traditional Chinese characters published in 2015 by the non-Christian publishing house Rye Field (麥田), which belongs to Cité Publishing Ltd. While its translation is based on the out-of-print version by CEFP (with the same translator's name printed), the title of the translation has been changed from《脫罪》(*Acquittal*) to《共謀》(*Conspiracy*). With CEFP's difficulty of sustaining its 'Fiction House' series as a representative example, one can get a glimpse of the dual peripheralisation of Christian fiction in Taiwan.

3.4 Christian publishing industry in Taiwan

In this section, I will give some information on Taiwan's Christian publishing industry since most Christian agents who attempt to intervene in readers' reception of literary works are associated with Christian publishing groups. These Christian agents' efforts can be seen as an integral part of the Christian literary and cultural realm in Taiwan.

The Taiwanese Christian publishing industry, which consists of several small-scale publishers that specialise in publishing Christian books, is almost a discrete sector in the publishing landscape in Taiwan. As mentioned in the previous section, Taiwan's publishing industry as a whole is greatly affected by that of the U.S. This phenomenon appears to be even more conspicuous in its

Christian publishing, which is a consequence of the close relation between Taiwan's Christian groups and those of the U.S. during the Cold War. The historical background to the Americanisation of Taiwan's Christianity after the mid-twentieth century will be delineated in the next section. This section concentrates on publishing-related facts.

Similar to what can be seen in Taiwan's mainstream book market, the predominance of translated books among all Christian publications has also been of concern to many critics in Taiwan's Christian community. For example, Wang Qian-ren (王乾任) (2008) has pointed out the Western dominance, particularly that of the U.S., in Taiwan's Christian publishing realm. Wang further addresses the main historical reason behind the close tie between the U.S. and Taiwan with regard to Christian publishing: the relocation of many of China's church-affiliated publishing houses to Taiwan and Hong Kong after the Communists' takeover of Mainland China in 1949. While most of the publishing houses that moved to Taiwan were established by the Americans, those which went to Hong Kong were mainly set up by the British. Since most of these publishing groups were financially dependent on the churches or missionary organisations from the West, Western missionaries tended to be the decision-makers in book selection. Consequently, most of their publications were translations that did not necessarily appeal to 'the specific needs' of local Chinese-speaking Christians (Yin, 2005 cited in Wang, 2008). This phenomenon that gave rise to the predominance of translated books from the West among Chinese-language Christian publications, according to Wang, has

created a pattern which publishing houses in the Chinese-speaking world still tend to follow nowadays.

Both Taiwan and Hong Kong play significant roles in the whole Chinese-language world with regard to Christian publishing. Since it was not until 2003 that China legalised the publication of certain forms of Christian literature (Haykin, et al., 2011), the number and diversity of Christian publications from China have both been limited greatly. As has been stated, the numbers of Christians and Christian churches in China have been increasing at a rapid rate, and Christianity is currently claimed to be the fastest growing religion in China. Over recent years, many Christian churches in Hong Kong and Taiwan have been very keen on supporting Chinese churches in church planting, leader training, missionary activities, and so on. Many major Christian publishers based in Taiwan or Hong Kong have also begun printing some of their publications in simplified Chinese characters in order to export them to China. This has led to a tight connection between China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan in circulating Christian publications. For instance, China Christian Council (中国基督教协会), the only legal Bible publishing agency in China, published 104 books from 1979 to 2001. The majority of the bestsellers among these publications were authored by overseas Chinese Christian leaders, including those based in Taiwan (Pang, 2004, p.36). The great demand for Christian books in China has also prompted secular publishers to enter the market (ibid., p.37).

Largely due to Hong Kong being governed by the U.K. for more than a

century, Christianity in Hong Kong society is not as alien as it is in other Chinese-speaking societies, although Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism are still the most practised religions there. The official statistics (Home Affairs Bureau of Hong Kong, 2016) show that among all Hong Kong residents, more than one million are Buddhists, over one million Taoists, 480,000 Protestants, 379,000 Catholics, and 300,000 Muslims. The former two groups together with other Chinese-originated religions such as Confucianism and Chinese folk religions comprise nearly 83% of Hong Kong's population.

The relatively high prevalence of Christian practices in Hong Kong, compared to other societies composed mostly of ethnic Chinese, can be manifested in its many long-established Christian institutions, including churches, educational institutions, hospitals, etc. In addition to several seminaries that aim to train pastors, church leaders, and ministry staff, Hong Kong has the Chinese University of Hong Kong as the only public/secular university in the Chinese-speaking world that has a Divinity School. The solid foundation of Christian theological education in Hong Kong is also linked to its vibrant industry of Christian publishing.

Hong Kong's publications occupy a portion of Taiwan's book market; both its mainstream and Christian publications complement Taiwan's publishing scene to a certain degree (Wang, 2009). Hong Kong also has the Association of Christian Publishers (基督教出版聯會, hereafter the ACP) as an organisational network formed by several major Christian publishers to promote publications and reading activities. The ACP organises a biennial

conference on Christian publishing in the Chinese-speaking world and conducts reports about latest updates on the Chinese-language Christian book market and publishing trends.

According to a report available online (Lee, 2010), which was initially presented at the 10th ACT Conference, from 2008 to 2010 there were approximately 400 cultural products, including printed publications, digital publications, audio products, and video products, released by Christian publishers in Taiwan per year; each product usually had 1,000 to 2,000 copies in its first print run. Significantly, among these cultural commodities, approximately only 30% were local products. The report also shows that on Taiwan's Christian bestseller lists the most commonly seen items have been children's picture books, self-help books, devotional works, Christian teaching resources, and Christmas gift books.

One of the crises that Taiwanese Christian publishers have been facing is that Christian books in Taiwan only have a limited readership (Wang, 2009; Lee, 2010). Since the core demographic for these books is Christians, the small size of the Christian population of Taiwan has contributed to this situation. In addition, as suggested by Wang, the target market of Christian publishing in Taiwan is rather narrow: most books published by Taiwanese Christian publishing houses can only be found in Christian bookshops. One reason behind this is that those books published by Christian publishers usually do not appeal to the general readers' tastes since they are normally filled with Christian jargon and doctrinal messages (Wang, 2009). Such a viewpoint on

the marginalisation of Christian publishing in Taiwan can be exemplified by the CEFP's case mentioned previously.

So far I have introduced the peripherisation of Christian publishing in Taiwan, the Americanisation of Taiwan's Christian publishing scene, the importance of Taiwan's and Hong Kong's Christian publishing in today's Chinese-speaking world, and the difficulties Taiwan's Christian publishing industry is facing. In the next section, I will briefly describe the historical and socio-political context which has resulted in the present status of Christianity in Taiwan.

3.5 Christianity in Taiwan and some historical facts

As a country that upholds freedom of religion and belief, Taiwan has a multi-religious society. On the Religious Diversity Index published by the Pew Research Center in 2014, Taiwan holds the second highest score among the 232 countries.[8] Only 12.7% of its population is claimed to be religiously unaffiliated; the most practised religions are folk religions (44.2%) and Buddhism (21.3%) (Pew Research Center, 2016).[9] There has seldom been strife and contention over religious matters in Taiwan since its democratic political system was ensured; furthermore, the contributions different religions have been making to Taiwan in areas such as social welfare, education, and

[8] The most religiously diverse country, according to the report, is Singapore. Six of the top twelve countries/territories on the Religious Diversity Index are in Asia; apart from Singapore and Taiwan, there are Vietnam, South Korea, China, and Hong Kong (Pew Research Center, 2014).

[9] Folk religions in Taiwan include diverse kinds of traditional religions. Generally speaking, they are polytheistic beliefs composed of elements of Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and local beliefs.

medicine are positively recognised (Laliberté, 2009).[10] As will be shown later, Christian missionaries have played a significant part in advancing education, public health, and medical care systems in Taiwan throughout its history.

Christianity in Taiwan is practised only by a small number of people and has never experienced a significant growth in terms of population. Most Taiwanese people adhere to the locally originated belief systems. The statistics provided by the Pew Research Center (2016) show that Christians occupy 5.5% of Taiwan's population. However, according to the latest *Statistical Yearbook* of Taiwan's Ministry of the Interior, the number of Christians, including Catholics and Protestants, from 1997 to 2013 has remained around 3% of Taiwan's population (Ministry of the Interior, 2016).

Christianity was first brought to Taiwan during the Dutch colonisation (1624-1662). It began with the sending of George Candidiusto, the first missionary ever sent to Taiwan, by the Dutch Reformed Church to what was then known as Dutch Formosa. Two years after the arrival of the Dutch, Spaniards landed and established Spanish Formosa in the north of the island in 1626. While the Dutch attempted to implant Protestant Christianity in Taiwan, the Spanish missionaries brought in Catholicism. Spanish Formosa existed until 1642 when the Spanish lost their battle with the Dutch who had been governing Dutch Formosa in the south.

In 1662 the island was taken over by Cheng Cheng-kun (鄭成功), a

[10] Laliberté argues that in present-day Taiwan there exists what Alfred Stepan terms as 'twin tolerance', which refers to the situation in which 'the state refrains from intervening in religious affairs, while religious organisations refrain from unduly influencing the political process to defend their narrow institutional interests' (p.75).

warlord previously based in southeastern China. Cheng drove the Dutch colonial government out and killed several missionaries.[11] Thus ended the short period of Western evangelism in Taiwan in the seventeenth century. Although it also marked the beginning of the following two hundred years of Christian vacuum, the Dutch missionaries' effort to create the writing system of the Sinkan language (新港語), a language spoken by the Siraya, one of the Taiwanese plains aborigine tribes in the Sinkan area, and translate the Bible into it, is a significant linguistic and religious legacy.[12]

It was not until the nineteenth century that Western Christian missionary activities were rekindled in Taiwan, partly because Taiwan was forced to open its door to Western businessmen and missionaries under the Treaty of Tientsin (1858) that the Qing Dynasty of China signed with several Western powers. James Laidlaw Maxwell from Scotland was the first Protestant missionary to arrive in Taiwan. He was sent by the English Presbyterian Mission, served as a medical missionary in southern Taiwan from 1865, and is regarded to be the founding father of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (臺灣基督長老教會,

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[11] The earliest history of Han Chinese immigration that can be traced nowadays is the migrants from Fujian in southeastern China during the second half of the sixteenth century (Ch'en, 1979 cited in Hsiau, 2000, p.3). Taiwan gradually became a Han Chinese-dominated society when Chinese immigrants, mostly from southeastern China, started settling in the island in the seventeenth century when Taiwan was colonised by the Dutch. Before that, Taiwan was mainly inhabited by different groups of aborigines whose languages are classified as Malayo-Polynesian languages (Hsiau, 2000, p.3). Nowadays, the roughly delineated demographic statistics of Taiwan's population shows that approximately 69% of Taiwanese people are Hokkien people whose ancestors were immigrants from Fujian with Hokkien as their mother tongue, 15% are Hakka primarily originating from Kwangtung and have Hakka as their first language, 14% are categorised as Mainland Chinese whose families resettled in Taiwan along with the KMT retreat after the Chinese Civil War, and the remaining 2% are the various indigenous Taiwanese groups (BBC, n.d.).

[12] It is commonly believed that the Dutch missionary Daniel Gravius finished the translations of *The Gospel of Matthew* and *The Gospel of John* into the Sinkan language, but only *The Gospel of Matthew* can be found nowadays. The manuscript of Gravius's *The Gospel of St. Matthew in Formosan Sinkang Dialect and Dutch* is preserved at Leiden University Library (Tsai, 2003).

hereafter the PCT). In addition to introducing modern medicine into Taiwan, Maxwell also translated the New Testament into Taiwanese Hokkien in the Roman alphabet.[13] Since a large number of Taiwanese people could not read Han Chinese characters at that time, it was believed that for illiterate people it would be easier to learn romanised letters than Han Chinese characters. Missionaries who worked with the Hoklo Taiwanese people considered it essential to enable them to access the Bible through romanised vernacular Taiwanese Hokkien (The Bible Society in Taiwan, n.d.). Nowadays, Maxwell and another Presbyterian missionary Thomas Barclay, who later published another Bible translation in romanised Taiwanese Hokkien, are revered as important figures who made contributions to the preservation of this local language.

Another important figure in the history of Christianity in Taiwan is George Leslie Mackay, a Canadian missionary serving with the Canadian Presbyterian Mission. As in the south Maxwell had been leading the mission, Mackay based his work in Tamsui in northern Taiwan, and worked there from 1872 to 1901. Apart from the sixty churches he established, during his years in Taiwan Mackay also founded Taiwan Oxford College (the present Aletheia University), the first girls' school in Taiwan and the predecessor to the present Tamkang Senior High School.

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[13] Taiwanese Hokkien is also called *minan yu* (閩南語), which literally means 'the Southern Min language' (Min is the short name for Fujian), or simply *taiyu* (臺語), Taiwanese (Neumann, 1999, p.5). In this thesis, I adopt the term Taiwanese Hokkien because the Hokkien language spoken in Taiwan has been identified by linguists as a blend of the dialects of Quanzhou and Zhangzhou with the influences of Amoy, i.e., Xiamen dialect (Quanzhou, Zhangzhou and Xiamen are all located in Fujian); nowadays, Taiwanese Hokkien also contains many Japanese loanwords (Liao, 2017).

Both Maxwell and Mackay are mostly recognised by Taiwanese people for their medical missions. Mackay Memorial Hospital and Sin-Lau Hospital (which was initially a clinic established by Maxwell) are among the leading hospitals in Taiwan. The efforts of Maxwell and Mackay demonstrate a prototype of how Christian missionaries usually approached Taiwan as their missionary field through different areas of work other than merely church planting. The contributions made by all the early Presbyterian missionaries such as Maxwell and Mackay to Taiwan built a positive image of the PCT since their works were closely connected with local needs.

The development of Taiwan's Christianity has been intertwined with its political history. In 1895, when Japan's occupation of Taiwan began, the Presbyterian missionaries won the favour of the Japanese government because they normally took the role as the mediator between the Japanese government and the local Taiwanese. Moreover, since the Japanese government was trying to gain British support at that time, Presbyterian missionaries were somewhat welcomed by the Japanese. It was also during the Japanese occupation that various Presbyterian-related institutions such as schools and hospitals mentioned previously were established (Rubinstein, 2003, p. 208). However, as shown in the history of both the Presbyterian Church and the Catholic Church in Taiwan, after the Pacific War in 1941 the Japanese government forced Western missionaries to leave the island, and all churches had to be controlled by Japanese administrators.

After the Kuomintang (hereafter the KMT), which had governed the

Republic of China, retreated to Taiwan in 1949, there emerged a new situation where different Christian denominations coexisted on the island, and the dynamic relations among different church groups and the government reshaped the landscape of Christianity in Taiwan. Prior to this, only a few denominations, such as the Presbyterian Church, the Catholic Church, and the True Jesus Church, had established units in Taiwan.[14] Following the KMT's arrival, more Christian groups that previously had been working in China moved to Taiwan because the Communist Party forbade the spread of Christianity in China. This phenomenon also brought a commonly used distinction between 'churches for mainlanders' and 'churches for the Taiwanese' in Taiwan society.

As previously mentioned, the PCT devoted itself to working among the local Taiwanese people who had been residing in Taiwan before the KMT's arrival, the aborigines and Hokkien people in particular. The Presbyterians' various efforts to indigenise Christianity collided with the KMT government's policies. The most overt example is that since the KMT decreed that Mandarin, the Chinese dialect authorised as the national language during China's Republican Era, should be the only legitimate language spoken in public, all Presbyterian institutions, including churches and seminaries, were required to use Mandarin in their public meetings. Furthermore, the Presbyterians' efforts to publish religious texts and teaching materials in romanised Taiwanese Hokkien were forbidden (Rubinstein, 2003, pp. 217-18). Consequently, this has

[14] The Catholic Church resumed its missionary work in Taiwan when Taiwan was forced to open its door to the West under the Treaty of Tientsin. The True Jesus Church founded in 1917 is a Protestant Church denomination originating in China. The first group of missionaries sent by the True Jesus Church arrived in Taiwan in 1926.

made the Mandarin *Union Version* the primary Bible version in Taiwan.

3.6 The Mandarin *Union Version* in the Chinese-language Christian literary system

The Mandarin *UV* is the Chinese-language Bible translation that is most commonly used in contemporary Taiwan. Ever since its publication in 1919, the Mandarin *UV* has been playing an important role in the Chinese-speaking world. This thesis thus treats the Mandarin *UV* as the canonised Chinese translation of the Bible that provides the linguistic norms for the Chinese-language Christian literary system (Liu, 2019). The chapters on *Gilead* and *The Shack* both offer textual evidence supporting this statement. This section sets out to introduce the socio-political background behind such a canonisation process.

3.6.1 The Mandarin *Union Version* in twentieth-century Chinese churches

The concurrence of the release of the Mandarin *UV* and the promotion of written vernacular Chinese based on Mandarin Chinese during the New Culture Movement (mid-1910s to 1920s) and the May Fourth Movement (1919) in China's Republican Era played a significant role in the favourable reception that the Mandarin *UV* received after its publication (ibid.). The New Culture Movement, which advocated replacing the traditional Confucian culture with the new culture based on western values such as democracy and science, played a critical role in the modernisation of China. The May Fourth

Movement is a mass political movement taken place in 1919, which marked the surge of nationalism and anti-imperialism in early twentieth-century China.

Initially, there were three Bible translation versions planned by the *Union Version* committee: two in classical Chinese, and one in vernacular Chinese. In 1907, it was decided that only one classical Chinese version would be published. This classical Chinese version *Wenli Union Version* (文理和合譯本) came out in 1919, the same year in which its vernacular counterpart, *Guanhua Union Version* (官話和合譯本), was published. In 1939, *Guahua Union Version* was renamed *Guoyu Union Version* (國語和合本). *Guanhua* means 'official language', and *Guoyu* 'national language'. This is what we now call the Mandarin *Union Version.* Preceded by the *Peking Committee Bible* (1870s), the Mandarin *UV* was the second complete Bible published in vernacular Chinese.

Translation scholar Chong Yau Yuk (莊柔玉) (2008) draws on polysystem theory to discuss relevant effects surrounding the canoninisation of the Mandarin *UV*. Considering Chinese Bible translations as a polysystem, Chong applies Even-Zohar's idea of centre-periphery relation between various elements within a system to note that along with the canoninisation of the Mandarin *UV* there has occurred the peripherisation of four other types of Chinese translations of the Bible: 1. the translations into classical Chinese; 2. the translations into dialects rather than the common language Mandarin; 3. the translations performed through individual works instead of collaborative efforts; 4. the translations infused with unconventional theological ideas.

Following Even-Zohar's statement that canonicity is 'no euphemism for "good" vs. "bad" literature', Chong points out that within the Christian community, the canonised script does not necessarily represent the best version. Chong further lists some Mandarin Bible translations published after the *UV* that were regarded as having the potential to challenge the superiority of the Mandarin *UV* yet to no avail. The examples include Lu Chen-Chung's translation (呂振中譯本, 1970), *Today's Chinese Version* (現代中文譯本, 1979), and the *Chinese New Version* (新譯本, 1992). The translation by the biblical scholar Lu Chen-Chung was rendered directly from the Hebrew and Greek texts. *Today's Chinese Version* features the application of Eugene Nida's dynamic equivalence as well as the aim to produce a unified Bible that can be shared by Protestant and Catholic Christians. The project for the *Chinese New Version*, launched by a group of Chinese Christian leaders and scholars with the aim to present a better translation that can replace the Mandarin *UV*, is described by Chong as the version that posed the greatest challenge to the Mandarin *UV*. Although these Bible translations were all claimed by some people to be versions of better quality than the Mandarin *UV*, none of them has successfully replaced the central position occupied by the Mandarin *UV* in the polysystem of Chinese Bible translations.

3.6.2 The Mandarin *Union Version* as the primary Bible version in Taiwan

Chong treats the canonisation of the Mandarin *UV* in the

Chinese-speaking Protestant circle as a whole, without specifying the situations in different countries or regions. I would like to further explain how the Mandarin *UV* has become the primary Bible version in Taiwan.

KMT's promotion of Mandarin as *guoyu* (國語; the national language) since the 1940s and its language policy influenced the use of the Bible in Taiwan's churches. *Guoyu* was promoted in Taiwan by the Mandarin Promotion Council established by the Republic of China government in 1946 because Mandarin was not used and even not understood by the majority of Taiwanese people at that time. By the time the KMT forces retreated to Taiwan, the Hoklo Taiwanese made up the majority of Taiwan's population. This means that Taiwanese Hokkien was the language spoken by most people in Taiwan at that time.

When a number of Bible translation projects were being carried out in China during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were also Bible translations being conducted in Taiwan. In 1873, the New Testament in romanised Taiwanese Hokkien, completed under the aegis of Maxwell, was published, with the Old Testament following in 1884. This Bible translation has been widely referred to as the first 'Taiwanese Bible'. In 1916, another translation of the New Testament into romanised Taiwanese Hokkien by Barclay and other assistants, which was the product of the translation project intended to provide a more accurate Bible translation in Taiwanese Hokkien, was completed. And in 1933, Barclay's translation of the Old Testament was also published.

When the KMT regime retreated to Taiwan in 1949, its prohibition of using languages other than Mandarin in public led to several incidents that sparked its conflicts with Taiwanese-speaking churches, primarily the Presbyterians. In 1955, all churches in Taiwan were banned from using the romanised alphabet. In 1957, copies of the Taiwanese Hokkien Bible were confiscated. The same happened to the highland aboriginal group Tayal, when in 1974 copies of their Bible and hymn books in romanised Tayal were forcibly taken away by the police during their Sunday service. In 1975, the police confiscated 2,200 copies of the newly translated Taiwanese Bible in the romanised alphabet (Chung-Hsing University Student Christian Fellowship, 2009). In 1984, the Ministry of Education urged all missionaries in Taiwan to use Mandarin in missionary activities (National Museum of Taiwan Literature, n.d.).

All these incidents contributed to the primary status the Mandarin *UV* has held in Taiwan after the mid twentieth-century and beyond. Nowadays, the Mandarin *UV* dominates Taiwan's Protestant scene and is the most widely used Bible version among Taiwanese Protestants for both public worship and personal study. This means that the terminology used in Taiwan's Protestant community is based on the Mandarin *UV*. When it comes to referring to Bible verses, be it in church or non-church settings, the Mandarin *UV* is usually the standard reference. Grounded on Chong's description of the contemporary use of the Mandarin Bible translations among Chinese-speaking churches, this should also be common practice among other Protestant sects throughout the

Chinese-speaking world.

3.7 Mandarin-speaking churches vs. Taiwanese-speaking churches

Missionaries who were expelled by the Communist Party in China and arrived in Taiwan after the KMT took over Taiwan found it easier to work with the mainlanders mostly due to linguistic reasons. In addition, the organisations these Mandarin-speaking western missionaries were affiliated with tended to have a close relationship with KMT. The KMT-led government was considered 'a paragon of religious toleration and a bastion against the "Red Chinese Hordes" who were driving out the missionaries from their shores and restricting the many Christian churches into the one state-controlled patriotic church' (Rubinstein, 2003, p. 220).[15]

Madsen (2007) offers a clear picture of how the KMT policy influenced religious affairs in Taiwan during and after its one-party rule, pointing out that there was 'a renaissance of Buddhism and Daoism' and also a downturn in the overall Christian population (with the exception of Taiwanese aborigines and the PCT membership) after the KMT dictatorship ended in the late 1980s (p.1). The KMT's preference towards Christianity was a consequence of its attempt to strengthen support from American missionaries; the KMT's partiality was demonstrated in various ways, such as the fact that it only allowed Christian universities but not Buddhist or Daoist universities to be set up, and had

[15] Interestingly, when explaining the challenges that the Presbyterian Church encountered after Taiwan was ruled by the KMT government, Rubinstein described Taiwan as a former 'Chinese province' that became 'KMT-dominated and American-bankrolled nation-state' (p. 216).

American missionaries as the intermediaries for aid given by the U.S. government. Madsen concludes that since the official constraints on religious affairs were removed and Taiwan society's penchant for seeking its own national identity became stronger after the late 1980s, it should be unsurprising that religious bodies that had a tendency to be characterised as indigenous and that had not been favoured by the KMT-led government during the previous decades would be preferred by the Taiwanese (pp. 12-13)

Considering the oppression of the PCT by the KMT regime before Taiwan's full democratisation, it would be fair to say that the Mandarin cultural system brought by the KMT has reinforced the image of Christianity as a 'foreign' religion that specifically belongs to the middle and upper classes. The tension between 'Mandarin-speaking churches' （國語教會） and the 'local Taiwanese churches' （本土教會）/ 'Taiwanese-speaking churches' （台語教會）was thus formed (Chen, 2000), which is also reflected in the literary and cultural domain. In the following sections, I will give the ministries of Campus Evangelical Fellowship (校園福音團契, hereafter CEF) and the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan Youth Ministry Committee (臺灣基督長老教會青年事工委員會, hereafter PCT Youth Ministry Committee) as examples to illustrate this viewpoint. The operation of these two Christian organisations will be explained with Even-Zohar's model of literary system.

3.8 Taiwan's Christian literary system: Campus Evangelical Fellowship in focus

The paratextual data concerning the target context presented in this thesis is largely drawn from the case of CEF. The operation of CEF, as observed, serves as a representative example of the realisation of Even-Zohar's 'literary system' model. I have shown the structure of Even-Zohar's model adapted from Jakobson's model of communication in Chapter 2. Here, Even-Zohar's theorisation of the literary system will be detailed, followed by the exemplification of CEF.

3.8.1 Even-Zohar's 'literary system' model

The interrelation at each end of the above system is explained by Even-Zohar as follows:

> [A] CONSUMER may 'consume' a PRODUCT produced by a PRODUCER, but in order for the 'product' (such as 'text') to be generated, a common REPERTOIRE must exist, whose usability is determined by some INSTITUTION. A MARKET must exist where such a good can be transmitted.
>
> (1990a, p.34, emphasis in original)

Even-Zohar chooses the term 'producer' instead of 'writer' to avoid ascribing a fixed image to the producing end discussed in his proposed model. Producers, according to Even-Zohar, include not only those involved in text-making, but also those engaged in the production of activities surrounding

texts, such as those 'performing established texts or reshuffling ones'. Likewise, the term 'consumer', rather than 'reader', is used because the 'consumer', similar to the 'producer', may take part in the literary activities at different levels. In Even-Zohar's opinion, there are 'indirect' and 'direct' consumers of literature. 'Indirect consumers' refer to those who are exposed to various kinds of elements of literary works that are 'digested and transmitted by various agents of culture and made an integral part of daily discourse'. By contrast, 'direct consumers' are those who are involved in reading and different literary activities in a more active way. What Even-Zohar places emphasis on here is that the consumers of literature (as well as all other arts and cultural activities) usually 'consume the socio-cultural function of the acts involved with the activity in question (sometimes taking the overt shape of a "happening") rather than what is meant to be "the product"' (ibid., pp.36-37).

Even-Zohar defines 'repertoire' as 'the aggregate of rules and materials which govern both the making and use of any given product'. Markedly, according to Even-Zohar, 'product' means 'any performed (or performable) set of signs, i.e., including a given "behavior"' (ibid., p. 43). Even-Zohar states in his later publication that the product can be 'an utterance, a text, an artifact, an edifice, an "image", or an "event"'; the product can be termed as 'the concrete instance of culture' since it is 'the item negotiated and handled between the participating factors in a culture', (1997a, p.27).

The definition of 'repertoire' has been revised by Even-Zohar several times since it was first proposed in the late 1970s. In the earliest version,

repertoire only refers to the set of regulatory elements involved in the production of the products. Later, its definition has been expanded to cover the collection of 'rules and materials' that govern both the creation and consumption of the products (1990a, p.43). The evolution of the implication of repertoire in the production, dissemination, and reception process of literary products will be further elaborated in Chapter 8, where the role of agents in the Christian context will be discussed with reference to both polysystem theory and Bourdieu's theory.

Among all the factors proposed by Even-Zohar in his theorisation of the literary system, 'institution' is one of the most significant that I explore in this thesis. According to Even-Zohar (1997a, p.37), it is composed of 'the aggregate of factors involved with the maintenance of literature as a socio-cultural activity'; the institution controls the norms existing in the socio-cultural activity by allowing some and disallowing others. It is empowered by the network of dominating social institutions to which it belongs, and 'it also remunerates and reprimands producers and agents'. It plays a part in the 'official culture' and has the power to decide which agents, producers, and products can be remembered by society in the future.

As an 'aggregate', the 'institution' is by no means a unified entity. Different groups that altogether form the institution are always struggling with one another to gain the dominant position within the institution. Examples of institution that Even-Zohar lists include 'part of the producers, "critics" (in whatever form), publishing houses, periodicals, clubs, groups of writers,

government bodies […], educational institutions […], the mass media' and so on (ibid.). Even-Zohar's concept of 'institution' is highly applicable when it comes to discussing the Christian literary polysystem; individuals or groups who attempt to promote the Christian interpretation of literary texts in order to disseminate Christian teachings can all be recognised as the conglomeration of the institution that plays the key role in shaping the concept of 'Christian-themed fiction'. Moreover, all these parts are networked under the paramount governing institution: the church, the universalised Christian community.

3.8.2 Campus Evangelical Fellowship

CEF is an interdenominational Christian organisation based in Taiwan. Holding student ministry as its focus, CEF works closely with many Protestant churches in Taiwan. CEF has its main office in the capital, Taipei, and six suboffices in different parts of Taiwan. It runs fellowship groups in schools and at universities across Taiwan and holds workshops, conferences, and online forums. The participants in these events are all from different Christian (mostly but not all Protestant) denominations and churches.

Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press (CEFP), mentioned in Section 3.3 as one of the major Christian publishing houses in Taiwan, is the publishing division of CEF and connects with the CEF-related network in various facets. In Taiwan's Christian community, CEFP is especially known for its intellectual-oriented evangelical background. CEFP's publications include

books, the bimonthly magazine *Campus* (校園雜誌), the bimonthly publishing newsletter *Book Festival* (書饗), and audio products.

In the gatherings and events organised by CEF, CEFP is often engaged to introduce or promote its publications. CEF's multifaceted ministry exemplifies the literary system model suggested by Even-Zohar, and its operation can be schematised as below:

INSTITUTION

(various agents affiliated with CEF)

REPERTOIRE

(textual components in conformity with mainstream evangelical Christian teachings)

PRODUCER ---------- CONSUMER

('writer') ('reader')

MARKET

(mainly the Christian community in Taiwan)

PRODUCT

In all three case studies in this thesis, CEF's efforts to influence Taiwanese readers' receptions of the texts manifest this model.

There are two modes by which one can approach the model of Christian literary system shown above. In the first kind of situations, when the 'products' are those texts straddling between the Christian and non-Christian literary

systems (like those chosen for the case studies in this thesis), the 'producers' can be authors, translators, publishers, etc.; the producer's intention of producing the texts may be different from that of the 'institution' which aims to evangelise. In the other kind of situations, the 'products' are paratextual materials or activities produced by Christian agents, such as CEF, to introduce Christian motifs into certain texts; such cases can thus illustrate Even-Zohar's idea that since 'producers' can be all those who engage in the network of production as a community, they 'already constitute part of both the literary *institution* and the literary *market*' (1990a, p.35, italics in original).

Christians comprise no more than five percent of the population in Taiwan, thus this Christian literary system sustained by CEF is rather small-scale. Also, due to the fact that the Christian book market is generally separate from the mainstream book market and CEFP's publications mostly target Christian readers, CEF's overall influence on Taiwanese society is limited. However, since CEF is an interdenominational evangelical organisation, many churches or missionary groups cooperate with CEF in holding events.[16] Therefore, CEF has been widely regarded as playing a significant role in the contemporary Taiwanese Christian community.

[16] One example is the Overseas Mission Fellowship (OMF), one of the biggest mission agencies serving East Asia nowadays. OMF was previously known as China Inland Mission, which was founded by the British Protestant missionary Hudson Taylor in 1865.

3.8.3 The institution in Taiwan's Christian literary system as a non-unified body

As suggested by Even-Zohar, the institution in a literary system is not a unified body. While CEF is seen to occupy a central position within Taiwan's Christian literary system, it is not the only organisation that functions on different levels to maintain its own system in Taiwan's Christian literary and cultural realm; in other words, it is not the only visible subsystem within the larger Taiwanese Christian literary system. A noteworthy counterpart of CEF is the PCT Youth Ministry Committee, which also has its own publishing division. Its website describes its mission as 'to be rooted in Taiwan, to commit to Christ and to identify with the Presbyterian order and faith'.

As introduced earlier in this chapter, the early Presbyterian missionaries' efforts to localise Christianity in Taiwan were manifest in their use of Taiwanese Hokkien and aboriginal languages in their missionary activities as well as their translation of the Bible into some of these languages. After the KMT government arrived in Taiwan, the Prohibition of the use of the various Taiwanese languages other than Mandarin in public led to the PCT being oppressed by the government. This contributed to the PCT's active involvement in the democratisation of Taiwan in the 1980s. The PCT is still now widely identified as a church system that is 'pro-Taiwan independence'. Nowadays, the PCT's publications, be they books, magazines, newsletters, or online materials, still display a high degree of local sentiment and Taiwanese nationalism.

Similar to CEF, in addition to publishing, the PCT Youth Ministry Committee has also set up student groups in many educational institutions across Taiwan and runs various faith-based events regularly. With its Presbyterian background, the PCT Youth Ministry Committee in general leans towards Reformed Protestantism, which is also the main theological stance of CEF. The major difference between these two ministries lies in CEF's position in the Mandarin Chinese language and cultural subsystem and the PCT's in the Taiwanese language and cultural subsystem.

In contrast to the PCT Youth Ministry Committee, CEF's website says that the idea of establishing a nationwide network for Chinese student ministries emerged in the 1940s during the Sino-Japanese war when there was an 'evangelical and spiritual revival' in China and a large number of intellectuals were converted to Christianity. CEF was founded in Taiwan in 1957 by a university graduate from China who went to Taiwan to obtain theological training. Before this, there were some small-scale student fellowships in Taiwan led by Western missionaries who were forced to move their ministries to Taiwan after the CCP took control of mainland China; it was not until the establishment of CEF that these independent fellowships could be integrated into a nationwide student ministry. CEF divides its history into three phases: 'from the mainland to Taiwan', 'from Taiwan to North America', and 'from North America to the Globe'. The second phase began in the 1960s when many university graduates in Taiwan went to the U.S. to further their studies, and Chinese-speaking churches started being established across the U.S. The

migration of a large number of students from the Chinese-speaking world to the U.S. in the 1990s marked the third phase of CEF's ministry, when CEF expanded its publishing territory, training, and outreach activities to other overseas areas. It also launched another magazine targeting overseas Christian readers: *Campus Overseas* (海外校園). A similar ministry strategy that set up a systemic CEF Christian literary and cultural network in Taiwan can thus be seen in the operation of CEF's overseas ministry.[17]

According to Even-Zohar, as the 'institution' in a literary system is '[e]mpowered by, and being part of, other dominating social institutions, it also remunerates and reprimands producers and agents' (1990a, p.37). In the CEF introduction, it mentions that many missionaries who had originally worked in China 'retreated' to Taiwan, and it was these missionaries who helped to found CEF in Taiwan. Moreover, CEF is known to have evolved from China InterVarsity Evangelical Christian Students Fellowship (1945; 中國各大學基督徒學生聯合會), a nationwide Christian student union established in China (Su, 2017; Wen, 2018). The link between CEF and the then KMT government has not been systematically examined by scholars. However, CEF has been widely regarded as part of the 'Mandarin-speaking church system' (Tsai, 2001, p.210), and the divide between the 'Mandarin-speaking churches' and 'Taiwanese-speaking churches' has been greatly linked to their political

[17] The information was first accessed on CEF's website in July 2017. However, its new website does not contain the introductory account quoted here. Rather, it speaks of the start of its ministry as in 1957. Since CEF's interest in linking its ministry to the grass roots of Taiwan has increased during recent years, this can be viewed as CEF's attempt to 'localise' the narrative of its history within Taiwan's current socio-political environment, where Taiwanese nationalism prevails in a more visible way.

stances (i.e. in support of the authority of the KMT or not) (Chen, 2000; Tsai, 2001, p.210). Therefore, when comparing CEF's steady development with the persecution of the PCT by the KMT regime, one can say that the rather stable status of CEF seen in the history of Taiwan's Christianity is partly due to its roots in China and the Mandarin Chinese culture.

3.9 The Americanisation of Taiwan's Christian literary and cultural system

In this last section of the present chapter, I would like to add some more information about the Americanisation of Taiwan's Christian literary and cultural system. In addition to the legacy of the early American missionaries and the continuous influences of American churches on Taiwan, another reason behind the close link between Taiwan's Christianity and that of the U.S. is the large number of Taiwanese immigrants in the U.S. Studies have shown the steady presence of the Chinese-speaking church culture in the U.S., in which the Taiwanese community has played a significant role (Chen, 2008; Lo, 2009). On many occasions, these immigrants become the intermediaries through which American cultural products are brought into Taiwan. CEFP's publication of 'Fiction House' series is one example (see Section 3.3).

In later chapters, empirical evidence will be used to further discuss the tight connection between Taiwan's Christian literary system and that of the U.S. Here, I would like to briefly introduce the link between my key findings and Even-Zohar's theoretical proposal. I need to re-emphasise the dominant

role that the U.S. Christian literary system plays in the globalised Christian literary polysystem where there are Christian literary systems of different nations. The superiority of the U.S. Christian literary system over Taiwan's Christian literary system can be approached through Even-Zohar's idea of the centre-periphery relation between different systems within the polysystem. In regard to this, Even-Zohar further notes: one should recognise that within a polysystem there are not just '*one* center and *one* periphery'; for example, there can always be a move of a certain item (e.g. element, function) 'from the periphery of one system to the periphery of an adjacent system within the same polysystem', and it is uncertain whether the item will move to the centre of the latter or not (1997b, p.5, italics in original).

In my summarised discussion in Chapter 8, one of the foci is the transmission of elements (e.g. norms, models, the positions of certain items, etc.) from the Christian literary system of the U.S. to that of Taiwan. My findings will show that, as Even-Zohar suggests, although the hierarchy between different systems within a polysystem determines the interaction patterns between these adjacent systems to a certain degree (i.e. those that hold more central positions within the polysystem may have more influences over others), the transference of items from one system to another is a far more complex process involving many other factors, such as the existing norms and laws already possessed by the receiving systems.

Chapter 4

Religious America:
Christianity and the Christian Literary System in the U.S.

Since the Taiwanese Christian literary system depends much on that of the U.S., I should introduce this important source system before proceeding to present my case studies. The U.S. Christian literary system, with its significantly large size and scale, plays a dominant role in the globalised Christian literary polysystem. Hence, it can potentially offer a window into how worldwide Christian literary systems that centre around evangelism function in general. I will mainly draw on Even-Zohar's concepts of 'institution', 'repertoire', and 'canonicity' to delineate my observations and findings. Lastly, I will introduce Christian fiction publishing as a profitable industry and the popularity of 'evangelical fiction' as an important cultural phenomenon in the U.S. in order to further elucidate the significant influence of the U.S. on the Taiwanese context as well as the differences between these two contexts.

4.1 The institution: the church as a strong base of American society

In the U.S. Christian literary system, how influential is the 'institution' in the dissemination and reception of literary texts in accordance with their evangelistic orientation? To answer this question, I should take both textual and contextual factors into consideration. As will be shown in my case studies,

church groups in the U.S. do to a certain degree play a part in popularising the Christian reading of the texts. Some mainstream critics' criticisms of Christian agents' evangelistic efforts through literary activities can be seen as not only a counterforce of these religious attempts but also evidence of the church groups' interference in mainstream culture, which is particularly obvious in the case of *Narnia*.

American churches' active cultural engagement is certainly a reflection of the prevalence of Christianity in the U.S. According to the Pew Research Center's report on the religious landscape of the U.S. (Lipka, 2015), 46.5% of Americans were identified as Protestants and 20.8% as Catholics in 2014. Although there has been a marked decline in the Protestant population (from 51.3% in 2007) as well as in the whole Christian population, which includes all Christians from different denominations (from 78.4% in 2007 to 70.6% in 2014), the majority of Americans still have Christian affiliations. Only 22.8% of the population was unaffiliated to any religion and 5.9% was affiliated with non-Christian faiths. American Christians are also known as more religious than Christians in other wealthy countries. The Pew Research Center's statistics reveal that 68% of American Christians claim that religion is very important in their lives, compared with a median of only 14% of Christians in Western Europe (Evans, 2018). This can explain the vast market of Christian cultural products in the U.S. and also the relatively significant influence of church groups on American society, compared to situations in other nations, particularly those in Western Europe.

The contrast between the U.S. and Europe in terms of overall religiosity has been discussed in *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations* (Berger, et al., 2008). The authors elaborate the notion of 'eurosecularity' and specify several differences between American and European societies when it comes to religion. As can be observed, religiously imbued rhetoric is significant in American politics but is generally uncommon in European politics (p.11). Although the U.S. and Europe are 'the most important cases of Western modernity' (p. 16), their different historical evolutions have resulted in their different levels of secularisation. The social and historical factors behind such a contrast include the Church-State relationships, manifestation of pluralism, different intellectual cultures, etc. Historically speaking, in Europe the monopoly status of state churches collided with the value of pluralism brought about by modernity; this has thus limited the development of Christianity in modern Europe. On the contrary, the church-state separation existing since the beginning of U.S. history has led to the pluralist dynamic of the American religious scene. The hypothesis that pluralist competition creates a more exuberant religious scene/market can be exemplified by the case of the U.S. (pp.12-17). While Evangelical Protestantism is an integral part of U.S. culture, it does not have a vast presence in Europe. Also, Pentecostalism, one of the most vibrant religious movements in the contemporary world, originated in the U.S and has spread worldwide. However, it has never massively influenced Europe (except the Roma population) (pp.11-12).

The authors' statement that 'western and central Europe is the most secularized area in the world' (ibid., p.11) is still true nowadays. In 2018, the Pew Research Center survey of religious beliefs and practices in Western Europe revealed that non-practising Christians comprise a majority of the population of Western Europe (Pew Research Center, 2018). In many of these countries, the proportion of population who identify themselves as non-practising Christians is greater than the proportion of population who claim themselves as church-attending Christians. Such examples include Germany (with 49% of its population as non-practising Christians, 22% as church-attending Christians, and 24% religiously unaffiliated), France (with 46% of its population as non-practising Christians, 18% as church-attending Christians, and 28% religiously unaffiliated), the U.K. (with 55% of its population as non-practising Christians, 18% as church-attending Christians, and 23% religiously unaffiliated), etc. The most secular countries are the Netherlands (with 15% of its population as non-practising Christians, 27% as church-attending Christians, and 48% religiously unaffiliated), Norway (with 14% of its population as non-practising Christians, 38% as church-attending Christians, and 43% religiously unaffiliated), and Sweden (with 9% of its population as non-practising Christians, 43% as church-attending Christians, and 42% religiously unaffiliated).

In addition to illustrating the relative significance of religion in U.S. society and culture, these comparative figures also explain why the U.S. occupies a central role in global contemporary Christianity. Such a highly

religious cultural environment has contributed to the thriving market of Christian fiction in the U.S. and has nurtured the existence of 'eveangelical fiction' as a distinct genre in the market. In my three case studies, differences can be observed between the U.S. Christian literary system and the Taiwanese Christian literary system in terms of the institution's functioning pattern and impact. A summarised comparative account of the relation between these two adjacent systems will be presented in Chapter 8.

4.2 The repertoire: a mirror of systematic theology

The repertoire of the U.S. Christian literary system determines how literary texts are treated and positioned within the system. 'Literary repertoires' are detailed by Even-Zohar as the following:

> a 'repertoire' may be the shared knowledge necessary for producing (and understanding) a 'text', as well as producing (and understanding) various other products of the literary system. There may be a repertoire for being a 'writer', another for being a 'reader', and yet another for 'behaving as one should expect from a literary agent', and so on. All these must definitely be recognized as 'literary repertoires'.
>
> (1990a, p.40)

Here, I mainly deal with the repertoire that belongs to agents in the U.S. Christian literary system. Nevertheless, this particular repertoire derived from Christian teachings is also the 'shared repertoire' for different roles within the

whole system, such as authors and readers.

It may be impossible to deduce a unified set of norms that exist in such a repertoire since different groups and individuals involved in Christianity may employ various standards to approach Christian-themed fiction as a specific genre. These various standards are the products of these groups or individuals' ideas and beliefs about Christianity as well as literature. However, 'Christian fiction' does present itself as a visible book category in the U.S. context. Some criteria have been used by scholars and critics to define this specific genre. For example, Tischler (2009, ix) defines Christian fiction as a genre that reflects components of the Christian worldview, which is 'a set of assumptions, often left unexpressed, but nonetheless apparent in the work'.[18] According to Tischler, these would contain: 1) God as the Father and the creator and sustainer of life; 2) Jesus Christ's substitutionary atonement, resurrection, and promise of his second coming; 3) the role of the Holy Spirit as the comforter, counselor, and the inspirer to believers; 4) '[t]he existence of an afterlife, a time of judgment, in which Justice will finally be accomplished, and a Heaven and a Hell in which humans will live beyond this time on Earth' ; 5) '[t]he temporary nature of time, sandwiched between the Creation and the Last Days'.

In Tischler's definition, Christian fiction works refer to texts that embody any of the above-mentioned threads rather than represent a certain

[18] Tischler's work is introduced by the publisher as '[a] biographical encyclopedia of American and British Christian-themed writers from World War II to the present, covering acclaimed literary works and popular evangelical fiction'.

denomination or writing style (ibid.). All the three authors studied in this thesis are introduced in Tischler's encyclopedia-style book. Some other noteworthy names listed by Tischler are Margaret Atwood, Dan Brown, Toni Morrison, and John Updike. The mention of Atwood and Brown in the encyclopedia is somehow interesting since these two authors are not normally known as 'Christian writers' and Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) are even recognised by some as anti-Christian. It is thus obvious that Tischler's selection of the authors of Christian fiction does not rely on the authors' approval of Christianity or lack thereof.

Tischler's suggestion provides a set of content-related norms of Christian stories from an academic perspective. However, whereas Tischler's criteria are focused on the theme of Christianity while not being concerned with the author's own religious approval, Arthur (2016), a judge for *Christianity Today*'s annual fiction awards, offers a set of standards that fits squarely into what researchers would call 'prescriptive norms' that do include (at least implicitly) questions of faith: textual characteristics that Christian agents approve of in Christian novels.[19] In her open letter addressed to Christian novelists and publishers, Arthur writes about the seven criteria she has utilised in her selection process for the award winners:

1. Excellent writing
2. Complex, interesting, non-stock characters

[19] *Christianity Today* is a Christian media ministry founded by American evangelist Billy Graham. Currently, it is one of the most prominent evangelical media platforms worldwide. When investigating the transference of norms from the U.S. Christian literary system to Taiwan's Christian literary system in this thesis, I largely refer to *Christianity Today* as it is one of the major sources that contribute to the repertoires of both systems.

3. Unusual plot lines and reveals
4. Addressing issues of ultimate meaning, with God in Christ acknowledged (or at least hinted at) as the center
5. Theological depth and soundness
6. A strong sense of the church and faith communities as a vital presence in the world
7. Cultural awareness

In Arthur's definition, good Christian fiction works are those that 'have the best shot at still being on the shelves in 100 years, yet which also uniquely point to God in Christ as the power that transforms lives'. Obviously, as opposed to Tischler's list, this set of standards proposed by Arthur is created within an evangelical context, in which cultural products are mostly considered vehicles that carry God's word.

Arthur introduces herself as 'one of those grumpy English majors who walks into a Christian bookstore and wants to know why Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* or Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* or Anne Tyler's *Saint Maybe* aren't on the shelves'. These novels, indeed, have been characterised as Christian due to the Christian motifs embedded in their storylines. What is noteworthy about this statement is that it points towards the distinct demarcation between the Christian book market and the mainstream/non-Christian book market in the U.S., which is one of the contextual factors contributing to the intra- and inter-systemic dynamics observed in the three case studies in this thesis.

Arthur's article offers access to the evangelical account of what constitutes desirable Christian fiction from a rather authoritative perspective. In pointing out the essential narrative elements of this specific genre, she also addresses some negative observations from published Christian fiction works in the U.S. I would like to particularly mention two of the aspects that concern Arthur: theological values and cultural relevance.

By 'Theological depth and soundness', Arthur means that she is searching for Christian fiction that contains 'a robust orthodoxy', which she defines as 'a high view of Jesus, Scripture, and the church as informed by the ancient creeds'. Arthur further emphasises the need for these literary works to delineate the valuable role the church and faith communities play in the world. Arthur criticises the tendency of contemporary authors to ignore faith communities as an integral part of their fictional characters' life transformations or spiritual journeys; in many cases, faith communities are portrayed in stories as religious authorities that oppress or hurt individuals. One of my case studies in this thesis, *The Shack*, is perhaps the most well-known and best-selling contemporary 'Christian novel' that is widely regarded to foreground the individuals' relationships with God and, meanwhile, implicitly denounces religious communities (although *The Shack* is not mentioned in Arthur's article).

Like many other Christian critics, Arthur's approach to Christian fiction is rather function-oriented. Many Christian critics' commentaries quoted in my case studies also reveal this trait. When reading Arthur's viewpoints, Tischler's

description of the core themes of Christian fiction, together with other Christian critics' commentaries, one may find a track that directs readers towards a set of beliefs. These standpoints—usually made from a certain theological perspective, largely cohere with the basic content of systematic theology. According to *Theopedia* (2018):

> **Systematic theology** is a discipline which addresses theological topics one by one (e.g. God, Sin, Humanity) and attempts to summarize all the biblical teaching on each particular subject. Sometimes called **constructive theology** or even **dogmatic theology**, the goal is to present the major themes (i.e. doctrines) of the Christian faith in an organized and ordered overview that remains faithful to the biblical witness.
>
> (emphasis in original)

In the Introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology* (Webster, 2007), systematic theology is described as a scholarly discipline which conceptualises 'Christian claims about reality' with 'a coherent and comprehensive account', relying on 'judgements reached about the sources, norms, and ends of systematic theology, and about its relation to other spheres of intellectual activity' (p.2). In short, sources refer to where the evidence and raw materials come from; norms mean the criteria which authorised sources should accord with; the ends of systematic theology are the orientations and targets, which involve the intellectual links of systematic theology to other disciplines such as philosophy and history (pp. 2-3). The doctrinal components introduced in the *Handbook* include 'The Existence Of God', 'The Trinity',

‘The Attributes Of God’, ‘Creation’, ‘Providence’, ‘Election’, ‘The Human Creature’, ‘The Fall and Sin’, ‘Incarnation’, ‘Salvation’, ‘Justification’, ‘Resurrection and Immortality’, ‘The Holy Spirit’, ‘The Church’, ‘Sacraments’, ‘The Christian Life’, and ‘Eschatology’.

These fundamental concepts of the Christian belief system can be readily found in the paratextual materials cited in this thesis. Since my paratextual evidences are either commentaries made by evangelical leaders or materials sourced from major Christian media outlets, they represent the predominant Protestant perspective in the U.S. context. In other words, they are enunciations made from the central position within the U.S. Christian literary system. The existence of systematic theology indicates the church’s attempt to consolidate itself as a structured and systematic entity. As observed, the criteria that Christian agents utilise to interpret literary texts correspond to the components of systematic theology. Therefore, I would like to suggest that these agents’ works can be regarded as attempts to further the consolidation of the church system by referring to the existing ‘repertoire’ of the Christian literary system; meanwhile, this ‘repertoire’ that contains norms deriving from Christian teachings is also strengthened. It is also where one can witness the interference of the ‘institution’ in the dissemination of these literary works.

4.3 Canonicity: the Bible as the ultimate canon

With the premise that each system is a relational structure, one of the key theoretical concepts that the polysystem approach deals with is the

centre-periphery dynamics between different components within a system. This idea is linked with canonisation, the process of establishing certain texts as canonised works in the literary system. Canonisation is certainly a phenomenon manifested in the Christian literary polysystem, as will be shown in my case studies.

The concept of 'canon' is not only integral to polysystem theory, but also essential to Christianity. Originating from 'qaneh' in Hebrew and 'kanon' in Greek, both meaning 'measuring rod', canon in the religious sense 'designates the exclusive collection of documents in the Judeo-Christian tradition that have come to be regarded as Scripture' (McRay, 1996). While in Christianity 'canon' solely refers to the texts, in polysystem theory it is used to refer to 'literary norms and works (i.e. both models and texts)' that are approved by the governing bodies in a socio-cultural context and whose 'conspicuous products' are maintained as the cultural legacy within the community (Even-Zohar, 1990b, p.15).

The concept associated with 'canon' is 'canonicity'. As stated by Sheffy (1990, p. 512), in polysystem theory 'canon' refers to the 'carrier', and 'canonicity', the 'properties'. Importantly, 'canonicity' is essentially a 'function' that relates to the concept of 'system', yet the material to which it is ascribed differs from case to case. Sheffy further notes that this is why Even-Zohar (1990 cited in Sheffy, 1990) points out in a footnote that in polysystem theory the attribute 'canonised' is preferred to 'canonical'; the first indicates that canonicity entails external efforts that credit this quality to

certain materials, but the latter suggests that canonicity is a feature intrinsic to them. Since canonicity is determined by authorities, here one can see a reemphasis of the role the 'institution' plays in a literary system.

Even-Zohar further explains that 'canonicity' operates on two different levels. Firstly, canonicity can be ascribed to 'texts', and secondly, 'models'. Even-Zohar calls the first case *static canonicity*, which describes the situation where a particular text 'as a finalized product' is chosen to be included in the group of texts that have been selected for preservation in a system. The second case, *dynamic canonicity*, describes the situation where a particular literary model is recognised 'as a productive principle' in a system through the repertoire of the particular system (1990b, p.19, my emphasis).

Based on my observations, I would like to propose that, in any Christian literary system, the Bible is represented as a primary text that holds 'static canonicity' and 'dynamic canonicity' at the same time. Furthermore, this is a permanent state since the Bible is the essential as well as the only text that serves to uphold the whole Christian literary polysystem. In terms of static canonicity, the utmost authoritative status of the Bible indeed cannot be changed. As for dynamic canonicity, a number of Christian critics' responses presented in my case studies as well as some of their conceptualisation of 'proper Christian literature' will show that in different periods and circumstances the Bible is always the guide for their judgments.

4.4 Christian fiction publishing: a profitable industry in the U.S.

In discussing popular literature and religion in the U.S., Chapman (2015, p.187) states that among the large number of books on religion and spirituality in the U.S. book market, '[t]he fiction sub-section is also densely populated, with a profusion of Evangelical Christian titles in particular'. She cites some statistics to introduce the U.S.'s thriving market for Christian fiction. For example, an article in the official magazine of the American Library Association, *American Libraries*, states that 'annual sales of Christian books and products rose from $1 billion in 1980 to more than $4 billion in 2000' (Ralph and Larue, 2005 cited in Chapman, 2015, p.187).

As reported by *Publishers Weekly* in 2011, the religion section occupied ten percent of America's whole book market (measured in dollar sales) (Nelson, 2011). This article also mentions a report published earlier in the same year, which revealed that in terms of e-book sales Christian fiction ranked as the third most popular genre (with a sixteen percent share) and it exceeded 'both general trade romance and mysteries' (ibid.). Chapman also mentions an American librarian's attitude towards Christian fiction in an interview with *Publishers Weekly*: 'if the book is with a known publisher, it's not a question of if we'll buy it, but how many copies we'll buy' (Byle, 2012 cited in Chapman, 2015, p.187). All these provide us with tangible information on the substantial role Christian fiction plays in the U.S. publishing scene nowadays.

4.4.1 Evangelical fiction: a distinct book genre in the U.S.

An important part of the vast U.S. Christian book industry is 'evangelical fiction'. Here, it is necessary to distinguish 'evangelical fiction' from 'Christian fiction', although there is an overlap between these two book categories. Evangelical cultural products in the U.S. set up 'an affirming and flattering mirror to Evangelical culture' (Chapman, 2015, p.190). While these products appear to intend to convert non-churchgoers, oftentimes they are produced and appreciated only by individuals or groups within the evangelical community, offering 'a validation of their faith and the sense of cultural and social identity that it generated' (ibid.). This indicates that the evangelical cultural realm is to a large extent separate from the mainstream.

According to Mort (2002), the late 1970s witnessed the rise of evangelical fiction as a genre in the U.S. Before this, Christian novels had been part of the American mainstream book market, and many Christian authors could easily publish their works with mainstream publishing houses. In other words, there was a time when separating the book category 'Christian fiction' from the general book market was not necessary. However, in the 1960s there was a tendency for writers who had once been recognised as 'Christian' to question the existence of God and deal with existential crises in their works; important Christian authors (e.g. John Updike) started to appeal more to scholars than the general readership (p.2). Mort points out that in 1979 the Christian publishing company Bethany House's publication of Janette Oke's *Love Comes Softly,* 'a romance with a strong Christian message but that struck a genuine note among

women in particular' marked the emergence of 'simple, straightforward fiction that celebrates the glories of America's past, romantic love, and the hope for redemption' (ibid.).[20] Such a description highlights the distinct American characteristics of evangelical fiction.

The popularity of evangelical fiction in the U.S. is also closely linked with the nation's socio-political landscape. As commented by Kennedy (2005), the growth of the Christian right in the political realm of the U.S. has further stimulated the already thriving market for evangelical fiction, and many mainstream publishers have started extending their publishing territory to evangelical fiction.

In fact, evangelical fiction can be described as a product of white, Christian America. Many critics, such as Chapman (2015) and Arthur (2016), have concerns about the predominance of white culture in contemporary U.S. Christian fiction. Chapman explicitly remarks, '[t]o read the extant scholarship on contemporary Christian publishing is to encounter a world dominated by white conservative Evangelicals, from the perspective of both production and consumption' (p.197).

In criticising the lack of cultural relevance in many Christian novels in the U.S., Arthur urges American Christian authors to adopt a more sensible approach to racial issues in their stories. She warns against the prevalent 'obliviousness' towards racial history and background. According to her, when a non-white shows up, the character usually appears as 'either a substitute for

[20] Each of Oke's novels had an initial print run of 250,000 copies, and the total sales of her books reached more than 19 million copies (Johnson, 2000 cited in Mort, 2002).

what otherwise would be a white sidekick—but with no discernable uniqueness—or the sidekick is a walking stereotype of their race'.

When advising American Christian authors to avoid clichés in their story plots, Arthur lists several types of Christian stories that seemingly attract a wide group of Christian writers and readers: stories with the heartland as their settings (either dealing with histories or the returns to the rural), retellings of Bible stories, stories with World War II as their backgrounds, and 'the corporate-versus-family drama' that features non-Christian characters being kept from losing the family relationships by loosening their grip on the capitalist world. Notably, when Arthur speaks of the heartland stories, she especially brings up Amish fiction, which is a subgenre of American evangelical fiction that deals with Amish people and culture.

Also termed as the Amish romance, Amish fiction is usually written and read by Christian females. The Amish series is quite a phenomenon in the U.S. publishing world. This has led to *Newsweek*'s publication of 'Fifty Shades of Amish: A Strange Genre of The Romance Novel' (Goodman, 2015), in which the Amish romance books were reported to be popular among women over the age of forty who are mostly evangelical Christians. Interestingly, Amish books do not have direct connection with the real Amish community, and most of their readers and authors are not Amish.

So far I have presented contextual information on the popularity of evangelical fiction in the U.S. Since evangelical fiction almost only caters to the evangelical community, all texts examined in this thesis do not fit neatly

into such a specific Christian genre. Even in the case of *The Shack*, 'evangelical fiction' would not be an entirely suitable genre label for this novel since it has largely circulated in the mainstream market. Yet, the commercial success of *The Shack* can still be seen as a reflection of the significance of Christian fiction in the U.S. book market.

As the most important adjacent system to the Taiwanese Christian literary system, the U.S. Christian literary system greatly influences its Taiwanese counterpart. As will be shown in the following chapters, while many features and elements of the U.S. Christian literary system tend to be replicated in the Taiwanese case, some remain untransferred. The similarities and differences observed in the introduction of the selected Christian-themed fiction texts into Taiwan in this study demonstrate the dynamic interaction of these two cultural systems.

Chapter 5

The Reclamation of *The Chronicles of Narnia* into the Christian World

With the goal of evangelism, different groups within the Christian literary polysystem, including publishing houses, the media, literary groups, and church groups, attempt to promote Christian beliefs through literature. Fictional features especially make literary works open to various interpretations and may enable Christians to identify and claim the Christian elements in the texts. In this chapter, I will draw on *The Chronicles of Narnia* (hereafter *Narnia*) to explore how individuals and groups within the Christian institution 'reclaim' literary works from the secular literary realm, where the *Narnia* books are best known as children's fantasy classics, and further discuss the dynamics generated between the Christian literary polysystem and its non-Christian counterpart during this process.[21]

Narnia is a profoundly influential work in the realm of children's fantasy literature. Written by the Irish-born British writer C. S. Lewis, *Narnia* consists of seven volumes telling the stories about the fantasy world of Narnia. The first edition of the *Narnia* books was published in London in the 1950s, and has been translated into at least forty-seven different languages since then (GoodKnight, 2010).[22] There have also been various adaptions of *Narnia*

[21] Here, I put the 'institution' in its singular form as it refers to the collection of different institutions within the Christian literary polysystem on a global scale. As will be unfolded in this chapter, church groups' utilisation of the *Narnia* series as an evangelistic tool is almost a global phenomenon. This is why the 'secular literary scene' is also in the singular.

[22] The *Narnia* story has the following sequence: *The Magician's Nephew*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *The Horse and His Boy*, *Prince Caspian*, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*,

produced in different media forms, including radio dramas, television series, musicals, films, etc. Since this thesis deals with phenomena related to the translation of the chosen texts in Taiwan from the year 2000 onwards, this chapter on *Narnia* will centre on the publication of its latest traditional Chinese character version by Titan Publishing House (大田出版社) and the release of its film series by Hollywood in the 2000s.

5.1 C.S. Lewis: a writer, literature professor, and Christian apologist

C.S. Lewis (1898-1963), in full Clive Staples Lewis, is undoubtedly one of the best-known English-language authors in the modern era. Writer, professor of English literature, and Christian apologist are perhaps the three most widely recognised roles of Lewis.[23] He was born and raised in Belfast to a Protestant family that attended the Church of Ireland, but later became an atheist during his adolescence. He renewed his faith at the age of thirty-two after taking a stroll with J.R.R. Tolkien and Hugo Dyson; all three of them belonged to the Inklings literary group, an informal group at the University of Oxford that lasted for around two decades (from the early 1930s to the late 1940s). Lewis' Christian identity and literary prestige both have contributed to his reputation and significance in the world of modern Christian literature.

Although the *Narnia* series brought him the most fame, Lewis had already

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The Silver Chair, and *The Last Battle.* However, the published order was: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Prince Caspian*, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, The Silver Chair*, *The Horse and His Boy*, *The Magician's Nephew*, and *The Last Battle*.

[23] Lewis had been a Tutorial Fellow in English of Magdalen College at the University of Oxford from 1925 to 1954. In 1954, he was elected to the Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at the University of Cambridge. He served at Cambridge from 1955 to 1963 (C.S. Lewis Foundation, 2018).

been a household name before its publication. During the World War II era, Lewis became an authoritative voice for Christianity through his series of lectures on religious programmes on BBC radio after he published *The Problem of Pain* (1940), a book giving Christian answers to human suffering. His BBC radio talks were later turned into *Mere Christianity* (1952), which has been commonly regarded as a modern classic of Christian apologetics and is ranked first on *Christianity Today*'s list of 'Books of the Century' for being '[t]he best case for the essentials of orthodox Christianity in print' (*Christianity Today*, 2000).

Lewis was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine in 1947 as 'a best-selling author and one of the most influential spokesmen for Christianity in the English-speaking world'. This cover story entitled 'Religion: Don v. Devil' especially mentions *The Screwtape Letters*, an epistolary novel portraying sins and temptations from the Devil's perspective. First published in 1942, the novel had already gone through twenty printings in the U.K. and fourteen printings in the U.S. by the time this issue of *Time* was published. Although described as not particularly well-liked by his colleagues at Oxford for his 'theological pamphleteering [, which was regarded as] a kind of academic heresy' by some of his elite contemporaries, Lewis' popularity among his target readers in the 1940s was summed up by the following few words in the cover story: 'With erudition, good humor and skill, Lewis is writing about religion for a generation of religion-hungry readers brought up on a diet of "scientific" jargon and Freudian cliches' (*Time*, 1947). Fifty-eight

years later, Lewis' name was again featured in an article in *Time* magazine. This time, he was described as 'the hottest theologian of 2005' (Van Biema, 2005).

The year 2005 marked a phenomenal comeback of Lewis as a popular author. Although Lewis had never been forgotten in the book market (especially by Christian readers), the release of the Disney adaptation of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* in late 2005 rekindled global interest in *Narnia* as well as Lewis' other works. This, of course, can also be seen in the Chinese-speaking world. There have been several Chinese versions of *Narnia* published after 2005.[24] At the same time, an increasing interest in introducing Lewis to the general readership can be observed among publishing houses in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. In the next section, I will introduce the translation history of the *Narnia* books in Taiwan in order to further illustrate how the 'reclamation' of *Narnia* has occurred in the Chinese-speaking Christian world.

5.2 Translating *The Chronicles of Narnia* as children's literature in Taiwan

Several traditional Chinese character editions of *Narnia* have been published in Taiwan by different publishing houses in the past decades, although not all of them were published as complete series. In 1979,

[24] In China, publishing houses that have published Chinese translations of *Narnia* during recent years include Yilin Press (譯林), Shanghai Translation Publishing House (上海譯文), Zhejiang Juvenile And Children's Publishing House (浙江少年兒童出版社), and People's Oriental Publishing & Media Co., Ltd. (人民東方出版社), to name but a few.

Chang-Qiao Publishing House (長橋出版社) published the first traditional Chinese character version of *Narnia* in Taiwan and put the novel series under the larger umbrella category 'Modern Tales for Children' (現代童話故事叢書) (Liang, 2010, pp.11-12). Several other publishing houses also published their own versions of the *Narnia* books; these include two of Taiwan's well-known publishers specialising in children's books: *Mandarin Daily News* (國語日報出版社) and Orient Press (東方出版社).[25] Some cover designs of these different Chinese versions of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* are shown in Appendix 1. As can be seen, *Mandarin Daily News*'s version was printed with *Zhuyin fuhao* (注音符號), the main Mandarin phonetic symbols used in Taiwan, so as to assist children with reading.[26] As for the Orient Press version, the story had undergone adaptation in order to cater to local young readers; this is a typical publishing strategy of Orient Press.

Currently, the predominant Chinese translation of *Narnia* books in Taiwan is Titan's version. So far Titan's version has undergone three editions, although all are presented with the original interior illustrations by Pauline Baynes.[27] Its

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[25] *Mandarin Daily News*, since its establishment in 1948, has been playing an influential role in Taiwanese children's reading experience and literacy development. One of its contributions is its translation of Western children's books. Founded in 1961, Orient Press has been known for adapting Chinese and Western classics for children (Desmet and Duh, 2004, p.1244).

[26] *Zhuyin fuhao* was first introduced into China by the Republican Government in the 1910s to help ordinary people and children build literacy. As Taiwan was later ruled by the government of the Republic of China, *Zhuyin fuhao* has thus become the main phonetic systems used in Taiwan. *Zhuyin fuhao* is sometimes called the *Bopomofo* system since 'bo', 'po', 'mo', and 'fo' are the utterances of the first four symbols of the system; their *Zhuyin fuhao* are written as ㄅ, ㄆ, ㄇ, and ㄈ. In contrast, the phonetic system used in China is the *Pinyin* system, the romanisation system officialised by the government of the People's Republic of China in the 1950s.

[27] Baynes was the chosen illustrator of both J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis. By the time Baynes worked on the illustrations for *Narnia*, she had been collaborating with Tolkien in the creation of his Middle-earth stories, including *Farmer Giles of Ham*, *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, *Smith of Wootton Major*, etc. (*The Independent*, 2008).

first edition was published in series during 2002 and 2003, with Baynes' drawings on the book covers. In 2005, the whole series was reprinted with newly designed book covers. And finally, the third edition with Baynes' drawings but with different designs from the first edition was published in 2014.

Titan's publication of the *Narnia* books surely caught the wave of the popularity of Hollywood's latest adaptation of *Narnia*. Volumes of Titan's second edition of *Narnia* came out separately only two to three months before December 2005, when *The Lion, the Witch and The Wardrobe* hit the big screen. In addition to revamping the designs of this second edition's book covers, Titan also made an amendment to the Chinese title of its *Narnia* series. Its first edition of *Narnia* books was published under the title 'The Magic Kingdom of Narnia'（納尼亞的魔法王國）, but in the second edition, the series title was changed into 'The Legend of Narnia' (納尼亞傳奇), which was the same as the Chinese title of its latest film adaptation. In 2010, Titan brought together its *Narnia* books into a book set and began promoting it with pre-order tickets for *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* shortly before the film was released. Meanwhile, a limited edition of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* with a 3D movie tie-in cover was also published by Titan.

Titan has never been particularly known for publishing children's books, and it did not explicitly make its *Narnia* series target young readers (unlike other publishers who had published *Narnia* over the past few decades). The paratextual evidence reveals that Titan put its *Narnia* under the category of

children's literature. This can be observed from the names listed as the endorsers of the books, most of whom are explicitly introduced as professionals in the field of children's literature.

As for the texts, the wide use of Chinese idiomatic expressions, especially *chengyu* (成語) in Titan's Chinese version of *Narnia* books can potentially support their young readers' literacy. *Chengyu* are idioms derived from classical Chinese but still commonly used in vernacular Chinese. These conventional expressions are mostly composed of four Chinese characters and normally considered as succinct literary expressions. Thus, they are an essential part of Chinese language cultivation for children in the Chinese-speaking world. While Titan had three different translators to work on the seven volumes in its *Narnia* series, the above-mentioned kind of language use can be largely observed in all volumes.

To illustrate this point, I will show some examples extracted from Titan's version of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* translated by Peng Chien-wen (彭倩文) in the following. Peng is a Taiwanese translator known for translating *Harry Potter* and many other children's literature works into Chinese in Taiwan.[28] A salient feature of Peng's translation is the use of *chengyu* to render Lewis' descriptions or expressions that do not necessarily contain idioms. Generally speaking, the use of *chengyu*, those alluding to Chinese ancient literature in particular, in modern children's literature in Chinese is a common

[28] This traditional Chinese character version of *Harry Potter* novel series published by Crown Publishing House has been circulated in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau. Peng is the translator of the first four volumes and the organiser of the translation team for the other three volumes. For Titan's *Narnia* series, Peng translated *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *The Magician's Nephew*, and *The Horse and His Boy*.

pragmatic approach to helping with children's language acquisition. Peng's utilisation of *chengyu* and the elaborate style in her translation may serve didactic purposes and also reinforce the image of *Narnia* as a classic of children's literature among its Taiwanese readers.

Example 1

ST: And the tune he played made Lucy want to cry and laugh and **dance** and **go to sleep** all at the same time (p.16).

TT: 他吹奏的旋律緊緊牽動露西的情緒，讓她一下想哭，一下　想笑，既想**翩翩起舞**，但又感到**昏昏欲睡**(p.21)。

(Back translation: The tune he played greatly triggered Lucy's emotions. At this moment she wanted to cry, and the next moment she wanted to laugh. She wanted to **rise up and dance**, but **experienced drowsiness** at the same time.)

The first four-character idiom highlighted in this example 翩翩起舞 (*pian pian qi wu*; 'to rise up and dance') is a literary expression denoting to dance lightly in a happy mood. The second idiom 昏昏欲睡 (*hun hun yu shui*; 'to experience drowsiness') literally means 'to experience dizziness and want to sleep'.

Example 2

ST: It seemed **so pitiful** to think of these little stone figures sitting there all the silent days and all the dark nights, **year after year**, till the moss

grew on them and at last even **their faces crumbled away** (p.117).

TT: 一想到這些小石像將會永遠站在那兒，度過無數寂靜的白日與黑暗的夜晚，就這樣**日復一日，年復一年**，直到它們身上長滿　了苔蘚，最後甚至連面龐也**磨損殆盡**，完全不復辨認，實在令人**感慨萬分**（p.120）。

(Back translation: One would **deeply lament** when thinking of these stone figures standing there forever, through the numerous silent days and dark nights, **day after day, year after year**, till their bodies were covered with moss, and eventually even their faces were **abraded into non-being**, becoming completely irrecognisable.)

A transposition can be seen in the translation of 'it seemed so pitiful…', which Peng renders as 實在令人感慨萬分 ('one would deeply lament…'). In the TT, this unit is put at the end of the long sentence. The four-character idiom utitlised here is 感慨萬分(*gan kai wan fen*), which means 'to have strong emotional reactions to something', usually 'to feel sad or very sorry about something'. The Chinese idiomatic equivalent to 'year after year' is 年復一年 (*nian fu yi nian*; 'year after year'); yet, Peng adopts the longer form of the same idiomatic expression in Chinese 日復一日，年復一年 (*ri fu yi ri, nian fu yi nian*; 'day after day, year after year') in her translation. For 'crumbled away', Peng uses 磨損殆盡 (*mo sun dai jin*; 'to gradually disappear through wear and tear'), which is apparently a derivative of the more commonly seen four-character phrase 消磨殆盡 (*xiao mie dai jin*; 'to be worn away and nearly disappear').

Example 3

ST: Peter was feeling uncomfortable too at the idea of fighting the battle on his own; the news that Aslan might not be there had **come as a great shock** to him. […] Everyone felt **how different it had been** last night or even that morning (p.147).

TT: 而彼得只要一想到他得靠自己領軍作戰，就忍不住開始直冒冷汗。亞斯藍可能不會來參戰的消息，對他來說簡直就是**晴天霹靂**。[…]每個人都深深感到，現在的氣氛跟昨天晚上，甚至當天早上比起來，可說有**天壤之別**(p.150)。

(Back translation: And Peter could not help but start sweating when thinking of leading the battle on his own. The news that Aslan might not participate in the battle came to him as **a sudden thunder in the sunny day**. […] Everybody strongly felt the atmosphere at the moment and that the last night, even that in the morning on that day, are **as different as night and day**.)

In Peng's translation, the shocking news about Aslan's possible absence from the battle is described as 晴天霹靂 (*qing tian pi li*) , of which the literal translation is 'a sudden thunder on the sunny day'; the phrase bears a very similar meaning to the English idiom 'a bolt from the blue'. The atmosphere of the present moment and that of earlier times are portrayed in the TT as 天壤之別 (*tian rang zhi bie*), a Chinese equivalent of the English idiom 'as different as night and day'.

5.3 Christianising *Narnia*: a cross-cultural phenomenon

The following discussion explores how *Narnia* has been commonly classified as Christian since its publication, and how it has been utilised for evangelism by church groups, first within the Anglophone context, and then other cultural environments such as the Chinese-speaking world. I will also address how this phenomenon of Christianising *Narnia* has spread across national and cultural borders, and yet it has had different reflections in the Anglophone world and Taiwan.

5.3.1 *Narnia* as Christian-themed literature in the Anglophone context: U.K. and U.S.

Narnia has been widely identified as a Christian allegory ever since its first publication. However, as early as 1954, Lewis already wrote in his correspondence with some primary school readers that it would be a mistake to assume that everything in the *Narnia* series '"represents" something in this world'. According to Lewis, this would be true in the case of *The Pilgrim's Progress* but his stories were not created in this way:

> I did not say to myself 'Let us represent Jesus as He really is in our world by a Lion in Narnia': I said, 'Let us suppose that there were a land like Narnia and that the Son of God, as he became a Man in our world, became a Lion there, and then imagine what would happen'.
>
> (Lewis, 1954, pp. 44-45)

In another essay, Lewis refuted the assumption held by some readers that he had intentionally framed his fantasy stories with Christian teachings and then strung elements together to create Christian 'allegories' for children; nevertheless, '[e]verything began with images; a faun carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge, a magnificent lion. At first there wasn't anything Christian about them; that element pushed itself in of its own accord' (Lewis, 1966, p. 46). Although in the passage Lewis did not specify which story he was referring to, all examples he listed, including the faun, the queen, and the lion, suggest that this reflection was on *Narnia*.

Lewis (1961) was once very explicit in the 'deeper meaning behind' the *Narnia* stories, as shown in the following 'supposal' (termed by the author himself):

> The whole Narnian story is about Christ. That is to say, I asked myself 'Supposing that there really was a world like Narnia and supposing it had (like our world) gone wrong and supposing Christ wanted to go into that world and save it (as He did ours), what might have happened?' The stories are my answers. Since Narnia is a world of Talking Beasts, I thought He would become a Talking Beast there, as He became a man here. I pictured Him becoming a lion there because (a) the lion is supposed to be the king of beasts; (b) Christ is called 'The Lion of Judah' in the Bible; (c) I'd been having strange dreams about lions when I began writing the work. The whole series works out like this.

The Magician's Nephew tells the Creation and how evil entered Narnia.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Prince Caspian restoration of the true religion after corruption.

The Horse and His Boy the calling and conversion of a heathen.

The Voyage of the Dawn Treader the spiritual life (especially in Reepicheep).

The Silver Chair the continuing war with the powers of darkness.

The Last Battle the coming of the Antichrist (the Ape), the end of the world and the Last Judgment.

As noted by Lewis' close friend George Sayer (1994, p.318), although readers can easily draw a parallel between the theology represented in *Narnia* and the Bible's narrative, Lewis 'almost certainly did not want his readers to notice the resemblance'. The author's intention, according to Sayer, was to enable Christianity to be more readily accepted by his readers later in their lives. Lewis is quoted as saying: 'I am aiming at a sort of pre-baptism of the child's imagination'.

The fact that Lewis was a self-identified Anglican Christian who authored several influential works revolving around Christian beliefs has also strengthened the link between *Narnia* and Christianity. Several critics have pointed out the correlation between Lewis' non-fiction expository writing and his fantasy stories by highlighting the apologetical content in the two different

forms of writing. In doing so, they suggest that Lewis demonstrates a versatile approach to apologetics in his different works.

For example, Wood (1995) examines Lewis' *Till We Have Faces*, *Mere Christianity* and *The Problem of Pain*, and maintains that Lewis demonstrates an unconventional fictional or imaginative approach in his apologetic writings.[29] McGrath (2013, pp. 129-46) points out that Lewis employs three distinct strategies, 'reason, longing, and the imagination', in his apologetic method, which can be found respectively in *Miracles*, *Mere Christianity* and the *Narnia* series. McGrath also states that while *Mere Christianity* displays a combination of 'reasoned argument with a much more subjective appeal to the longings of the human heart', *Narnia*, as the 'imaginative counterpart' of *Mere Christianity*, seeks to attract readers' imaginations. Textual evidence of this can be found in Schakel's article (2005) discussing the magic and meaning in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Schakel mentions an example where Lewis' idea in *Mere Christianity* has been converted into the fictional portrayal in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*: as in *Mere Christianity* Lewis states that men's receipt of *Zoe*, 'the spiritual life which is in God from eternity', can be paralleled with the transformation of sculptured stones to human beings, in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* those who have once been captured and turned into stones by the White Witch eventually come alive through Aslan's breath (p. 48).

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[29] All of these three books are categorised by Wood as 'apologetic works' in this paper, although *Till We Have Faces* (1956) subtitled *A Myth Retold* is normally regarded as a novel that retells the myth of Cupid and Psyche.

Whether or not *Narnia* should be approached through allegorical interpretation, it cannot be denied that Christian elements do exist in its story. This has led to the publication of numerous academic or non-academic works on the Christian motifs and symbolism in *Narnia*. As mentioned, much discussion took place concerning the Christian interpretation of *Narnia* when the novels were first published; such attention has never been lacking ever since. Following the latest *Narnia* film series, there was a boom in the *Narnia*-related book market after 2005. Some of these books were published by Christian publishers with a specific aim to teach readers how to decipher the Christian messages in *Narnia*, and even how to teach other *Narnia* readers the Christian values reflected in the stories. Some examples of this kind of publication are: T. Williams' (2005) *The Heart of the Chronicles of Narnia: Knowing God Here by Finding Him There* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson), J. Kloster's (2008) *Eternal Truths of Narnia— Bible Studies and Leaders Guide for the Chronicles of Narnia* (Newberry, Florida: Bridge-Logos), W. Vaus' (2010) *The Hidden Story of Narnia: A Book-By-Book Guide to C. S. Lewis' Spiritual Themes* (Cheshire, Connecticut: Winged Lion Press), to name but a few. Among these books, *The Heart of the Chronicles of Narnia* was purposely published as a companion to the film *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, released in 2005. As will be mentioned in the next two sections, books with the same function were also published in Taiwan during the same time. *The Hidden Story of Narnia* includes a preface written by Anne Waller Jenkins, to whom Lewis wrote the letter in which he proposed the 'supposal'

regarding the Christian theme of each *Narnia* volume.

In addition to the above-mentioned examples, there are also some *Narnia*-related books published by Christian publishing houses that deal with religious and spiritual aspects in the *Narnia* stories yet look less didactic. The former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams' (2012) *The Lion's World: A Journey Into the Heart of Narnia* is an example. Williams, who is also a revered literary figure, provides a thorough analysis of the *Narnia* stories to support his argument that although the novels do not represent 'self-conscious allegories of theological truths', 'there is a strong, coherent spiritual and theological vision shaping all the stories (p. 4).

There are also some introductory books to *Narnia* that are published by non-Christian publishers yet cover Christian interpretations of themes of *Narnia*. Two of the best-known of these books are D. C. Downing's (2005) *Into the Wardrobe: C. S. Lewis and the Narnia Chronicles* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass), and P. F. Ford's (2005) *Companion to Narnia, Revised Edition: A Complete Guide to the Magical World of C.S. Lewis's The Chronicles of Narnia* (New York: HarperCollins; first edition published in 1980). The latter published by the major mainstream publisher HarperCollins is perhaps the best-known companion to *Narnia* to date.

Apart from printed materials, the Christian reading of *Narnia* can also be easily accessed via some common online resources. The BBC website, for example, has put the entry 'C.S. Lewis' (2009) under 'Christianity' on its introductory section 'Religions'. There, Lewis is primarily introduced as 'the

author of the children's classic *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*' with information about Lewis as 'the man, the storyteller and the Christian'. Following the section about *Narnia* 'Fantasy in fur coats', a separate section 'Christian allegory' subtitled 'Allegory or shaggy lion story?' briefly discusses the debate over whether or not *Narnia* should be read as a Christian allegory, while claiming that each *Narnia* book epitomises a distinct Christian narrative.

On Wikipedia there is a page 'Religion in *The Chronicles of Narnia*' (2017), which introduces *Narnia* as a novel series that not only contains 'numerous traditional Christian themes' but also draws on characters and elements from classical Greco-Roman mythology as well as British and Irish folklore. Later, the webpage details relevant information on *Narnia* under three headings: 'Christian parallels', 'Paganism', and 'Religious and secular reception'. Since the BBC and Wikipedia are certainly among the most popular websites nowadays, they can exemplify the fact that the Christian contours of *Narnia* stories not only interest the Christian community but are also known in the secular literary and cultural realm. This has led to the tensions between different attitudes towards the religious motifs (including both the Christian and the non-Christian) embedded in the *Narnia* tales. This is where one can witness the interaction between the religious and secular literary systems, as will be shown in my later discussion.

5.3.2 *Narnia* as Christian-themed literature in the Taiwanese context

As mentioned previously, *Narnia* has been mainly positioned within the

field of children's literature since it was first introduced to Taiwanese readers. This is similar to how the novel series has been promoted in different parts of the world. While the biblical elements interwoven with the storylines of *Narnia* may be highly visible to some non-Christian readers in societies where Christianity is an integral part of their local cultures, they may be less identifiable to readers in those generally non-Christian cultural contexts. Taiwan, as a nation that has its local culture mostly rooted in Buddhist, Daoist and folklore traditions, is one of the latter cases. In this sense, Taiwanese publishers' production of materials that provide Christian interpretations of the *Narnia* novels can be regarded as playing an even more important role in influencing their readers' reception of the stories.

Most of the books that introduce Christian motifs in *Narnia* were translated from English and published by Christian publishing houses. Some of the examples are *The Key to the Magic Wardrobe—Into the Fantasy World of Narnia* (魔衣櫥的鑰匙—跨入納尼亞的奇幻世界; published by A Kernel of Wheat Christian Ministries [美國麥種傳道會] in 2005), *The Study Guide to* The Chronicles of Narnia—*The Fantasy World of* The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (納尼亞傳奇導讀—獅子·女巫·魔衣櫥的奇幻王國; published by Ya Ge Publishing House [雅歌出版社] in 2006), *The Call of Narnia—The Study Guide to* The Chronicles of Narnia (納尼亞的呼喚—納尼亞傳奇系列精選導讀; published by Olive Christian Foundation [橄欖基金會] in 2005), etc.[30] All these three books were published during late 2005 and early 2006,

[30] Below are details about the originals of these books: 1) *The Key to the Magic Wardrobe* was translated from Veith, G., 2005. *The Soul of The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*. Wheaton,

which can be seen as these Christian publishers' efforts to promote Christianity by taking advantage of the latest trend of *Narnia* brought by the Hollywood adaptation.

Apart from translations, Taiwan's Christian publishing houses also have published several companions to *Narnia* and introductory materials related to C.S. Lewis that are written by local Taiwanese authors. Similar to what happened in the Anglophone context, many more *Narnia* or Lewis-related publications have been produced after the Disney film adaptation of *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* was released in 2005. These materials have appeared in different forms, including books, brochures, and audio books.

The earliest indigenous C.S. Lewis-related publication to be found in Taiwan is *The Spiritual World of C. S. Lewis* (路益師的心靈世界), which was a collection of different Taiwanese authors' essays on Lewis, first published by Ya Ge Publishing House in 1989, and then reprinted in 1994. In 2001, CEFP published *Flames of the Sublime* (山腰上的火炬—魯益師思想導讀), written by Pang Zijian (龐自堅) as a guide for readers to understand Lewis' thoughts.[31]

5.3.3 The *Narnia* phenomenon: from the Anglophone world to Taiwan

Discussion on paratextual materials for *Narnia* published after the year 2005 is incorporated into this section, where 'the *Narnia* phenomenon' among

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Illinois: Victor Books. 2) *The Study Guide to* The Chronicles of Narnia was translated from Ditchfield. C., 2003. *A Family Guide to Narnia.* Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway. 3) *The Call of Narnia* was translated from Smith, M., 2005. *Aslan's Call: Finding Our Way to Narnia.* Westmont, Illinois: InterVarsity Press.

[31] Here, I transliterate the author's Chinese name myself since the author's English name is unavailable.

Christian communities, the flourishing *Narnia*-related evangelistic activities launched by church groups, will be the focus. As stated by Russell (2009, p. 60), the release of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* in 2005 during the Christmas season has been regarded as a marketing strategy of the film production companies that wished to make this Christian-themed film specifically target evangelical Christians in the U.S. (who are described by Russell as "the avowedly faithful audiences who appeared on the industry's radar following the success of Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* in 2004").

Many news reports dated during the period when *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* was being shown reveal that many churches in the U.S. and the U.K. launched evangelistic activities by means of the screening of *Narnia*. For instance, as stated in an article published in *The Christian Post*, some American church groups had already previewed the film before its official release, including the megachurch Saddleback Church who 'bought out 20,000 seats and filled up every single movie theater in Lake Forest, Calif., to watch the movie a few days early' (Tse, 2005).[32] Similar church activities were reported in a news story in the *Houston Chronicle* with the title 'Pastors lead flocks through the wardrobe to Narnia' and the subheading 'Churches and Disney see Narnia as a land of opportunity'. In addition to the special private screenings before the public release of the movie, some Houston churches

[32] *The Christian Post* is one of major American Christian newspapers that provide Christian news nationwide and global wide. It is headquartered in Washington, D.C., and known for its non-denominational evangelical background.

planned their Sunday services around *Narnia* themes. The report also mentions that in the previous month, over 140 church leaders in Houston attended a gathering that involved the movie trailer screening and training in how to hold church activities surrounding the film. The event was hosted by the Mission America Coalition, an evangelical organisation that arranged it at the national scale (Karkabi and Parks, 2005). Here, one can note that this faith-based *Narnia* promotion launched by churches was a nationwide phenomenon.

Christian groups in the U.K. also had similar evangelical activities planned around the *Narnia* film. In November 2005, the BBC reported that St. Luke's Church, Maidstone, in Kent, was giving away *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* film tickets to 1,000 single-parent families. It is also mentioned that in March the same year, St. Luke gave away thousands of tickets to *The Passion of the Christ*, which led to a ten per cent increase in church attendance on Easter Sunday.

The use of the film as an evangelistic tool by church groups can also be observed in the Taiwanese context. Various events were planned in the hope of arousing Taiwanese Christians' interest in the newly released film as a gospel movie, and more importantly, sharing the evangelical messages (that were believed to be) inherent in the plots. Consequently, the 'Narnia Gospel Movement Alliance' (納尼亞福音行動聯盟) was initiated by the leaders of several major Christian groups in Taiwan. According to a news article published in Hong Kong's Christian newspaper *Kingdom Revival Times* (國度復興報) in November 2005, this evangelical alliance sought to adopt the same

promotion strategy some churches already used in the previous year when they utilised *The Passion of the Christ* as a device for evangelisation. The alliance was also organising a workshop and putting together a collection of useful resources, such as study guides and teaching materials, to help church leaders with their outreach activities (*Kingdom Revival Times*, 2005).

Many local churches in Taiwan were also keen on promoting *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Some churches bought out theaters for their members to invite non-Christians to the movie; for them, this is an act of 'pre-evangelism'. For example, a *Narnia*-related event was advertised on the news sheet released in late November 2005 by one of the biggest churches in Taiwan's capital, Taipei Glory Church (台北榮耀堂). It states that the church was going to buy out an entire cinema screening of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* on Christmas Day. Following the screening, a talk was to be given by the church's pastor, and non-Christian audiences would be invited to do The Sinner's Prayer afterwards.[33] Also, a short article 'Pre-evangelism: The Gospel from the Kingdom of Narnia' (來自納尼亞王國的福音：福音的預工) was included in the news sheet. The article was extracted from *The Good News from* The Chronicles of Narnia: *Introductory Brochure to* The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (來自納尼亞傳奇的福音《獅子·女巫·魔衣櫥》—福音導覽手冊) published by China Sunday School Association, Taiwan (中國主日學協會), and the church members were recommended to buy the brochure as a

[33] The Sinner's Prayer, or the Salvation Prayer, in the evangelical context refers to the prayer said by individuals who confess their sins and declare their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Saviour through whom they can have a connection with God.

guide to the film.[34]

Similar to the case of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the subsequent instalments of the *Narnia* film series *Prince Caspian* and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, which were released respectively in 2008 and 2010, also triggered evangelical reactions among churches, although on a less extensive scale. Yet, it was during this period that two *Narnia*-related works produced indigenously in Taiwan were published. One is *The Theology of Narnia* (納尼亞神學) published by CEFP in 2011. This book is one of the main materials I will draw on to discuss the case of *Narnia* in Taiwan's Christian literary system in the next section. The other one is an audio companion series for children *Candy Story*: *The Legend of Narnia* (糖果姐姐說故事：納尼亞的傳奇故事) published in late 2011 by Cosmic Light Publishing House (宇宙光出版社), a Christian publishing house that shares a status similar to that of CEFP in Taiwan.[35] Unlike most *Narnia*-related publications, the *Candy Story* audio book series features only the last five volumes of *Narnia,* instead of including the best-known *Narnia* book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

The above-mentioned publications exemplify local publishing efforts made by Christian publishers in Taiwan as a response to the cultural trend brought by the *Narnia* films. In the next section, I will describe how Taiwanese Christian agents promote Christianity through *Narnia*, e.g. localise the stories

[34] The news sheet 'News and Prayer Points, 27 November 2005' (2005.11.27 消息與代禱) was first accessed on Taipei Glory Church's website in September 2015, yet the material is no longer available.

[35] *Candy Story* is the English title given by Cosmic Light Publishing House to the audio book series, although its Chinese title means 'Sister Candy Tells Stories'.

through extra-textual interpretations. I will further discuss relevant phenomena surrounding these attempts within the framework of polysystem theory.

5.4 *Narnia* in Taiwan's Christian literary system

In this section, the systematic operation of the Taiwanese Christian literary system to Christianise *Narnia* in the specific Taiwanese context will be delineated. As Christianity is rather unfamiliar to most Taiwanese people, Taiwan's Christian groups usually consider it essential to seize any possible opportunity to proselytise. Cultural products, in many cases, serve as an ideal apparatus for them to deliver evangelical messages since the use of these cultural products in evangelism is believed to carry less doctrinal weight than straightforward preaching. As *Narnia* (in both print and audiovisual forms) tends to be recognised merely as children's fantasy literature by the mainstream majority among its Taiwanese audience, the efforts made by Taiwan's Christian institution to 'reclaim' *Narnia* from the non-Christian realm to its territory are clear.

5.4.1 *The Theology of Narnia*: an example of the indigenisation of *Narnia* in Taiwan

CEFP's publication of *The Theology of Narnia* (納尼亞神學) is a typical example of how Western Christian literary classics have been deployed as evangelistic devices within Taiwan's Christian literary system, and how the 'foreign' has been merged with the 'local' during this process. The author of

The Theology of Narnia is the former Principal at Taiwan Theological College and Seminary (台灣神學院), Hong-hsin Lin (林鴻信), who has been teaching at both secular and Christian universities across the Chinese-speaking world, in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, China, and so on. Besides being a scholar, Lin is also a pastor who has experience of ministering in rural Taiwan, and is currently a visiting preacher in different churches in Taiwan. Lin is known as one of the most important theologians in the contemporary Chinese-speaking Christian community. Many of his works demonstrate the localisation of Christian theology in the Chinese-speaking world.

The Theology of Narnia, subtitled '*C.S. Lewis' Mind and His Passion*' (路易斯的心靈與悸動), does not only centre on *Narnia* but offers a comprehensive discussion on Lewis' philosophical and theological thoughts that have been reflected in his various works.[36] As Lin states in the Preface, he draws on *Narnia* as the theme of this book mainly because he believes that the world of Narnia only belongs to children and thus provides access for people to achieve the condition of genuineness/realness from the imaginary world. This, according to Lin, represents the kernel of Lewis' own theology: an unceasing longing and pursuit for genuineness/realness (p. 11).

Lin devotes one chapter of the book to elaborating the Christian values and theological concepts represented in *Narnia*. In this chapter entitled 'The Narnian World' (納尼亞世界), Lin looks at the seven *Narnia* books through a Taiwanese evangelical lens. Two examples can illustrate this point. Firstly, in

[36] The English title and subtitle of this book are both provided by CEFP on the copyright page.

the section on *Prince Caspian*, Lin mentions the ideas of 'honour', 'shame', and 'sin' (p.133).[37] 'Honour and shame', as Lin explains, is an important theme in both Hebrew classics and Greek and Roman classics. Lin argues that compared with 'sin and forgiveness', 'honour and shame' may be more easily connected with the Eastern culture since 'shame', instead of 'sin', is more commonly highlighted in the East when it comes to mistakes. 'Sin' tends to point towards a certain case of wrongdoing, while 'shame' indicates the rejection of an individual for any reason. As the former asks for forgiveness, the latter requires acceptance. Lin further links this point to Bible studies, stating that there is an emerging approach to biblical interpretations: understanding biblical messages from a twofold perspective that engages both conceptualisations of 'sin and forgiveness' and 'shame and acceptance'.

The second example is from Lin's discussion on the last *Narnia* volume *The Last Battle*, where the author comments on the ending of the whole *Narnia* story:

> And for us this is the end. [...] But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.

[37] The original passage from the novel Lin refers to here is: "'You come of the Lord Adam and the Lady Eve,' said Aslan. 'And that is both honour enough to erect the head of the poorest beggar, and shame enough to bow the shoulders of the greatest emperor on earth. Be content.'"

(pp.165-66)

Lin parallels this final passage of *The Last Battle* with the closing lines in Mackay's memoir *From Far Formosa: The Island, Its People and Missions* (1896): 'But the half has not been told. These chapters are but a fragment. Not today or tomorrow can the story be written. The real story is not finished; it has only begun. There are chapters to be added from the yet unread pages of the book of God' (see Section 3.5 for the significance of Mackay in the history of Christianity in Taiwan). The connection Lin draws between these two sources is interesting as it demonstrates the author's effort to make *Narnia* resonate with Taiwanese readers.

5.4.2 Christianising *Narnia* in Taiwan

The Taiwanese Christian community's appropriation of *Narnia* as part of its evangelistic scheme serves as an illustrative example of how the Christianisation of certain literary works takes place on Taiwan soil. After introducing *The Theology of Narnia* for its representativeness in localising *Narnia* through the publication of paratextual materials, now I will continue to present other socio-semiotic activities revolving around *Narnia* within Taiwan's Christian literary system.

The Theology of Narnia was published two months after the release of the third installment of the *Narnia* film series *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. When the film was released in Taiwan in December 2010, Lin was the speaker of an after screening talk 'The Fantastic Christmas—*Narnia*' (奇幻聖誕—納

尼亞), which was co-organised by Taiwan Theological College and Seminary, Taiwan Frontier Association (台灣基督精兵協會) and the *Chinese Christian Tribune* (基督教論壇報). The *Chinese Christian Tribune* published an article publicising the event, and an interview with Lin was included. Although the article does not mention the then forthcoming *The Theology of Narnia*, one can notice that the kernel of *Narnia* Lin mentioned in the interview corresponds to the key thread in his book: Lin encouraged the audience of *Narnia* to convert to childlikeness in order to get to the genuine/real state through the imaginary. Moreover, Lin used Lewis' portrayal of the mouse Reepicheep to urge the Chinese-speaking Christian community to 'do big things for the Lord', which also echoed with his attempt to make his book more culturally specific in order to target it at local readers (*Chinese Christian Tribune*, 2010).

The conclusion Lin draws for the *Narnia* chapter in *The Theology of Narnia* is, again, linked with Lin's interpretation of appreciating the Narnian world as entering the childlike state (Lin, pp.166-68). Also, the information Lin presents indicates his intention to feature the Christian background of this particular series of *Narnia* film adaptations. Lin first mentions that some crew members of the film series are from Christian backgrounds, such as the Director Andrew Adamson and the Executive Producer Rev. Bob Beltz. Adamson, who also directed *Shrek*, was recruited by Walt Disney Pictures and Walden Media to direct *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Prince Caspian*. Adamson later served as the producer of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. After mentioning Adamson's personal reading of *Prince Caspian* as a

story of nostalgia, Lin points out the extended meaning of the termination of Adamson's directorship of the *Narnia* film series after the completion of its second installment. Lin does this by associating it with Adamson's own statement in the interview. At the age of eleven, Adamson moved to Papua New Guinea with his missionary parents. At that time, Papua New Guinea was a land of openness and freedom. Yet, it eventually turned into a place filled with violence and corruption, which upset Adamson. In Lin's interpretation, this parallels with the storyline of *Prince Caspian*: Adamson's disappointment corresponds to how the four main characters feel when they cannot find the Narnia world that they used to know; moreover, the ending of the story shows that even the older characters can no longer return to Narnia.[38]

Up till now, we have seen the significant role Lin has played in intermediating between *Narnia* as a foreign fantasy story imbued with Christian allusions and its readers or audience in Taiwan (and also the larger Chinese-speaking world). The case of *Narnia* manifests both kinds of operation of Taiwan's Christian literary system I have mentioned in Section 3.8.2: firstly, the institution within the system functions to maintain the relevant literary and socio-cultural activities surrounding *Narnia* since the *Narnia* stories correspond with the norms of the system (i.e. the theological elements agreed by the institution); secondly, the institution plays the role as the producer of

[38] According to Lin's note, his concluding discussion in this chapter draws on two online sources: 1) Hammond, W., 2008. Andrew Adamson on *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*. *Time Out London*, [online]. Available at: <https://www.timeout.com/london/film/andrew-adamson-on-the-chronicles-of-narnia-prince-caspian-1> ; 2) Moring, M., 2008. The Weight of Story. *Christianity Today*, [online] 6 May. Available at: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/mayweb-only/andrewadamson.html>

paratextual publications related to *Narnia*, and at the same time, constitutes part of the market within the system.

5.4.3 Canonising the Christianised *Narnia* in Chinese

In *The Theology of Narnia*, the translation of the *Narnia* books Lin quotes from is the traditional Chinese character version published by Chinese Christian Literature Council (hereafter CCLC), although currently the best-known traditional Chinese character version is the one published by Titan. CCLC is one of the leading Christian publishing houses based in Hong Kong, and its *Narnia* books were first published during the 1960s. Although the latest reprint of CCLC's *Narnia* series was published in the 2000s, it is almost unavailable on the market nowadays. In our correspondence (2015), Lin states the reason for his preference for CCLC's version over Titan's. According to Lin, although CCLC's translation 'contains archaic literary expressions' while Titan's translation appears to be 'livelier', he chooses CCLC's version because this is the Chinese version that his generation is more familiar with, and he considers it 'more faithful to the original'. Lin further suggests that Christian knowledge should be a requirement for translating *Narnia*.

In *The Theology of Narnia* Lin even explicitly points out a 'mistranslation' in Titan's version (pp.164-65). The specific example Lin gives is 'the shadowlands' from the ending of the last *Narnia* volume *The Last Battle*:

ST: 'There *was* a real railway accident,' said Aslan softly. 'Your father and mother and all of you are— as you used to call it in the

shadowlands—dead. The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream is over: this is the morning'.

(Lewis, 1956 cited in Lin, 2011, p.164, italics in original).

Titan:「**確實有**發生一起火車意外事故，」亞斯藍溫柔地說，「你們的父親、母親，還有你們全部—正如你們習慣說的，進入了『冥府』—都死了。你們在世間的生命已經結束，永恆的假期開始了。夢境已經結束，天開始亮了。」(p.182)

(Back translation: 'There **was** a railway accident,' said Aslan gently. 'Your father and mother and all of you—as you used to say, entered "the underworld"—died. Your earthly lives are ended, and your eternal holidays have begun. The dream is over, and there comes the dawn.')

CCLC: 「真的發生了一次火車車禍，」阿司能平靜的說。「你們的爸爸媽媽和你們大家，都—像你們在那鏡花水月的地方說的—死了。像這個名詞一樣，學期結束了，假期已經開始。夢做完了，現在已經到了早晨。」 (p.203)

(Back translation: 'There really was a railway accident,' said Aslan peacefully. 'Your father and mother and all of you—as you said in the place with flowers in the mirror, and moon in the water—died. Just like this noun, your school term is over, and the holidays have begun. The dream is ended, and the morning has come.')

In Titan's version, 'the shadowlands' is translated as 冥府, a Chinese term that describes the place where spirits of the dead go to, so it can be back translated as 'the underworld'. As noted by Lin, the shadowlands should be a

place for the living rather than the dead. In the ST, Aslan, the fictional representative of Jesus Christ in the story, declares the deaths of the children and their parents, yet their deaths only make sense in the shadowlands. From Aslan's perspective, the fatal accident has brought the children and their parents the end of term, i.e., the end of their assignment in the world, and has marked the beginning of their holidays in heaven. In other words, the morning has come, so they are no longer in the dream, and are granted access to another world that is more real.[39]

In CCLC's version, 'the shadowlands' is translated as 鏡花水月的地方 (the place with flowers in the mirror, and moon in the water). 'Flowers in the mirror, and moon in the water' is a classical Chinese four-character idiom that describes beautiful things that are visible but unattainable since they do not exist in reality. Lin considers this translation highly literary as it implies the illusion of the worldly life through a classical expression. However, in Lin's opinion, 'the shadowlands' in the story can be directly translated as 影子大地. This translation does not carry any further implications beyond its literal meaning, so its back translation would be simply 'the shadowlands'. Although Lin does not mention the biographical film featuring the relationship between Lewis and the American writer Joy Davidman, to whom Lewis was married, the film is named *Shadowlands* (1993). The Chinese translation of its title《影

[39] Concerning the inaccurate translation of 'the shadowlands' in Titan's version, my guess is that the translator perceived it as 'the land of the shadow of death'. If it is true, then this translation still has a Christian allusion. In *King James Version* (*KJV*), the well-known Psalm 23 has this verse: 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil'. And also in *KJV*, Isaiah 9:2 is translated as 'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined'.

子大地》is exactly what Lin suggests in *The Theology of Narnia*.

Through commenting on the two translations of 'the shadowlands', perhaps the most important concept in *Narnia*, Lin provides readers with a glimpse into how Christian ideology takes part—or, according to Lin, *should* take part—in translating this particular text. More importantly, Lin's acknowledgement of CCLC's version as the more accurate translation represents a case of 'canonisation' within Taiwan's Christian literary system.

'Canonisation' (1997b, p.6), in Even-Zohar's explanation, is the process in which the literary or cultural products are preserved according to certain norms and standards set by a certain community and thus become part of the community's historical heritage. In contrast, 'non-canonisied' works are those products that are not considered legitimate by the community, and they will eventually be forgotten provided that their statuses remain the same.

The above-mentioned process has occurred within the context of 'dynamic stratification' (ibid., p.4), by which Even-Zohar meant the items or elements within the heterogeneous system are always struggling with each other, so that a hierarchised relation is formed among them. As noted by Even-Zohar (ibid., p.6), Viktor Shklovskij might have been the first theorist to put forth the concept of 'the socio-cultural distinctions of text production in terms of literary stratification'.

However, in Even-Zohar's polysystem theory (1990b, p.15), canonicity is not a 'euphemism for "good" versus "bad" literature', and the elements of the works that determine their statuses do not indicate that those elements are

‘essentially’ relevant to the statuses. That is, although the ‘people-in-the-culture’ may regard the features of works that make them become canonised or non-canonised to be their fundamental qualities, for historians these features may merely serve as indications of the norms and standards possessed by the community during a certain period.[40]

Considering the shift of meaning in the rendering of ‘shadowlands’ in Titan’s version, one can reasonably describe it as a translation flaw. It is therefore understandable that Lin, as a Christian scholar, regards CCLC’s version as a better translation since it retains the Christian implication in the original. In fact, CEFP’s senior editor Sean Ying also stated during our interview (2015) that CCLC's version of *Narnia*, although less known by readers nowadays and not easy to find in the current book market, is still the version preferred by most Christian scholars in the Chinese-speaking world.

The discussion above shows that CCLC’s traditional Chinese character version of *Narnia* is ‘canonised’ within the Chinese-speaking Christian literary community to a certain degree. Christian scholars, partly in the hope of seeing Christian messages spread through the *Narnia* stories, evaluate the translated texts by how accurately they display the Christian components embedded in the original. Nevertheless, if one locates *Narnia* solely within the field of children’s literature instead of Christian-themed literature, the CCLC edition, known for containing more classical literary expressions, may not necessarily

[40] The explanation of ‘canonicity’ is from Even-Zohar’s revised version of ‘Polysystem Theory’ published in 1990. The passage cited here was not included in the later revised version written in 1997 (reprinted in 2005).

outweigh Titan's version since the latter is recognised for its more engaging language. All these, one can say, correspond to Even-Zohar's point that the criteria by which the products are judged by the community do not suggest the essential values that the products have but only reflect what product features are considered as legitimate by the community.

5.5 *Narnia* and the Christian literary repertoire

In Section 4.2, I have drawn on the U.S. case to delineate theological elements as essentials of its Christian literary repertoire. The U.S. Christian literary system, as a central system of the globalised Christian literary polysystem, can offer a sketch of the globalised Christian literary repertoire. As *Narnia* has been highly acclaimed by Christian literary communities worldwide, one can readily find elements within its stories that concord with components in the repertoire of the globalised Christian literary polysystem. What *Narnia* has demonstrated to readers is the kernel of such a repertoire: biblical teachings.

Here, I would like to identify the key set of norms of the Christian literary polysystem through *Narnia*, the work that occupies an important position in the modern Christian literary world. Lewis' 'supposal' of what each *Narnia* book means within the Christian context has given readers a clear picture of how the *Narnia* stories reflect the essential elements of the grand narrative of Christianity: from the Creation, the Fall of Man, the domination of evil over the world, the redemption, to the Final Judgment. One can say that in his

Narnia tales, Lewis gives a fantasised retelling of the linear narrative of salvation in Christianity, i.e. the Christian gospel. With the aim of evangelism, the institution within a Christian literary system has a preference for works that embody the Christian gospel. This phenomenon can be seen in each of the Christian literary systems of different nations since the gospel is the core of Christianity. Importantly, through the translation of 'the shadowlands' in the Chinese-speaking context, we have seen that the significance attached to the gospel message is also reflected in translation matters.

There are other examples in CCLC's Christianised Chinese translation of *Narnia* that show the importance of embedding Christian imagery in the translated text. In the following, I would like to compare some examples extracted from two Chinese versions of *The Last Battle*, the last volume of the *Narnia* tales, to illustrate this point. These two Chinese translations were published by Titan and CCLC respectively. Titan's version represents a secular translation, and CCLC's is the Christian version endorsed by most Chinese-speaking Christian scholars. As shown below, the contrast between these two versions even can be noted in the translation of some characters' names.

Example 1

ST: Aslan.

Titan: 亞斯藍。

(Back translation: Aslan [transliteration].)

CCLC: 阿司能。

(Back translation: Aslan [with the first Chinese character 'Ah' as diminutive, the second character denoting 'the authority', and the third character 'being able'.])

CCLC's translation of Aslan, The Great Lion that represents Jesus in *Narnia*, embodies the characteristics of the Lord of Lords in Christianity.

Example 2

ST: King Tirian.

Titan: 逖里安國王。

(Back translation: King Tirian [transliteration].)

CCLC: 鐵律恩國王。

(Back translation: King Tirian [with three Chinese characters meaning iron, law, and grace respectively.])

Tirian is the last king of Kingdom Narnia, and portrayed as respectable, honest, and courageous in the story. CCLC's translation of his name carries all these elements associated with ideal mental and moral qualities taught in Christianity.

Example 3

ST: 'Welcome, in the Lion's name. Come further up and further in' (p.165).

Titan: 以雄獅之名，歡迎各位，請繼續往前走、往上爬。(p.177)

(Back translation: In the Lion's name, welcome everybody. Please walk

further forward and further up.)

CCLC: **奉**阿司能**之名**，竭誠歡迎你們，請更上層樓，更進一步。(p.182)

(Back translation: In Aslan's name, we sincerely welcome you. Please come further up and further forward.)

There is essentially no difference between the meanings conveyed in these two translations. However, in CCLC's version, 'in someone's name', translated as 奉…之名 (*feng…zhi ming*), carries an honorific connotation, while Titan's version does not. This honorific expression is a fixed term used in Chinese Bible translations whenever the phrase 'in Jesus' name' appears; the Chinese translation is 奉耶穌之名 (*feng ye su zhi ming*).

Example 4

ST: Emeth's face grew sterner. 'Is it then not true that Tash and Aslan are **all one**?' he asked. 'Has the Ape lied to us?'

'Of course they are **all one**,' said the Ape (p.106).

Titan: 埃米司的表情變嚴肅了，「難道『太息神』與『亞斯藍』是**同一個人**的話不是真的？」他問道，「難道猿猴是在騙我們？」

「他們當然是**同一個**。」猿猴說。(p.116)

(Back translation: Emeth's face became sterner. 'Is it then not true that Tash and Aslan are **the same person**?' he asked. 'Has the Ape lied to us?'

'Of course they are **the same person**,' said the Ape.)

CCLC: 艾美斯的臉色變得更嚴肅了，他問道：「這樣說來，那你說的阿司能和泰西是**二位一體**的話是假的囉？是老猿猴欺騙我們嗎？」

「他們當然是**二位一體**，」老猿猴說。(p.115)

(Back translation: Emeth's face became even sterner. He asked, 'So, it was not true when you said Aslan and Tash are **two in one**? Has the Old Ape lied to us?'

'Of course they are **two in one**,' said the Old Ape.)

This is the conversation between Emeth and the Old Ape, who concocted a story with other malevolent characters that Aslan and Tash, the antagonist deity, are the same being. It is notable that CCLC's version uses an adaptation of the Chinese Christian jargon for Trinity 三位一體 (*san wei yi ti*; 'three persons in one body') to represent 'two in one' in the passage.

5.6 *Narnia* as a battleground: the Christian literary system versus the non-Christian literary system

In polysystem theory, Even-Zohar speaks of the dynamic interaction (i.e. struggles) between different systems within the larger system where they are situated. In the case of *Narnia*, readers can see this manifested in the tension generated between the Christian literary system and its non-Christian counterpart surrounding church groups' 'reclamation' of *Narnia* from the secular literary and cultural realm, particularly their appropriation of *Narnia* for proselytisation. However, while the tension generated in the Anglophone context has proven to be rather conspicuous, very little has been seen in the Taiwanese context.

One of the representative figures of anti-Narniaism in the Anglophone

world is Philip Pullman. This award-winning British novelist best known for the fantasy trilogy *His Dark Materials* was reported to publicly denounce the *Narnia* series; for Pullman, *Narnia* is a religious propaganda that carries sexist and racist messages (Ezard, 2002).[41] As an internationally known best-selling author who was once criticised by a rightwing columnist for being 'semi-satanic' due to the themes of his fiction works (ibid.), Pullman's remark typifies the opposition to *Narnia* due to its Christian subtext.

There have even been books published in the Anglophone world to counter the spiritual symbolism of *Narnia*. For example, *The Magician's Book: A Skeptic's Guide to Narnia* (2008), written by Laura Miller, looks at spiritual and moral indications in *Narnia* from a secular angle that goes against the author's own Catholic upbringing. It was introduced in both *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*. In *The New York Times*, Miller, 'as a child enthusiast, a maturing apostate and an adult critic' is quoted as stating (Maguire, 2008): 'Can a book win over a soul who is fundamentally disinclined to believe? If any books could have persuaded me, it would have been these, yet I didn't budge'.

In fact, even HarperCollins, the publishing conglomerate by which the latest edition of Lewis' book series was published, was also reported as putting in its memo that 'no attempt will be made to correlate the stories to Christian imagery/theology' (HarperCollins, 2001 cited in Easterbrook, 2001).

When *Narnia* was back on the big screen in 2005, *The Guardian*

[41] The statement was given when Pullman answered a question from the audience in The Hay Festival of 2002 sponsored by *The Guardian*.

published an anti-Narnia article with the pungent title 'Narnia represents everything that is most hateful about religion' (Toynbee, 2005). It presents in detail how the particular network was formed to promote Christianity through the film *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Disney, which initially made its first *Narnia* film to be religious, assigned the evangelical publisher Outreach to publicise *Narnia* as a Christian work in British churches. In addition, many Christian organisations across the U.K. and the U.S. endeavored to popularise the evangelical meanings behind *Narnia* among a wider audience. For Toynbee, Aslan constitutes 'an emblem for everything an atheist objects to in religion'. She contends that what people really need is 'a very human moral compass' rather than sacred guidebooks.

Based on the above-mentioned criticisms, we can see that the transmedia text *Narnia* has created an arena where the Christian literary and cultural system and the non-Christian literary and cultural system contest with each other in the Anglophone context, and the counterforce against the proselytising efforts representing the Christian literary and cultural system can be rather fiery.

Nevertheless, for some secular critics who mainly treat *Narnia* as children's fantasy literature, its educational value still deserves recognition. For example, Easterbrook in 'In Defense of C. S. Lewis' (2001) rebuts some charges against *Narnia*, including Philip Hensher's criticism that *Narnia* novels are '"poisonous" and "ghastly, priggish, half-witted" books" intended to "corrupt the minds of the young with allegory"', and Pullman's accusation that

they are infused with racist and misogynist elements. While agreeing that *Narnia* is an Anglo Anglican-centred fantasy that is seemingly in favour of aristocracy and imperialism, Easterbrook quotes the co-editor of *The C. S. Lewis Reader's Encyclopedia*, John G. West Jr.: 'Many older books contain race or gender references discordant to modern ears,[…] We don't stop reading Twain or Darwin because they used racial terms no author uses today'. As for Pullman's comment that Lewis has had Susan, the older sister in the four siblings, sent to hell because of her interests in 'nylons and lipstick and invitations', Easterbrook regards it as a misreading. For Easterbrook, although in the original story Susan does not take part in 'the special ascension', this simply means that Susan's present 'normal' life continues, and presumably she will join her siblings in heaven later.

Easterbrook concludes his article with the story of Emeth, a soldier from Calormen, the world of paganism in *Narnia*, who finds himself in heaven with Aslan. This, according to Easterbrook, indicates the importance of virtue over religion in Lewis' storytelling, 'and paradise awaits anyone of good will. This seems an up-to-date message—and a reason the Narnia books should stand exactly as they are.' This final paragraph can be seen as an extended response to Pullman's 'concern' about the 'heaven and hell' issue in *Narnia*.

All the above-mentioned comments appear to be sensationalist statements made by critics in the Anglophone popular culture realm. I choose them over conventional academic criticism because these comments represent direct sources that point readers towards the dynamic relation between the Christian

and non-Christian literary systems in the contemporary Anglophone context. When looking at all these comments altogether, one can find that the so-called anti-Narniaism is largely associated with anti-Christianity. Therefore, instead of saying that the tension between the Christian and non-Christian literary systems on *Narnia* signposts a battlefield of literature, it would be more accurate to describe it as a battleground of religion.

This paratextual phenomenon surrounding *Narnia* can be regarded as a case that mirrors the polarisation between secularism and Christianity in the Anglophone literary scene. In contrast, in Taiwan's context no efforts and statements against the Christian subtext of *Narnia* or the Christian community's use of *Narnia* as an evangelistic tool can be found. Nor can any introduction of anti-*Narnia* criticism from the West into Taiwan be seen. This disparity is a reflection of the different statuses of Christianity in the Anglophone and the Taiwanese contexts.

Conclusion: a matter of translation

Lewis is undoubtedly a canonised Christian author in the modern Anglophone world. His significance and popularity have been displayed in both the Christian and the non-Christian reception of his works since the mid-twentieth century. Even the polemics targeting Lewis' intellectual roots in Christianity and Anglophone elitism can be seen as the counter voices that demonstrate the attention Lewis has received throughout these decades.

Most of Lewis' books have been published in the Chinese-language

publishing world, either by Christian or non-Christian publishers. Some even have different versions published in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China; such examples include *The Screwtape Letters*, *Mere Christianity*, *The Four Loves*, and of course, *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

The history of translating and retranslating Lewis indicates the transfer of the canonicity of Lewis' works from the Anglophone Christian literary system to the Taiwanese Christian literary system. Since 2013, CEFP has re-established its 'C.S. Lewis series', in which there are two of Lewis' Christian-themed fictional works, *The Screwtape Letters* (小心魔鬼很聰明 [*Be Careful, the Devil is Smart*], 2014) and *The Great Divorce* (開往天堂的巴士 [*The Bus to Heaven*], 2014). The series also includes non-fiction works, such as *A Mind Awake: An Anthology of C. S. Lewis* (覺醒的靈魂 1 & 2 [*A Soul Awake 1&2*], 2013) and *The Problem of Pain* (痛苦的奧秘 [*The Mystery of Pain*], 2015). Before this, another major Christian publisher in Taiwan, Ya Ge, also published several works by Lewis in traditional Chinese characters, such as *The Four Loves* (四種愛 [*The Four Loves*], 1989), *A Grief Observed* (卿卿如晤 [*My Dearest*], 1994), and *Till We Have Faces* (裸顏, 1996). Many of these translated volumes have been republished with different titles. For example, the first edition of CEFP's *A Mind Awake* translated by Tseng Chen-chen (曾珍珍) was published in 1978. *The Screwtape Letters* was firstly co-translated by Tseng and Gu Hua-de (顧華德) and published as 大榔頭寫給蠹木的煽情書 (*The Sensational Love Letters from Screwtape to Wormwood*) in 2002 by Taosheng Publishing House (道聲出版社) in Hong Kong. CEFP's

current edition of *The Great Divorce* translated by Wei Chi-yuan (魏啟源) has been republished by CEFP for three times; the previous two editions were 天淵之別 (*The Difference between Heaven and Earth*) published in 1978 and 夢幻巴士 (*The Dreamy Bus*) in 1991.

Of all the three cases studied in this thesis, *Narnia* demonstrates the most active responses from the agents in Taiwan's Christian literary system. If one considers evangelising in Taiwan as translating Christianity, one may describe Lewis as playing an important role in this translation process. However, Lin's effort to localise Lewis' theological and philosophical thoughts seen in *The Theology of Narnia* also tells us that extra local elements need to be brought in to compensate for the potential untranslatability of the foreign.

Chapter 6

Gilead as an 'Authentic' Christian Novel?

Some fiction works can be easily identified as Christian due to their overt display of biblical motifs or allusions in realistic settings. However, as introduced in Chapter 4, in the U.S. many modern Christian-themed fiction books mainly circulate in the Christian book market as they only cater to Christian believers. Most of such works tend to adopt certain plots with the aim of conveying evangelical values, and thus they are categorised as evangelical fiction, the genre fiction that appeals to evangelical Christians, rather than literary fiction that can be seen in the mainstream book market. Rarely can one see Christian-themed fiction works whose contents are infused with biblical and theological elements gain popularity among general readers and receive acclaim from literary critics outside the Christian literary circle. In other words, it is not common for a Christian-themed novel to be considered as literary fiction at the same time. Considering this, the American novelist Marilynne Robinson's novel *Gilead* is examined in this thesis.

6.1 *Gilead* and its author as a Christian, a novelist, and a theologian

First published in 2004, the award-winning novel *Gilead* made its way onto the best-seller list in the U.S. book market and also received several awards, including the Pulitzer Prize (2005), Ambassador Book Award for Fiction (2005), the National Book Critics Circle Award (2004), New York

Times 10 Best Books of the Year (2004), and so on. This highly acclaimed novel was later known as one of the favourite books of the former U.S. President Barack Obama. With her achievement in fiction writing, Robinson was awarded the Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction in 2016. She was also named in *Time* magazine's list of 100 most influential people in the same year.

Gilead represents a unique case among contemporary best-selling books. The novel, named after Gilead, Iowa, the fictional American town where the story is set, is a long letter written by a dying Congregationalist pastor to his seven-year-old son. Gilead, at the same time, is the name of a place mentioned in the book of Genesis in the Bible. It first appears as 'the hill country of Gilead' in the passage where Jacob was found by his father-in-law Laban after he fled from Laban's house (Genesis 31:21-25). As already suggested by the book title, the novel is imbued with biblical allusions. The narrative is clearly framed within a Christian background, which is reflected in the narrator John Ames's account of his pastoral career and family history. *Gilead* is essentially a realistic novel, although the narrative strategy Robinson employs in it can hardly be identified according to common categorisations in regard to fiction writing. There are no chapter breaks in the novel, and the story itself is composed without an overt plot. Therefore, much attention has been drawn to the meditativeness displayed in the novel.

One factor that contributes to the popularity of *Gilead* may be the recognition Robinson has received for her first novel *Housekeeping*, published

in 1980, which won the PEN/Hemingway Award for best first published novel and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. Nowadays, *Housekeeping* is widely praised as one of the contemporary classic novels in the history of American literature. In 2003, the *Guardian* placed *Housekeeping* eighty-fifth on its list of 'The 100 greatest novels of all time', and the book was introduced with the following description: 'Haunting, poetic story, drowned in water and light, about three generations of women' (McCrum, 2003). Later, in 2015, the novel was ranked ninety-second on the *Guardian*'s list of 'The 100 best novels written in English', and it reads: 'Marilynne Robinson's tale of orphaned sisters and their oddball aunt in a remote Idaho town is admired by everyone from Barack Obama to Bret Easton Ellis' (McCrum, 2015).[42] The novel was also included in 'All-TIME 100 Novels' of *Time* magazine; the list represents the 100 greatest English-language novels published since the launch of *Time* magazine in 1923 (Lacayo, 2010).

It was not until twenty-four years later that Robinson's second novel *Gilead* was published. During the period between the publications of *Housekeeping* and *Gilead*, Robinson wrote two non-fiction books. The first one is *Mother Country: Britain, the Welfare State, and Nuclear Pollution* (1989), which was nominated as a finalist for the National Book Award for Nonfiction in 1989. *Mother Country* investigates the environmental deterioration and the life-threatening dangers brought about by Sellafield, a

[42] Bret Easton Ellis is an American popular fiction writer as well as a screen writer. He is best known for his psychological thriller novel *American Psycho* (1991), which was later adapted into a film (2010) with the same title.

government-owned nuclear reprocessing plant on the coast of the Irish Sea. This book challenges not only the British government but also the non-governmental environmental organisation Greenpeace. The latter successfully won the libel suit against Robinson, which led to the banning of the book in the U.K.[43] The second book is *The Death of Adam: Essays on Modern Thought* (1998), a collection of essays dealing with various issues in social, political, religious, and cultural aspects. It received the PEN/Spielvogel Award for the Art of the Essay in 1999.

Apparently, the attention *Gilead* attracted partly resulted from the time gap between its publication and that of Robinson's widely acclaimed debut novel *Housekeeping*. For example, the following blurb was on the back cover of the book:

> Twenty-four years after her first novel, *Housekeeping*, Marilynne Robinson returns with a story about fathers and sons and the spiritual battles that still rage in America's heart. In the luminous and unforgettable voice of Congregationalist minister John Ames, *Gilead* reveals the human condition and 'manages to convey the miracle of existence itself'.[44]

When asked in an interview whether she considers herself 'a religious writer' since the protagonist of *Gilead* is a pastor, Robinson expressed her

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[43] In 'A Moralist of the Midwest' published in *The New York Tines Magazine* in October 2004, it is stated: '"Mother Country" was "eye-opening", Robinson said; she was slapped with a libel suit by Greenpeace, of all things, and because she refused to excise any passages, the book remains banned in Britain' (O'Rourke, 2004).

[44] This introduction is given in the first edition of *Gilead* published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 2004, and the quote in the statement is from *Los Angeles Times Book Review*.

dislike of book categorisation that divides works into religious or not. For her, there should not be a rigid dichotomy between religious and non-religious since any work that demonstrates compassion and perceptiveness can be defined as religious regardless of the author's intention (Fay, 2008). However, Robinson's religious identity does tend to be highlighted in most cases where her name is mentioned. This is partly due to the themes in most of her writings, and also her active engagement in her church. Robinson is a deacon of the Congregational United Church of Christ in Iowa City, where she sometimes gives sermons.

Although reluctant to describe herself as 'religious', Robinson does not shun religious-related discussion. Robinson openly stated her personal understanding of religion and its relation to arts in the same interview mentioned in my last paragraph. She described religion as 'a framing mechanism', and 'a language of orientation' that reveals itself as a set of inquiries: 'Religion has been profoundly effective in enlarging human imagination and expression. It's only very recently that you couldn't see how the high arts are intimately connected to religion' (ibid.).

The above quotes not only speak of Robinson's own approach to religion but also elucidate the infusion of religious inquiries into her writings. In *Gilead*, as well as the two novels subsequent to it, *Home* (2008) and *Lila* (2014), one can see the manifestation of this. And indeed, 'religion', in the context of Robinson's writings, refers to 'Christianity'. Robinson's mention of the loosened link between religion and high arts nowadays, which corresponds to

what I have stated in the very beginning of this chapter, somewhat also indicates the uniqueness of Robinson's own literary works.

An interview with Robinson conducted by Obama for *The New York Times* in 2015, which has attracted much attention, also features religion and spirituality as two of the main themes (Robinson and Obama, 2015). Importantly, this interview also sheds some light on American Christianity as the thread of Robinson's writings. Calling Robinson a novelist and a theologian, Obama spent a substantial part of their conversation on Robinson's portrayal of Christian spirituality in *Gilead* and the root of American democracy in Christian values. Robinson held the view that democracy, instead of being an outcome of loyalty or convention, is a demonstration of the 'religious humanism' built upon the biblical statement that people are made in the image of God, which leads to the central idea of democracy: every human being deserves respect, 'the love of God being implied in it'. Later in the conversation, Obama mentioned the binary 'us versus them' set by many Christians in the U.S. in public forums and asked Robinson how she dealt with this concern as a Christian who held her faith in high regard, Robinson commented that Christians who stand or act 'against the imagined other' prove to be those who do not take their Christian faith seriously. Robinson furthered this point by quoting the Bible verse 'love thy neighbour as thyself', which, according to her, means 'your neighbour is as worthy of love as you are, not that you're actually going to be capable of this sort of superhuman feat' but 'you're supposed to run against the grain'. For Robinson, this implies the

counter-intuitiveness of Christianity. It is also where Obama linked this challenge of being a Christian back to the faith struggles Robinson's characters in *Gilead* face.

Robinson's identity as a theologian is also clearly displayed in her essay collections that either directly tackle Christian and theological topics or comment on social and cultural issues through the prism of Christianity. In addition to *The Death of Adam* mentioned previously, Robinson has also published *Absence of Mind: The Dispelling of Inwardness from the Modern Myth of the Self* (2010), which the then Archbishop of Canterbury Williams (2010) describes as 'one of the most significant contributions yet to the current quarrels about faith, science and rationality', and *When I Was A Child I Read Books* (2013), introduced by its publisher as revisiting 'the themes which have preoccupied her bestselling novels: the place literature has in life, the role of faith in modern living, the contradictions inherent in human nature'. In 2015, she published *The Givenness of Things: Essays*, which, as described in *The Guardian*, is the author's 'impassioned and erudite defence of Christianity' that presents a counter-narrative to the predominant atheist discourse mainly influenced by Richard Dawkins over the years (Scholes, 2016). As can be seen, Robinson's essays mostly centre on Christian faith. Markedly, all these 'Christian' works were published by non-Christian publishers and have been reviewed in mainstream media. This further illustrates what I have described about Robinson as an author: her writings straddle the mainstream and the Christian literary and cultural systems.

6.2 Translating Marilynne Robinson's fiction works in Taiwan

All the four novels by Robinson have been translated into traditional Chinese in Taiwan. Three of them, *Gilead*, *Home*, and *Housekeeping*, have been translated into simplified Chinese in China. The earliest translation of Robison's work in traditional Chinese characters was *Housekeeping,* 管家 (*Housekeeping*). It was first published in 2005 by Rye Field (麥田), a publishing house that is part of Cité Publishing Limited, the large publishing conglomerate in the Chinese-language publishing industry (see Section 3.2). This first traditional Chinese character edition of *Housekeeping* eventually went out of print, and in 2011 Rye Field published its reprint edition with a new cover design.

In 2006, the first traditional Chinese edition of *Gilead*, 遺愛基列（*Leaving a Legacy in Gilead*）, was published by Ten Points Publishing Company (天培文化), a sister company to Chiu Ko Publishing Company (九歌出版社).[45] The translator of it is Shih Ching-chen (施清真), a translator of many popular literature books. Reviews have been published in Taiwan's mainstream newspapers upon the publication of this traditional Chinese character version of *Gilead*. Meanwhile, its original version was ranked seventh on the 2006 bestseller list of Caves Books (敦煌書局), one of the largest foreign language book suppliers in Taiwan.

Later, Ten Points' traditional Chinese character version went out of print.

[45] Chiu Ko is a leading publishing house known for publishing literature books in Taiwan since the late 1970s. Ten Points, founded in 2000, specialises in publishing translated books. Ten Points has published most of Margaret Atwood's works in traditional Chinese characters. Another well-known author it features is the award-winning Bengali American writer Jhumpa Lahiri.

It was not until 2014 that its reprint by Peripato Culture Studio (漫步文化) was published. Peripato's promotional strategy for the novel can be seen as more commercialised than that of Ten Points. While Ten Points only mentioned that the novel was a Pulitzer winner on the cover of its edition, Peripato included the line 'U.S. President Obama's favorite contemporary novel' and some recommenders' names altogether on the front of the belly band, and listed the awards *Gilead* had won on its back. Peripato's reprint of *Gilead* appeared on the market with the sequel *Home* (家園) as Volume I and Volume II of the 'Gilead Series' (基列系列) respectively. On the back flaps of both books, the pre-announcement of the publication of *Lila* (萊拉) in traditional Chinese characters was made: 'The author has completed Volume III of the Gilead Series *Lila*. Its Chinese edition is expected to be published in 2015'. Six months later, the English version of *Lila* was published in the U.S., and its traditional Chinese character version was released in May 2016.

This brief historical account of Chinese translations of Robinson's fiction works in Taiwan demonstrates the importance of Robinson as a foreign author in Taiwan's publishing environment. This is largely due to the prestige Robinson has established in the U.S. However, as will be shown later, the literariness as well as the foreignness of Christianity and American culture embedded in Robinson's works have somewhat made it difficult for them to gain popularity among general readers in Taiwan.

6.3 *Gilead* as Christian-themed literature in the mainstream media in the Anglophone world: the U.S. and the U.K. in focus

Gilead, albeit having an overt Christian thread in the narrative, does not fall into the non-mainstream 'Christian fiction' sector but has circulated in the mainstream book market. In this section, I will present some selected examples of mainstream media coverage of *Gilead* in the U.S. and the U.K. in the hope of delineating how the novel has been introduced to general readers in the Anglohpone world.

6.3.1 *Gilead* as Christian-themed literature in the U.S. context

Apart from being published by the prominent American publisher of literature, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, *Gilead*, as shown on its back cover, has attracted critical acclaim from mainstream media, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Time* magazine, *Elle*, etc. In many cases where Christian media or reviewers have written about the 'Christian-themed' *Gilead* and its author, they refer to the mainstream media as their information sources.

For instance, in 'The Calvinist on the Bestseller List', an article published in *Christianity Today*, *The New York Times* Book Review editor Gregory Cowles was quoted as describing Robinson's popularity as 'both heartening and a little weird': 'heartening because Robinson's sentences are so polished and faceted and clear they could bend light; weird because most of her books engage deeply with the thornier aspects of Calvinist theology' (Cowles, 2014 cited in Stone, 2014).

In fact, Robinson herself claims to be perplexed by the fact that she has come into prominence by writing these seemingly unappealing novels. In Cowles' article, a statement Robinson made during her interview with *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in 2005 was quoted: 'If you were to say to someone that you were to write a book about a minister dying in Iowa in 1956 and that he would spend a certain time on theological reflections, they would not think this was a book that would necessarily . . . sell'. Almost ten years later, when Robinson talked about her newly published novel *Lila* during the interview by *The Telegraph*, a similar attitude towards the commercial success of her novels was displayed: Robinson initially considered *Housekeeping* an overly private novel to be published and regarded *Gilead* as 'seem[ingly] borderline incommunicable'; she thus described the fact that these works actually resonated with many readers as 'very, very gratifying' (Mulkerrins, 2014).

Some critical reviews offer in-depth perspectives through comparative readings of *Gilead*, *Home*, and *Lila*. A noteworthy example is 'Lonesome Road' published in *The New Yorker* (Acocella, 2014). Featuring the newly published *Lila*, this article, subtitled 'Marilynne Robinson returns to Gilead in her new novel', examines the different narrative perspectives Robinson adopts in the three novels. Acocella devotes a considerable part of it to comparing Robinson's depictions of certain scenes that are included in both *Gilead* and *Lila*. While *Gilead* is told through the perspective of Ames, Robinson uses a third person omniscient point of view in *Lila*. Acocella looks at the variations between Ames' account of some events with what have been presented with

the third person narration in *Lila*, which draws the readers' attention to the sensitivity and sophistication displayed in Robinson's storytelling. Although not delving into theological motifs displayed in the novels, Acocella does comment on how Robinson deals with religion in her fictional writing: the 'meliorist, reformist' way, and the 'rapturous, visionary' way. Acocella notes that while many authors are skilful at the first kind, only few in the contemporary era are good at the latter. In remarking that the latter constitutes Robinson's strength by offering some textual examples, Acocella writes: 'most of the time Robinson's people aren't actually starving; they're just alone. That is the final meaning of her insistence on her characters' own point of view: because they don't see the same reality, they are consigned to solitude'.

Acocella's thorough review of Robinson's novels enables readers to see the significant position Robinson holds in the contemporary American literary world as a novelist with deft skill in portraying religion through her literary writing. Mason (2014) makes a similar comment in 'The Revelations of Marilynne Robinson' published in *The New York Times Magazine.* The article is based on Mason's interview with Robinson, and a large portion of it revolves around Robinson's Christian intellectual background that has been reflected in her writings. Mason describes both Robinson's non-fiction and fiction as 'remarkable': the former for being able to 'make the polemical seem reasonable', and the latter for incorporating 'her intellectual fascinations' without transforming the stories into 'pedagogical platforms'. Mason also points out that all four novels by Robinson are in dialogue with biblical stories.

From the articles mentioned above, readers can get a glimpse of how Robinson's image as an intellectual 'Christian writer' has been covered by the U.S. mainstream media.

What is also noteworthy is that after Obama's interview with Robinson, many U.S. media outlets released stories about this unconventional interview conducted by the then President. For instance, *Time* magazine published '4 Things We Learned About President Obama When He Interviewed Marilynne Robinson', and the first point listed is 'one of his favourite characters in fiction is a pastor in Robinson's 2004 novel *Gilead*'. The article also quotes Obama's description of Ames, whom the President considered himself able to relate to: 'gracious and courtly and a little bit confused about how to reconcile his faith with all the various travails that his family goes through' (Berman, 2015). Undoubtedly, Obama's endorsement has helped to popularise *Gilead* among the general public in many ways, which, as mentioned, is also revealed in the Taiwanese publisher Peripato's promotional strategy.

6.3.2 *Gilead* as Christian-themed literature in the U.K. context

Although *Gilead* is not as well known in the U.K. as it is in the U.S., it is, by and large, still appealing to many literary readers as well as critics in the U.K. Positive book reviews written by renowned critics for the mainstream press can exemplify this. *Gilead* appears to have enjoyed a long-term popularity among its British readers. The publication dates of the articles presented in the following range from 2005 until 2018.

One of the earliest reviews of *Gilead* published in the U.K. was 'The damaged heart of America' written by the acclaimed writer Ali Smith for *The Guardian* in 2005. Smith considers *Gilead* 'not the literary equivalent' of *Housekeeping* and remarks: 'Not the most immediately prepossessing of subjects, it is not the most immediately prepossessing of novels'. Nevertheless, for Smith, at the centre of the novel is 'a calm-eyed reminder of the liberal philosophical and religious traditions of a nation' in a time when undesirable things occur unexpectedly yet are at the point of bettering themselves (Smith, 2005).

In 2011, *The Independent* published 'Book of a Lifetime: *Gilead*' written by Naomi Wood, the author of the prize-winning historical novel *Mrs Hemingway*. Marking that the story revolves around forgiveness and grace as both secular and religious struggles, Wood concludes the review: 'It is a book of a lifetime for those who believe life does last a lifetime, or for those, like the pastor, who are waiting with sweetness, trepidation, and some degree of regret for the next one' (Wood, 2011).

Later in 2012, *Gilead* was selected for the Guardian Book Club, a special column in *The Guardian* that features a different book during four consecutive weeks.[46] In the article of week one, John Mullan (2012a) discusses Robinson's use of parataxis in her narrative, which 'is an imitation not just of biblical syntax, but of an honest man's hard thinking'. For the second week, Mullan

[46] For each session of the Guardian Book Club, the first three weeks deal with different topics related to the books, and the final one presents a collection of readers' feedback posted on the Book Club blog.

(2012b) looks at the novel under the topic 'motivated narrative', examining Ames' repeated efforts to address his intention of writing the letter in the novel. The third article is written by Robinson (2012) herself, giving an account of her experience of writing *Gilead*. Robinson writes about how the settings of the novel and the background of her protagonist readily came to her mind. She also discusses her familiarity with the history of Abolitionist movement and the Midwest through reading while writing, her long-term immersion in reading theology, and her own living experience in Iowa. Robinson further notes, 'The novel is, among other things, an inquiry into the question of how individual lives interact with culture and history, for weal and for woe. A modest query and a vast question'. The final article is written by Mullan (2012c) through collecting readers' responses at the book club gathering. According to him, many readers were most interested in the 'serene presence' of Ames' wife and her 'shadowy' background, which also aroused their curiosity in whether there would be a third volume following *Home* to tell Mrs Ames' story. Ames' Christian faith was also one of the focuses in readers' discussion. Robinson was described as 'keen to correct some common assumptions about American Christians' to her British readers in the hall.

What can be observed from the aforementioned is that in terms of its reception in the U.K. context, the nature of *Gilead* as a novel set against the backdrop of American Christianity has added a tint of foreignness to it for British critics and readers. The effects of foreignness on the general reception of the novel, as will be presented in Section 6.5, are even more obvious in the

Taiwanese context.

6.4 Reading *Gilead* through the Christian lens in the Anglophone world: the U.S and the U.K. in focus

In the previous sections, I have presented how *Gilead* has been considered by reviewers as an untypical Christian-themed novel that has gained popularity in the U.S., as well as how it has been perceived by British readers as an American story rooted in the nation's Christianity. In this section, I aim to look at how *Gilead* has been read in the Anglophone Christian literary system. Based on the chosen reviews and commentaries, I will discuss how the Christian theological system and the Christian literary system correlate with each other.

6.4.1 *Gilead* in the U.S. Christian literary system

To explore the status of *Gilead* in the U.S. Christian literary system, I shall refer to *Christianity Today*, which, as mentioned before, is the largest U.S.-based Christian media organisation that supplies both domestic and international news. It should not be surprising that as of February 2018, there can be found seventy-two articles mentioning Marilynne Robinson in the archives of the *Christianity Today* website. The entries include news stories, editorials, book reviews, essays, etc., that have appeared in all *Christianity Today*'s branch publications. Among them, 'Marilynne Robinson, Narrative Calvinist' and 'The Calvinist on the Bestseller List' offer the most in-depth

analysis of *Gilead* to readers.

'Marilynne Robinson, Narrative Calvinist' (Gardner, 2010) briefly addresses Robinson's own account of her solitariness and the inspiration she received from her grandfather and an old lady, which nurtured her spirituality in her childhood. Gardner then writes about Robinson's first novel *Housekeeping*, in which Robinson's writing style proves to be influenced by Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson and Henry David Thoreau. In mentioning the twenty-five-year gap between the publications of *Housekeeping* and *Gilead*, Gardner states that during this period Robinson delved into the era when Dickinson and her contemporaries were living and writing, which has led to her realisation that the Reformed Theologian John Calvin had a great impact on these writers. Gardner continues to introduce Robinson's articulation of the background to her works, Calvinism, by referring to her preface to *Steward of God's Covenant*, a collection of Calvin's writings published in 2006, as well as her essay collection *The Death of Adam*.[47] According to Gardner, there are three 'liberating themes' in Robinson's understanding of Calvin's theology: 1. every individual is granted the ability to perceive God; 2. people have the tendency to avoid facing God; 3. genuine perception — 'the radical understanding of the presence of God, and of his nature as manifest in Christ', in Robinson's words — is not part of the fallen nature of man, and thus needs to be granted by God according to His own will. Following his summary of Robinson's theological stance rooted in Calvinism, Gardner proceeds to

[47] Calvin, J., 2006. *Steward of God's covenant: selected writings*. Thornton, J. and Varenne, S. eds. New York: Vintage Books.

present plots in *Gilead* that correspond to these three main Calvinist themes and encapsulate his reading of the novel under the heading 'Grace in *Gilead*'.

'The Calvinist on the Bestseller List' (Stone, 2014) tells about the phenomenal popularity of Robinson's works among different readership groups. The article provides an outline of Robinson's works published by the time the article was written, with a specific focus on the then newly published *Lila*. When it comes to the Gilead series, Stone describes *Gilead* as an old preacher's explication of the Ten Commandments to his son in his letter, *Home* as a contemplation of the reverberation of the biblical parable of the prodigal son, and *Lila* as 'the strange parable in *Ezekiel*, of God seeing Israel as an orphaned baby, "weltering" in blood, and taking it up, and loving it into life'. Stone concludes that Robinson's popularity probably is not 'weird' because modern U.S. culture may just long for more grace; such a phenomenon is 'heartening' but also 'a challenge'.

Another article written by Stone, 'Why Marilynne Robinson, Narrative Calvinist, Doesn't Fear Fox News' (2012), features Robinson's talk at the Festival of Faith and Writing at Calvin College in 2012. It quotes a challenging question posed to Robinson from the audience: 'Bill Moyers would have loved your talk and Fox News would have debunked it. How do you expect to have credibility among conservative evangelicals?'[48] Robinson replied, 'The only obligation I recognise is to say what I believe to be true […] and to say it with

[48] Moyers is a journalist and political critic who has been identified as a Democrat. Fox News has been widely accused of being biased towards the conservatives. Conservative evangelicals, also known as the Christian right, in the U.S. political context are traditionally defined as 'born-again' evangelicals whose political views aligh with the Republican Party (Terry, 2012, p. 6).

kindness. I believe that is how a Christian conversation should proceed'.

Generally speaking, Robinson is a highly applauded writer in the U.S. Christian literary community, as shown in these articles. Robinson's Calvinist background tends to be emphasised by Christian critics. In Sections 6.4.3 and 6.4.4, I will further elaborate the implication of this, which points towards the significant position Robinson has been given in the Anglophone Christian literary system, and the dynamic discussion surrounding the 'orthodoxy' of her works.

6.4.2 *Gilead* in the U.K. Christian literary system

Compared with the U.S., the U.K. has had a relatively limited number of commentaries on *Gilead* produced by the Christian media. However, there is no doubt that Robinson has also been given an esteemed position by Christian critics in the U.K. Two of the most influential sources will be reviewed in this section.

Among the seemingly sparse attention paid to Robinson's literary works within the British Christian community, the endorsement from the Reverend Rowan Williams certainly has some significance. In 2011, Williams delivered a lecture under the title 'Native speakers: identity, grace and homecoming', which featured *Gilead* and *Home*.[49] Williams compared the two novels and elaborated the Christian themes portrayed in them, such as grace, forgiveness,

[49] The lecture was delivered during the ceremony where Williams accepted the Conference on Christianity and Literature Lifetime Achievement Award. The Conference on Christianity and Literature (the CCL) is a U.S.-based academic society devoted to further the study between Christianity and literature. The CCL Lifetime Achievement Award has been held since 1992. Its recipients include John Updike (2006) and Marilynne Robinson (2008).

hospitality, justification, etc. He concluded the lecture by describing Robinson's fiction as 'an imagined justification', artistically achieved by attempting to articulate 'what it "sounds" like to speak under an unknown judgement that is constrained by […] the nature of a liberty for which "the one sufficient reason for the forgiveness of debt is simply the existence of debt" (*Gilead* p.161)'. This comment contains a theological implication that points towards God's forgiveness, which denotes the justification of sinners through divine grace. It again highlights 'grace' as the major theme in Robinson's fiction (Williams, 2011).

In 2012, the *Church Times*, a major Anglican newspaper in the U.K., published 'A minister of the word', which was based on an interview of Robinson during Robinson's visit to London (Wroe, 2012). In addition to reporting Robinson's account given in the interview, Wroe also outlines how theological elements, especially that of Calvinism, are interwoven in Robinson's writings, with a focus on *Gilead* and the essay collection *When I Was a Child I Read Books.* The article begins with a distinct Calvinist tone:

> Surely only predestination can account for the stellar success of Marilynne Robinson's novel Gilead. How else can we explain the universal, critical praise - and the Pulitzer Prize - that was given to a series of letters from a retired clergyman, the Revd John Ames, to his young son? Or that the 77-year-old Mr Ames, whose primary form of literary expression is the sermon, could be so beguilingly good that Calvinism itself appears to be worth a second glance?

And what, bar divine will, could bring several hundred readers of The Guardian—many with highly dubious religious creditworthiness—to deliver their testimonies on one of Robinson's rare London visits?

Wroe's paragraphs suggests that the popularity *Gilead* and its author have gained in the mainstream (secular) literary realm is rather unusual from a common perspective; therefore, only the supernatural concepts 'predestination' and 'divine will' can explain it. Generally speaking, Wroe's article presents a rather positive view of Robinson's works, and again, emphasises the role of Robinson as a Calvinist writer.

6.4.3 Marilynne Robinson: the American Calvinist writer

As a widely identified Calvinist, Robinson's status as an 'authentic' Christian writer in the American Christian literary realm is well supported. This partly stems from the prevalence and even predomination of Calvinism among American churches nowadays. Calvinism, a branch of theology based on the sixteenth-century Reformed theologian John Calvin, is a major tradition in Protestantism worldwide. It is especially influential in American Christianity. In the following, I will present some facts about Calvinism in the U.S. and introduce the importance of Robinson as an American Calvinist writer.

In one of *Time* magazine's cover stories in 2009, '10 Ideas Changing the World Right Now', 'The New Calvinism' is placed third on the list.[50] In the

[50] This cover story is composed of ten different articles by various writers. Although it claims to introduce trends 'changing the world', the observations were primarily made on American society. Other concepts discussed in the article include 'Jobs Are The New Assets', 'Recycling the Suburbs', 'Reinstating the Interstate', 'Amortality', 'Africa, Business Destination', etc.

article, Calvinism is described as a 'cousin to the Reformation's other pillar, Lutheranism' and presenting 'a rock-steady deity who orchestrates absolutely everything […] by a logic we may not understand but don't have to second-guess. Our satisfaction — and our purpose — is fulfilled simply by "glorifying" him' (Van Biema, 2009). Several representative Neo-Calvinist figures in contemporary U.S., including John Piper and Albert Mohler, are mentioned. Both Piper and Mohler are pastors and authors who teach at seminaries and are rather influential in the U.S. Christian realm. Piper's comments on Robinson's Gilead series and Mohler's criticism on *The Shack* will be discussed in this present chapter and the next chapter respectively.

'New Calvinism', a religious neologism, does not have an exact definition because 'the Old' has already presented diverse strands; in addition, particular criteria that make 'the New' distinct from 'the Old' do not seem to exist (Piper, 2014a). However, New Calvinism is identified as a movement that has begun with its grounding in 'the Old', which contains the beliefs in 'the inerrancy of the Bible' and 'the Five Points (TULIP)' (ibid.).

TULIP stands for the five major elements of Calvinist teaching (Gritters, 2000; Slick, 2012): Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints. To give a brief summary, Total Depravity signifies the sinful nature of man that keep them from sensing God's presence and having the knowledge of God. Unconditional Election maintains that God has chosen each believer according to His own

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(listed in the order in which they appear in the original).

will not based on the individual's merit; moreover, since it is impossible for sinners to initiate their seeking for God, the election has been completed even before the creation of the world. Limited Atonement means that Jesus shed his blood only for those who have been elected rather than for everyone. Irresistible Grace describes the absoluteness of God's preselection of certain individuals into salvation. Finally, Perseverance of the Saints denotes that those saved will not lose their salvation but be continually sanctified by God's hand.

Calvinist doctrines laid the foundation of the Puritan movement in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Many academic works have been published on the relation between Calvinism and the socio-political situations of the U.S. through centuries. Calvinism has survived the shifting tides of American society and remained the most dominant belief system within the mainstream Protestant communities in the U.S. However, it is difficult to find a systemic analysis that can accurately point out the reasons behind the long-standing primary position Calvinism has in American Protestantism. In order to answer this question properly, one needs not only historical and sociological understanding of American Christianity but also knowledge of the theological domain.

Hart (2016, n.pag.) offers a sketch of the history of American Calvinism and points out the difficulty of adopting a consistent or static research approach to it due to the fact that diverse forms of Calvinist belief and practice have contributed to the existence of various religious groups and individuals in the U.S. As stated by Hart, Calvinism has taken root in American history since the

arrival of the European Protestants from different backgrounds in the sixteenth century. While the transplantation of the European Protestant communities to the new land initially reflected a diversity in the American Calvinist landscape, the British occupation of the Eastern seaboard and later the coming of political independence eventually led to the loss of the variety of Calvinism in the U.S. Along with this historical development, there sprang up a 'pan-Protestant network of Anglo-American churches and religious institutions' from Calvinist followers across different denominations. For this group of Christians, religious practice was closely linked with their American patriotism. On the other hand, there were some 'ethnic-based Calvinist denominations caught between Old World ways of being Christian and American patterns of religious life' (ibid.). Following this process of nationalising Calvinism, there came a phase where the modernisation of Calvinism occurred. The cross-denominational efforts of modernising Calvinism starting around the 1820s, according to Hart, were to respond to the expansion of the U.S. territory, the continual arrival of immigrants and the liberation of slaves. Moreover, there was a call for 'a closer union among Christians of a common faith and order' to counter the sociocultural elements that were inherently against Christianity at that time, including 'Romanticism, Ecclesiasticism, Rationalism, Infidelity, Materialism, and Paganism itself' (United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1969 cited in Hart).[51] The consolidation of Calvinism and

[51] The quote was originally from the Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1868), p. 671.

adaptation of Calvinist teachings to the then changing America persisted until 1960. American society after 1965, as Hart points out, entered a new chapter identified by some as 'post-Protestant', when the Protestant influences in the public realm decreased.[52]

Although Calvinism ceased to play a significant role on the institutional level, the impact of Calvinism on many areas of American life has endured, which Hart refers to as the intellectualisation of Calvinism. To illustrate this point, Hart mentions John Updike and Marilynne Robinson as novelists whose works clearly reflect Calvinist themes; as for research, Calvin and other Calvinist thinkers such as the Puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards and the Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth continue to interest academics. Interestingly, Edwards, a representative figure of Reformed theology, is compared with Robinson by the Christian leader John Piper when he criticises Robinson's belief. This will be mentioned in the next section.

Robinson's fictional portrayal of Calvinist figures has been discussed in *Displacing the Divine: The Minister in the Mirror of American Fiction* (Walrath, 2010), which examines the images of ministers represented in American fiction as cultural symbols that reflect the public's perceptions towards God as well as the religious institutions in the changing American society since the 1790s. Walrath regards Ames in *Gilead* as 'the most convincing and historically accurate comic Calvinist in recent American fiction' for he does not bear an idealised Christian image and at the same time

[52] The example Hart mentions is that public schools in the U.S. no longer adopted school-sponsored prayer and Bible reading.

constantly grapples with faith issues (pp. 288-289). By calling certain fictional ministers 'comic Calvinist', Walrath considers these characters in the late twentieth-century novels clerics who 'inhabit imaginary premodern worlds where a pervasive and benevolent God rules' (p. 285). Within this story frame, these fictional figures do not fall into fatal mistakes and their failures can never outweigh God's goodness. Walrath describes Ames as reluctant to accept the postmodern idea that 'believing *requires* convincing thought' and incapable of negotiating Christian belief with certain components of the postmodern culture (p.288, italics in original).[53]

Walrath's comments on these Calvinist characters in fiction apparently hint at some elements of Calvinism, such as God's sovereignty and grace. His observation on the representation of Calvinism in modern American fiction echoes Sacramone's reasoning about the prevalence of Calvinism in contemporary American society in his web post 'Why Calvin and Not Luther?' (2013).[54] Sacramone first points out a fundamental element of Calvinism that tends to appeal to the general public on the psychological level: access to fresh starts via personal encounter with the Christ, which differs from the instruction on continual repentance in Lutheranism. Second, Calvinism tends to provide

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[53]. To support his argument, Walrath quotes Ames' statement: 'I'm just trying to find a slightly useful way of saying there are things I don't understand. I'm not going to force some theory on a mystery and make foolishness of it, just because that is what people who talk about it normally do' (*Gilead*, p.152, cited in Walrath, 2010, p.288).

[54] Sacramone is a former editor of *First Things*, a major ecumenical journal in the U.S. that aims to 'advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society' (*First Things* website, n.d.). 'Why Calvin and Not Luther?' was first published on Sacramone's web blog *Strange Herring*, which is now closed. This article has been republished and circulated on several websites, including the source of my citation *The Aquila Report*, an online magazine officially introduced as the 'independent source for news and commentary from and about conservative, orthodox evangelicals in the Reformed and Presbyterian family of churches'.

compelling expository teachings in current American church settings. Also, Calvinism encourages Christians to build cultural engagement based on their identity as the Elect whose ultimate life goal is to glorify God as the giver of life and salvation. Furthermore, Calvinism does not have a root, which means it does not have to be institutionalised in order to be disseminated and practised. Sacramone links this feature of Calvinism to the historical fact that John Calvin hardly settled in one place and even needed to go into exile throughout his life.

In regard to the interdenominational appeal of Calvinism in the U.S., a similar point to Sacramone's can be seen in Koyzis' 'Calvinist Baptists, But No "Lutheran" Baptists?' (2013). Koyzis notes that the choice of an individual to become a Lutheran in the U.S. context mostly denotes that he or she will then join a specific Lutheran church, while being a Calvinist usually means following the Calvinist theology and this adherence can occur in different denominational settings. This distinct trait of Calvinism may also constitute a core reason for Calvinism being readily adopted in different national and cultural environments. As will be discussed in Chapter 8, Calvinism also forms a predominant part in Taiwanese Protestantism, and one manifestation of this is the theological norms shared between Taiwan's Christian literary system and that of the U.S.

6.4.4 The interrelation between the theological system and the Christian literary system

It may be that the primary position of Calvinism within the U.S. theological

system has contributed to the reverence for Robinson's works in the U.S. Christian literary system. Since Calvinism is also a popular Protestant theological branch of Christianity on a global scale, the Calvinist themes featured in Robinson's writings have paved the way for her to be known as a Christian author in other nations' Christian literary systems. As can be observed, this has been manifested in the U.K context.

The reception of *Gilead* among authoritative Anglophone Christian figures, although tending to be positive in general, still displays some tension as a result of the disagreements over Robinson's theological representations in the novel. While this fact on the whole does not hinder the popularity of *Gilead* within the Christian community, it does provide us with an illustrative case study of how doctrinal positions (or, ideological stances) determine the conceptualisation of (real) Christian-themed literature. A voice that should not be neglected is Piper, a name that was given as an example of Neo-Calvinist preachers in the *Time* magazine article cited in Section 6.4.3. Piper is the founder of desiringGod.org, an influential website in the Anglophone Protestant world, and is currently chancellor of Bethlehem College and Seminary, Minnesota.

In the following, I will draw on three articles Piper has written on the Gilead series, which exemplify a rather conservative evangelical reading of the novels. 'Do You Benefit From Reading Authors That You Don't Always Agree With?' (Piper, 2009) is an edited transcript of his response to the said question on desiringGod.org. Piper gives 'an easy yes' answer and says 'I've

never read an author outside of the Bible that I agree with on everything'. He mentions four very different Christian authors to elaborate his answer: C. S. Lewis, G. K. Chesterton, Jonathan Edwards, and Marilynne Robinson. These four Christian authors are all known as authoritative writers in the Christian literary realm, but all had some beliefs that Piper disagrees with. When it comes to Robinson, although Piper acknowledges her representation of the struggles that Ames faces in *Gilead*, he expresses his doubt on whether Robinson is an 'evangelical believer' based on several things that Ames writes in his letter to his son.

Piper (2014) gives further comments on certain biblical themes portrayed in Robinson's *Gilead* and *Lila* in 'The Fallibility of the Foundling's Savior: Marilynne Robinson's *Lila* and Jonathan Edwards'. By referring to the eighteenth-century Puritan pastor Edwards, Piper displayed a critical attitude towards Robinson's theological stance represented in her fiction. Piper is known for his expertise on Edwards' theology and writings. Not only has a series of his articles on Edwards been published on desiringGod.org since 2003, but there has also been a collection of his writings that show Edwards' influences on his own theology, released under the title of *Captive to Glory: Celebrating the Vision and Influence of Jonathan Edwards* (2014).

Piper (2014b) describes *Lila* as a 'message-bearing' novel. According to him, what makes 'message-bearing fiction' differ from 'fictionalised sermons' is the former's 'complexity, profundity, indirectness, beauty, and story-telling skill of the writing'. After acknowledging that the novel is a success in the

artistic sense by detailing the strengths Robinson demonstrates in her storytelling, Piper maintains that it is 'sad' that Ames turns from 'being the sometimes perplexing lover of God's grace' and 'living in awe of mystery' in *Gilead*, to being the man who speaks assuredly 'about the morally eviscerating effects of the biblical teaching about hell' in *Lila*. Piper points out paragraphs in *Lila* where Ames considers it 'a very grave sin' to assume that some people may go to hell, and where Ames and Lila talk about the awakening of their nonbeliever friends in heaven. Piper further compares these excerpts with Robinson's article published in *Humanities,* 'Jonathan Edwards in a New Light' (2014). Robinson's description of Edwards' insistence on damnation as 'profoundly at odds with his vision of God as absolute love' has convinced Piper that the fictional character John Ames is expressing the author's own views in this case, which has brought disappointment to Piper at both personal and theological levels.

Piper (2014b) describes Ames as 'a very helpful friend', from whom he has learned how to be a loving husband. However, he feels that he loses this friend 'when [Ames] turns from mystery to pontificating with no greater authority than his own instincts, on how hell and grace don't mix'. Piper's conclusion explicitly shows his strong belief in the Bible:

> If our choice were between whether Edwards 'too readily' held on to the doctrine of hell, or whether Marilynne Robinson too readily, and sadly, turned John Ames into a kind, old liberal, I would choose the patiently-wrought grandeur of Edwards's vision. But, of course, this is not

the choice. The choice is: Has God spoken reliably in the Bible?

Piper's objection to Robinson's 'liberal' sense of the hell issue in Christianity directs readers to the questions surrounding reading Christian-themed literary works from a doctrinal perspective, e.g. How has the dominant theological thinking been imposed on the interpretation of Christian-themed literature? Since the tenets that are held true by some are not necessarily considered non-negotiable by others, in what ways do we see the tension existing in the theological system transfer to the Christian literary system?

Between the interval of the publications of the two above-mentioned articles, Piper (2010) published a short article on *Gilead* entitled 'I Love This Novel. Still Do. More Than Before.' Piper claims that he has continuously felt touched by *Gilead* and presents twenty-one quotes from the novel that he believes to be 'some of the treasures'. However, he also makes a strong point in regard to Christian literature: '*Gilead* is not a "must read." There are no "must reads" but the Bible.' Here, one can see the distinct nature of a Christian literary system, in which the Bible always occupies the most central place, and is the ultimate authority that governs literary activities within the system. This is one of my key observations that support my argument concerning the systematic operation of the Christian literary polysystem in this study.

In reading Piper's comments on *Gilead*, I would like to raise some fundamental questions for this study: From a Christian perspective, what should 'good' Christian-themed literary works entail? Do they necessarily have

to play a functional role in proselytism? How do Christian critics approach the negotiation between artistic elements and doctrinal teachings in Christian-themed literature? In my next chapter on the controversial Christian novel *The Shack*, readers will encounter all these questions again. Based on my findings, I will present a more comprehensive discussion in Chapter 8.

6.5 *Gilead* in Taiwan: the double foreignness

Gilead clearly bears a twofold foreignness, i.e., the Americanness and the Christianness, to its Taiwanese readers. In this section, I will discuss the effects this double foreignness has brought to the production and circulation of its traditional Chinese character versions in Taiwan. Firstly, I will explore how *Gilead* has been introduced in Taiwan's mainstream non-Christian literary system. And then, I will look at its status in the Taiwanese Christian literary system. Finally, I will present how the foreignness is reflected in the translation products.

6.5.1 *Gilead* in the non-Christian literary system in Taiwan

Gilead is described by *The New Yorker* book critic James Wood (2008) as 'one of the most unconventional conventionally popular novels of recent times'. Nevertheless, the novel has not attracted as much attention in Taiwan as it has in the English-language book market despite the fact that Taiwan's general readership tends to be interested in translated books that are best-sellers and/or prize winners. Of course, the high degree of literariness of *Gilead* may also

have made it less approachable for ordinary readers.

In terms of the promotion of the novel, some subtle attempts to make it accommodate the interests of Taiwanese readers can be observed. For example, in a review included in Peripato's reprint, the Taiwanese writer Chang Rang (張讓) (2006, p.18) states: 'Undoubtedly, Robinson is writing about religious faith. However, faith in her writing is far from fossilised doctrines but a collection of vivid and interesting stories….Despite being an agnostic, I cannot help but engross myself in it'. Chang's review firstly appeared in Book Reviews, *United Daily News* (聯合報), when the first traditional Chinese character edition of *Gilead* by Ten Points was published. Chang gives her article the title 'The Most Loving Goodbye' (最深情的告別) and focuses her discussion on Robinson's portrayals of life and death issues together with family relationships.

The second review included in Peripato's edition, 'The Prodigal Son Does Not Come Home' (浪子沒有回家), is written by another Taiwanese writer, Yuan Chiung-chiung (袁瓊瓊). Instead of 'neutralising' the Christian themes when reviewing the text, Yuan not only introduces the biblical meaning of 'Gilead' but also thoroughly explains the parable of the prodigal son based on the plots she extracts from the novel. Yuan's article in some way contextualises the story in its original Christian context, which may help enhance Taiwanese readers' understanding of the story's background.

Another review of *Gilead* 'The Image of the Father' by Anbo Lin (林安柏) (n.d.), published on a major literary website *Net and Books* (網路與書),

also focuses on the father and son relationship as a typical (Western) literary theme. Lin notes, 'The grand topic of "Father and Son" has been a motif that theologians, philosophers, and even psychologists keep tackling ever since God sent His dearest son Jesus to the world. Robinson also tries to give an answer to it in this novel'.

In paratext theory, reviews are epitexts that are not included in the printed texts. Compared to some peritexts, epitexts may influence readers in a less certain way (Batchelor, 2018, p.149). By including Chang's review that was first published in *United Daily News* in the reprint of *Gilead*, Peripato turned the epitext into a peritext. In this way, Chang's and Yuan's reviews serve as the introductions to the printed volume and thus 'overtly contribute meaning' to the text (Pellatt, 2013, p. 2). As noted by Pellatt, the introduction or preface of a translated work may significantly influence the intercultural understanding of the text (ibid., p. 3). In the case of *Gilead*, the two introductory articles written by Taiwanese authors potentially bridge the cultural gap for local Taiwanese readers.

The fact that only very few reviews of *Gilead* can be found in Taiwan illustrates the lack of popularity of *Gilead* on Taiwanese soil. A Taiwanese reader's post on aNobii.com, the international online community for book readers, may offer some clues as to the apparently difficult reception of the novel in Taiwan. The reader (Tina Ray, 2016), although giving the novel full marks, points out three things about the novel that have contributed to her initial resistance to it: 1. It is a novel about Christianity; 2. It describes the

continuation of patriarchy and the opposition between fathers and sons; 3.The story told by the narrator is set in the 1880s (sic), which she considers 'too old'. However, for her, the author's use of 'poetic language' to reflect on many life issues through her characters is 'astonishing'.

The foregoing sketch of how *Gilead* has been read in Taiwan's mainstream literary domain provides some information on the alien status of the novel as translated Christian-themed literature in the Taiwanese context. Considering Taiwan's socio-cultural environment and the status quo of its book market, it would be reasonable to say that it is the conspicuous Christianness embedded in this American literary narrative that has particularly affected its reception among the general readers in Taiwan.

6.5.2 *Gilead* in Taiwan's Christian literary system

Similar to the little attention given to *Gilead* in Taiwan's non-Christian literary system, among all Christian publications in Taiwan I have looked at, there can only be found two articles written by local authors mentioning *Gilead*, aside from a translated article 'Summer Reading: The Top 10 Novels for Pastors' (牧者不容錯過的十大小說) (Pastor, 2013) published in CEFP's *Campus* magazine in 2014.

Both articles are targeted at Christian readers and only briefly introduce the novel without offering any in-depth review. In 'Reading is the Power of Faith' (閱讀是信仰的力量), the CEFP staff member Chang Ta-hung (張大虹) (2011) writes about the importance of reading to nurture Christian spirituality.

Gilead is one of his book recommendations. Chang particularly points out that Chinese-speaking readers tend to favour Christian books dealing with more pragmatic topics, or those written for Bible study and devotional use. He thus urges readers who would like to pursue spiritual growth not to neglect the role literature plays in spiritual cultivation since they may find resonance with those stories.

The other article is 'Telling Stories Through Your Life, And Telling Your Life Stories' (以生命說故事，說生命故事) published in *Kingdom Resources For Christ Magazine* (神國資源為基督協會雜誌) (Lin, 2014).[55] The article encourages Christians to share their faith by telling stories rather than merely preaching the doctrines. Using *Gilead* as one of the examples for personal evangelism, the author Lin Min-wen (林敏雯) suggests the potential of its story to engage people who seem to 'wander astray from heaven' but still 'long for salvation' at some moments.

What can be noticed here is the attempts to turn *Gilead* from an artistic work into a tool applicable for evangelism, which is, as observed in my study, a common phenomenon in the Christian literary sphere. These Christian critics' act of assigning 'Christian literature' as a specific function-oriented genre to *Gilead* also corresponds to the relative insignificance of 'pure literature'（純文學）in Taiwan's Christian literary system. The limited number of reviews of *Gilead* published by both the mainstream and the Christian media clearly exemplifies the double marginalisation Christian-themed *literary* fiction has

[55] Kingdom Resources For Christ is a U.S.-headquartered Chinese Christian organisation.

been facing in Taiwan.

6.5.3 The translation of *Gilead* into Chinese in Taiwan

The unfamiliarity of Christianity in Taiwan has been reflected in the translations of *Gilead* too. Christian jargon has long been believed to be one of the reasons that set a barrier between non-Christians and Christians in Taiwan (Baozhen, 1974; Liu, 1999). The two translations of *Gilead* published by mainstream Taiwanese publishers can exemplify such a barrier that has contributed to the foreignness of Christianity to the majority of Taiwanese. This section presents the textual evidence for this statement.

Although Peripato's version is based on the first edition published by Ten Points, there is a major difference between these two Chinese versions in terms of the translation of some Christian terminology and biblical allusions. In our correspondence, *Gilead*'s translator Shih (2019) wrote that Ten Points sold her translation to Peripato without informing her; she did not even know that there was a reprint of *Gilead* until a friend told her so. Shih also wrote that as a non-Christian, she found translating *Gilead* rather challenging and she felt 'a lack of confidence' during the process. I could not obtain information regarding the changes made in Peripato's edition, but Shih's answer confirms my hypothesis that it was due to the translation producer's unfamiliarity with Christianity that many instances in the translation of *Gilead* do not conform to the Sino-Christian linguistic convention.

The two translations are compared as follows. The examples are

categorised into three main groups:

I. Examples of biblical allusions revised according to the Mandarin *Union Version* in Peripato's version

In Ten Points' version, some biblical allusions were translated by the translator herself; however, in Peripato's version all these biblical allusions are presented as the way they are in the Mandarin *UV*, the predominant translation of the Bible used by Chinese-speaking Protestants (see Section 3.6). In Peripato's version, all direct quotes from the Bible are highlighted with a different font style, and there are footnotes indicating the original source of each verse. As will be seen, the translations in these two editions essentially bear the same meaning as that of the ST; the difference between them is merely about how the biblical expressions are represented in Chinese. In order to represent this difference in my back translations, I quote from the *New International Version* to render the biblical allusions translated according to the Mandarin *UV* in Peripato's edition. The case of *Gilead* exemplifies the important role the Mandarin *UV* has been playing in the Chinese-language Christian literary world. As presented in the next chapter, the case of *The Shack* is an even more evident example of this.

Example 1

ST: Well, see and see but do not perceive, hear and hear but do not understand, as the Lord says (p.7).

Ten Points: 誠如天主所言：「親眼所見卻不領悟，親耳所聞卻不理解。」(p.7)

(Back translation: As the Lord of Heaven said, 'See but do not perceive, hear but do not understand.')

Peripato: 誠如主耶穌所言：「你們聽是要聽見，卻不明白；看是要看見，卻不曉得。」(p.25)

(Back translation: As Lord Jesus said, '*You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.*')

This quote follows when Ames writes about his relationship with his father: 'You can know a thing to death and be for all purposes completely ignorant of it. A man can know his father, or his son, and there might still be nothing between them but loyalty and love and mutual incomprehension' (p.7).

Example 2

ST: And Edward replied, and this was very wrong of him, 'When I was a child, I thought as a child. Now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things' (p.26).

Ten Points: 愛德華卻駁斥說父親錯了：「我還是個小孩子的時候，想法自然像個小孩；現在我已長大成人，也該放棄孩子氣的想法。」(p.26)

(Back translation: Edward refuted Father's statement, 'When I was still a child, I thought like a child. Now that I have become a man, I should have let go of childish thoughts.')

Peripato: 艾德華卻駁斥說父親錯了：「我做孩子的時候，心思像孩子。既成了人，就把孩子的事丟棄了。」(p.45)

(Back translation: Edward refuted Father's statement, '*When I was a child, I thought like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.*')

This excerpt is Ames' account of the argument between his brother Edward and their father. Edward, the remarkably intelligent son who later became an atheist during his study in Germany, refused his father's request to say grace. The response was to their father's words: 'You have lived under this roof. You know the customs of your family. You might show some respect for them' (p.26).

Example 3

ST: It had occurred to me that these were the only two instances in Scripture where a father is even apparently unkind to his child. The Lord can ask, 'What man of you, if his son asked for bread, would give him a stone?' and it is a rhetorical question (pp.129-130).

Ten Points: 我想到在《聖經》中，只有這兩件父親虧待孩兒的故事，天主問道：「孩子若向你要麵包，你卻對他丟擲石頭，那你算是何種人？」但這只是反詰式的問句 […]。(p.132)

(Back translation: It had occurred to me that in the Bible, these were the only two stories where a father mistreats his child. the Lord of Heaven asked,

'If a child asks you for bread, but you throw stone at him, then what kind of man are you?' But this is just a rhetorical question […].)

Peripato: 我想到在《聖經》中只有這兩件父親虧待孩子的故事，主耶穌問道：「你們中間誰有兒子求餅，反給他石頭呢?」這只是反詰式的問句[…] (pp.153-154)

(Back translation: It had occurred to me that in the Bible these were the only two stories where a father mistreats his child. Lord Jesus asked, '*Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone?*' But this is just a rhetorical question […].)

This is in the passage where Ames mentions his sermon about Abraham's sending his son Ishmael and Ishmael's mother Hagar into the wilderness, and giving his another son Isaac as an offering to God.

II. Examples of religious terms that are translated as Catholic expressions in Ten Points' version but changed into standardised Protestant terms in Peripato's version

Example 1

The most notable example is the translation of '**the Lord**'. In Ten Points, it is translated as ***Tienzhu*** **(天主)**, the Lord of Heaven, the name Chinese-speaking Catholics used to address the Lord. Yet, the term appears as ***Zhu*** **(主)**, Lord, (or ***Zhuyesu*** **[主耶穌]**, Lord Jesus, where applicable) in Peripato's version. As the narrator in *Gilead* is a Protestant preacher, the latter is a more suitable translation.

The translation of 'God' into Chinese has been one of the core issues for discussion in the history of Christian missions in China. The standardisation of the term *Tienzhu* (天主), the Lord of Heaven, took place in the first half of the eighteenth century when the Vatican issued the papal decrees that ended the accommodating missionary policy adopted by earlier Catholic missionaries. Before that, the Jesuits, who had been undertaking their missionary works in China since the sixteenth century, used *Shangti* (上帝) to address God and permitted local believers to practice ancestor veneration. However, the term *Shangti*, the Highest Deity in its Chinese origin, was later regarded as being in conflict with the monotheism of Christianity (Ahn, 2011, p.102). This is why Catholicism in Chinese is called *Tienzhujiao* (天主教), Religion of the Lord of Heaven.

Unlike in the Catholic case, the debate over which term to use to address the Christian God in Chinese has never been settled within the Protestant community. The debate, often recognised as the 'Term Question', first emerged in the mid-nineteenth century between the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the American missionaries. While the LMS favoured the use of *Shangti*, the American missionaries preferred *Shen* (神). Behind the two terms exist cultural implications rooted in traditional Chinese culture: *Shangti* denotes the Supreme God according to Chinese Confucianism, and *Shen* is a generic term used to address god or spirit in the Chinese context featuring polytheism and pantheism (Ahn, 2011, p. 98-99). Nowadays, both terms are used by Chinese-speaking Protestants to address the Christian God.

Example 2

ST: She makes a very unlikely preacher's wife. She says so herself. But she never flinches from any of it. **Mary Magdalene** probably made an occasional casserole, whatever the ancient equivalent may have been. A mess of pottage, I suppose (p. 30).

Ten Points: 她不太適合當個牧師太太，她自己也這麼說，但她從不退縮。**聖抹大拉的馬利亞**說不定偶爾也做一鍋燉菜或是類似燉菜的食物，我猜是一鍋濃湯吧！(p.30)

(Back translation: She makes a very unlikely pastor's wife. She herself also says so. But she never shrinks back. **St. Mary Magdalene** probably made an occasional casserole, or something like casserole. A mess of pottage, I suppose!)

Peripato: 她不太適合當個牧師太太，她自己也這麼說，但她從不退縮。**抹大拉的馬利亞**說不定偶爾也做一鍋燉菜或是類似燉菜的食物，我猜是一鍋濃湯吧！(p.30)

(Back translation: She makes a very unlikely pastor's wife. She herself also says so. But she never shrinks back. **Mary Magdalene** probably made an occasional casserole, or something like casserole. A mess of pottage, I suppose!)

In the passage, Ames writes to his son about his wife. The difference between the two TTs is rather subtle yet important: 'Mary Magdalene' is translated as 聖抹大拉的馬利亞 (St. Mary Magdalene) in Ten Points' version,

but has become 抹大拉的馬利亞 (Mary Magdalene) in Peripato's. Mary Magdalene, a follower of Jesus, has been venerated as a saint in the Catholic Church, Orthodox churches, and some Protestant churches such as the Anglican and Lutheran churches. In the Chinese-speaking context, the title 'Saint' is only used in Catholicism to refer to those who have been canonised, and it is not applicable in Protestantism.

III. Expressions that are not translated according to Chinese Christian terminology in both editions

Although some terms have been amended in Peripato's edition in order to represent the Protestant context in the novel, there are still some expressions in the revised edition that are not consistent with the Chinese-language Christian terminology.

Example 1

ST: I spent several hours in **meditation** and prayer over John Ames Boughton, and also over John Ames […] (p.123).

TTs: 我花了幾小時**靜坐冥想**，為約翰・艾姆斯・柏頓祈禱，也為我—約翰・艾姆斯—禱告[…]。(Ten Points, p.125; Peripato, p.147)

(Back translation: I spent some hours **sitting still and meditating**, praying for John Ames Boughton, and also for me—John Ames […].)

The sentence is in Ames' narrative of his own emotional struggles when facing his closest friend Boughton's prodigal son John Ames Boughton, who is

usually called Jack Boughton. The Chinese translation of 'to meditate' here is *jingzuo mingxiang* (靜坐冥想), to sit still and meditate. Although it literally means almost the same as the ST does, the term is merely used in the Buddhist context. According to the Sino-Christian terminology, the act of 'meditating' is called *muoxiang* (默想). Therefore, the use of *jingzuo mingxiang* obviously contradicts the Christian theme of the novel. Shih (2019) wrote in her correspondence with me that she chose to translate 'to meditate' as *mingxiang* because she is not a Christian and thus not familiar with Christian expressions. Therefore, I argue that Shih's adoption of *jingzuo mingxiang*, a Buddhist phrase that can be commonly seen in Taiwan's context, to translate a Christian term is one example that represents 'the foreignness' of Christianity in Taiwan.

Example 2

ST: You have begun palling around with a chap you found at school, a freckly little **Lutheran** named Tobias, a pleasant child (p.37).

TTs: 你最近在學校結識了一個名叫托比亞斯的小朋友，這個臉上長了雀斑的小男孩是個**路德教徒**，人很和善[…]。

(Ten Points 37; Peripato 56)

(Back translation: Recently you have met a boy named Tobias at school. This freckly little boy is **a follower of the Lutheran religion**, a nice person […].)

The problem with the Chinese translation here is that it treats Lutheranism as a religion rather than a denomination by inserting 教 (*jiao*), a word that

denotes ‘religion’, into the phrase, while in the ST ‘Lutheran’ should refer to a Christian who is part of the Lutheran denomination. The accurate translation of ‘Lutheran’ in this passage should be 路德會會友, a member of the Lutheran denomination.

In addition to all the above-mentioned examples, Ten Points’ blurb on the back of the book describes the protagonist Ames as 傳教士, a ‘missionary’, which has later been changed into the correct term 牧師, a ‘pastor’, in Peripato’s blurb. Since nowhere in the novel does Ames describe himself as a ‘missionary’, the introduction of the protagonist as a missionary in Ten Points’ edition indicates a confusion between the two Christian occupations, missionary and pastor. This is an error that suggests the text producer’s unfamiliarity with either the novel or Chinese Christian terms.

Conclusion: the inevitable gaps

In the interview conducted for *The New York Times Magazine* (Mason, 2014), Robinson mentioned feeling ‘a kind of self-alienation’:

> There’s something about finding out that your interior life is acceptable to people on a wide scale that you simply have to make a revision of yourself. You think, What a surprise. The question of how private you are, how inward you are. All that seems suddenly to change when you find out that people are reading your stuff in China.

This statement indicates Robinson’s perception towards the transmission of her

works to the other side of the world, which is described as bringing some effects onto her own life. This is of course an interesting point about the cross-cultural translation of literary works.

However, although both Robinson's fiction and non-fiction works have been highly acclaimed by Anglophone critics and readers, only her novels have been translated into Chinese. None of her non-fiction works has been translated in the Chinese-speaking world. Judging by the lack of attention paid to Robinson's novels in Taiwan and also the translation products, I would argue that they reflect the inevitable gap between the Anglophone literary system and the Taiwanese literary system. That is to say, although Taiwan's book market has been shaped by the Anglophone influences to a large extent, the essential differences between the socio-cultural environments seem to make Robinson's Christian-themed works difficult to be popularised in Taiwan. In addition, many instances in the two traditional Chinese character translations of *Gilead* published by mainstream publishing houses indicate the translator's (as well as the editors') unfamiliarity with Christian knowledge. This somewhat also indicates the gap between the mainstream literary system and the Christian literary system in Taiwan.

Chapter 7

The Possibility of 'Heretical' Christian-Themed Fiction: *The Shack*

Few works of fiction with clear Christian motifs have become international bestsellers. It is even more exceptional for books almost uncontroversially identified as 'Christian' in the secular scene to generate dialogues and even debates on the definition of 'Christian literature' within the Christian community. As these two phenomena are both seen in the case of *The Shack*, this contemporary global bestseller represents a unique case in the context of Christian literature.

7.1 *The Shack* as a narrative of trauma, recovery, and reconciliation

The Shack, first published in 2007, was the debut novel by the Canadian author William Paul Young, a Bible College graduate who did several jobs both inside and outside the ministry. The novel, subtitled 'Where Tragedy Confronts Eternity', was not intended to gain such commercial success in the mainstream book market. The idea of penning the author's own life story was prompted by his wife, who encouraged him to write it as a Christmas gift for their children. After the completion of the manuscript, several copies of the novel also circulated among family and friends, from whom Young received a suggestion to get the manuscript published. Young submitted the manuscript to more than twenty publishers but was rejected by all of them. While Christian publishers

considered it ‘too controversial’, secular publishers found it ‘too Christian’ (Rich, 2008).

The novel was later published by Windblown Media, a publishing house established by Young and his friends. In May 2008, Hachette Book Group USA, a major mainstream publisher, started cooperating with Windblown Media to publish *The Shack* (ibid.). The novel was then surprisingly on top of *The New York Times* best-seller list for fifty-two consecutive weeks, which, indeed, has contributed to its being translated into more than forty languages (Windblown Media, 2017). Its film adaptation was released in March 2017 and has grossed nearly 97 million U.S. dollars at the box office (Box Office Mojo, 2018). Young’s second novel, *Cross Roads* (2012), and third novel, *Eve* (2015), also deal with Christian topics. *Cross Roads* is subtitled ‘What if you could go back and put things right?’ On Young’s official website, *Eve* is introduced as a book that ‘will destroy harmful misconceptions about ourselves’ (2015).

The Shack can be concisely described as a story of healing and recovery. With the shack symbolising the place where an individual’s secrets, pain, and shame are hidden, the novel tells the story of Mackenzie, or ‘Mack’, who has been overwhelmed by the loss of his six-year-old daughter and has been through a great faith crisis since then. Missy, missing on a family camping trip, is claimed by the police to have been abducted and murdered by a serial killer. Mack’s healing process and the reconstruction of his relationship with God begin with an invitation he receives from ‘Papa’ to meet up at the shack, where Missy’s bloodstained clothing has been found while her body remains

undiscovered at that point.

The essence of the story lies in Mack's encounter with the manifestation of the Triune God in three different persons: 'Papa' as an African American woman whose name is Elousia; Jesus Christ, the Middle-Eastern carpenter; and the Holy Spirit *physically* present as an Asian woman called Sarayu. Through his conversations with the three figures, Mack comes to grips with 'The Great Sadness' in his life and restores his broken relationships with each of them. Mack spends a weekend in the shack and has a nearly fatal car accident on his way back home. After recovering consciousness, Mack realises that the accident has, in fact, occurred on his outward journey, which means that he has never physically revisited the shack in reality. Towards the end of the story, Mack shows the police the cave where, as revealed by Papa, Missy's body has been placed. Based on the forensic evidence collected, the murderer is arrested and brought to trial.

The novel is known for being semi-autobiographical. Young is introduced in the blurb of the first edition of *The Shack* as being raised in New Guinea by missionary parents, 'suffer[ing] great loss as a child and young adult', and currently 'enjoy[ing] the "wastefulness of grace" with his family in the U.S.' Young's personal traumatic story that tells about sexual abuse and negative religious experience in his early years has been publicised in many of his interviews. On many occasions, Young has spoken of the negative impacts of fundamental and conservative Christian traditions on him during his upbringing. These have led to his emotional insecurity in his relationships with

God and people and have been reflected in his storytelling. For example, in an interview by Nicky Gumbel (2014), Young openly shared how his wife's discovery of his extramarital affair led to his disclosure of all his past pains and the healing process afterwards. Young described himself as 'a performer' who used pieces of the shack to build 'a façade' according to others' expectations before this turning point occurred (Young, 2014, 10:26-11:05).

Young repeatedly linked the concept of 'being religious' with being dogmatic, suppressive, and hypocritical, rather than being devout or pious in a positive sense. Nevertheless, the story of *The Shack* is far from being anti-Christian or opposed to the Christian God. When speaking about the 'phenomenal' popularity of *The Shack*, Young described it as a 'blessed' book that was first gifted from him to his children, and then from God to His children. Young believed that it offered readers access to think about God, who was '*relational* not *religious*', and removed their assumptions about God and themselves (Young, 2014, 26:2-26:31, my italics).

As will be seen later in this chapter, the contrast Young posed between the 'relational' God and the 'religious' God can be identified as a thread through *The Shack*. This also prompts me to probe into the contemporary discourse on Christianity introduced by the controversies over the novel. The tensions surrounding different discussions will be one of the foci of this case study.

7.2 The debatable Christianness of *The Shack*

Generally speaking, Young's portrayal of the triune deity and its loving

nature in *The Shack* corresponds to the attributes of God in Christianity. The novel is endorsed by Eugene Peterson, the author of *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* and a former professor of Spiritual Theology at Regent College in Vancouver. On the book cover, Peterson is quoted: 'This book has the potential to do for our generation what John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* did for his. It's that good!' This is indeed a strong endorsement from an internationally known Christian leader, since *Pilgrim's Progress* is widely identified not only as Christian literature but also as an English classic. Another point hinted at here is that *The Shack* is treated as an allegorical novel by Peterson. In fact, as will be shown in Sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2, *The Shack* has been constantly compared with other renowned Christian allegories in addition to *Pilgrim's Progress*, such as John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and C.S. Lewis' *Narnia* tales. While some consider *The Shack* a contemporary example that is on a par with these works, many draw on these well-known Christian-themed literary works to criticise this popular novel intended for a wide general readership. Through the case of *The Shack*, one can note how the canonisation of certain Christian-themed classics has influenced the reading of contemporary works in the Christian literary polysystem. A more detailed analysis will be presented in Sections 7.2.3 and 7.2.4.

Several mainstream media outlets have released stories and articles on *The Shack*. In June 2008, an article entitled 'Christian Novel Is Surprise Best Seller' was published in *The New York Times*, featuring *The Shack* as an unexpected success. It addresses how the novel has attracted readers, including

those who initially found its depiction of God unorthodox (Rich, 2008).

Similarly, *USA Today* published 'Aim at "spiritually interested" sparks "The Shack" sales', in which the novel was called 'a wrenching parable about God's grace' (Grossman, 2008a). The commercial success of *The Shack* as a self-published novel was described by *Publishers Weekly*'s senior Religion editor Lynn Garrett as 'most unusual'; its popularity was mainly due to its emotional impacts on the general readers who did not necessarily consider the appropriateness of its theological representations (Garrett, 2008 cited in Grossman, 2008a). Another article published in *USA Today*, '"Shack" [sic] opens doors, but critics call book "scripturally incorrect"', gave a more detailed account of how the novel had come into existence as a bestseller as well as the phenomenon surrounding its publication (Grossman, 2008b).

A noteworthy fact concerning the composition of the novel is the revision process in which the theological jargon was removed. The co-editing lasted for fifteen months before publication and was undertaken by Young and two former pastors Wayne Jacobsen and Brad Cummings (Grossman, 2008b).[56] This editing process suggests not only that the publication of *The Shack* was geared toward a wider readership rather than only the Christian community, but also that it was the producers' intention to break religious conventions in terms of language use. Judging from the novel's status as a global bestseller, their objectives have apparently been achieved.

[56] Wayne Jacobsen co-authored *So You Don't Want to Go to Church Any More* under the pseudonym Jake Colson with Dave Coleman; the book was published by Windblown Media in 2008.

7.2.1 The biblical God vs. the fictional God

While the dilution of Christian language in the text should not arouse negative concerns or disputes within the Christian community to a great degree, any deviant way of representing Christian teachings grounded in the Bible, the supreme reference for people to understand the Christian God and His Word, would certainly bring about contentions. Particularly in such a case as *The Shack*, a popular novel easily identified as Christian by its readers, there is a strong tendency for Christian leaders to guard against its 'danger' of disseminating unbiblical messages.

This has been covered in the above-mentioned news stories about *The Shack* in mainstream media. For instance, articles in *The New York Times* and *USA Today* both quoted the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS) President Albert Mohler's reproach against the novel. The SBTS is part of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in the U.S. The SBC was known for launching the Conservative Resurgence in the 1960s, a campaign against the emergence of liberal movements in Christian communities at that time. Mohler, known as a leading figure in the conservative Protestant community in the U.S., provides a representative case for us to observe common disapprovals of *The Shack* through a theological lens.

The Shack is described as 'a wake-up call for evangelical Christianity' in Mohler's article 'The Shack—The Missing Art of Evangelical Discernment' (2010), originally published on his website and later in *The Christian Post*, a major interdenominational evangelical media source. Calling *The Shack* 'a

narrative theodicy' that contains theological elements 'unconventional at best, and undoubtedly heretical in certain respects', Mohler denounces the novel in a rather unreserved way. The theological term 'theodicy' describes the means to respond to the providence of a benign God in a world of evil and suffering. Mohler criticised Young's portrayal of the Trinity, who were represented as three individual human beings, since '[n]owhere in the Bible is the Father or the Spirit described as taking on human existence'. He also condemned Young's delineation of the relationship between the three Persons of the Trinity:

> In one of the most bizarre paragraphs of the book, Jesus tells Mack: 'Papa is as much submitted to me as I am to him, or Sarayu to me, or Papa to her. Submission is not about authority and it is not obedience; it is all about relationships of love and respect. In fact, we are submitted to you in the same way.'

According to the Bible, Jesus claimed that he was sent by the Father (John 17:3) and the Father is greater than the Son Jesus (John 14:28). Also, what lies at the core of Christianity is that the Father is the creator and the supreme ruler of the whole universe. Mohler therefore considers Young's alternative description of the relationship between the Father, the Son, the Spirit, and men 'extreme' and 'dangerous'—'[t]he essence of idolatry is self-worship, and this notion of the Trinity submitted (in any sense) to humanity is inescapably idolatrous'.

Mohler further expresses concern over the messages suggesting universalism, universal redemption, and ultimate reconciliation in the novel.

These ideas centre around the belief that the death and resurrection of Jesus led to all sinners' reconciliation with God, which means that salvation has already been fulfilled for everyone, even without the individual repenting and accepting Jesus as their personal savior. Mohler's strong opposition to these concepts manifests and exemplifies the disapproving stance taken by many evangelical Christians on *The Shack*. Clearly, they contradict the fundamental tenets of mainstream evangelical Christianity: Jesus is the (only) way to God (John 14:6), and men must turn away from sin and believe in Jesus the resurrected Redeemer in order to be saved (Acts 2:38-39; Roman 10:9-10).

Two other Christian academics who also criticised *The Shack* are quoted by Mohler. One of them is James B. DeYoung, a New Testament specialist teaching at Western Theological Seminary, whose *Burning Down the Shack: How the 'Christian' Bestseller Is Deceiving Millions* (2010) has drawn special attention partly due to the author's long friendship with Young that enabled him to comment on Young's personal beliefs.

As already suggested by DeYoung's book title, from his viewpoint, the common classification of *The Shack* as 'Christian' should be questioned. In a short review published online, DeYoung (2009) comments that all unorthodox theological representations in Young's story revolve around Christian universalism. In order to support his opposition to the novel, DeYoung presents information obtained through his personal contact with Young in earlier years, accounting how Young himself had believed in Christian universalism and had justified his embrace of it on various occasions. As DeYoung starts the article

by addressing the question (DeYoung called it 'the rub') of whether Christian fiction needs to be doctrinally correct, he argues for a 'yes' in the final paragraph—'for Young is deliberately theological [in his storytelling]'.

The other critic Mohler quotes from is Timothy Beal, a religious studies professor. Beal's commentary on *The Shack,* 'Theology for Everyone' (2010), was published in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, a major news service for U.S. academic affairs. The article articulates the contentious theological ideas represented in the story and traces each of these fictional representations back to the academic sources where, according to Beal, the liberal theological thoughts by which Young was highly influenced, are from. Beal asserts that the attention *The Shack* has stirred among readers is not due to its literary merit but 'its theology, which is not your run-of-the-mill pop God-talk'. Drawing on what he witnessed at a book discussion meeting of around forty people at a Presbyterian church, Beal details the three main theological elements of *The Shack* that were unfamiliar to most of those present, whose theological backgrounds ranged from 'agnostic to liberal moderate to conservative evangelical'. The first was the metaphorical representation of God, which derived from metaphorical theology. The second was the concept that the persons of the Trinity commune in a nonhierarchical way; Beal links this with a liberal theological idea that considers the Trinity to be '*perichoresis*, a dynamic, intersubjective circle of interrelationship'. Finally, at the centre of Young's storytelling is universalism, which holds that all people, regardless of their personal faiths, are granted salvation by God's grace.

One can notice that Mohler and Beal share almost the same arguments in the above-mentioned articles. However, Beal's article, published in a secular media outlet, does not forthrightly describe these theological ideas as heretical or theologically deviant but merely identifies them as non-mainstream. According to Beal, the three theological perspectives reflected in Young's story all stem from 'liberal and radical academic theological discourse from the 1970s and 80s', which had a great impact on feminist and liberation theologies in the academic realm but did not play a significant role in shaping mainstream Christian theology. Beal further argues that *The Shack* is 'a real alternative, a serious theological countervoice' to the mainstream Christian theological tradition, and its popularity indicates readers' openness and aspirations for 'alternative theologies', though it may take decades for these non-mainstream elements to be recognised.

What Beal calls theological countervoice is heresy in Mohler's terms. While Beal appears to report and examine the existing objections to *The Shack* within the Christian community from a theological perspective, Mohler denounces the unconventional theology revealed in the novel while drawing on rigid doctrinal statements. I am therefore prompted to explore several questions: How are 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' constructed in the realm of evangelical Christianity? What are the elements that determine whether certain works can be identified as proper Christian literature? What factors govern the positions of certain works in the contemporary Christian literary polysystem? By referring to some more reviews produced within the U.S. Christian community,

where Christian literary activities are seen to be the most active in today's world, I shall answer these questions in the following two sub-sections.

7.2.2 The necessity of being 'just fiction'

Mohler's criticism of *The Shack* written from a strong critical standpoint demonstrates an authoritative Christian voice. He is just one of the many Christians who disapprove of the novel. Many other influential Christian leaders have also commented on it. I will introduce comments from Timothy Keller and Ravi Zacharias in the following.

Both Keller and Zacharias are evangelical Christian figures generally identified as more capable of relating to the post-modern society and delivering intellectual messages. Keller is an internationally known American pastor and apologist; he is known for founding the Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York and authoring *The New York Times* bestseller *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. Zacharias leads Ravi Zacharias International Ministries (RZIM) that feature intellectual Christian training. Unlike Mohler who believes that the reason behind the popularity of *The Shack* in the evangelical community is just the absence of basic theological understanding '—a failure even to understand the Gospel of Christ', both Zacharias and Keller acknowledge the positive effects *The Shack* has brought to many readers' exploration of life and faith issues as well as their journeys through suffering and pain. However, they still publicly express their concern about the novel.

Keller published his comment on *The Shack* in 2010, by which time *The*

Shack had already established its bestseller status and had been reviewed by many critics and readers. He claims at the beginning of the article that it was 'just some impressions' rather than a thorough review (Keller, 2010). He sums up four points he observed in the story of *The Shack*. First, man's misuse of free will leads to evil and suffering. Second, God allows the existence of evil for the sake of achieving some wonderful things that are beyond human understanding. Third, when we feel resentment towards God due to tragedies, we are taking the role as the 'Judge of the world and God', yet we are not eligible to perform such a job. Fourth, we should gain an 'eternal perspective' and see God's people enjoy bliss in the presence of God in the afterlife. All these aspects are regarded by Keller as theologically appropriate. His main concern is that those who are highly influenced by the fictional portrayals of God in *The Shack* will not be prepared for 'the far more multi-dimensional and complex God' depicted in the Bible. Keller further elaborates the biblical description of the holiness of God with a focus on His wrath against sin. This essential attribute of God, according to Keller, does not exist in the story of *The Shack*. Keller concludes by offering C. S. Lewis' depiction of Aslan the lion in *Narnia* as a contrast, and quotes how Aslan is described in the novel: 'Safe?...Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you'.

As for Zacharias, he categorises *The Shack* as allegorical writing, and remarks that the close distance between Young's portrayal of the divine figure and the original from the Bible has led to confusion (Esposa-hermosa, 2011).

Speaking from his own personal reading of the novel, Zacharias states that it blurred the images of God and Christ he had pictured in his mind and had learned in his study. The 'danger' of this, he opines, is that 'doctrinally if you come close to that which can become quite aberrant, you risk the pristine nature of the doctrine'.

Both Zacharias and Keller draw on Aslan in *Narnia* to illustrate their ideal model for imaginative depiction of God. It is unknown whether this is merely a coincidence, or one of them has been influenced by the other. Either way, this suggests the canonised status of *Narnia* in the contemporary Christian literary world.

The *Narnia* series is essentially a twentieth-century fantastical illustration of the Christian Gospel. Hence, it is understandable that critics refer to *Narnia* when commenting on other modern Christian-themed fiction works. However, one may ask how *Narnia* and *The Shack* relate to each other in the literary sense and what have prompted critics to make comparisons between them. To deal with this inquiry, I will look at 'I Am Not Who You Think I Am' (Jeffrey, 2010), published by *Books and Culture*, a bimonthly book review magazine published under the *Christianity Today* banner. Its subtitle 'Situating *The Shack* in a Christian literary landscape' seems to suggest a difference between its content and those of other commentaries that mainly employ a theological perspective.

Firstly, Jeffrey discusses Young's narrative strategy of engaging the fictional narrator 'Willie' to report what Mack, the protagonist of the story, has

told him. Jeffrey cites the declaration of Willie, whose name is a derivative of the author's first name, William: 'Whether some parts of it are actually true or not I won't be the judge, […] I would not be too surprised…if some factual errors and faulty rememberances are reflected in these pages'. She argues that Young's use of the three voices, Mack, Willie, and Paul, in the narratives is '[t]o create, presumably, both an impression of collective witness for those who "buy" *The Shack*'s theologically innovative message *and* a means of diffusing the criticism of those who don't' (Jeffrey, 2010, n.pag., italics in original). Jeffrey further points out that 'theophany', by which she means the demonstration of the presence of God, constitutes 'the explicit *raison d'être* of *The Shack*'. By pointing out Young's creation of the unprecedented representation of God and emphasising its uniqueness in the Christian literary realm, Jeffrey implies that Young's portrayal of the Triune God is a counter-tradition when it is compared with existing literary works that are regarded as Christian: 'there are no significant *Christian* literary precedents for Young's exuberant representation of the Godhead' (ibid., italics in original).

Two major Christian works Jeffrey refers to in her analysis of *The Shack* are *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Paradise Lost.* The former is used as a literary example of theophany, and the latter theodicy. Jeffrey mentions that many readers have found the parallel drawn by Peterson between *The Shack* and *Pilgrim's Progress* perplexing, 'especially those who recognize in *The Shack* a repudiation of every doctrinal assumption of Bunyan's Calvinism'. As discussed in the previous section, universal redemption is a main theme in *The*

Shack. The concept of universal redemption is indeed a total contrast to Calvinist convictions (see Section 6.4.3). When comparing *Paradise Lost* and *The Shack* in terms of theodicy, Jeffrey points out that while in *Paradise Lost* the source of evil is the Fall of humans when tempted by Satan, in *The Shack* sin is always unconditionally justified and 'absorbed into an all-encompassing, markedly feminine, love' (ibid.).

Although Jeffrey's critique seems to offer a less doctrinal reading, she revisits the substantial question raised in the text, which also serves as Young's intention of writing the novel: to alter readers' imagination of God. It should be no surprise to find that Jeffrey's article, written for a major evangelical media ministry, is still in essence 'Christian'. After going through several main threads of the novel with biblical references, she states: '*The Shack* is anything but "just a novel"' (ibid.). In fact, reading all the remarks mentioned in the above, one can conclude that for these evangelical Christian critics, there is a necessity for *The Shack* to be *just* an imaginary story and not taken seriously as a theological reflection. Paradoxically, some of them apparently cannot take the *story* lightly themselves. In the next section, I will apply the concept of 'canonicity' in polysystem theory to look into this phenomenon.

7.2.3 The non-negotiable canonicity

Similar to Christian leaders who are concerned about the confusion *The Shack* may bring to its readers' theological understanding, Jeffrey suggests readers distinguish *The Shack* from Christian literary works that are grounded

in biblical teachings. Indeed, both *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Paradise Lost* are widely regarded as prime examples of 'real' Christian literature. In other words, these two works written in the seventeenth century are canonised in the Anglophone Christian literary system.

If we bring *Narnia* into discussion here, we will find that canonisation is an inevitable phenomenon in the Christian literary (poly)system. Also, what should be emphasised here is that these highly acclaimed representatives of 'Christian literature' have been primarised among other fiction works within the Christian literary (poly)system mainly because of their Christianness. Indeed, they all bear the potential of spiritual cultivation, but it should not be neglected that they have different characteristics. Even *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Paradise Lost*, although both published in the seventeenth century, would be difficult to compare due to their differences in genre, style, readership, and so on. The epic poem *Paradise Lost* is a highly erudite and intellectual vision of the biblical story, whereas *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a Christian allegory written in prose. *The Pilgrim's Progress* earned popularity among general readers, but *Paradise Lost*, although far more highly regarded as literature, never had popular appeal.

These works canonised within the Anglophone Christian literary system not only hold significant status in the world of Anglophone Christian literature but also serve as the standard for critics to refer to when evaluating other Christian-themed works. Of course, this process of canonisation exists in every literary system. In the Christian context, canonisation represents itself as part

of church groups' efforts to consolidate the Christian literary and cultural system. This again corresponds to the main argument of this study.

In comparing *Pilgrim's Progress* with *The Shack*, Jeffrey points out the contrast in the approaches towards religion that these two novels employ. Jeffrey lists the 'dead nouns' Young has ascribed to religion: 'law', 'fear', 'judgment', 'rules', 'power', 'expectations', and particularly 'performance'. On the contrary, Bunyan in his 'anti-Catholic satire' responds to 'what he sees as false religion with sincere "biblical" faith' (Jeffrey, 2010, emphasis in original). In this sense, we can describe Young's writing as an attempt to contend with the existing rigid religious system.

In fact, the publication of *The Shack* can be regarded as a systemic operation itself. Jeffrey mentions two things about *The Shack* that should 'make any Christian uncomfortable' (ibid.). First, Young's benediction to his readers (which is in his acknowledgements of *The Shack)* is 'that the abiding presence of Papa, Jesus and Sarayu will fill up your inside emptiness with joy unspeakable and full of glory'. Second, 'The Missy Project' was launched to encourage its readers to publicise the novel in different ways, such as giving the books to friends as gifts, writing a book review and publishing it online, talking about the book on different platforms, etc. This exemplifies Even-Zohar's idea that consumers' participation in the literary activities is an integral part of a literary system. If we see *The Shack* forms a sub-system within the U.S. Christian literary system, this sub-system revolving around the global bestseller (and its film adaptation) can thus be considered to pose a

danger to the canonised sub-system within the same system.

However, judging by all the oppositional voices within the Christian community against *The Shack*, it is foreseeable that the novel will not become canonised within the U.S. Christian literary system. This is because many elements of its story do not cohere with the biblical norms that are considered unchallengeable by the institution within the system. The ending of Jeffrey's article well illustrates this:

> *The Shack*'s 'I am not who you think I am' also revises the theophanic declaration itself: 'I am that I am'. As such, it problematises the self-revelation of God at the heart of the Old Testament and of Jesus, the incarnate 'I Am', at the heart of the New. We are left, then—however diverting we find Papa, Jesus, and Sarayu—with a question memorably posed by that first and subtlest of inquisitors (Genesis 3): 'Is God who you think He is?' To which, in Christian terms, we have only ever been able to turn to one source for the answer.

This statement suggests that the Bible is the prime canon that holds the ultimate canonicity for Christian literature. Texts such as *Paradise Lost*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Narnia* tales are canonised within the Anglophone Christian literary system because their contents cohere with the biblical norms.

7.2.4 The Bible as the model provider

Through the lens of polysystem theory, when a text or model has canonicity, it is considered to be at the centre of the literary (or cultural) system.

For Even-Zohar, this generates two kinds of strata: the 'constant stratum' and the 'changing stratum'. The former applies to existing texts and points towards the past, and the latter is future-oriented since it concerns the models guiding cultural production (Shavit, 1991 cited in Codde, 2003, p.103).

Codde (2003), in elaborating Even-Zohar's idea of canonicity, refers to Sheffy's (1990) comment: while 'the constant stratum in the canon (or the centre of the literary system)' only applies to the cases of texts, one should be aware of the existence of canonised repertoires or models that will always retain their literary value (Codde, 2003, p.103). Canonised models may not be equivalent to central models since the canonised models 'are fixed and durable; they endure in our literary consciousness or, at least, they seem to be much less sensitive to transitions of centre and periphery' (Sheffy, 1990, p.517). That is to say, canonised items that hold high prestige are not necessarily in the central position within a literary system since they may not conform to the literary norms that predominate during the particular period and cannot offer 'active models' for creating new texts (ibid.). Sheffy uses the Shakespearean sonnet to illustrate her point: it undoubtedly enjoys the status as canon, even in situations where it does not provide the literary system of certain times with norms or models for text production.

Therefore, Codde suggests that 'canonised' be used for texts or models that have high cultural prestige, and 'central' for texts or models that are influential in terms of text production in a literary system during a certain period of time. As a consequence, 'dynamic canonicity' proposed in

polysystem theory would not be applicable to influential models or repertoires; rather, what we have seen is 'dynamic centrality' (p.104).

Codde also points out that Even-Zohar himself addresses the concepts of '*canonical* texts' and '*canonised* models', in order to distinguish between texts of high cultural status and texts as 'a potential set of instructions' (Even-Zohar, 1990 cited in Codde, 2003, p.104). It is an ideal for every text producer to see their text become canonised as a model to be followed. However, once a model moves from the centre to the periphery, the author needs to seek new models. Otherwise, the author's status would decline, although the text itself remains prestigious. This again tells us that 'the dynamics in the literary system operate through models, rather than through individual texts' (p.104).

There is no fixed definition given to 'model' in polysystem theory. What one can find in Even-Zohar's explanation is that on some occasions he uses 'property', 'feature', and 'norms' as qualities of his 'model' (1990b, p.15). Although the concept of 'model' seems to be self-explanatory, one may still wonder what 'model' exactly denotes in a certain literary context. When Sheffy uses the Shakespeare sonnet as an example to argue that a text can be canonised but does not necessarily still offer the model that is at the central position of a literary system, we see that a model can mean the 'form'. On the other hand, it also implies that what 'model' exactly refers to can vary from one circumstance to another.

It would be reasonable for us to regard 'model' as part of 'repertoire'.
In the context of this study, 'model' can particularly refer to motifs and

representations in literary works. Within the Christian literary (poly)system, the Bible is recognised as the text carrying the canonised model which is always located at the centre of the (poly)system. The above theoretical discussion by Codde has led us to reflect on Even-Zohar's original conceptulisation of 'canonicity' and the relation between it and 'centrality'. If one applies Codde's theoretical suggestion to speak of the Christian literary (poly)system, the Bible can be described as its primary canonical text offering the ultimate canonised model that demonstrates both 'dynamic canonicity' (as it is permanently canonised) and 'dynamic centrality' (as it is considered the greatest and never-changing standard of judgment to approach literary works). I would like to further the theoretical discussion through examining *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Paradise Lost* with Sheffy's and Codde's differentiation between canonicity and centrality. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in the Christian sense, has offered a canonised model for modern Christian literature, and the model it provides is allegory. Allegorical form has still been adopted by Christian fiction authors in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. *The Pilgrim's Progress* has been frequently mentioned by Christian literary critics who speak of its significance within the Anglophone Christian literary system (and even the globalised Christian literary polysystem since it has been translated into many languages). Therefore, it can be described as providing a model that is both canonised and central within the system, although its status can never be superior to the Bible, the ultimate canon for Christian literature that provides models (e.g. message, form, language, etc.) for all types of Christian writings.

While usually espoused for its religious conspicuous doctrinal message in the Christian world, *The Pilgrim's Progress* is also highly esteemed for its literary value in the mainstream literary realm (which might be surprising to some). It ranks the very first on *The Guardian*'s list of 'The 100 Best Novels in English' for being 'the ultimate English classic' that has an unusual number of editions. Its status is compared to the Bible for 'the range of its readership, or its influence on writers as diverse as William Thackeray, Charlotte Bronte, Mark Twain, CS Lewis, John Steinbeck and even Enid Blyton' (McCrum, 2013).

In contrast, *Paradise Lost*, a highly esteemed work of English literature, represents a different case whose models are canonised but not central within both the Anglophone Christian and non-Christian literary systems. In the Christian context, it is best known for its aesthetic merit, and its form, the long epic poem, is rarely adopted by Christian writers. It is normally not introduced as a tool for Christian teaching either. In the non-Christian literary context, while *Paradise Lost* still appeals to elite readers nowadays, religious poetry is no longer a common genre in the modern literary world.

However, as shown in both cases of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Paradise Lost*, they have gained status in the Christian literary world because they meet the biblical norms offered by the ultimate model provider, the Bible, within the Christian literary polysystem. This is a prerequisite for recognition in the Christian literary world. For some, *The Shack* does not meet such a prerequisite.

7.2.5 System dynamics

Considering the popularity of *The Shack* and several leading evangelical figures' attempts to peripheralise the novel within the Anglophone Christian literary system, we see the manifestation of the following viewpoint of Even-Zohar:

> [T]he center of the whole polysystem is identical with the most prestigious canonized repertoire. Thus, it is the group which governs the polysystem that ultimately determines the canonicity of a certain repertoire. Once canonicity has been determined, such a group either adheres to the properties canonized by it or alters the repertoire of canonized properties in order to maintain control.
>
> (1997b, p.8)

As the Bible is regarded as the authoritative Word of God in Christianity, the repertoire formed by it, which is at the centre of the polysystem, is also considered unchallengeable and unamendable from the Christian governing group's perspective.

Nevertheless, it is essential to recognise that the extreme commercial success of *The Shack* shows that there is a demand for it. This demand is something neither the secular nor the Christian publishers were able to predict, thus the manuscript was rejected by both mainstream and Christian publishers and eventually was self-published. The demand is from a certain group of people who are seeking for a less rigid set of religious messages that offers a

'fluid and dynamic' spiritual realisation.[57] It also corresponds to what Beal (2010) calls 'an openness, even a hunger, for alternative theologies'. In the functional aspect, *The Shack* gives guidance for readers to explore answers to suffering and evil in real life and cope with their own grief. Importantly, the novel has a contemporary and realistic setting. The contemporariness distinguishes the novel from other Christian classics mentioned in the above.

According to Even-Zohar (1997b, p.7), '[t]he normative repertoires of any activity would very likely stagnate after a certain time if not for competition from non-normative challengers', and it is due to the stimulation (or, 'pressures') from the latter on the canonised system that 'the evolution of the "system"' may occur. Only through this refinement can the system be preserved. Otherwise, the original canonised activity may gradually become 'petrified'. This petrification poses dangers to the system because it then becomes incapable of fulfilling the shifting requirements of the society in which it operates.

Judging by the intense struggle between the sub-system of *The Shack* and the prestigious sub-system at the centre of the U.S. Christian literary system, the U.S. Christian literary system is certainly not a petrified system. However, the popularity of *The Shack* somehow demonstrates that there is a specific need of society that the repertoire officially approved by Christian institution cannot meet. The bestselling status *The Shack* has enjoyed in many different countries

[57] Young has once said, 'I have a lot of freedom by knowing that you really experience God in relationships….It's fluid and dynamic, not cemented into an institution with a concrete foundation' (Grossman, 2008b).

further indicates that this is a global phenomenon. As the canonised Christian literary works cannot satisfy the twenty-first century readers' yearning for 'Christian novels' like *The Shack* that can resonate well with them, one would wonder, apart from boycotting *The Shack*, how the governing group of the canonised Christian repertoire are going to deal with this demand?

7.3 The popularity of *The Shack* as a representation of the American evangelical culture

The Shack can be seen as a cultural phenomenon born out of American evangelicalism. This can be further illustrated by the contrast between the reception of it in the U.K. and that in the U.S. The scarcity of commentaries on *The Shack* produced in the U.K. indicates the sparse interest British critics have in the novel and perhaps also the relative unfamiliarity of *The Shack* to British readers. In the following, I will review some paratextual materials that can shed some light on how *The Shack* has been perceived in the U.K.

In his review written for *The Guardian*, Sutherland (2008) calls *The Shack* 'America's self-publishing "miracle"'. For him, the success of *The Shack* does not necessarily indicate a 'portent' for literary talents to 'find a way around the cumbersome apparatus of the publishing industry'. Sutherland describes the storyline of *The Shack* as 'simple'. He further comments that Young is different from those prestigious writers who have self-published and 'supply a well-rounded literary education', such as Mark Twain, D.H. Lawrence, Anaïs Nin, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Margaret Atwood, etc.

It is not surprising that Sutherland, as an English literature professor, has such a viewpoint on *The Shack*. Sutherland also mentions that Christian fiction is commonly seen to occupy a larger section than science fiction in U.S. bookshops. By doing so, he contextualises the popularity of *The Shack* and introduces to his U.K. readers the significance scale of the Christian fiction market in the U.S.

Although the attention *The Shack* has attracted in the U.K. is not as much as it has received in the U.S., it has still brought some stimulation to the reading public and Christian groups 'in the relatively secular U.K.' (Coulter, 2009, p.3). In February 2009, seven months after it was first published in the U.K., *The Shack* ranked twenty-fourth in terms of sales among all books purchased from Waterstone and eighteenth on Amazon.co.uk (ibid.). 600,000 copies had already been sold in the U.K. when Young's second novel *Cross Roads* was published (Scott, 2012). Paul Coulter, a Bible college lecturer, published an online brochure, *Exploring 'The Shack'*, on the Christian website bethinking.org. Bethinking.org is operated by Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF), a UK-based organisation through which Christian Unions at higher education institutions nationwide connect with each other. This thirty-six-page brochure provides responses to different theological themes reflected in the story of *The Shack*, such as suffering, the character of God, human freedom and choice, sin and judgment, the cross, and salvation.

The brochure includes a chapter, 'An Architect's Analysis: What genre of literature does it represent?', in which Coulter first explores definitions of

different descriptions concerning the genre of the book (i.e. fiction, novel, metaphor, allegory, theology, and autobiographical) and then concludes: 'It is potentially misleading to call it either fiction or a novel. We may, instead, classify it as **a semi-fictional, semi-allegorical tale with theological themes and autobiographical elements**' (p.9, emphasis in original). For Coulter, *The Shack* is 'firmly orthodox in a number of important respects' but contains 'several theological weaknesses' (pp.33-34). Similar to many other Christian leaders and educators, Coulter regards *The Shack* as 'a potentially dangerous book', particularly in its ability to emotionally resonate with its readers in a powerful way that would prevent them from practicing theological discernment (ibid.). Here, one can notice a pattern of Christian criticism similar to what has been observed in the U.S. context.

When it comes to the film adaptation, *The Shack* is described as 'the latest faith-based film that failed to replicate US success in the secular UK market' in *The Guardian*'s Box Office Analysis (Gant, 2017). While the film (or, 'the mystical drama', in Gant's words) had earned $57 million at the U.S. box office, it only debuted with £97,000 across the U.K., averaging £575 from each of the 168 cinemas that showed the movie. (The top three countries with the most ticket sales for *The Shack* outside the U.S. were Brazil, Mexico, and Germany.) In addition, *The Guardian*'s film critic Peter Bradshaw (2017) criticises *The Shack* as 'a wet weekend at Christian Disneyland', and its story 'literal, righteously pedagogic and unsubtle—with some truly silly stuff about walking on water'.

The case of *The Shack* demonstrates a general difference between the U.K. and the U.S. in terms of the reception of contemporary faith-based cultural products. It also highlights the fact that the popularity of Christian novels that mainly appeal to evangelical readers, as presented in Section 4.4, is a specifically American phenomenon.

7.4 The global bestseller *The Shack* in Taiwan

The traditional Chinese character edition of *The Shack, Xiaowu*, was published by Solo Press (寂寞出版社) under The Eurasian Publishing Group (圓神出版集團), one of the largest publishers in Taiwan. *Xiaowu* was published in June 2009 and was ranked fifth on Eslite Bookstore's (誠品書店) bestseller list for all books sold through all its branch stores in Taiwan in 2009. Eslite's bestseller list is an important reference that indicates the popularity of *Xiaowu* since Eslite is one of the leading retail bookstore chains across Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China. Its Dunnan (敦南) branch, which started opening twenty-four hours in 2009, was among the seventeen bookstores that were selected as World's Coolest Bookstores by CNN in 2015 (Cha, 2015). Like many other global bestsellers, *Xiaowu* and its original share the same book cover design. Adopting the same book cover design from the original can be seen in many cases of translated global bestsellers in Taiwan.

In the printed volume of *Xiaowo*, Solo Press lists the endorsers of the original English version and also several local celebrities who endorse *Xiaowo*. Since these Taiwan-based endorsers include both Christians and non-Christians,

different cultural elements, whether religious or secular, can be observed in their commentaries or introductions. At the beginning of the book, several short comments by cultural celebrities and general readers from both Taiwan and overseas are presented. Solo Press' inclusion of general readers' comments illustrates its attempt to promote *Xiaowo* as 'a novel for everybody'. In Taiwan, such a marketing strategy can be commonly seen in cases where the books are produced to target a wide general readership.

Following this there are four introductory articles, three of which are written by Taiwanese Christian critics. While two of the critics, Peng Huei-hsian（彭蕙仙）and Su Hsuan-huei（蘇絢慧）, draw on the story of Job in the Bible and other Christian messages to introduce the novel, they also attempt to emphasise the religiously neutral elements of the story. Peng, a former journalist and newspaper editor, writes:

> Although the Christian messages in the novel are rather obvious, the author's deep reflection on various relationships and incidents in life are in fact interreligious. Rather, we should probably say that *this novel provides a clear, credible, sincere and pleasing response to the loneliness, confusion, anger and crying amidst human suffering*' (p.15, emphasis in original).

Su, a hospital-based counsellor, gives her article the title 'Go Back to Your Shack, Where You Will Find Love and Healing', which clearly corresponds to Young's use of the shack as a metaphor for the place where each individual's brokenness and sorrow have been secretly stored.

Another introductory article included in the book is written by Lu Cheng-Ta (呂政達), the chief editor of *Living Psychology* (張老師月刊), a leading magazine of psychological health issues in Taiwan. As a literary writer and psychologist, Lu employs several theories in his reading of *Xiaowu*. A noticeable feature of Lu's article is that he demonstrates a reading through the psychotherapeutic lens. 'Besides being immersed in popular Christian discourse, which appeared in works such as *Conversations with God* and *The Disappearance of the Universe*, *The Shack* presents a typical psychotherapeutic process through the [protagonist's] illusion of God's presence' (p.22).[58] Lu situates the novel within the debate between psychological science and theistic religions over whether God made men according to His image or men created God based on their imagination of a perfect deity. In response to this theme for interpretation, Lu addresses theories of Sigmund Freud, Edmund Husserl, and Abraham Maslow. The title of Lu's article, 'As Happy as Gods', is derived from Maslow's humanistic psychology that stresses the importance for psychotherapists of regarding their clients in a positive and emphatic way without negative judgments. God, in this sense, is referred to as the role model for psychotherapists, according to Lu's quote from Maslow. Lu urges the readers to extend this concept in reading Young's portrayal of Papa, Jesus, and Sarayu in the novel, thus to realise that 'the happiness of God hides in the

[58] The first volume of N. D. Walsch's book series *Conversations with God* was published in 1995, and became *The New York Times* bestseller. *The Disappearance of the Universe: Straight Talk About Illusions, Past Lives, Religion, Sex, Politics, and the Miracles of Forgiveness* (2004) narrates the author G. R. Renard's encounter and conversations with two 'ascended masters'. Both *Conversations with God* and *The Disappearance of the Universe* have been translated into Chinese and published in Taiwan. While Lu categorises them as 'Christian', these works are, in fact, identified by Christian churches as non-Christian New Age self-help books.

mundane and trivial things in daily life' (p.24).

While Lu draws on a humanistic perspective to introduce the novel, the title of his article adopts a polytheistic viewpoint, which is embedded in Taiwanese culture. Lu uses *shenmin* (神明), a term denoting 'gods' in Taiwanese tradition, in the title. *Shenmin* has a plural sense, and it has never been used to solely refer to the Christian God. Hence, the English translation of the title would be 'As happy as gods' instead of 'As happy as God'. Since Lu uses *shen*, the term used to address any god in any religion, it cannot be certain whether, in the article, he deliberately puts *shenmin* instead of *shen* in the title. However, Lu's article does serve as an example of a non-Christian introduction to *The Shack* in the Taiwanese context. To some degree, this strategy of de-Christianisation is important for promoting Christian works in Taiwan's mainstream book market.

7.4.1 *The Shack* as an inspirational novel in Taiwan

Xiaowu is placed in the section 'heartwarming/therapeutic novels' (溫馨/療癒小說) on Books.com.tw (博客來網路書店), the largest online book retailer in Taiwan. In fact, to be more precise, it can be classified as 'inspirational literature' (勵志文學) according to the common genre categorisation in the Taiwan book market. There is no exact definition of 'inspirational literature', and it may have varied meanings in different contexts.

According to The Book Genre Dictionary, a website set up by Mark Malatesta, who introduces himself as a former literary agent of bestselling

authors, ‘inspirational fiction’ books ‘contain stories of people who overcome adversity or reach new levels of understanding that inspire and encourage the reader to do the same’ (Malatesta, 2014). Markedly, in the U.S. context, ‘inspirational fiction’ is usually linked to ‘religious fiction’, and the two are sometimes even interchangeable. For example, Amazon.com puts ‘Religious & Inspirational Fiction’ as a sub-category under ‘Literature and Fiction’ in its categorisation of books, and most of the books in this sub-category are essentially Christian-themed works. Most of the examples Malatesta lists as ‘inspirational fiction’ books contain obvious Christian elements. *The Shack* and *The Pilgrim’s Progress* are both included.

In Taiwan, however, ‘inspirational literature’ does not represent ‘religious literature’ although they do overlap. Generally speaking, inspirational literature as a genre in Taiwan includes both fiction and non-fiction narratives with motivational messages that can encourage readers and help them improve their lives. In some sense, inspirational literature books share some features with self-help books. Inspirational literature occupies a significant position in Taiwan’s mass book market, yet it has received little scholarly attention. As Chi Ta-wei (紀大偉) (2012, p.88) comments, ‘inspirational literature is often too commercialised to be respected in academe’. These books are not considered ‘real’ literary works but fall into the category of popular literature. *The Shack*, therefore, represents a foreign example of inspirational literature in the Taiwanese context.

I would like to explore the effect of the introduction of *The Shack* as an

inspirational novel on the general Taiwanese readers. In order to do so, I will look at some readers' reviews on *The Shack* posted on Books.com.tw. As of March 2018, there have been thirty-five readers commenting on the novel on the website. Twenty-nine of them marked the novel as 'Good', three 'Fair', and the remaining three 'Bad'. Among the reviewers who gave positive feedback in the 'Good' group, some mentioned their initial reluctance to continue reading the whole book when they found that the novel contains very explicit religious themes. However, eventually they found the story inspiring and helpful for their reflections on life, relationships, trials, etc. Meanwhile, some of these reviewers, as professing Christians, recommended the book with evangelistic enthusiasm and urged people to know more about Christian faith through *The Shack*.

From these Taiwanese readers' responses, one can witness how universal moral teachings, whether being recognised as Christian or not, in the novel can easily resonate with the local culture. The most common theme mentioned by these Taiwanese readers is forgiveness. For example, a Christian reviewer brought up an incident that had happened in Taiwan: an arsonist who caused sixteen deaths in 1992 was converted to Christianity due to the forgiveness offered by the sister of a victim. The reviewer concluded by quoting *The Gospel of Matthew* 6:14 'For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you' (Red Dragonfly of Love [愛的紅蜻蜓], 2009).

Another reviewer with the screen name 'Mark's Imagination Space'

(Mark 的幻想空間, 2009), as a self-claimed religiously neutral person, began by stating that he was prompted to read the novel because it was known as the top U.S. bestseller in 2008. While admitting his inability to fully understand the Christian messages in the novel, the reviewer stated that the most valuable lesson he learned from the story was forgiveness. The reviewer further stated that if he had biblical knowledge he might have been able to grasp these messages. He also commented that Christian readers might be able to find 'satisfaction and healing' through the novel. However, he did not think that non-Christian readers would want to convert to Christianity after reading it. This review exemplifies the impact of U.S. bestseller lists on readers in Taiwan, which corresponds to what I have presented in Section 3.2.

A review posted by a reader whose screen name was 'Confucius' (2010) mentioned '*Wen yi zai dao*' (文以載道), a Chinese literary tradition that contends 'literature serves a vehicle to convey moral doctrines'. In viewing the novel as allegorical writing, the reviewer applauded Young's storytelling skill but disagreed with how tragedy and forgiveness are treated in the novel. From the reviewer's perspective, the ending where Mack finds Missy's body through God's guidance is questionable because it seems to imply two things. First, God breaks His own principle of 'non-intervention [into the natural realm]' stated previously in the novel; second, Mack's trust in God eventually brings him rewards from God. 'Mack's choice of "trusting God, and forgiving the murderer" is abrupt and unbelievable', noted the reviewer. The review was concluded with a famous traditional Chinese saying commonly misquoted and

misinterpreted: '*Tien di bu ren*' (天地不仁) from Laozi's *Dao De Jing.* The full sentence of this saying is *Tien di bu ren, yi wan wu wei chu go* (天地不仁，以萬物為芻狗), which means 'Heaven and Earth are impartial. They regard all things as straw dogs'. It suggests that every creation is treated equally by the supreme power. The common misunderstanding mainly centres on the word *ren* (仁), which means benevolence. As *bu* denotes 'not', the saying has thus been misconceived as 'Heaven and Earth are not benevolent' by many people. Apparently, the reviewer referred to this wrong interpretation when quoting *Tien di bu ren* to support the idea that Young's portrayal of the protagonist's faith in God is in essence not convincing.

Among the three reviewers who considered *The Shack* 'Fair', two stated that the novel might be found to resonate among Christian readers. All three negative responses criticised the novel for being too preachy. None of these comments mentioned anything about the untraditional Christian imaginative elements in Young's storytelling. Nor did any of them make comments about the translation itself.

The popularity of *The Shack* in Taiwan is certainly not fortuitous since it possesses two features that usually contribute to a work being a bestseller in Taiwan's book market. First, it is a translated novel with a storyline that can easily appeal to general readers in Taiwan. Second, it belongs to 'religion and motivation', one of the three major book genres that Taiwan's book market focuses on (Trentacosti, 2015). It would be reasonable to conclude that the motivational and self-help elements of *The Shack* have made it transcend

cultural boundaries and gain commercial success in Taiwan. Its route of attracting attention in Taiwan is, indeed, different from that in the U.S. where Christian fiction enjoys a wide readership.

7.4.2 *The Shack* as a Christian novel in Taiwan

In June 2008, *The China Times*, one of the four major newspapers in Taiwan, published a short news story featuring the surprising best-seller status of *The Shack.* Calling *The Shack* 'a Christian novel', the article further introduces 'Christian novels' as a fiction genre 'written about the world from a Christian perspective, usually with positive endings', which has been established as part of the literary tradition of North America. The North American Christian literary community is described as separate from the mainstream literary world, with distinct authors, publishers, bookshops, and even literary awards. Accordingly, *The Shack* is regarded as a 'breakthrough' in Christian novels due to its success in the mainstream book market (*The China Times*, 2008).[59]

This article on *The Shack* was released by *The China Times* eleven months before its traditional Chinese character edition was published in Taiwan. The article does not mention the controversies caused by its unconventional theological portrayals. It even mistakes Papa for the protagonist whose daughter is murdered. As presented previously, those readers' reviews on Books.com.tw show the absence of comments on

[59] This article is no longer available on *The China Times* website, but still can be accessed through a weblog at the link provided in the reference list.

theological messages in *The Shack*. Although the novel was rather popular after its translation was published in Taiwan, I cannot find any responses from the Taiwanese Christian community with regard to the unbiblical elements of the novel. Moreover, none of the English-language publications criticising *The Shack* (mentioned in Section 7.2) have been introduced into Taiwan.

It was not until the release of the film in 2017 that Christian media in Taiwan published stories about *The Shack*. Some churches in Taiwan held evangelistic events surrounding the film, which, as we have seen in the case of *Narnia*, is a common strategy for churches to promote Christianity. In a news report in *The Chinese Christian Tribune*, *The Shack* is described as having content that is incompatible with biblical teachings, but it still attracted many Christians due to the inspirational messages that can help people reflect on their own lives. A Taiwanese pastor was quoted as encouraging the audience to 'have conversations with God' when walking through trials and suffering (He, 2017).

Generally speaking, Taiwanese church groups did not respond to *The Shack* as actively as their counterparts did in the U.S. This is a reflection of the relatively small scale of the Taiwanese Christian literary system. Such a contrast also demonstrates the fluidity of 'Christian fiction' as a genre in different cultural contexts. While many debates over whether *The Shack* should be categorised as a (proper) Christian novel have arisen in its source context, the novel has appeared as a Christian work in Taiwan without obvious controversies.

7.5 The language of a faithful translator

In the chapter on *Gilead*, I touched upon how the Mandarin *UV* serves as a reference for proper Christian language in Chinese. This has become even more evident in the case of *The Shack*. The standardisation of terminology in Chinese Protestantism is one of the significant outcomes of the canonisation of the Mandarin *UV*. In some sense, this phenomenon has fulfilled the missionary translators' original aim to launch the *Union Version* project as 'a common Bible translation' in nineteenth-century China (Zetzsche, 1999, p.22). This section sets out to unravel the link between the canonisation of the Mandarin *UV* and some translation phenomena observed in the case of *The Shack*.

7.5.1 *Xiaowu* vs. *Pengwu*

Although *Xiaowu* targets mainstream readers, its translator Chen, according to her introduction in the book, is a self-proclaimed 'blessed Christian'. Her translation contains a significant number of phrases that specifically belong to Chinese Protestant terminology — even in places where the original author did not include overt biblical expressions. These phrases were clearly shaped by the Mandarin *UV* since it is the predominant Bible translation used in contemporary Taiwan.

In contrast, *Xiaowu*'s simplified Chinese counterpart *Pengwu* 棚屋(2010) published in China represents the opposite with regard to the Christianisation of the text. Both 'xiaowu' and 'pengwu' mean 'a shack', yet the term 'pengwu'

is not commonly used in Taiwan, which is manifested in its absence in the online dictionary published by Taiwan's Ministry of Education. This section will highlight some of the most visible contrasts between these two Chinese translations. In pointing out ways in which these two translations vary, I intend to explore how far the translation of Christian-themed texts into the Chinese language has been conditioned on the linguistic level by the Mandarin *UV*.

In Section 7.5.2, drawing on the response obtained from my online conversation with Chen, I will also show how a Christian translator's own 'Christianised' language in her translation may be viewed as an *unintended product* resulting from their personal involvement in Christianity (Liu, 2019). I only interviewed Chen because I could not obtain the other translator Zhu Ziyi's (朱子仪) contact details. As this discussion mainly draws on Chen's Christianised translation of *The Shack* to represent the link between the authoritativeness of the Mandarin *UV* and Christian translators' language use, the answers I received from the Christian translator Chen should be sufficient for this study.

It can be argued that the translators' familiarity with Christian terminology certainly affected their language use. *Pengwu*'s translator Zhu writes in her Afterword that when translating the novel she frequently referred to the Bible her grandmother left her and the Chinese-English Bible her father gave her. However, there is no mention of Zhu's religious identity, while *Xiaowu*'s translator Chen is Christian.

The differences between what appears in the Christianised *Xiaowu* and the

less Christianised *Pengwu* can be categorised into three types: (1) instances where biblical allusions in the original are retained in *Xiaowu* but not in *Pengwu*; (2) instances where the biblical references are translated in accord with existing Christian terminology in *Xiaowu* but not in *Pengwu*; and finally, and perhaps most interestingly, (3) instances where the expression in the original does not contain Christian jargon yet is rendered with specific diction moulded by the Mandarin *UV* in *Xiaowu*. Each pair of examples under these different categories is presented in parallel with the ST. For the second and third categories, I also examine whether the particular Christian expressions found in *Xiaowu* also exist in the other three Mandarin Bible translations, which Chong (2008) has mentioned as versions that, when compared with other existing Chinese Bible translations, now occupy relatively influential positions: Lu Chen-Chung's translation (hereafter Lu's version), *Today's Chinese Version* (hereafter *TCV*), and the *Chinese New Version* (hereafter *CNV*).

Category 1: Christian allusions retained in *Xiaowu* but not in *Pengwu*

Example 1

The Shack: We're not justifying it. We are redeeming it. (127)

Xiaowu: 我們不是在證明，而是在救贖。 (159)

(Back translation: We are not justifying it. We are saving and atoning for it.)

Pengwu: 我们不是要证明，我们要付诸行动。(141)

(Back translation: We are not justifying it. We are putting it into action.)

‘It’ in the sentence refers to the existence of evil. The sentence is extracted from Papa’s answer to Mack’s doubt about the three-in-one God’s love for those who suffer in the world. Papa’s response to Mack’s question about evil, pain, and suffering is that everything happens according to their good purpose so that every human being can build a ‘face-to-face relationship’ with them (p.124). Papa also reassures Mack that they are not evil and they will use every human choice to reach ‘the ultimate good and the most loving outcome’ (p.125).

The difference between the two Chinese versions lies in the translators’ renditions of the verb ‘redeem’. In *Xiaowu* it is translated as 救贖 (*jiushu*), meaning ‘to save and atone for sins and mistakes’, which indeed has a religious connotation. In *Pengwu* the translation 付诸行动 (*fu zhu xingdong*) means ‘to put it into action’. Apparently the translator of *Pengwu* adopts the definition ‘to carry out a promise’ for the verb ‘redeem’ in the passage. Since the conversation is about what Papa, Sarayu and Jesus can do in the midst of affliction and suffering, and has explicit Christian content, the translation in *Xiaowu* should be closer to what the original author means.

Example 2

The Shack: He believed, in his head at least, that God was a Spirit, neither male or female,[…].(93)

Xiaowu: 至少他的理智相信：上帝是個「靈」，既非男也非女，[·····]。(121)

(Back translation: At least in his head he believed: God is a ‘Spirit’, neither

male nor female, […].)

Pengwu: 至少在理智上，他相信上帝是一种精神，既不是男人也不是女人。 (102)

(Back translation: At least in his head, he believed God is a kind of spirit, neither male nor female.)

This sentence is about Mack's presumption about God before encountering Papa in the story. The translation of 'Spirit' in *Xiaowu* 靈 (*ling*) is the Chinese equivalent of 'Spirit' appearing in the ST, which denotes the form of existence beyond the physical realm. It is the exact word used for 'spirit' in the Chinese translation of the well-known Bible verse: "God is *spirit*, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). In *Pengwu* the translation of 'a spirit' is 一种精神 (*yizhong jingshen*), "a kind of a spirit". *Jingshen*, the 'spirit' in Zhu's translation, represents 'spiritual consciousness' rather than *ling*.

Category 2: Biblical references translated according to Christian terminology in *Xiaowu* but not in *Pengwu*

Example 1

The Shack: They find their identity and worth in their brokenness […].(p.189)

Xiaowu: 他們[·····]在破碎中找到自己的身份和價值[·····]。(p.232)

(Back translation: They[…]find their identity and worth in their brokenness[…].)

Pengwu: 他们在跟上帝的离异中找到了自己的身份和价值[·····]。(p.217)

(Back translation: They find their identity and worth in their departure from God […].)

Posui in Mandarin Protestant terminology can be seen in the Mandarin *UV*'s translation of Psalm 31:12, whose English translation is 'I am forgotten as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery'. *Posui* can also be found in Lu's version, *TCV* and the *NCV*, although the term is not always applied to the same verses in these versions.

This example is extracted from Papa's description of people who keep themselves away from God. The concept of men's 'brokenness' is constantly mentioned in Christian teachings. It is mostly linked with the Christian belief that people are 'damaged' due their sins, and translated as 破碎 (*posui*) in Mandarin Protestant terminology. *Xiaowu* uses this exact term. However, in *Pengwu* it is translated as 跟上帝的离异 (*gen shangdi de liyi*): 'the departure from God'. On the theological level, this perhaps should not be considered as a mistranslation but merely a non-standard Christian phrase.

Example 2

The Shack: Submission is not about authority and it is not obedience; it is all about relationships of love and respect. In fact, we are submitted to you in the same way. (p.145)

Xiaowu: 順服無關乎權柄，也不是服從，一切都是關乎愛與尊重的關係。事實上，我們也用同樣的方式順服你。(p.180)

(Back translation: Submission is not about authority, and it is not obedience. It

is all about relationships of love and respect. In fact, we submit to you in the same way.)

Pengwu: 恭顺与权威无关，它不是顺从，它只跟爱和尊重相关。事实上，我们对你们也同样恭顺。(p.165)

(Back translation: Humble submission is not about authority, and it is not obedience. It is only about relationships of love and respect. In fact, we also humbly submit to you like this.)

This is one of places in the novel criticised by Christian leaders as representing unorthodox teachings since nowhere in the Bible does it say that God submits to man. It is unknown why Young uses the passive 'be submitted to' in this passage. In fact, Young uses the standard usage 'submit to' in other places in the novel as well as an article responding to the controversy around his idea of submission (Young, n.d.). 順服 (*shunfu*), the phrase representing 'submission' in *Xiaowu*, is a fixed term in Mandarin Christian language. As shown in this example, it can be used both as a noun and as a verb. In addition, *shunfu* can be used as an adjective, denoting 'obedient'. In *Pengwu*, another synonymous phrase 恭顺 (*gongshun*) is used to render 'submission' as well as 'be submitted to'. The character 恭 (*gong*) means 'humble'. As for the translation of 'authority', *Xiaowu* also adopts an existing Christian term 權柄 (*quanbing*), while *Pengwu* uses 权威 (*quanwei*), which is not specifically a Christian term and more commonly used in non-church settings. *Shunfu* is applied abundantly in the Mandarin *UV* and the other three later Mandarin Bible versions mentioned in the above.

Example 3

The Shack: Jesus is both the promise and its fulfillment. (p.203)

Xiaowu: 耶穌既是應許、也是應許的實現。(p.247)

(Back translation: Jesus is not only the promise, and also the fulfillment of the promise.)

Pengwu: 耶穌既是許諾又是諾言的實現。(p.234)

(Back translation: Jesus is the promise and also the fulfillment of the promise.)

Here is another example where *Xiaowu* adopts a standard Christian expression but *Pengwu* does not. 應許(*yingxu*) in *Xiaowu*, and 許諾 (*xunuo*) and 諾言(*nuoyan*) in *Pengwu* all bear the same meaning: 'promise'. However, 應許(*yingxu*) is the particular Mandarin phrase to refer to 'promise' in biblical contexts. Like *shunfu*, *yingxu* can be found in many verses in all four Mandarin Bible translations.

Category 3: Expression precisely influenced by the Mandarin *Union Version*

The Shack: And remember, I am bigger than your lies. I can work beyond them. (p.233)

Xiaowu: 而且你要記得，我比你的謊言還大。我動的工可以超越謊言，[……]。(p.232)

(Back translation: And you've got to remember, I am bigger than your lies. The work I do can go beyond your lies.)

Pengwu: 要记住，你的谎言再大也大不过我。我能够不受它们的影响。(216)

(Back translation: Remember, no matter how big your lies are, they are not bigger than me. I can be unaffected by them.)

As shown in the back translations, the two Chinese translations of these words of Papa about lies both contain the original meaning of the ST. The difference merely lies in their wording. For the translation of 'I can work beyond them', 我動的工可以超越謊言 (*wo dong de gong keyi chaoyue huangyan*) in *Xiaowu* clearly suggests Chen's being influenced by the Mandarin *UV.* The first four characters 我動的工 (*wo dong de gong*), 'the work I do' or 'the work I have begun to do', is the focus for discussion here. Chinese-speaking Christians commonly use 動工 (*donggong*), 'do the work', to express that God works/has worked. In secular language, *donggong* is typically, if not only, used in the construction field. The source for this specific expression is the translation of the following Bible verse in the Mandarin *UV*: 'that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus' (Philippians 1:6). The translation in the Mandarin *UV* is: 那在你們心裡動了善工的，必成全這工，直到耶穌基督的日子。(腓立比書 1:6) In the other three Mandarin Bible versions, the verb 動 (*dong*) 'move' is replaced with 開始 (*kaishi*) 'begin'. The latter translation would be more relatable for contemporary readers.

7.5.2 The language of a faithful translator

Was the Taiwan-based Christian translator Chen conscious of her use of

standardised Christian language during the translation process? In our online conversation (2017), Chen said that she conducted the translation of *The Shack* during the first two years following her conversion to Christianity. At that time, she was eager to learn more about the Christian faith and thus became rather familiar with the church culture, including the terms used in the Christian community. She described it as 'easy' and 'natural' to translate the Christian concepts in the novel 'without further pondering on how to make the translations more accurate'. She further stated:

> But you reminded me that perhaps at that time I did deliberately choose to apply the language used by Christians. After all, our [Christian] language has so many expressions that are different from ordinary usage. It's just that maybe it didn't really occur to me to wonder whether those words were authentic Christian expressions. I just thought it was how people communicated at church.

I then asked Chen which Bible version was used in her church and which version was used for her personal study during that particular period of time. Chen's answer to both questions — unsurprisingly — was the Mandarin *UV*. Apparently, Chen had unknowingly reproduced Christian terms used almost only within the Protestant circle, and the source of these terms, as mentioned, was the Mandarin *UV*. Chen's response has prompted me to further inquire into the translator's 'habitus' and its relation to translational norms, which will be covered in the next chapter.

With reference to Chong's application of polysystem theory in her study

of the canonisation of the Mandarin *UV*, my finding demonstrates that the Mandarin *UV*, as the canonised Chinese translation of the Bible, continues to contribute significantly to the formation of the linguistic repertoire of contemporary Chinese-speaking Christian translators. In another sense, the authoritative standing of the Mandarin *UV* has also given rise to the existence of linguistic norms for translating Christian-themed texts into Chinese. When analysing Chen's Christianised translation of *The Shack* — especially in relation to places where the original text does not use any particular Christian diction — and taking into account Chen's own reflection on the language specifically used in the Protestant circle, it is possible to argue that what is featured here is a faithful translation that complies with the linguistic norms derived from modern Chinese Christian terminology grounded in the Mandarin *UV*. But more than that, we have encountered a faithful translator whose use of language proves to be an unwitting product of her personal engagement in the church community.

Conclusion: the universal appeal

The Shack has shown us how Christian literary activities have taken place within a network of power relations. In the U.S. context, the institution's exercise of power has been demonstrated not only in church groups' attempts to 'censor' *The Shack*, but also in their canonisation of certain literary works as appropriate Christian literature. In Taiwan, although only few responses criticising *The Shack* from churches can be found, we have seen the

canonisation of the Mandarin *UV* and how this has conditioned the translation of Christian works. The other important observation we have gained in this present chapter is that the definitions of 'Christian' and 'heretical' (Mohler, 2010) can be rather flexible in different cultural contexts. However, the worldwide popularity of *The Shack* seems to not rely so much on the degree to which it is identified as Christian, but rather on its universal appeal to readers who would like to explore the 'big' questions about life and existence.

Chapter 8

Beyond the Polysystems Approach

My main stance in the theoretical discussion presented in this thesis is grounded in polysystem theory. Revolving around the concepts of 'canon/canonicity', 'repertoire', and 'institutions', my three case studies conducted through the polysystem approach explore phenomena surrounding the transmission of Christian-themed fiction from the Anglophone contexts to the Taiwanese context. In this chapter, I will report and discuss the findings in response to my research questions. Apart from the descriptive analysis, I will also show the viability of polysystem theory in the investigation of how literary works are handled in the Christian realm. I will use the empirical evidence to justify the use of the polysystem approach that involves norm theory in this thesis. However, this is not to say that the polysystem approach is able to cover every angle of the research questions for this study. Based on my findings, I will first look at the relation between 'norms' and 'habitus' and discuss the intersection of polysystem theory and Bourdieusian ideas. After this, I will draw on two of Luhmann's key ideas, i.e. 'autopoiesis' and 'second-order observation', to expand the scope of my critical analysis, and present a reflective discussion on this system-oriented study.

8.1 The adjacent Christian literary systems: the U.S. and Taiwan

While the Christian literary systems of the U.S. and Taiwan are closely

adjacent to each other, my case studies have shown that not all elements in the repertoire of the U.S. Christian literary system have been replicated in the Taiwanese Christian literary system. To what degree has the Taiwanese Christian literary system adopted the norms operating in the U.S. Christian literary system? How do the repertoires of these two systems differ from each other? This section intends to answer these questions.

8.1.1 The repertoire that governs the reading of literary texts within the Taiwanese Christian literary system

Generally speaking, Taiwan's mainstream theological discourse accords with that of the U.S. to a great extent. Taiwan's Christianity has been dominated by Reformed Protestantism, i.e. Calvinism. As Calvinism is a major Protestant branch that has gained worldwide popularity, the core elements in the repertoire of Taiwan's Christian theological system are not dissimilar to other nations' theological systems. According to Cheng Yang-En (鄭仰恩) (2009, pp. 184-85), Calvinism has always occupied a prominent position in Taiwan's Christianity, although the missional lines have changed. Calvinism has always been at the heart of Taiwan's theological landscape: firstly with the Dutch Reformed Church in the seventeenth century when Formosa was a colony of the Dutch, then with the English and Canadian Presbyterian missions under the rule of the Qing Dynasty of China and during the Japanese occupation, and lastly with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan after the Second World War.

Apart from the Presbyterian case studied by Cheng, the Calvinist root of Taiwan's Christianity can be seen in many other instances, such as CEF and many other Christian churches and organisations. In the chapter on *Gilead,* I have elaborated on the predominance of Calvinism in the U.S. and how this has impacted the reception of Robinson's works in American society. Since Christianity in modern Taiwan has been greatly shaped by American Christianity, it is not surprising that the majority of Christian teachings in the contemporary Taiwanese Christian community tend to be based on Calvinism, or, Reformed theology.

Compared to the U.S., the theological norms found in Taiwan's Christian literary system appear to be fewer. This is partly due to the fact that only a very limited number of Christian paratextual materials surrounding literary texts have been published in Taiwan. Of the three cases examined in this thesis, only *Narnia* seems to offer us a glimpse into the repertoire of Taiwan's Christian literary system because of its relatively abundant paratextual publications and activities.

As introduced in Chapter 5, at least seven books originally published in English that intend to introduce the gospel messages embedded in *Narnia* have been published in Taiwan (see Section 5.3.2). However, it was Lin's *The Theology of Narnia* that has significantly contributed to the localisation of the Christian interpretation of *Narnia*. Lin's effort also demonstrates the formation of C.S. Lewis studies in the Chinese-speaking world (see Sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2).

Lin, as a Presbyterian pastor, is also an expert on Calvinism. Lin (2011, pp.356-62) borrows Calvinist concepts to illustrate Lewis' point about men's knowledge of God through the inspiration from heaven in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (1980). Although a thorough account of the parallels Lin draws between Calvinist theology and Lewis' ideas would be beyond the scope of my discussion here, it is worth mentioning that Lin has published several books on John Calvin and his theology in Taiwan. The best-known example is *The Theology of Calvin* (加爾文神學), whose first edition was published by Lichi Publishing House (禮記出版社) in 1994; its revised edition was published by CEFP in 2004. Lin is also the co-author of *Theological Reflection: Calvin and the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan* (神學反思：加爾文與台灣基督長老教會) published by Yeon Wang (永望文化) in 1996. In June 2017, CEFP published the high-profile *Systematic Theology* (系統神學) written by Lin. This two-volume work (with nearly 2,000 pages in total) is promoted as a systematic theology book tailored for readers in the Chinese-speaking world. In this regard, the tendency of systematising 'orthodox' Christian teachings can also been seen in the Taiwanese context.

Lin's perspective towards Christian fiction is also similar to what I have found in the mainstream evangelical groups in the U.S. During our conversation on 9 August 2016, Lin expressed his concern over the claimed Calvinist theme in *Gilead* and commented that the novel should not be considered completely 'orthodox'. His viewpoint certainly corresponds to John Piper's (see Section 6.4.4). Lin also questioned whether *The Shack* could be

regarded as 'Christian' in any way, although he was not totally against both *Gilead* and *The Shack* as 'fictional works'. However, while Lin represents a rather authoritative voice within the 'institution' of Taiwan's Christian literary system, this does not mean that such viewpoints on *Gilead* and *The Shack* are shared among every individual and group within the institution. There is no paratextual evidence gathered for this study that shows such a critical viewpoint towards *Gilead* and *The Shack*. This contrast corresponds to Even-Zohar's idea about the non-unification of the institution within a polysystem (see Section 3.8.1).

In the case of *Gilead*, I have found that in Taiwan there is a lack of Christian materials on the novel. Apart from an online journal article published by the overseas Chinese organisation Kingdom Resources for Christ, I could only find two articles published in CEFP-affiliated media outlets mentioning the novel. One of them is a translated article originally from *Christianity Today* and will be introduced in Section 8.1.3. Neither of these articles gives an in-depth introduction or critical comment, which shows the limited attention paid to this literary novel within the rather small Christian community in Taiwan. It also indicates the prevailing norms in the repertoire of the Taiwanese Christian literary system that *Gilead* does not appear to conform to, such as the potential to be used as evangelistic and teaching materials and the direct connection with Taiwan's local readership (see Section 3.4).

Compared to *Gilead*, *The Shack* has received more attention from Christian individuals and groups in Taiwan. This suggests that *The Shack*,

being an example of 'popular literature' with characteristics of self-help books, has more links with the existing repertoire of Taiwan's Christian literary system. However, unlike their counterparts in the U.S., most Christian agents in Taiwan have not made many efforts to criticise the potential 'theological danger' of the book. This may be due to the relatively small scale and the relative homogeneity of the Taiwanese Christian literary system, compared to that of the U.S. It can also be a reflection of the generally pragmatic attitudes held by church groups towards faith in Taiwan (see Section 3.3), judging by many Christian leaders' positive views on *The Shack* (He, 2017).

8.1.2 The universality of biblical norms

This thesis treats the globalised Christian literary polysystem as the mega-polysystem in which different nations' Christian literary systems coexist and interact. The disparities in the sizes and scales of the U.S. and Taiwanese Christian literary systems are obvious. However, as a whole, my case studies show that there is no conspicuous difference between the general theological attitudes of the U.S. and Taiwanese Christian agents.

This is of course a reflection of Christianity's 'world mission', especially in evangelical contexts. This is where one witnesses the existence of universal Christian norms. To state it differently, the universality of biblical norms is embedded in Christianity through Jesus' Great Commission, and it is believed that those who belong to God are 'from every tribe and language and people and nation' (Revelation 5:9). Therefore, a shared repertoire that carries a unified set of biblical norms is likely to be found among different systems

within the globalised Christian literary polysystem.

Moreover, the central items in this common repertoire, which are determined by Christian authorities, to a large degree, mirror the basic lines of systematic theology, the supposedly comprehensive biblical teaching. This directs us again to the primary status held by the greatest canonical work, the Bible, within the whole Christian literary polysystem. Importantly, the Bible, with its authoritative status, provides the system with 'truth claims', the allegedly unchangeable and non-negotiable Christian values that function as the pivot of the shared repertoire of all Christian literary systems worldwide. Findings on the U.S. and Taiwan contexts presented in this thesis can exemplify the aforementioned argument.

8.1.3 The transfer of the Christian literary repertoire from the U.S. to Taiwan

When selecting new books to be published or introduced, many Christian publishers in Taiwan tend to rely on reviews published in mainstream Christian media. For example, CEFP editor Yang Fang-chan stated in our interview in July 2015 that *Christianity Today* has been the major source the CEFP editorial team turns to when deciding what publications they should introduce to their readers. As CEFP is one of the biggest Christian publishers in Taiwan and associates with different nationwide ministries, it will serve as a crucial reference here.

In its September/October 2014 issue, CEFP's bi-monthly magazine

Campus Magazine invited a number of leaders and critics in Taiwan's Christian community to write about their thoughts on reading as well as give book recommendations (including, but not limited to, Christian books). All the foreign books on the recommendation lists were written by either European or North American Christian authors who are commonly recognised as 'classic' writers in the Christian world. Some of these authors are Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945, German theologian), J.J. Packer (1926-, British-born Canadian theologian,), Eugene Peterson (1932-, American-born theologian and Bible translator,), Henri J. M. Nouwen (1932-1996, Dutch theologian), and Philip Yancey (1949-, American Christian author). Although the twenty-first century has been an era of global Christianity (see Section 3.1), the reading lists offered by these Taiwanese Christian leaders reflect a preference for Christian books from the West.

Another example that can illustrate the influences of the West on the current Taiwanese Christian scene is the inclusion of a translated article originally published in *CT Pastors*, a *Christianity Today*-affiliated journal targeting church leaders, in the issue. The author recommends ten novels as the summer reading list for pastors (Pastor, 2013), but there is no explanation for his selection. The novels on the list, from the highest-ranked to the tenth, are: Marilynne Robinson's (2004) *Gilead*, Shusaku Endo's (1966) *Silence*, Frederick Buechner's (1980) *Godric*, Mary Doria Russell's (1996) *The Sparrow*, Fyodor Dostoyevsky's (1866) *Crime and Punishment*, Graham Greene's (1940) *The Power and the Glory*, Nathaniel Hawthorne's (1850) *The*

Scarlet Letter, C.S. Lewis' (1956) *Till We Have Faces*, Salman Rushdie's (1991) *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, and Flannery O'Connor's (2007) *Wise Blood*. As can be seen, the only non-Western works on the list is Endo's *Silence*, a modern classic among the very rare Christian literary works written in Japanese.

While *Campus Magazine* translated this article with a view to encourage Christian readers (particularly pastors) to read literary works, three of the above-mentioned books, *Godrik*, *The Sparrow*, and *Wise Blood*, had not been published in Taiwan by the time this particular issue was released. In some way, we may consider it a rather non-contextualised fiction reading list for readers in Taiwan and an arbitrary transfer of elements from the repertoire of the U.S. Christian literary system into its Taiwanese counterpart by Taiwan's Christian agents.

A similar attempt to promote literary reading among Christian readers in Taiwan can be seen in Chang's online article (2011) (see Section 6.5.2). Chang's list of recommended authors looks somewhat random since he does not state any specific rationale for the selection. Chang introduces several established Christian writers in the hope of helping Taiwanese Christians cultivate their spiritual lives through reading. The mentioned writers, as sequenced by Chang, are Augustinus Hipponensis, Marilynne Robinson, Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872, German philosopher), C.S. Lewis, Georges Bernanos (1888-1948, French writer), and Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471, German-Dutch Catholic monk). Chang's recommendation list, again, enables

us to witness the Western dominance in Taiwan's Christian literary domain.

In Chapter 6, I have explored how *Gilead* as a Christian-themed *literary* novel has been received differently in the U.S. and Taiwan. Since many of the above-mentioned book recommendations share the two characteristics—foreignness and literariness—that have hindered *Gilead*'s popularity in Taiwan, one can presume that these books may only appeal to a limited number of Taiwanese readers. In addition, some of them have even not been translated in Taiwan so are in fact inaccessible to the local readers. Considering the mission of CEFP as an evangelical literary agency: to equip the Christian readers with essential knowledge, and to share the gospel with non-Christian readers in the Chinese-speaking world, it is perhaps fair to say that this transmission of Christian literary repertoire from the U.S. to Taiwan does not seem to be an effective action.

8.1.4 The self-insufficiency of the Taiwanese Christian literary system

My research findings reflect the dominance of translations in Taiwan's Christian literary materials, which corresponds to many critics' observations (see Section 3.4). Here, by Christian literary materials, I mean all kinds of Christian texts, including fiction and non-fiction works, and commentaries that contain theological elements. One can easily relate this phenomenon to Even-Zohar's (1990c, p.47) hypothesis concerning the position of translated literature within the literary polysystem. According to his hypothesis, translated literature would occupy a central position within a literary polysystem in the

following three situations:

(a) When a polysystem has not yet been crystallised, that is to say, when a literature is 'young', in the process of being established; (b) When a literature is either 'peripheral' (within a large group of correlated literature) or 'weak' or both; and (c) When there are turning points, crises, or literary vacuum in a literature.

This hypothesis has been criticised by some scholars. Two of its most frequently quoted critics are Bassnett (1998) and Hermans (1999). Besides pointing out that polysystem theory does not go far beyond Russian Formalism, Bassnett (1998, p.127) describes Even-Zohar's claim about the three conditions where translated literature occupies a central place within a literary polysystem as 'somewhat crude' since she considers Even-Zohar's evaluative wording such as 'peripheral' and 'weak' problematic. Hermans (1999, p.109), who holds a similar view, also criticises the use of descriptive terms in Even-Zohar's postulation. For Hermans, there is value judgment in the process of ascribing the qualities 'young', 'weak', 'in crisis', 'containing a vacuum' to a literature, and it is not clear from what vantage point a literature can be categorised as such.

Chang (2011, p.314), one of the biggest advocates for polysystem theory, gives counter-responses to these two criticisms and further proposes a revised version of Even-Zohar's hypothesis with different terms. Firstly, Chang maintains that since the essential premise of polysystem theory is that there is always a hierarchical relationship between the elements (systems) within a

polysystem, terms such as ‘central’/ ‘peripheral’ and ‘old’/ ‘young’ should be considered suitable to describe the statuses of different items. Secondly, regarding the more controversial terms, ‘weak’ and ‘vacuum’, Chang argues that they are not intended to be derogatory.

Chang quotes Even-Zohar’s following explanation of ‘weak’ written in another paper ‘Interference in Dependent Literary Polysystems’ (1990d, pp. 80-81):

> It is then the weakness of the literary repertoire vis-à-vis a situation with which it cannot cope that mostly determines whether an alien system may be accessed or not. In a weak situation, a system is unable to function by confining itself to its home repertoire only.

Therefore, Chang contends that weakness or strength in Even-Zohar’s theory mainly denotes ‘an entity’s internal conditions’ but not things like its political or cultural power in relation to that of another entity, although Even-Zohar did admit in his interview with Chang that ‘weak’ is a bad word choice for a descriptive theory.

Chang further states that ‘vacuum’, likewise, mainly refers to the absence of a repertoire within an entity to deal with a certain circumstance, or to meet a certain demand. Theoretically speaking, a culture without any vacuum would stagnate. ‘[W]henever a new repertoire is accepted into a culture, one may assume that there must have been a vacuum to accommodate it’ (ibid.). Apparently, Chang links the existence of ‘vacuums’ with the dynamic nature of systems suggested by polysystem theory, to justify that ‘vacuum’ does not

necessarily carry a negative connotation in Even-Zohar's original statement.

Consequently, Chang proposes replacing 'weakness' or 'inferiority' with 'a sense of self-insufficiency' to refine Even-Zohar's hypothesis. Chang also writes in the footnote that Even-Zohar has agreed on this reworded hypothesis. Chang presents two versions; the first version focuses on translation in a literary polysystem, and the second deals with culture in general (p.318):

1. Translated literature tends to assume a central position in the literary polysystem when there is a general sense of self-insufficiency, which is likely to arise in three situations:
    a. when a literature is 'young';
    b. when a literature is 'peripheral'; and
    c. when there are turning points, crisis, or vacuums in a literature.
2. Foreign repertoires tend to be welcomed by a culture when there is a general sense of self-insufficiency, which is likely to arise in three situations:
    a. when a culture is 'young';
    b. when a culture is 'peripheral'; and
    c. when there are turning points, crisis, or vacuums in the culture.

Taiwan's Christian literary system and Christian culture can both be described as fitting all these descriptions regarding 'self-insufficiency'. Taiwan's Christian literary system is relatively 'young' and 'peripheral' within the globalised Christian literary polysystem. It contains 'vacuums' due to the limited number of local authors and the lack of variety in reading materials.

Therefore, it depends greatly on Western sources, especially those from the U.S.

8.1.5 The non-transferability of 'evangelical fiction' as a genre

However, the 'self-insufficiency' of Taiwan's Christian literary system does not pave the way for every kind of publication from the U.S. to enter Taiwan's Christian book market. I have introduced 'evangelical fiction' as a distinct genre in the contemporary U.S. book market (see Section 4.4.1). When comparing the receptions of *The Shack* in the U.S. and the U.K., I have also pointed out that the phenomenal popularity of *The Shack* in the U.S. is a reflection of the evangelical culture that particularly belongs to American society (see Section 7.3). When it comes to the evangelical fiction market, the contrasts between the U.S. and other nations would be even more noticeable if one compares the U.S. with Taiwan.

Evangelical fiction as a book category has never been known to Taiwanese readers. Among all the materials produced by Taiwanese Christian agents examined in this study, there is no mention of any book that falls into the genre of evangelical fiction. One of the reasons may be that evangelical fiction works tend to be culturally loaded stories that only appeal to American conservative Christians. As described by Arthur, many common themes in evangelical fiction are specifically American, for example, stories about America's heartland that promote traditional rural values (see Section 4.4.1). There is no doubt that the stark difference between the cultural environment of

the U.S. and that of Taiwan has made the transfer of the evangelical fiction as a genre difficult. With Christians as a minority of its society, Taiwan has a publishing environment that is significantly different from that of the U.S. Taiwanese Christian readers' general preference for non-fiction has also reduced the opportunity for evangelical fiction to be introduced into Taiwan's book market.

8.2 Systematic efforts of Christian agents: their habitus and the application of norms

In this section, I will explore the role of agents in my system-based analysis of how Christian-themed literature has been introduced into Taiwan. By bringing the empirical evidence gathered in this study into the theoretical discussion centring on the concepts of 'norms' and 'habitus', I hope to bridge the methodological divide assumed by some between the polysystem approach and the Bourdieusian approach in the field of translation studies.

8.2.1 The transfer of the white face of Christianity

Christianity in Taiwan (and of course, many other parts of the world) has borne a Western image. Even in today's era of Global Christianity where the Global South claims to have a significantly increasing number of Christians, the predominance of European and Anglo-American Christian cultures still exists in Taiwan. This can be observed in the examples presented in Section 8.1.3.

In fact, even just within the U.S., white evangelical culture still dominates the nation's contemporary Christian publishing (see Section 4.4.1). Taiwanese Christian agents' tendency to rely on mainstream U.S. Christian media has thus contributed to the uneven look of Taiwan's Christian cultural landscape. Considering the historical factors behind the American influences in Taiwan's Christian publishing realm (see Section 3.4), Taiwanese Christian agents' leaning towards replicating the repertoire of the U.S. Christian literary system can be regarded as a result of the systematic functioning of the Taiwanese Christian realm. This is especially evident in CEFP's case, where we see a direct transposition of publishing norms and patterns from the U.S. Christian literary system into Taiwan, seemingly without any attempt to 'localise' the efforts.

Based on the findings presented above, the image of Christianity as a 'white religion from the West' in Taiwan may have been reinforced through literary translation—i.e., the selection of what Christian literature to be translated and introduced. The title list of books included in CEFP's 'Fiction House' series also substantiates this argument (see Section 3.3). However, Taiwan's theological landscape seems to be more diverse, if compared to Taiwan's Christian literary landscape. A number of books on Black liberation theology and Third World Theologies have been published in Taiwan in recent decades. In addition to translations, some of these works were even written by Taiwanese writers. Most of these books were written by theologians working with the PCT; for example, Hu Chung-ming's (胡忠銘, 1992) *Introduction to*

Third World Theologies (第三世界神學概觀) and Wong Chong-gyiau's (王崇堯, 1995) *Black Power and Black Theology* (黑人力量與黑人神學). These agents' efforts correspond to the different characteristics of the CEF and the PCT subsystems I introduced in Chapter 3.

In the U.S. Christian book market, African American Christian literature, although not necessarily appealing to the mainstream readership, constitutes a subsystem within the U.S. Christian literary system. It has created a booming and profitable industry but still awaits more attention from scholars and critics. Although the industry is 'largely self-contained and self-sustaining' (Chapman, 2015, p. 197), African American Christian literature represents black history and is part of the U.S.' Christian legacy. The predomination of 'white Christianity' in Taiwan's Christian literature translation can be regarded as a phenomenon partly resulting from Christian literary agents' reliance on mainstream American media. It would be interesting to see, with a more diverse theological landscape gradually forming in Taiwan, whether its market for translated Christian literature will reflect the same tendency towards plurality.

8.2.2 Translational norms in the Taiwanese Christian literary system

My findings suggest that translational norms do exist in the Chinese-language Christian literary realm. I have presented how the Christianised translation of *Narnia* has been preferred in the Chinese-speaking Christian community. For the other cases, I have shown how the Mandarin *UV*

has become the canonised Chinese Bible and later contributed to the formation of the 'proper Christian language' in the Chinese-speaking world. Based on the response of *Xiaowu*'s translator, Chen, I argue that the use of standardised Christian terminology by Christian translators (who belong to the system) may be unintended on some occasions. Their unintentional acts are consequences of the canonisation process of a specific Bible translation in the religious structure.

Chong's (2008) discussion on the canoninisation of the Mandarin *UV* hints at the power structure of the polysystem of Christian Bible translations (See Section 3.6.1). When introducing the tensions surrounding the use of the Mandarin *UV* after its publication, Zetzsche mentions Gu Dunrou's (顧敦鋕) criticisms of the Mandarin *UV*: '(1) errors in the choice of words; (2) grammatical and stylistic problems; and (3) mistakes in translation' (Gu, 1957, cited in Zetzsche, 1999, p.343). Zetzsche further states that although many Bible scholars called for revision of the Mandarin *UV*, there was a prevalent attitude in Chinese-speaking churches towards the Mandarin *UV*: the Mandarin *UV* should not be replaced by any other Bible translations since 'criticism of the *Union Version* was criticism of the Chinese Bible' (Zetzsche, 1999, pp. 344-345). This corresponds to Chong's discussion on the very authoritative status given to the Mandarin *UV* by the majority of Chinese-speaking Protestants. It also re-attests to the powerful role of 'institution' in the Christian literary system.

Both Chong (2008) and I suggest that the operation of the

Chinese-language Christian literary polysystem as a whole is an intricate network where agents of power are involved to create dynamics and consolidate the structure in various aspects. Many of the phenomena observed in the Chinese-language Christian literary polysystem reflect the phenomena in the political and/or theology polysystems. This resonates with critics' further elaboration on polysystem theory as a theory of culture: in order to understand the practices within a polysystem, researchers should not be confined only to components of that certain polysystem itself, but extend to other polysystems that correlate with it (Hermans, 1996; Chang, 2011).

Many instances discussed in this thesis show that the language used by the Chinese Christian community can be conspicuously different from everyday language used by non-Christians. In Toury's theorisation of translational norms (see Section 2.1.3), he regards the existence of various types of sociocultural constraints of translation as a continuum that has 'rules' (i.e. the strongest constraints) and 'idiosyncrasies' (i.e. the weakest constraints) at the two ends. The relative nature of norms is again demonstrated in Toury's classification of behaviours of different intensity: 'basic (primary) norms', which are almost mandatory; 'secondary norms, or tendencies', conventional and favoured by most of the community members; 'tolerated (permitted) behaviour' (Toury, 1995, p.67). In translating Christian-themed works, adopting standardised Christian jargon to render Christian notions can be regarded to be 'basic norms'. Nevertheless, abiding by the language of the Mandarin *UV* to translate Christian allusions is more similar to an unwritten rule, and thus closer to what

Toury calls ‘secondary norms’.

8.2.3 The agents embedded in the system

I am aware that the association between norms and the rigid structuredness of systems has been a major criticism by translation scholars. The concern lies mostly in the ‘mechanical tendency implicit in system thinking’ (Agorni, 2007 cited in Chang, 2011, p.333). Bourdieu’s theory has thus become a useful tool for translation researchers to investigate agents’ behaviours. The core interest of the Bourdieusian approach to literary or artistic production is the dynamics engendered along with the agents’ position-taking in the particular field. This is what Bourdieu has explicitly pointed out as the fundamental difference between his theory and ‘all “systemic” analysis of works of art based on transposition of the phonological model’ (1983, p.314, emphasis in original). When commenting on Even-Zohar’s polysystem theory, Bourdieu states:

> the existence, form and direction of change depend not only on the ‘state of the system’, i.e. the ‘repertoire’ of possibilities which it offers, but also on the balance of forces between social agents who have entirely real interests in the different possibilities available to them as stakes and who deploy every sort of strategy to make one set or the other prevail.
>
> (ibid., p.315, emphasis in original)

While Bourdieu’s idea broadens the factors involved in the process of literary or artistic production, in this study we see the principles of the ‘system’

operate above the mobility of the agents. The relation between norms and habitus in translation studies has been explored by Simeoni (1998). Simeoni explains the difference between the use of norms and habitus to approach translation practices: Toury focuses on translational norms as what '*controls*' agents' acts, but a habitus-centred account features the degree of translators' involvement 'in the maintenance and perhaps the creation of norms' (1998, p.26, emphasis in original).

Simeoni further points out the need to make more empirical enquiries into the 'translatorial mind (or mindset)' as 'the socio-symbolic, representational and interactive realities of cognition in the wider world of practice' (ibid., p.3). Using Toury's theorisation of norms to illustrate his research topic about the implied subservience of translators in the translation process, Simeoni urges translation researchers to look into 'habitus-governed acquisition' of translation competence (ibid., p.14). He then opines that the concepts of norms and habitus are not fully incompatible: a translator's habitus, a theoretically imaginary space where the 'mental, bodily, social and cultural forces' are integrated into '[a] highly personalised construct [that]…retains all the characteristic imperiousness of norms'. As norms need a habitus to 'instantiate' them, the functioning of a habitus also requires norms. Simeoni specifies that to incorporate the notion of habitus into the existing descriptive translation studies is not to minimise the significance of norms, but to concentrate more on translating and authoring behaviours than texts and systems (ibid., p.33).

Judging by Chen's Christianised language in *Xiaowu* and CEFP agents'

practice that reflects a high degree of Americanisation, one can describe these Taiwanese Christian agents, whose behaviours have unwittingly conformed to the norms set by the system, as embedded in the Christian literary system. In terms of theoretical contribution, I would like to suggest that these findings support Tyulenev's argument when he addresses the significance of system-based theories: 'systemic macroparadigms are often criticized for disregarding human conscious volition (Webb, Schirato, and Danaher, 2002); yet they have their advantage of better describing unintended affects of human activity' (2012, p.8). These agents' acts can be described as consequences occurring within a system of power relations, an intricate network that involves many historical and socio-political factors.[60]

8.2.4 The invisibility of agents in the polysystem?

Polysystem theory has been criticised for not paying enough attention to the role agents (including 'institution', termed in Even-Zohar's model) take in the dissemination of cultural products. Another concern about polysystem theory that is widely shared by many translation scholars is its structural origin, which seems to bear a rather deterministic view towards many issues. For instance, Gentzler (2001, p.119) writes that by attempting to find rules that maintain the polysystem—'the system of cultural heterogeneity', Even-Zohar turns polysystem theory into 'a formalism of forms'; although Even-Zohar's

[60] The notion of habitus may be applicable in the discussion of mainstream publishing agents' behaviours since they are commercially driven and appear to be more active in accumulating the capital in order to gain position in their field.

literary systems consist of various systems and are continuously changing, at the centre of polysystem theory is the idea of 'a totally integrated and meaningful "whole"' (ibid., emphasis in original).

Certainly, Gentzler's comment encapsulates polysystem theory with its philosophical implication. However, there exist different interpretations among translation researchers of the 'openness' and 'heterogeneity' that Even-Zohar indicates in his theory as attributes of every system. For instance, Chang (2011) holds a rather positive viewpoint towards the open heterogeneity of the hypothetical (poly)systems, suggesting that a (poly)system does not necessarily have to be regarded as inseparable from Structuralism due to its being non-closed and ever-changing.

Perhaps it would be difficult to reconcile the opposite perspectives on this matter. However, as shown in this study, it is possible for us to think of the Christian literary (and cultural) polysystem as a relational whole, which is essentially a structure of power sustained by a certain group of people according to a number of norms and laws based on Christian doctrines. In other words, it is a power system which individuals and groups within the 'institution' are always seeking to structuralise through applying elements originating from their belief system. Furthermore, it is a power system that constantly interacts with other power systems, and the agents within it, be they publishers, organisations, translators, or critics, who sometimes produce certain outcomes without being aware that they perform the tasks according to certain systemic norms generated in a wider context. For example, CEFP's replication of the

publishing norms held by the U.S. mainstream Christian media can be explained when placed in the historical context giving rise to the considerable Americanisation of Taiwan's Christianity in the modern era.

I would like to continue my discussion on the agents in the polysystem approach by revisiting the concept of repertoire. 'Repertoire' is defined as 'the aggregate of rules and materials which govern both the *making* and *handling*, or production and consumption of any given product' (Even-Zohar, 1997a, p.20, italics in original). This revised definition apparently contains some minor changes to the wording. In Even-Zohar's former definition published in 1990, the repertoire of a literary system refers to 'the aggregate of rules and materials which govern both the making and use of any given product'. In the footnote, Even-Zohar wrote that by 'product' he meant 'any performed (or performable) set of signs, i.e., including a given "behavior"' (1990a, p. 39). That is to say, in polysystem theory, not only texts can be regarded as products, any literary activities surrounding the text productions can also be considered as products. In fact, Even-Zohar has further defined a product as 'the concrete instance of culture' that can be exemplified by 'an utterance, a text, an artifact, an edifice, an "image," or "an event"' (1997a, p. 27, emphasis in original). Chang (2011, p.336), when explaining the viability of polysystem theory as 'a general theory of culture' to study cultural phenomena, gives examples of 'products' in different research contexts: the translator is the producer when the study is about a translated text; when the study is about a translation course, the translator becomes the product and the institute that offers the course is part of

the institution, but if the study is about the tertiary education system, then the university becomes part of the product.

To synthesise Even-Zohar's explanations cited in the above, one can note that the course of *making* and *handling* the products in a literary context not only involves the text producers and the readers, but also the individuals or organisations intervening in the process. Moreover, since Even-Zohar also includes extra-textual activities in the category of products, one can infer that the repertoire in Even-Zohar's proposed model is in fact adopted and employed not only by producers and consumers but also by those who mediate between the two ends, i.e. those who *make* and *handle* literary activities. If we revisit the definition of 'agents' offered by Milton and Bandia (see Section 2.2.1), we can certainly refer to all the intermediaries as agents. Although critics commonly suggest that the negligence of agents is a major downside of the polysystem approach, it seems that the concept of 'agent' is not explicitly and thoroughly written about in Even-Zohar's exposition of the theory but does exist in his conceptualisation of how literary (poly)systems function.

With my empirical investigation into the translation of Christian-themed fiction in contemporary Taiwan, I have given an example of how the polysystem approach, norms theory, and the idea of habitus can be theoretically intertwined in the study of translation activities and behaviours, as suggested by scholars such as Simeoni. A final note to add is that my examination of the agents' use of norms within the Christian literary polysystem merely presents a probabilistic tendency, rather than a universal law. As stated by Hermans (1996,

p.31), 'non-compliance with a norm in particular instances does not invalidate the norm'. My study is thus a case of what Chang calls 'the discovery of regularities' when he defends for the ability of polysystem theory to provide a framework where norms and agency co-exist (2011, p. 335).

8.3 Applying Luhmann: on the system-based subjectiveness

The following discussion draws on Luhmann's social systems theory to review the systemic analysis of the Christian literary polysystem in this thesis. My use of Luhmann's ideas aims to strengthen my exploration of Christian agents' participation (i.e. the intervention of 'institution') in the process of translation and appropriation of literary texts.

From now on, I will use 'the Christian literary polysystem' to generalise about the functioning of existing Christian literary systems in whichever context and on whatever scale as long as there is an 'institution', i.e. any church group, operating in the system. The reason behind this is that as shown in my case studies, Christian agents' intervention in the dissemination and reception of literature can be found in the contexts of U.S., U.K., and Taiwan, although to different degrees. This, of course, also applies to my discussion on the globalised Christian literary polysystem since the core Christian tenets stated in the Bible are shared across the world.

In the following, I will first summarise how Luhmann's concept of 'autopoesis' can be applied to review the Christian literary polysystem (see Section 2.5.2). Second, I am going to describe the operation of Christian

literary polysystem from an outside perspective, with reference to Luhmann's idea of 'second-order observation' (see Section 2.5.3). Finally, I will give a reflective account of my own role as a researcher, a second-order observer, when conducting this study. This will illustrate and respond to the fundamental (philosophical) issue regarding the inevitable subjectiveness of descriptive translation studies.

8.3.1 The Christian literary polysystem through the evangelical lens

Throughout the preceding chapters, a key point I have made is that there can be observed systemic patterns in the socio-semiotic activities in the Christian literary realm, particularly in evangelical contexts. The Bible provides the basis for the formation of a repertoire to which the institutions or agents within the Christian literary (poly)system refer when identifying certain literary works as Christian or not. And for many of these agents, biblical teachings serve as the ultimate criteria that justify whether certain Christian works fall into the category of 'real' Christian literature that conveys orthodox Christian messages. Hence, on many occasions, these Christian agents' reactions towards specific types of texts are somehow predictable. Texts that contain contents coherent with biblical values would gain their acceptance and favour, and those without such qualities would be disapproved of accordingly.

Among Christian critics' commentaries and reviews presented in the case studies, all disapproving responses towards the selected literary texts draw on biblical principles as the basis for judgment. Some Christian critics also

mention that the Bible should be considered the greatest literature that no other literary text can ever supersede. Nevertheless, we do see some literary classics canonised by Christian critics, which have become the yardsticks for evaluating other Christian-themed fiction works. In the case of *The Shack*, examples I have found that commonly serve as the standards for measuring the appropriateness of later fiction works include *Paradise Lost*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and the most frequently mentioned, *Narnia*. In Jeffrey's review (2010), even Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Dante's *Paradiso*, and medieval biblical plays are cited as the successful precedents of Christian literature that infuse artistic imagination and biblical traditions into the stories.

Jeffrey's mention of literary works published throughout the past few decades reflects Even-Zohar's idea of the diachronic dimension of a system in his polysystem theory. However, as indicated in Section 7.2.5, the phenomenon that canonised texts hold a nearly unchallengeable status given by authorities (the 'institution') within the Christian literary polysystem somehow points towards a possible stagnation of the system—since the younger texts are constantly compared with their canonised counterparts and labeled as inferior by the agents, it is difficult for the subcultural elements that relate more to the present socio-cultural environment to revitalise the system. I consider this a reflection of what Luhmann calls the 'autopoesis' of a system. Such an autopoietic system is self-referential; its self-referentiality is demonstrated in the agents' use of existing elements within the system to 'claim the right' to express their viewpoints and further consolidate, sustain and adjust the system

(Hermans, 1999, p.145).

8.3.2 The Christian literary polysystem from the perspective of subjects outside the system (e.g. researchers)

The discussion above suggests that the Christian literary polysystem is self-referential and self-reproducing. To a certain degree, it is also self-contained since in many cases it seems to remain unaffected by the cultural elements from the non-Christian literary polysystem. To illustrate this point, I would like to draw on the case of the U.S. Christian literary system since its larger scale enables it to contain more conspicuous instances. Evangelical fiction publishing as a profitable business in the U.S. can mark the system's self-containment. A large number of American Christian readers are drawn to this specific genre that does not appeal to the mainstream market. One of the most representative examples is the Amish novel series that features a nearly secluded cultural setting (see Section 4.4.1).

In the meantime, this autopoietic Christian literary system also attempts to influence the reception of literary texts outside the system through publishing paratextual materials and/or holding literary events surrounding mainstream works. Or, to put it in another way, the Christian institution always tries to enlarge the territory of the system by spreading the meanings produced within the system.

However, as seen in my case studies, their effort has only produced limited results. Based on publishing facts and critical reviews, we see that

church groups' messages often only have impacts on a certain group of people. Not only do they have difficulty in reaching non-Christians, they also display diverse degrees of influence on different individuals within the Christian literary system. One example of this is the co-existence of various types of Christian responses towards *The Shack*: although many conservative church leaders make efforts to intervene in the circulation and reception of the novel, it is apparently still popular among many Christians. This can be illustrated by Luhmann's conceptualisation of communication in his social systems theory. Hermans (1999) explains that Luhmann does not think of communication as the transference of preconstituted messages; rather, he contends that meaning is perceived by the recipient as an outcome of recognising selectiveness. Moreover, '[t]he element of selection concerns both the enunciation, i.e. the intentional act of utterance, and the information, i.e. the "theme" or the "data" which are highlighted' (Hermans, 1999, p.140, emphasis in original). Since communication occurs at a specific time point and in a particular context, understanding a communication means being aware of the 'theme' and 'mode of utterance'; it also means being able to notice 'what is included and what is excluded' in both. Therefore, the meanings of texts and utterances are never fixed, and all texts and utterances are created with meanings in distinctive contexts (ibid.).

The consequence of such a selection process that involves subjectivity is that each utterance may incur different reactions among its receivers. If we consider this point in the case of the ultimate canon of the Christian literary

polysystem, the Bible, the fluidity of interpretation in biblical messages certainly attests to it. It is due to the Bible's being open to interpretation that we see the co-presence of varying branches of Christian theology, which further leads to theological disputes over the content of Christian-themed literature.

Gilead may be a good example here. Recognised as a Calvinist author, Robinson infuses Calvinist concepts into her storytelling. However, her fictional representation of God's predestination for salvation, a central idea of Calvinism, has attracted criticism from some evangelical church leaders. Robinson's portrayal of salvation in *Gilead* (and also the third volume of the trilogy, *Lila*), according to many in the Christian community, is closer to universalism. Whether salvation is granted to every man or only the chosen ones is one of the most debatable concepts in Christian theology. Theologians supporting both sides claim to have based their arguments on Bible verses. This is just one of the examples of theological disputes. In this way, from an observer's perspective, the objective definiteness of the content of the Bible, which is believed by many conservative Christians, is in fact challengeable.

In addition, in the chapter on *The Shack* I address the seemingly constant demand for 'new breeds' of Christian literature which can appeal to a wider readership. While Christian critics frequently use canonised texts to challenge unconventional Christian-themed fiction works (popular ones in particular), undoubtedly there is a need for works that can resonate with the contemporary audience to enter the book market. Thus, we have seen the unprecedented

popularity of *The Shack* around the world. Here, once again, we witness the contrast between the conservative Christian viewpoint in the autonomous Christian literary system (that is, the Christian literary world should contain only certain types of works), and the reality that stimulations from other systems (which often contrast the essential elements of the Christian literary system) are required in order to reinvigorate the system and prevent it from stagnating.

Just as discussed in Section 8.2.3, the agents within the Christian literary polysystem, on most occasions, act according to the existing norms without further meta-awareness. This can be further discussed with Luhmann's concepts of 'first-order observation' and 'second-order observation'. Obviously, to put it in Luhmann's terms, my discussion on how the Christian literary polysystem functions can be considered a second-order observation from a researcher's perspective. However, does it mean that it is an adequate and neutral observation from outside the Christian literary polysystem? The answer 'No' is found in Hermans' elucidation of the constructivist and relativist attributes of Luhmann's social systems theory, which directly responds to one of the central concerns about descriptive translation studies that has already been addressed by scholars. In the next section, in referring to the existing scholarly discussion on the constraint of descriptive approaches, I will reflect on my own position as a researcher who carries out the observation and provides the description and analysis during the research process. This will also lead to my thoughts in the final chapter 'Conclusions and Prospects'.

8.3.3 The stance of the researcher

As a researcher, a second-order observer of my research subject, I also view the phenomena and speak about them within a certain system. From the very beginning, the foremost challenge has been how to define 'Christian-themed literature'. Later, when it comes to studying literary activities surrounding the texts, questions are posed with regard to the meanings of terms such as 'Christianity', 'evangelical', 'conservatism', etc. Certainly my understanding of what these items refer to is a product of my own background and experience. Even my selection of texts to study reflects a specific standpoint. The solution is, of course, to navigate different systems from both inward and outward perspectives. Without taking other academic references and counter-opinions into consideration, it would never be possible to come up with a representative list of items to examine in any case. However, blind spots always exist.

When addressing the paradoxical situations translation researchers are constantly facing, Hermans (1999, p.147) gives two main orientations to think about. The first is to remain self-reflective and self-critical, and avoid being caught up by the pitfalls of prescriptivism. To do so, the studies ought to 'operate at the level of theory, analysis and history', which mainly entails 'theorizing the historical contingency of different modes and uses of translation together with the concepts and discourses—historical and contemporary—which legitimize them'. The second is to recognise that to study translations we must not only know about the translations, but also

translate those understandings into 'our metalanguage of translation'. That is to say, translation descriptions themselves always involve the descriptivists' own translation acts, which means now the descriptivists' practices include a certain degree of interpretation and manipulation and their own norms should be considered. 'The study of translation rebounds on our own categories and assumptions, our own modes of conceptualizing and translating translation' (ibid., pp.147-148).

In the course of undertaking this PhD research project, contextualising the objects and locating findings that are relevant to the contexts has always been one of my main tasks. Such attempt corresponds to Hermans' first point regarding the avoidance of prescriptivism. Coming from a Taiwanese background has allowed me to have 'first-hand observations'—to know how the texts and paratextual practices are perceived from the Taiwanese perspective. However, it also means that my conceptualisation of Christianity was initially conditioned, or confined, within the Taiwanese context. For instance, many Western works can be readily identified as Christian literature in Taiwan where Christianity is not part of the local culture, yet they may not be considered specifically Christian in their source context. *Gilead* is one of these examples.

Carrying out this research project in the U.K. has given me a chance to approach the concept of Christian literature and Christianity as a religion from a different angle. On the one hand, Christianity is part of the Anglophone cultural heritage. On the other hand, secularism is believed to increasingly

dominate much of the West, particularly Western Europe, nowadays; this can be exemplified by the core question in Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* (2007): 'why was it virtually impossible not to believe in God in, say, 1500 in our Western society, while in 2000 many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable?' (p.25) We thus have witnessed in this study how the secular part of the U.K. society opposes Christian churches' interference in the cultural realm.

My personal involvement in the cultures tackled in this study has also helped me be more aware of how I represent my research subjects. From grasping the definition of the Christian-themed fiction simply from a Taiwanese perspective to interpreting it as a genre that possesses indefinite meanings, the process unceasingly generates inquiries about my own 'translations' of it from the varying source environments. Other questions have also emerged: Should I let the works speak for themselves? (But how?) Should I consider what the authors have said about their works—whether they are intentionally created as Christian or not?

Hermans' second point prompts me to ask myself: 'Have I really understood my metalanguage along the way?' My own cross-cultural encounters have certainly contributed to this process of decoding messages enunciated from different systems, yet I am not exempted from being viewed as an agent from another system: the academic system of translation studies. This unending probing of the limits of my perspective as well as my representations of the various subjects in this study directs me back to examine,

once again, all the fundamental questions inherent in this thesis. Polysystem theory provides an overarching theoretical framework for the analysis in this thesis. The integration of Luhmann's system theory further helps me practise what Hermans calls self-criticism and self-reflection in the hope of strengthening this descriptive study.

Chapter 9

Conclusions and Prospects

I shall briefly state the contributions this PhD project has potentially made. My study presents a case that investigates phenomena surrounding the translation of English-language Christian-themed fiction into the small Chinese-speaking nation, Taiwan, in the context of contemporary globalisation where cultural capitals and religious ideas can be easily mobilised across different platforms. It offers a close look at the systemic occurrence of the cross-cultural transmission of Christian popular culture from the Anglophone contexts to the Taiwanese context, as well as how social, political, religious, and literary realms interact and generate the observed phenomena. This thesis provides empirical evidence for the influence of American Christian culture on Taiwan and also sheds some light on contemporary Sino-Christian culture from a literary angle.

In the theoretical sense, my findings and analysis negotiate differences between Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, Bourdieu's theory of culture, and Luhmann's social systems theory through integrating some central elements of the latter two theory sets into polysystem theory. My key argument is that polysystem theory can be applied to examine literary and cultural phenomena in which the institution plays a major role, especially when the institutional efforts tend to adhere to a certain belief system. Meanwhile, it would be helpful to incorporate agents' habitus into the system-oriented theoretical framework

while discussing the institutional attempts. By doing so, researchers may be able to weaken the mechanical tendency hinted by system-based theories and bring attention to the agency. Luhmann's theorisation of social systems helps to strengthen my point on the structuralisation and self-containedness of the Christian literary polysystem and also enables me to critically reflect on the vantage points from which the systems are examined and described. In this way, this study should give a counter-response to scholars' claim for the replacement of polysystem theory by non-systems approaches and discover an alternative route for the application of polysystem theory by integrating other theories to complement it. It goes in the opposite direction of Gouanvic's (2005, p.149) statement that '[i]t is necessary, then, for polysystem theory to be completely reevaluated in the context of Bourdieu's social theory, to the point where polysystem theory might have to renounce its own paradigm in order to accommodate that of Bourdieu'. Rather, my discussion hopefully rehabilitates polysystem theory by borrowing other theories to make additions and improvements to it.

Indeed, each theory has pros and cons, and we can find overlaps between different theories. In my discussion, I have drawn some parallels between the theoretical elements of polysystem theory and those of each of the other two theories. In comparing Bourdieu and Luhmann, Inghilleri (2005, p.141) comments that the theories of both entail reflexivity. Certainly, the most significant contrast between these two theories is that while Bourdieu considers that society 'presupposes struggles between dominated and dominant fields

that are inhabited by significant agents and institutions' (ibid.), Luhmann's conceptualisation of modern society as composed of different systems states 'the insignificance of agency' (ibid., p. 142). My adoption of Luhmann's ideas of first-order and second-order observations to investigate Christian agents' behaviours and present my meta-discussion is based on the fact that it employs a systemic perspective towards the observed subjects as polysystem theory does.

As byproducts of structures and systemised activities, various types of norms in the Christian literary polysystem were also delineated in my discussion. Importantly, the tentative regularity of these agents' behaviours should be understood as in Toury's following statement: 'Consistency in translational behaviour is thus a *graded* notion which is neither nil (i.e., total erraticness) nor 1 (i.e., absolute regularity); its extent should emerge at the end of a study as one of its conclusions, rather than being supposed' (1995, p.67, emphasis in original).

When considering Christian-themed fiction as a genre that bears foreignness in both the religious and literary senses in Taiwan, one may want to find out more about the reception of the selected texts through general readers' reviews and compare them with those gathered in the source context. In the earlier stage of my research, I drew on some representative customers' reviews on Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk to analyse how my chosen texts have been perceived in the Anglophone contexts and further compared the Taiwanese readers' reviews with them. Such a method has already been adopted by some

researchers to conduct studies on readers' responses (Gutjahr, 2002; Aubry, 2009). My rudimentary discussion showed interesting contrasts between how these texts have been received in the Anglophone world and how they have been received in Taiwan. Nevertheless, due to the length and scope of this thesis, I do not have the chance to further my analysis and include it in the final version of my thesis. I do regard reader response as a potential area to delve into more deeply. It would also be interesting to undertake a systematic reader survey within the Christian community in Taiwan.

Another aspect that would be of interest to researchers, especially those who work in areas related to Sino-Christianity and World Christianity, is whether Taiwan's local Christian works and also those from other nations within the Global South can gradually move towards the centre of Taiwan's Christian literary system. In other words, will someday Taiwan's Christian literary and theological landscapes become less American? I hope this PhD thesis has provided readers with essential information to approach such further questions.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

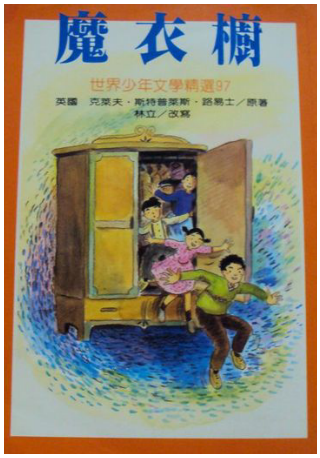
Front cover designs of traditional Chinese character editions of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Chang-Qiao Publishing House (長橋出版社), 1979

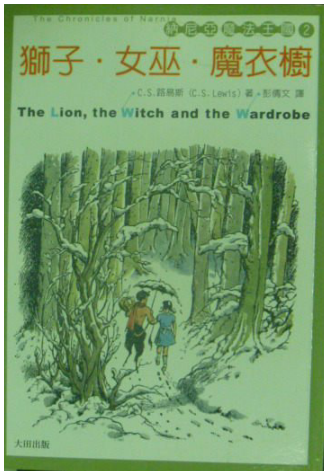
Mandarin Daily News (國語日報出版社), 1974

Tien Wei / Hsiao Lu Publishing Company（天衛[小魯少年文庫]）, 1994

Orient Press（東方出版社）, 1999



Titan Publishing Company (大田出版社), 1st edition, 2002



Titan Publishing Company (大田出版社), 2nd edition, 2005

Titan Publishing Company (大田出版社), 3rd edition, 2014

Appendix 2

Front cover designs of the two traditional Chinese character editions of *Gilead*

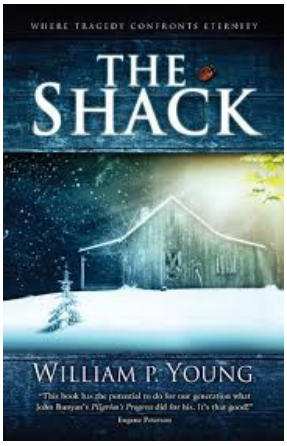
Ten Points Publishing Company (天培文化), 2006

Peripato Culture Studio (漫步文化), 2014

Appendix 3

Front cover designs of the original and the two Chinese editions of *The Shack*

The Shack in English, Windblown Media, 2007



The traditional Chinese character edition of *The Shack*, Solo Press, 2009

The simplified Chinese character edition of *The Shack*, Beijing October Arts & Literature, 2010