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College of Social
Sciences

**Library Wars:
Discourse, Power and Dystopian Young Adult Literature
from the East and West**

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

In the last twenty years, much of the excitement over the rapid development of technology has faded away as it has not provided all the answers to social problems. On the contrary, some problems have become more acute through the use of new technologies, such as the subjugation and monitoring of citizens, a phenomenon this thesis examines in a sample of the many dystopian works written for young adults which have emerged in both the West and the East in the last two decades. These works reveal authors' thoughts about the power structure of human society; their concerns and ideas about the past and present and their expectations about the future of the world.

This thesis is based on a comparative analysis of the contemporary Western and Eastern Dystopian Young Adult Literature (DYAL) from a sociological perspective. The focus will be on issues of information control and censorship in DYAL, because knowledge is one of the main bones of power contention in a dystopian prospect. Based on the theories of sociology of literature and Michel Foucault's theory about discourse and power and a historical review of the development of YAL in the East and West, this research attempts to structure the spatiotemporal attributes of DYAL, and expound the circulated, exchanged and interactive relationship between (D)YAL and society. From this structure, more importantly, a discourse-power mapping framework for analysing dystopian literature has been developed.

Although there have been numerous studies on the Western DYAL, comparative research on the Western and Eastern DYAL has been scarce. Hence, three representative dystopian YA works from USA (*The Great Library* series, Rachel Caine, 2015), Japan (*Library Wars* series, Hiro Arikawa, 2006) and China (*Infernal Affairs*, Sizhe Zangyi, 2014) were selected to be analysed with the framework in order to discuss the discourse-power relationship; the political ideas and social concerns shown in works from different cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the results of the qualitative research on the Western and Eastern reader groups' discussions have been included in the comparative analysis of the works. This sheds light on both authors' and readers' thoughts about discourse-power structure and the

future prospect of human society inside and outside DYAL.

This thesis aims to demonstrate the sociological issues around DYAL from a different theoretical scope. The study may provide an effective framework for the researchers in this field and could be applicable to further educational conversations. Hence, this research has realistic and practical importance not only for scholars and educators in YA literature, but also for the sociologists who are interested in youth culture in the digital era.

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Author's Declaration

“I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.”

Printed Name: Lan Ma

Signature: _____

Abbreviations and Glossary

ASPC	Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign (China, 1983)
BL	Boys' Love (Story)
CCA	Comics Code Authority
CL	Children's Literature
CNNIC	China Internet Network Information Center
CPC	Communist Party of China
CR	Cultural Revolution (China, 1966-1976)
(D)YAL	(Dystopian) Young Adult Literature
GAPP	General Administration of Press and Publication (China)
GFW	Great Fire Wall (China)
GL	Girls' Love (Story)
IL	Internet Literature
MAPP	Motion Picture Association of America (USA)
SFW	<i>Science Fiction World</i> (a Chinese magazine)
SHDF office	The Office of Eliminating Pornography and Suppressing Illegality in GAPP (known as 'Sao Huang Da Fei Bangongshi' in Chinese, SHDF office)
SoL	the Sociology of Literature
RPG	Role-playing Game
Sci-fi	Science Fiction

Library Wars:

LFA	Library Freedom Act
MBA	Media Betterment Act
MBC	Media Betterment Committee

Chapter 1

Introduction

This introductory chapter begins by briefly exploring the background and context of the research in order to show the rationale for the purpose and research questions of this thesis. Next, the methodology adopted in the study is presented, followed by a guide through goals of each of the chapters.

1.1 A Fractured World, a Changed Era

When this research started in 2015, effects of the PRISM¹ crisis were still being felt. People started to realize the threats and risks brought by high-technology in the digital era. As the study came to its end in 2019, it was the 20th year since the birth of ‘Great Firewall of China’ (GFW), a wall on the Internet to ‘protect national security’ by censoring and blocking access to selected foreign websites².

The Chinese central government increased the efforts to punish the illegal VPNs³ in summer 2017 and dozens of ‘ladders’ lost efficacy. At the same time, a teenager’s comment widely spread on Weibo⁴ that read ‘before I was born, the wall already existed’ renewed Chinese people’s concern on the Internet censorship: if the millennial generation is already used to something existing since they were born, will they consider the isolation of Chinese Internet from the world as a natural and normal thing? Furthermore, there were rumors that the Chinese government was planning to export the technology of GFW to any country with an interest in it. On social media, people wondered, did this mean more

¹ PRISM: the clandestine and controversial anti-terrorism mass electronic surveillance data mining program launched by American and British governments.

² <https://www.greatfirewallofchina.org/>

³ VPN: Virtual Private Network, also called as ‘ladder’ among Chinese people, which is mainly used to connect foreign websites (Google, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.) in China.

⁴ Weibo: The largest Chinese Social media website

countries would be ‘protected’ as ‘isolated islands’ from a global Internet?

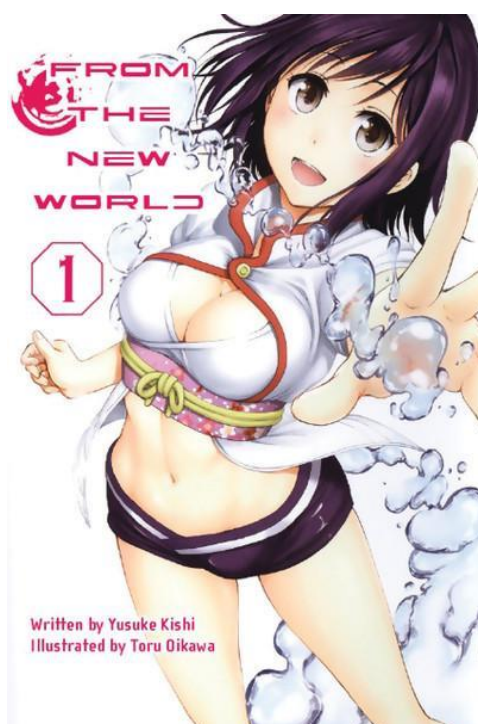
Beyond debates about freedom in the digital era, the technology revolution is continuing to happen with further advances that may mean embedding microchips into human brains, or self-developed Artificial Intelligence (AI). The futurist Ray Kurzweil believes that in 2029, AI will achieve human levels of intelligence, while in 2045 there will be a new ‘singularity’ of human civilization (Galeon and Reedy, 2017: n.p.). Will these things mean the liberation of humanity, or, as described in some science fiction (Sci-fi), will they push humankind into a technological totalitarian world? This debate has also become a focus of online discussion. Once the excitement and imagined wonders of a global digital age in the new century began to cool down, more discordant notes started to appear. What kind of future will the development of technology bring? The answer continues to be uncertain.

Throughout human history, governments have often controlled information and knowledge under the guise of protection. These controls tend to appear in two forms: monitoring, which may violate people’s privacy; and censorship, which mainly focuses on the sensitive content of media. With modern technology speeding up the sharing of information, the phenomenon of monitoring and censorship also has become more common in every aspect of people’s lives.

The first form, monitoring, can be illustrated by cases such as PRISM in the West and Skynet in China. It is mainly used to defend national security. The second form, censorship, is a very broad concept for which abundant examples can be listed. When it comes to reading and literature, some famous cases have been the censorship on books, such as *Ulysses* (Joyce, 1922), *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (Lawrence, 1928) and *Slaughterhouse-Five* (Vonnegut, 1969). *The Bluest Eye* (Morrison, 1970) has also been frequently challenged or banned from middle school and high school classrooms since its publication because of parents’ protests or educators’ concerns (Lalami, 2014). The United States also enacted strict censorship on comics a long time ago through the Comics Code Authority⁵. In the East, due to the traditional cultural contexts and special political environments (which tend

⁵ From 1950s to 1990s, CCA is the factual censor for the USA comic book industry (Adkinson, 2008).

to tie the culture to national ideologies), censorship in China is much stricter than in most other countries. For instance, some Chinese Acts in recent years do not allow ‘any real ghost to appear in movies’, or ‘any explicit description about sexuality in novels online’.⁶ At the same time, all books have to submit an application form to be censored before publication, in order to get an authorized ‘issue number’. The environment for sensitive issues in the media is much more open in China’s neighbour, Japan. Influenced by Western ideas after WWII, with a content rating system, books and movies including sexual or bloody content generally could be published. However, after Tokyo’s application for the 2020 Olympics was successful, the government decided to clean up some of the controversial publications, mainly books including porn content (Yang, 2014: n.p.).



Figuer 1-1: The cover of *From the New World* (manga, vol.1, Kishi and Oikawa, 2012)

The girls in many Japanese manga and animations tend to be shown as young and scantily dressed, even in some books actually addressing serious issues (as in this dystopian work). This phenomenon always causes disputes. It is one reason that the Chinese government takes a negative attitude and enacts strict censorship on the publishing of Japanese comics. In the West, some of these images are considered to be close to ‘child porn’, although in fact most of the characters are supposed to be over 16 years old.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, with the rapid development of the Internet, governments have increased censorship on online content posted by individuals. In 2015, professor Hockx pointed out that the ‘Chinese government still strictly regulates the publishing world, yet it is growing increasingly tolerant of Internet literature and its

⁶ In 2018, some Chinese game designers received a new request from GAPP that the player can not kill the other player in the game, even though game belongs to war strategy, because ‘it isn’t beneficial to a harmonious society’. However, some comments online believed that the comment was just the excuse of the department to charge more fees. The criteria of censorship in China are mostly indistinct, therefore, passing the censoring or not depends on many unpredictable factors.

publishing practices while still drawing a clear yet ever-shifting ideological bottom line.’⁷ Nevertheless, when it came to 2017, the controls on Chinese Internet literature also became much tighter. Another recent example is the NetzDG law passed in Germany, ‘(which) demands social media sites move quickly to remove hate speech, fake news and illegal material. Sites that do not remove “obviously illegal” posts could face fines of up to 50m euro (£44.3m).’ (BBC news, 2018: n.p.). Some responses online are further concerned that under such new policies, companies will abuse authority (e.g. control or delete posts more than necessary) to avoid troubles.

At present, most countries consider that controls on information are necessary for protecting children and juveniles, or for resisting terrorism. However, it is lack of effective measures to limit the border of controls. When the restraint is lost, the results of controls might become unpredictable. There is never a shortage of concerns around this issue. One notable embodiment of those worries is dystopian literature, which began to appear in the late 19th century, impacted by the negative influence of Industrial Revolution. The first wave of dystopian literature started in the early 20th century, represented by *We* (Zamyatin, 1921), *Brave New World* (Huxley, 1931), *1984* (Orwell, 1949), and *Fahrenheit 451* (Bradbury, 1953). The negative conjectures about both aspects of information control mentioned above were significantly reflected in these books.

Throughout the 20th century, numerous dystopian novels dealt with topics related to control and censorship. The list of dystopian literature on Wikipedia displays more than 100 books. At the same time, as Moylan points out: ‘in a more diffused manner, works that shared the cultural ambience of the dystopian imagination (though sometimes with ambiguity or irony) appeared on the realist or modernist margins of mainstream fiction...Albeit in a more popular direction, a clear dystopian tendency developed within SF...and continued to recent.’(2000: p.121). Since the beginning of the new century, as represented by the popularity of The *Hunger Games* trilogy (Collins, 2008), the fictions focusing on dystopian issues boomed into a second wave in the West, mainly within the range of young adult literature (YAL). In both East and West, as the social environment becomes more turbulent,

⁷ <https://www.soas.ac.uk/news/newsitem100548.html>

the number of cultural products implicating critical realism also rises. For instance, in the last three years, the number of short stories with dystopian elements posted on Chinese Internet has distinctly increased.

There is no doubt that these works have had a great influence on generations of people worldwide. Cultural media have always played the role of bridges between civilizations and mirrors of reality. No matter how strict the controls become, if individuals are determined, they can still cross over the forbidden boundaries to explore the world by means of cultural media. Early in the 18th century, a French publishing censor said, ‘if a person only can read the books which were formally approved by the government, he will lag behind the others one century’ (Karolidis, 1999: n.p.). In the most trying times during the Cold War, there were still numerous Chinese people who secretly listened to ‘enemy units’ – for which they could be sentenced to death – to enjoy the banned entertainment, to learn knowledge, or even learn foreign languages (Huang, 2010). Recent research (Ma and Fang, 2016) called Chinese Fansub groups of Japanese animation ‘fire thieves’⁸, because these groups translate and distribute foreign resources online illegally – in fact, it does not limit to Japanese animation. Chinese Fansub groups appeared in the late 1990s and still are active at present. They are mostly constituted by young people (mainly students studying overseas in the early period), who work for free out of passion. The groups translated a large number of manga, animation, TV series and movies from Japan, USA and Europe. Most of those foreign works have never been issued into China officially because of a variety of reasons. Even for those films formally introduced into China, there are many comments which consider the Chinese official versions are generally worse than the Fansub groups’ ones, because some translators of the official versions are not familiar with the works. They only obtained the job through connections with the licensees. However, problems of funds and copyrights beset all the Fansub groups constantly. With the development of technology, the means to connect with the outside world are increasing, while becoming more flexible and difficult to control completely.

⁸ It is a metaphor of the Prometheus legend.

All the conflicts between freedom and control mentioned above, and their reflection in literature, reveal the close connections between culture, technology, and politics. Culture and literature in particular, can never be isolated from reality. This viewpoint has been expounded by many literary theorists and sociologists, which could be traced back to Bonald's expression that 'Literature is the expression of society' (1802). All the historical facts, including those mentioned above, are the basis to comprehend the origin and content of texts, as well as to interpret their social impact.

Thus, one cannot understand the bloom of dystopian YA literature (DYAL) nowadays without looking at contemporary global politics and technologies. On the other hand, with the present world relapsing into animosity and unrest again, the post-cold-war generation is becoming more perplexed. Reading DYAL can be a meaningful coping mechanism for their growth and socialization. As Moylan (2000: p.xvii) argues,

(The) readerly trips can lead to an involvement with the design, portrayal, and investigation of an imagined society that involves a provisionally totalizing grasp of an entire social logic and an entire way of life...

...Imaginatively and cognitively engaging with such (dystopian) works can bring willing readers back to their own worlds with new or clearer perceptions, possibly helping them to raise their consciousness about what is right and wrong in that world, and even to think about what is to be done, especially in concert with others, to change it for the better.

Based on this thread, I believe that if we can use historical and sociological perspectives as the objects of reference to analyse literature, specifically dystopian literature, it could contribute to a deeper understanding of texts and new insights. On the other hand, constructing a sociological analytical framework relating to dystopian literature might be useful to help young readers understand the texts and critically reflect on the real world. These are the primary standpoints of this research.

1.2 Motivations for the Research and Research Questions

The primary aim of this research emerged from my personal life experience. I grew up in a house strongly associated with a Chinese local official newspaper. Throughout my childhood, I heard many references to censorship. After graduating with a degree in Sociology, I was recruited by a Chinese publishing house as an editor of children's and YA literature. In the five years I worked there, I edited dozens of foreign books, introducing them to China. During this period, I came to a deeper realization of the influence of censorship on the production processes of literature, as well as its impact on writers and readers. By contrast, as a big fan of Internet literature (IL), I had noticed how the situation of Chinese literature had changed rapidly over the past 20 years. Compared with the traditional publishing industry which has always been under strict controls, the Chinese IL domain experienced a relatively free period in the 2000s. However, since then it has faced increasingly tightened censorship, with an impact on the lives and practices of many Chinese authors and readers.

Based on these experiences, I became deeply aware of the intense conflicts of discourse between different generations and different groups in China, its manifest in this cultural field, and its effects on the younger generation. This growing awareness then fed my interest to explore further, in order to understand this phenomenon from an academic perspective.

My ideas have changed throughout the research process. In the beginning, the concerns of this study were mostly about understanding how young people think about the technology and process of publishing; about the changes caused by digital innovations, and about the controls on information exercised by the government shown in fictions. As the research progressed, however, it became apparent that it was still more important to understand the literature itself firstly. Without a deep understanding of the works themselves (including the authors' thinking revealed in them), one could not fully comprehend readers' responses and analyse them together critically. I first chose Sci-fi as the target genre for tackling the issues mentioned above, because Sci-fi is the genre that includes most literary works

focusing on the different hypothesis about the results taken by the development of technologies, including information control in societies. Nevertheless, after reviewing literature related to this field and to young readers within it, I soon found the range was too wide for a doctoral study. Therefore, I refined the scope to look at ‘dystopian young adult literature’ – which seemed a more precise topic for the study. Meanwhile, given that previous research involving Eastern DYAL are still limited, I decided to include a comparative dimension to my study, building on my knowledge of languages to include Japanese and Chinese dystopian YA fictions in my analysis.

At the same time as I redefined my topic, I felt that a linguistic analysis would not be satisfactory. I became interested in going deeper into the texts to look for what might be ‘hidden’ behind the words. I was impressed by Applebaum’s argument (2009) on the impact of technologies on Sci-fi narratives and the influence of texts on readers, all of which inspired me to think about the internal relationships and connections between social environments, publications, authors and readers. This also led me to look for research paths through other perspectives, such as sociology and history. Because this all meant breaking new grounds, I needed to explore beyond the field of literature study and to try to create a genuinely interdisciplinary methodology.

Several scholars before me have tried to use fiction as a source of sociological data. For example, Marjorie DeVault (1990) used novels to compare readers’ collective understanding with the author’s intention for the same work. However, the focus of that research was politics and law, which somewhat deviated from a fully sociological perspective. In the last 20 years, there has not been enough sociological research involving YAL to support a ready-made methodology for this text analysis. Therefore, I had to search for or to create an adaptable theoretical approach for this study.

After experimenting with several sociological research perspectives, I came to theories around the sociology of literature and knowledge. Those theories were flourishing in the Cold War period, though most were abandoned in the waves of postmodern inquiries.

Nevertheless, I was inspired by those theories, particularly Michel Foucault's arguments about discourse, knowledge and power, which are exactly relevant to the key issues that I had in mind. Based on these theories, I further narrowed the scope of the study to the discourse-power relationship inside and outside DYAL, and established some primary concepts of my own analysis framework.

The main aim of the thesis is to explore the Western and Eastern contemporary dystopian YA literature from a sociological angle in order to understand how social and cultural elements influence these works. I will focus on selected texts and on readers' responses from three countries: China, Japan and the United States, each a representative of their respective geo region.

My overarching questions are the following:

What is the role of censorship, power and knowledge in these DYAL texts?

In what ways are the social and cultural experiences of authors and readers reflected in their views of dystopia?

Based on the framework developed in Chapter 2, these questions will be analysed from three perspectives:

- 1) Historical and social contexts: the impact of the external environment on the creative processes of writing DYAL;
- 2) Text analysis: a comparison between the content of Western and Eastern DYAL based on selected texts;
- 3) Readers' responses: young adult's perspectives on contemporary DYAL from China, Japan and the United States.

Among these, the first sub-question is the foundation for discussing the second and third ones; while the third one supports a deeper understanding of the first and second

sub-questions, driving to the final conclusions of the research. Therefore, the following chapters of this thesis will focus on these three perspectives. Three dystopian YA texts from three representative countries (USA, Japan and China) are used to discuss the second and third aspects in detail. In addition, the research also applies empirical analysis to the relationship between society and dystopian YAL: the society outside the texts, and inside the texts. The discourse-power relationship is the internal driver of the analysis throughout the whole research.

1.3 Research Structure

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter two sets the theoretical foundation of the study. It starts with a historical review on the sociological theories of literature. Based on that, a general framework was summed up for describing the relationship and interactions among the sections of the production process of cultural works. The conception about the special spatiotemporal characteristics of contemporary dystopian literature thereby was suggested, as the foundation of the whole study. After that, a further review on the development of the concepts around utopia and dystopia was given, while the research scope was defined more accurately.

Chapter three describes the research design and methodology adopted in this study in detail. It includes the justification for selecting the three texts selected for further analysis. It also presents the theories used to develop the analytical framework for the literary works and the use of grounded theory in the empirical analysis. The challenges and reflections upon ethical issues raised by the study are also considered in this chapter.

Chapter four and five take a journey backwards in the history of American, Japanese and Chinese (D)YAL, which could be seen as the practice of the theory shown in Chapter 2 - to think about (D)YAL from sociological perspectives. The powerful influence of different social environments on the local authors' writing is demonstrated, particularly the effects of censorship. The internal relationship between dystopian literature and the society where it is born thereby is primarily revealed. Furthermore, considering the limit number of current Western and Eastern studies on Chinese (D)YAL, the details given in these two chapters may fill a blank in this field.

In Chapter six, the analysis takes a different perspective to discuss societies in (D)YAL. The details of three specific fictions from USA, Japan and China are reviewed. Meanwhile, the framework refined from Foucault's theories on power and

discourse is employed. Hence, the relationship between DYAL and society is further and clearly revealed.

In the final chapter, some crossing points displayed in the Western and Eastern DYAL are comparatively discussed. The data of two focus groups is incorporated in the analysis. Therefore, a deeper relationship among society, writer, text and reader is revealed.

This research adopts “Library Wars” as the title for two reasons: firstly, it is the name of one of the fictional works analysed in this study⁹; secondly, the library as a space is usually a symbol of the protection of freedom of knowledge. It often represents a space where the collision between different powers happens and when censorship occurs, the library can become a war zone for the freedom of speech. This situation has been described in many dystopian YA fictions and has become a representative theme of DYAL.

In this study, the footnote system will be used in combination with a formal reference system. In case that Western researchers might not be familiar with the states of Eastern (D)YAL, the footnotes will be intentionally clearer to facilitate understanding. Besides, since there are many materials cited from the Internet, some paper quotes have no page numbers.

⁹ The English version of manga used 'Library Wars', but the Film and Wiki used 'Library War'. I adopted manga name to refer to the work in this thesis.

Chapter 2

The Sociological Thoughts Related to Dystopian Society and Dystopian Literature

Introduction

This chapter aims to set a theoretical foundation for the study. The chapter begins with the review back to the diverse theories of the Sociology of Literature (SoL) in history, for understanding how early scholars explained the relationship between literature, authors and their social background. Based on that, a sociological framework about the creating process of literature which connects writer, publisher and reader will be suggested. As a deduction, the concept of spatiotemporal characteristics of (D)YAL will be assumed, which will lay a foundation for this study. The second part returns to the review of concepts related to utopia and dystopia, as well as the brief review of their changes over time, for defining the conception and scope of this study clearer. The last section especially focuses on the thinking of Foucault's theories about discourse and power. Following that, the concepts of power field and group power will be provided, which will help for contributing the framework for analysing texts in the later chapters.

2.1 Literature in Sociological Perspective

In the long history of both West and East, there were abundant discourses connecting literature to its social background. In the West, it can be traced back to the time of Plato and Aristotle, who described the effects of art and literature on society and humanity¹⁰. In the East, in early 300 BCE, Mencius pointed out that appreciation of objective circumstances was necessary for understanding an author's works – from social, political, cultural, ethnic and geographic perspectives. His viewpoints had been developed initially

¹⁰ Reference: Plato, *'The Republic'* and Aristotle, *'Poetics'*

in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (Liu Xie, A.D. 501), in which it can find out many common points of convergence with the Western positivist literary critical theories 1500 years later. However, most of the contemporary Chinese studies in the field of SoL are basing on the Western theories (including Russian ones), but did not develop their original and complete theory system. Therefore, the following review will mainly focus on the development of Western theories.

Since the 18th century, with the development of capitalism, the relationship between literature and society had raised specific questions in the field of literary criticism and philosophy. Thinkers, ranging from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Friedrich Schiller, constructed the foundations of modern SoL theories. The writings of Madame de Stael and Louis de Bonald also embedded the nascent concept of SoL. Madame de Stael (1800) believed that we should analyse literary works from social and historical perspectives - including political, philosophical and religious effects of the literature - in its own time beyond consideration of the authors' individual lives and talents (Fang, 2011). Louis de Bonald (1796) also argued that 'literature is the expression of a society'. Since then, many sociologists further developed more detailed theories around the relationship between individual artistic consciousness and society. Among them, Auguste Comte's positive philosophy, Max Weber's sociology of religion, and Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge had a huge influence on the subsequent development of SoL. However, as Wolf Lepenies' work (1988) showed, 'the distinctive roles of sociology and literature, their different functions and tasks assumed a diverse nuance in different countries' (Longo, 2015: p.54).

In fact, there is not an exact and commonly accepted definition of 'the Sociology of Literature'. Griswold described it as an amoeba: 'it lacks a firm structure, but has flowed along in certain directions nevertheless' (1992: p.455). Although it did not formally become an independent subject until the early 20th century, the sociologists of the 19th century had already presented multiple lines of enquiry. For example, Wilhelm Scherer (1880) argues that literary works are the conjoint productions of individuals and society; therefore, people should study literary and art works in three key dimensions: the author's

living experience (*Erlebtes*), what he/she had learnt (*Erlernstes*), and the things he/she inherited (*Erebtstes*). His thought followed Auguste Comte's and Hippolyte Taine's positivist thinking around art works, and became one of the origins of positivist school in the Sociology of Literature.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, sociologists provided a variety of research schools and methodologies for studying literature. In 1931, Ernest Kohn-Bramstedt in his article '*The Problems of Sociology of Literature*' noted that 'basically, there are only two main approaches to explain literary works: the connotation (source, content, structure), and the function' (Fang, 2010: n.p.). From him to the later sociologists such as Levin L. Schucking and Robert Escarpit, their emphasis was always on the connection between literary works and the social classes of audiences (readers). They hence attempted to show in the process of creating a book, how the authors, agencies (sponsor, press, critics) and readers work and interact.

If taking a historical review, it can find out that after the 1940s, the Sociology of Literature developed to two quite different directions in the West. The following summary is partly refined from Fang's series papers (2014) around this field, the chapter 'Social and cultural theory and literature' in *Routledge Handbook of Social and Cultural Theory* (Elliott, 2014), and some other sociologists' papers on sociology of literature (The details are referred to in the bibliography at the end of this thesis).

In the empiricist camp, the field generally followed the route of positivism. Researchers tended to use positivist research methodology to make up for the shortcomings of the studies of literature, but with less discussion from the perspective of aesthetics and linguistics of texts themselves. In the socialist camp, the relative traces of the concerns on historical and social dimensions of art could be found in the early researchers' methodologies before the 1920s. However, with the rise of the Soviet Union, the empirical studies were oppressed in this camp, while Marx's and Engels' theories of ideology, class and materialism came to play a striking role in the socialist literary theories. Nevertheless, from the 1950s, new sociological thinking was developed in Eastern Europe, which tried to involve empiricism again for reversing the biased trend of metaphysical studies on literature in some socialist countries.

Looking back at the representative early scholars' theories in this field, it can be observed that they focus on some common points. In 1921, Paul Merker tried to define the concept of 'a new sociological methodology on literature', which differed from existing literature studies focusing on aesthetics at that time. He suggested five focus points in this methodology: the popular styles of the time; the relationship between production and consumption; theories of poetics and literary phenomena; the impact of foreign literature; the worldviews of the time (mostly from a philosophical perspective) and their influence on culture. Literature is always, he insisted, 'the real mirror image of the mainstream worldview of the era' (cited from Fang, 2010: n.p.). After him, Levin Ludwig Schucking researched 'literary taste' from a sociological perspective, and explored the reasons for the popularity of works in some specific periods. He (1923) pointed out, 'literary taste is restricted by the particular time, culture and society' (cited from Fang, 2010: n.p.), and clearly contributed the three elements to SoL: *creation* (the writer), *spread* (the agency/publisher), and *consumption* (the reader). Following his thought, Eric Rothacker (1931) argued that 'The changes of cultural taste and popular style are not from "(their) inherent regularity", but always from the class which was silent before. The changes show the values of the class, to resist the dominant values...These changes are influenced by diverse social movements' (cited from Fang, 2010: n.p.).

Besides them, there were also many other sociologists who had suggested their constructive thoughts to this field, which explained the relationship between literature and society from different angles. For example, Karl Viëtor (1934) emphasized that art and literature are created for humanity, and therefore can only exist in the field of society (cited from Fang, 2010: n.p.): Changes in a social system could influence the existing forms of art and literature, and different works address different classes of audience. On the other hand, the receivers of the works also could affect the author's choices of source materials and issues. Thereby, it also could be explored that how literature and art change a social group's attitudes, lifestyles, morality and aesthetics, and how then to create a new 'group reality'. Georg Lukács (1947) followed Marx's historical and sociological critique to research the aesthetics of cultural works, and considered the 'human' as the core of art's meaning, while only the 'form' of art and literature lies chiefly in the bond between the

creator (writer) and receiver (reader). Arnold Hauser (1951) also emphasized art is the production of society, while society is the production of art, too.

Robert Escarpit (1972) considered literature as a kind of social activity. He researched the process of literary activity, including creating, censoring and editing (selection), publishing, selling, consuming and reading. He highlighted three dimensions of the literary experience: individual intelligence (writers), abstract structure (works), and collective consciousness (readers). He especially paid attention to the effect of the third dimension (collective), which was always neglected in literary research. After him, Lucein Goldmann further expressed that, ‘All the human behaviors are the attempts to meaningful responses to some specific states’ (cited from Duan and Niu, 1989: n.p.). ‘Transindividual’ (classes, groups, collectives, societies) constitutes the base of his theory. He supposed a ‘literature-society’ paradigm, and rejects the purely empiricists-positivist styles of analysis. However, at the same period, Theodor Adorno disagreed with Lucács’ view of realism. He emphasized that the sociological meaning of works of literature was to be found in the form and language and structure of literary works themselves. He saw capitalist society as a total system in which art is in a permanently dialectical relation to the forces of production, consumption, and subject-formation, including unconscious ones (cited from Fang, 2010: n.p.).

Through the review above, it can be found that though the sociologists have different focal points, and sometimes disagree with the others’ theories and methodologies, there still remain some common points throughout their thinking, which could be summed up in the following figure:

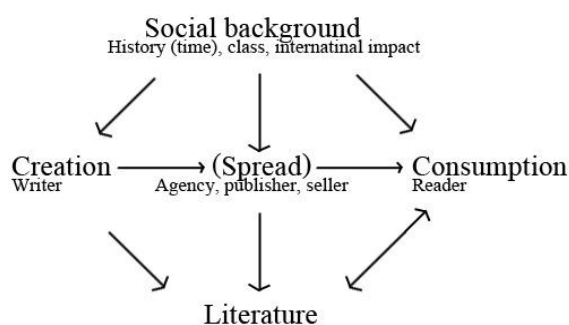


Figure 2-1: A primary framework (A) about the relationship among the sections in publishing, from the perspective of SoL

It could be summed up that, generally, the early sociologists in this field (SoL) consider literature as a historical and social effect. All the subjects involved in the production process of a book are influenced and limited by their social background: from the materials and languages which the writers choose, to the ways that agencies and publisher choose the manuscripts and design the books, as well as the ways that readers select and understand books. The social environment also influences literary change in different eras, including the recognition of authors and readers in specific times and places. All of these external aspects are inextricably bound to the social customs and norms, time characteristics, and so forth of a culture. The complete concept of a book only can be formed from this multidimensional perspective.

However, in the middle 20th century, the work and ideas of some famous literary theorists seem totally opposed to the sociology of literature. For example, Rene Wellek, who tried to explore the universal nature of literature, argued that ‘it is important to think of literature as a totality and to trace the growth and development of literature without regard to linguistic distinctions... Yet literature is one, as art and humanity are one; and in this conception lies the future of historical literacy studies’ (1953: pp.49-50). Wellek suggested that readers should retain as many responses as possible when doing text interpretation, in order to avoid the limitation of any fixed ideology.

Over the same period, Roland Barthes also argued in favour of understanding literature ‘non-ideologically’. He and some other literary theorists considered that literature studies should focus on the internal content (which is mostly revealed by linguistics). They believed the great writers and their works are occasional and random appearances, but not direct and inevitable historical results. Although his emphasis was different from Wellek’s, both their theories implied that the sociologists’ studies could not grasp the nature of literature (Fang, 2010: n.p.).

In 1967, Barthes declared the concept of the ‘death of the author’ (Fang, 2010: n.p.). He argued that it is a ‘language’ but not an ‘author’ that speaks in the text (Elliott, 2014: p.288). Moreover, when the work is finished, the author is ‘dead’ (hidden); at the same

time, the reader is born. Actually, ‘the reader’ also becomes a phantom, while the language itself (text) is freed. He also argued that the values of literature are created during the dialogues between the reader and the work (the interaction in the text). Following this theory, Umberto Eco developed his historical analysis of the evolution of the reader as intrinsic to the work (Elliott, 2014: p.289). Later in 1969 and 1971, Foucault raised the concepts of ‘author-individual’ and ‘author-function’, which arise from his groundbreaking theories of power and discourse – which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. His theories overturned the authors’ absolute dominance over the texts adhered to in certain styles of classical criticism (Fang, 2010: n.p.).

It is interesting to think deeper about those conflicts that happened in the middle of the 20th century – among sociologists, or between them and literary theorists. The literary theories represented by Barthes and Wellek exhibited a strongly idealistic trend, which could be associated with the idealistic worldwide social movements arose in that period. Regarding the field of SoL, the conflicts showed distinct traces of early Cold War politics in the confrontations between the empiricist camp and socialist camp. For a time, the field (SoL) in the West seemed to tilt towards an empirical understanding of the subject which excluded any aesthetic value orientation whatsoever, and which considered literature exclusively as a social fact. Nevertheless, contrasting theories soon appeared, represented chiefly by the Frankfurt School, which argued that we should reconsider both the art work’s autonomy and its possible deviation from the prevailing trends in society.

These confrontations among ideologies and the other circumstances of the time restricted the development of the sociology of literature. If compared with each other, almost all the theories at that time show a lack of completeness. Generally, in these respects, I partly agree with Terry Eagleton’s argument (which follows Marxism and considers that literature is a part of social ideologies) – all the texts and even literary theories are conditioned by social and historical factors.¹¹

The literary critic M. H. Abrams has noticed similar problems, which are mentioned in his work *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (1953). He

¹¹ Eagleton, T. (1996) *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. The reason I say ‘partly’ is that I still believe people have the potential to exceed the limitations of their original ideological background. This point will be discussed further later.

combed literary theories before the 1950s, and famously came up with four types of theory: *mimetic*, *pragmatic*, *expressive*, and *objective*. He pointed out that all of these literary theories are basically grounded in four critical reference points, which could be shown as a framework as follow:

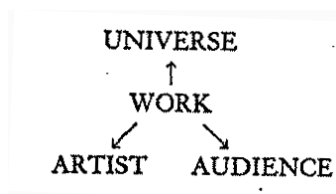


Figure 2-2: Abrams' framework of four elements in the total situation of a work of art (1953: p.6)

It can be seen that Abrams' framework has affinities with my summary of sociological theories (Figure 2-1). His work has had a huge influence on subsequent literary theory in the East and West. It is no doubt that this framework has strong inclusiveness and beautiful conciseness. However, in my personal opinion, Abrams' analysis is still mainly around the relationship between artists and works (in other words, the authors' domination to the works), while the relationship between readers and works is just used as a supporting factor in authors' creating process. Besides, it also lacks the consideration on the influence from the middle stage of the cultural work production (e.g. agencies and publisher).

In my opinion, the contradictions among those early sociological and literary theories mentioned above are not insurmountable barriers. For reviewing more clearly, Figure 2-1 could be developed as follows:

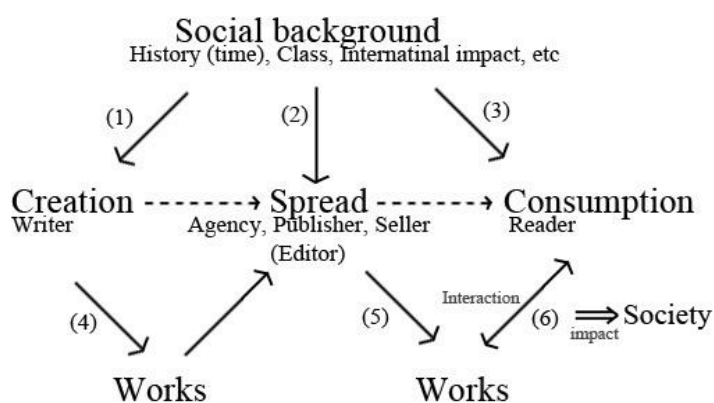


Figure 2-3: A suggested framework (B) of the relationship and interactions among the sections in the producing process of cultural works

I give numbers to different parts of the producing process of cultural works, as above. It could be discovered that most scholars mentioned previously just focus on the different aspects of the whole process. For instance, the literary theorists before the 1950s mostly focus on part (4). They emphasized the authors' internal creativity and autonomy, but ignored or debased the inevitability and importance of the other parts (1-3, 5-6). After the 1960s, for liberating texts, in some literary critical theories, the existence of humans was dispelled in the process (4-6). On the other hand, the sociologists admitted parts (1-3) as the precondition of their research, and made these parts as the emphasis of their expositions. Based on that, they focused on different aspects in parts (4-6). Some of them tended to analyse literature totally as an objective social fact, while the others' thoughts involved humans' subjective initiative as an essential factor in the producing process of books. Turning to the structuralist theories, it can find out that some scholars started to focus on part (6) – the interactions between readers and books, and also the results of those interactions back to the society. Overall, this framework (Figure 2-3) reveals the indivisible relationship between literature, time, human and society. Regardless of the content of the text, it is a fact that none of the books could be produced and exists completely independently from its external environment.

After the 1970s, because of various reasons, people's interest in SoL began to decline. With the rise of postmodern theories – with the core concepts around decentralization, anti-rationalism, deconstructionism, and impact of the changes of world pattern – it seems those early theories of SoL already became antiquated. Nevertheless, there were still some scholars who did not give up the exploration in this field.

Pierre Bourdieu is a very important sociologist from this period. Deploying the conceptual apparatus and methodology of field theory, he gave the concept of 'the field of cultural production', which could be considered as 'a space of possibilities that orients and defines the universe of possible choices and action available to its agents' (Elliott, 2014: p.293). The space is beyond any individual's control, while all the agents with their ownership of

capital and symbolic prestige, habitus, and different dispositions interact with each other as if participating in a ‘game’. Following his theory, Bernard Lahire (2011) explored further and emphasized the particularity of writing as a profession, which decided most writers co-exist in different fields at the same time (p.295). Lahire (2011) also suggested that the habitus is not (or no longer) a system shared by a certain class, but rather an eclectic set of dispositions that are often contradictory, due to non-typical socialization paths in late modernity.

After the 1990s, the Sociology of Literature almost disappeared from people’s views (Elliott, 2014: p.296). On the other hand, more and more literary studies started to adopt a sociological perspective to some extent. In 2010, the journal *New History of Literature* gave a special issue ‘*The Sociology of Literature after “the Sociology of Literature”*’. In the preface, James English discussed the predicaments of this discipline, while introduced various sociologists’ works in recent years, and explored the possibilities of a ‘new’ sociology of literature in the future. Among the essays in this issue, I was attracted by Mark McGurl’s *Ordinary Doom: Literary Studies in the Waste Land of the Present*. He organised the ‘reciprocal illumination’ of sociology and literature around ‘their different orientations to temporality and especially to the concept of modernity’ (English, 2010: p.xvii). He argued that neither discipline could deal with the threats taken by ‘an increasingly unpredictable and terrifying future’, but a new temporal framework could be established through fusing the thoughts from two disciplines to make a possible new field of study. His viewpoints encouraged me to think more about the new possibility of the Sociology of Literature, and partly inspired my thinking about the temporality of literature.

Despite the predicaments of the discipline, the early theories of SoL still have their significance, which should not be undervalued. I would argue that eliminating those theories’ prejudices and considering them comprehensively is the only way to realize the real nature of literature. Literature is never only a combination of vocabulary. It is a truth that people’s social background will influence their actions, their thinking and creation. This term can refer to structuralist theories, such as Foucault’s theory about discourse, and Bourdieu’s theory of habitus (Grenfell, 2013) (though Foucault’s arguments almost totally eliminate humans as the subject of discourse, which I do not necessarily agree with – I will

discuss it further in the following sections). At the same time, literature has its internal randomness and irregularities, which are mostly because of humans' initiative. It means the thoughts shown in the work may not be limited by the author's original social background, but has a possibility to transcend the limitations of reality.

Besides, having worked as a publishing editor for five years, I would emphasize that it also should not ignore the re-creating effects from publishers, agencies and (possible) translators on the literary works. The impact on final books from publishers comes not only from the graphic design, binding and printing process (which is mentioned by Escarpit), but also from the editing process. Particularly during the process of introducing books to foreign countries, changes to the content of the work may be numerous, because of translation or censorship. One example is when some foreign books are introduced into China, including fiction, the sensitive descriptions relating to politics or sexuality generally need to be edited (or deleted) to some degree. If considering under a contemporary background, this list of re-creators probably should also include advertisers, website editors, and so forth. This point is not the focus of this thesis, therefore, I would not expatiate more at present, but it could be worthy for discussion further in the other studies. It will also be interesting to discuss the differences between Internet literature and traditional literature: The process of traditional publishing process decides that it could not ignore the changes and re-creations that happened in the middle stage (editors and agencies). However, Internet literature is mostly like the direct communication between writer and reader. To some extent, it means the author's ideas may be shown more originally and completely to readers - some parts of this point will be discussed further in Chapter 5. In one word, the whole publishing process is a floating process of discourse powers, or the fighting and balancing process of different discourse powers.

Through the reviews and analysis above, I would argue that there is a kind of implicit spatiotemporal attribute existing in the sociological nature of literature - 'Literature' here is a broad-sense conception, including all kinds of works of the creative imagination, such as fiction and nonfiction, manga, poetry, drama, and so forth. In my thinking, literature holds two 'time' properties. The first exists in its external creating process. As argued previously,

in this process, the interpretation of the work may be changed. Most of the time, these changes will be more distinct when the producing process of the work goes across different geographic areas with different cultures. Secondly, the internal content of the work itself has multiple time dimensions. As the sociologists and literary theorists have argued (while borrowing Abrams' metaphors), most literary works are mirrors or lamps to the past or present reality – in this definition, they are hardly gotten out of humans' thoughts and experiences from the past. However, some literary works also own a sense of futurity, particularly when they try to show some pictures about the hypothetical future beyond reality and humans' cognitive boundaries, or even further, to 'support challenges to the status quo by illuminating a set of tactics for future use' (Singer, 2011: p.314). This feature especially appears in 'speculative fictions'.¹² As de Certeau (cited from Ewick & Silbey, 1998: p.220) argues, 'whereas history recounts in the past tense the strategies of instituted powers, these "fabulous" stories offer their audience a repertoire of tactics for future use'. If narrowing the scope to dystopian literature, this point becomes particularly prominent.

The plot is the 'syntax of a certain way of speaking our [temporal] understanding of the world' (Brooks, 1985: n.p.). In almost all dystopian works, it can be found that the plot actually shows the author's concerns about existing social issues (already happened or happening), through the hypothesis of alternate futures, however, the actions of characters (or their answers to the issues) are mainly imagined basing on humans' past experiences. Thus, I would say, dystopian literature particularly has a historical property with three simultaneously temporal dimensions: past, present, and future.

Furthermore, the author's imagination may be not only influenced by his or her country's original culture and history, but also shaped by any cultural or historical factors worldwide. Particularly under the background of the current global information era, this possibility is significantly increased. In my opinion, more and more literary works nowadays are no longer the expression of a specific 'worldview', which is the appearance of a certain

¹² The concept of this category range is raised in the 21st century, which is an umbrella genre encompassing narrative fiction with supernatural or futuristic elements. Generally, it includes fantasy, sci-fi, horror, utopian and dystopian fiction, alternate history, apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction, supernatural fiction, and so forth.

group/class ideology (as Goldmann argues)¹³, but display the conflicts and communications among different cultural groups. This spatial attribute is distinctly shown in the Eastern and Western dystopian YAL, which I will discuss in more detail in the following chapters.

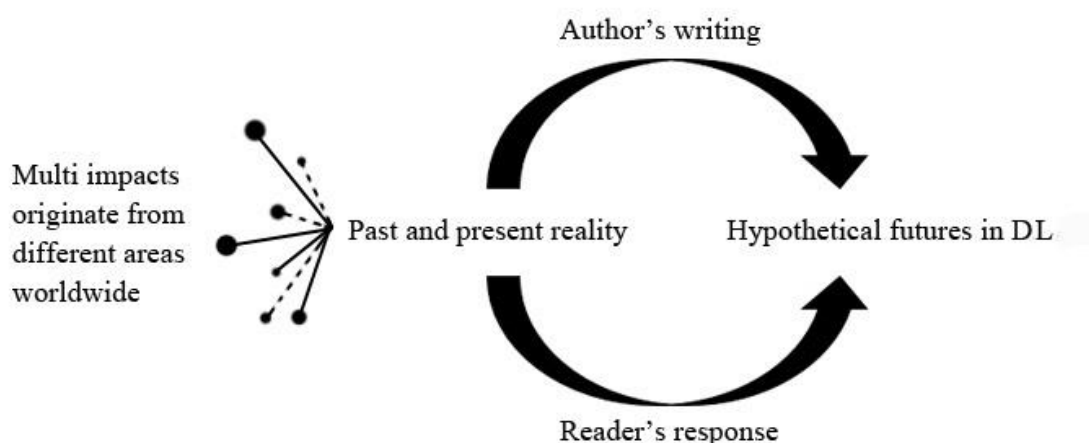


Figure 2-4: The spatiotemporal characteristics of contemporary dystopian literature

At present, there are still limited sociological studies on literature that focus on the text content – the actions and speech of characters, the background setting of the story, the development of plot and so forth – and use them to answer sociological questions. As Rutherford and Crouch point out (Elliott, 2014: p.278), ‘(The sociologists) have had little to say about the work itself. This opposition between the institutional organization of literature and the *work* itself, remains a sore point in sociology’s dialogue with literature.’ On the other hand, though there are plenty of literary studies that involve historical analysis on the author’s background, the plot and so forth, they are not strictly written from sociological angles, and do not use sociological methodologies.

If specific to young adult literature (YAL), the number of this kind of study is much fewer. I only found several papers and books in this field. Roberta S. Trites’ book (2000) *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature* provided a brilliant work on analysing discourse and power issue in the Western YAL, which greatly

¹³ Goldmann believed the worldview of a literary work is actually shared and expressed by a certain group (class), which means ‘the appearance of group ideology’ (Vermander, 2012, cited from Wu, 2012: n.p.).

filled the blank of the field. However, its research angle still differs from my research, and does not involve the comparison between the Western and Eastern texts. This is one reason that led me to write this thesis.

On the other hand, the readers' understanding of the book is based on their own background and values, hence, their interpretations of the work may differ from the author's original thinking. This point has been partly explored in structuralist theories. Nonetheless, there are still some gaps existing in the terms that how the readers from different areas of the world understand the same book, particularly in the present complex social environment; the political conflicts among countries, the number of international trades, and cultural communications are increasing simultaneously, along with the changes of readers' habitus taken by the rapid development of technologies. This point (the comparison among readers' responses to the same work from different cultural groups) is lacking in those early sociologists' analyses. In recent years, there have emerged some literary and educational studies which involve the multicultural reading field, but if specific to the comparison between West and East readers' responses to dystopian YAL, it is still almost a blank for sociological research, which consequently becomes another point of this thesis.

In conclusion, the spatiotemporal characteristics of literature decide the unique relationship and interactions among the sections in the producing process of a book in every certain historical period. For the dystopian YAL at present, many new situations have appeared, including the changes of publishing process (technologies), the social environment, the circulation of publications worldwide, the interactions or conflicts among authors' thinking, readers' understanding and texts (from different cultural backgrounds). These are worthy to be explored more from the sociological perspective.

2.2 From Utopia to Dystopia

From early classic dystopian works such as Zamyatin's *We* or Orwell's *1984*, to contemporary dystopian writings, one of the common features of the fictitious worlds conceived in most of these texts is that the society is in a state of fake utopia. It is also apparent in contemporary dystopian works for young adults (YA) in both the West and the East, like the English works from *The Giver* (Lowry, 1993) to *Divergent* (Roth, 2011); or the Japanese fictions from *Battle Angel Alita* (Kishiro, 1990) to *A Boring World Where the Concept of Dirty Jokes Doesn't Exist* (Akagi and Yuzuki, 2012). The descriptions of the worlds in these texts always include 'utopian' elements, although the whole worlds are terrible – that could be said to be the main reason they are classified to the 'dystopian' literary genre. Therefore, in order to research contemporary dystopian YA literature, it is necessary to have a good understanding the development of conceptions of both utopia and dystopia in these contexts. As discussed in the last section, this could be seen as a part of social background of DYAL authors' creativity.

Many studies discuss the origin of the idea of 'utopia' in the West: This word was created by Thomas More for his work *Utopia* in 1516 (among others: Davis, 1981; Clacys and Sargent, 1999; Coverley, 2010). In 1818, Jeremy Bentham first proposed the word 'cacotopia', as a match for, or opposite of, utopia (Sargent, 2006). Later in 1868, Greg Webber and John Stuart Mill adopted the word 'dystopia' first time (Coverley, 2010). Since then, utopia and dystopia are always considered as two sides of the same coin, in the sense that both refer to a fictitious 'ideal' society.

As Vieira (cited from Clacys, 2010: p.3) argues, at its point of origin, 'Utopia' was just a lexical neologism, 'but over the centuries, after the process of deneologization, its meaning changed many times, and it has been adopted by authors and researchers from different fields of study, with divergent interests and conflicting aims.' The status of 'dystopia' is similar. At present, both utopian and dystopian ideas possess multiple interdisciplinary

meanings, drawn from many studies across literature and arts to cinema, politics, sociology, philosophy and even psychology. In the context of this specific research, the scope for discussing and defining them will be confined to sociology and literature.

There exists a long history of utopian and dystopian ideas using literature as an international medium. Though the earliest books referencing utopia and dystopia might be considered to be mostly religious works, such as the Bible or the Chinese *Tao Te Ching*, the bulk of utopian and dystopian writing is found within literary fictions. Hence although modern academic research about utopia began with the work of Karl Mannheim, Ernst Bloch, Krishnan Kumar and some other great sociologists in the early 20th century, most studies relevant to this enquiry have emerged from the literary field since the 1970s, contributing abundant and important theories for our understanding of the genre.

Basically, utopia originally means ‘nowhere’ or ‘no-place’, something that has tended since More to be construed as a ‘good’ or ‘ideal’ place. In contrast, dystopia means a ‘bad’ place (Carey, 1999: p.xi). Leading Western scholars have provided more detailed definitions and interpretations, such as Darko Suvin, Gregory Claeys, Lyman Tower Sargent, Raymond Williams, Tom Moylan, Peter Filling. In the 1970s, Raymond Williams (1978: p.54) summarized fictions that have been grouped as utopian / dystopian. He considered that Paradise and the Hell as only are rarely utopian or dystopian, because they are inherently universal and timeless, thus commonly beyond the conditions of any imaginable ordinary human or worldly life. On the other hand, a utopian or dystopian world usually has the characteristic mode which is ‘willed transformation’. He emphasized the importance of ‘technological transformation’, and believed that only when it is used as a conscious warning, the hypothetical world could be seen as utopia or dystopia.

Though Williams’ paradigm is more like a classification, it reveals some significant characteristics of utopian and dystopian fictions, which corresponds to Vieira’s later generalization of the four characteristics of the concept of utopia defined historically (Claeys, 2010: p.6):

- (1) The content of the imagined society
- (2) The literary form into which the utopian imagination has been crystallized
- (3) The function of utopia
- (4) The desire for a better life, caused by a feeling of discontentment towards the world one lives in

Booker (1994) briefly defines *dystopian* literature as ‘specifically that literature which situates itself in direct opposition to utopian thought, warning against the potential negative consequences of arrant utopianism...[and which] generally constitutes a critique of existing social conditions or political systems...’ (p3). Claeys and Sargent (1999) offer a range of relevant definitions that have become important foundations of many later 21st century studies:

Dystopia or negative utopia – a utopia that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which the reader lived.

Anti-utopia – a utopia that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as a criticism of utopianism or of some particular eutopia.

Critical utopia - a utopia that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than contemporary society but with difficult problems that the described society may or may not be able to solve, and which takes a critical view of the utopian genre (p2).

Above all, there are two central characteristics of utopian and dystopian works that be found in the critical literature:

- (1) A nonexistent place, with a (real or false) perfect appearance (sometimes it might be designed as a near-future world or the mirror image of the real world);
- (2) A place that condenses the author’s expectation, criticism or concerns for the future possibilities of mankind and human society.

Some studies separate dystopian, anti-utopian and critical utopian works meticulously, but in this research, because the focus will be on some issues and factors commonly existing in those texts, they will be considered as one general category and referred to as ‘dystopian

works' in the following discussion. Thus, particularly for this research, 'dystopia' can be interpreted further as 'a nonexistent place which is negative but always with a falsely perfect surface, showing the author's anxious or critical assumptions about mankind and human society'. Additionally, 'utopia' discussed in this study will generally follow Claey's and Sargent's definition, and also might include some conceptions of 'eutopia' in the strict sense.

Thus, this thesis would adopt the widest concept 'dystopia/dystopian' as the foundation of analysis, which points to the imagined (future) world where the stories unfold, and exhibiting the characteristics above.

Although the ideal and perfect society may be said to be humanity's common aspiration, there are still distinct differences within this. If considering the origin of 'utopia' and 'dystopia' strictly, as Dutton (Claey's, 2010: p.223) argues, '...the overwhelming majority of references to the (pre-)history of utopia point to Western traditions and worldviews as its foundations.' Kumar (1987, cited from Claey's, 2010: p.226) claims, 'Utopia is not universal. It appears only in societies with the classical and Christian heritage, that is, only in the West.' Gottlieb also directly (2001: p.3) declares, 'Dystopian fiction is a post-Christian genre.' However, if considering utopia and dystopia in a broader extent, particularly from their central characteristics which were discussed previously, it is undoubtedly true that 'utopian' and 'dystopian' impulses have existed not only in the Western world, but across assorted traditions and worldviews internationally.

Most studies discussed utopia and dystopia as special literary genres (among others: Claey's and Sargent, 1999; Gottlieb, 2001; Claey's, 2010). Nevertheless, as Booker (1994: p.3) argues, 'dystopian literature is not so much a specific genre as a particular kind of oppositional and critical energy or spirit...any number of literary works (especially modern ones) can be seen to contain dystopian energies.' Historically, broad utopian and dystopian elements exist extensively in literary works worldwide, especially in fantasy and SF (science fiction) works. On the one hand, 'science has played a major role in the history of

utopian thinking and in the modern from utopia to dystopia' (Booker, 1994: p.5) - and early in Williams' paradigm, we can trace the inseparable relationship between SF and utopian or dystopian works (Booker, 1994; Baccolini and Moylan, 2003). On the other hand, the proportion of *fantasy* writings including utopian and dystopian thinking also cannot be ignored, though it has still not attracted as much critical attention as dystopian SF.

We should devote some more discussion here to the definition of these genres and the relationships among them. There is still not a commonly accepted definition of the 'SF' genre yet, though many scholars have offered explanations. Rabkin suggests four fundamentally different ways to construct a definition: characteristic, prototypical, operational and social (Gunn, Barr and Candelaria, 2009: p.16). He favours a characteristic definition of SF: 'it is that branch of fantastic that seeks plausibility against a background of science.' (p.21) In the later part of the same book, Franklin argues that, 'SF is a defining feature of modern culture and society. It is central to know how we modern humans imagine space, time, the macrohistory of our species, our future, and even our place in the cosmos' (Gunn, Barr and Candelaria, 2009: p.23). Edward James (1994, cited from Moylan, 2000: p.7) also points out that, 'SF is more concerned with the created world or produced social environment, more interested in the collective fate of the human species, exploring these concerns in a setting that while resonating with their material realities, does not actually exist (or exist so much) in the known world of its author or readers.'

Thus, two characteristics can be identified that define 'SF' and which seem very close to the central characteristics of utopian and dystopian genres mentioned above:

- (1) An imaginary place (mostly designed as a rationally predictable past or future world¹⁴, or a mirror image of the real world);
- (2) A presentation of the author's expectations or concerns of the (future) possibilities of mankind and human society, which particularly relate to the effects of science and technology on humanity

In effect, these two points are conformable with Fitting's summary of the two

¹⁴ Not all of SF set the stories in the future; some ones are set in a fabled world in the history, for example, the Chinese SF 'Yan Shi' (The Robert Inventor) by Pan Haitian, which is set in Zhou dynasty (1046 – 771 BCE)

characteristics that specific fictions bring to the utopian genre: ‘the ability to reflect or express our hopes and fears about the future, and more specifically to link those hopes and fears to science and technology; ...an awareness of the effects and importance of science and technology’ (cited from Claeys, 2010: pp.138-139). This can be seen in contrast with Williams’ paradigm above, though Fitting did not separate utopia and dystopia strictly.

Similar to the case of SF, a common and precise definition of literary fantasy does not yet exist. Jackson (1981: p.1) offers a brief claim about the literature of the fantastic: which is ‘transcending’ reality; ‘escaping’ the human condition and constructing superior alternate, ‘secondary’ worlds. Especially considering the classic fantasy works before the 1980s (e.g. Lewis and Tolkien), Jackson argues that one important function of fantasy literature is to be ‘an art form providing vicarious gratification’ (p.1). Later Mathews proposed that (2002: pp.1-2),

Fantasy enables us to enter worlds of infinite possibility...Most critics agree it is a type of fiction that evokes wonder, mystery, or magic – a sense of possibility beyond the ordinary, material, rationally predictable world in which we live...Modern fantasy is clearly related to the magical stories of myth, legend, fairy tale, and folklore from all over the world...Fantasy as a distinct literary genre, may best be thought of as a fiction that elicits wonder through elements of the supernatural or impossible.

From these viewpoints, there are some central elements for traditionally defining ‘literary fantasy’:

- (1) An imaginary place (where should be not ordinary, material and rationally predictable);
- (2) Presenting the author’s expectations or concerns of the possibilities of mankind and human society, which particularly elicit wonder through invocation of the supernatural, the mysterious or impossible.

The central characteristics summarized above could be employed to define most SF and

fantasy works in both West and East¹⁵. Consequently, it could be said that the most obvious difference between typical SF and typical fantasy works is the logical, scientific or technological rationality of the world in the former. As Mathews (2002: p.3) expresses it, ‘...fantasy does not require logic – technological, chemical, or alien – to explain the startling actions or twists of character and plot recorded on its pages; such events may be explained by magic or not explained at all.’

Reviewing the key characteristics of utopian and dystopian, SF, fantasy genres highlighted above, it can be seen that there are significant commonalities among them. However, none of them can completely cover the range of any other one. Therefore, in contrast to some early scholars (e.g. Darko Suvin) who claimed that utopia (or also dystopia) as a sub-genre of SF, this study will argue there is a deal of overlap among them, while adopting the intersection of these genres as the research scope. In the other words, this study would select the texts involved the dystopian characteristics following the definitions mentioned above, regardless of the genre they are sorted to (as SF or fantasy).

Initially, this research in fact was going to consider SF rather than dystopias, however, this changed for two reasons: the first one has been explained in Chapter 1. Another reason is I have found most of the studies about dystopian fiction are focusing on SF, but did not find so many which focus on fantasy works. However, if following the definition of dystopian genre given above in this study, there are a number of contemporary fantasy texts which can be classified within the dystopian genre or which include typically dystopian elements. For instance, the fifth book of *Harry Potter* (Rowling, 2003) reveals some obvious dystopian factors (e.g. Dolores Umbridge’s control of the school and the lies reported by the newspaper); the *Mistborn* series (Sanderson, 2006) and the *Great Library* series (Caine, 2015) also could be defined as dystopian fictions, due to the societies described in them

¹⁵ There are several names for the fantasy works in China: Mohuan, Qihuan and Xuanhuan, which can be explained strictly as magical imaginary work, mysterious imaginary work and Taoist imaginary work. The first one and second one (which is more formal) are always regard to the works based on the Western supernatural systems, such as Western magic, wizards, vampires. In contrast, the third one generally points to the works based on Chinese traditional supernatural systems. However, they are usually used in disarray on many websites or in the bookshops, because of non-professional staff.

(the fake utopia with strict controls from ruling class). Moreover, the *Mistborn* series and many other dystopian fictions published in recent years lead to another justification for the changing the scope of this research: in literature of the last 30 years the border between SF and fantasy as become fainter. Taking the *Mistborn* series as an instance, the beginning of the story seems a typical ‘fantasy story’: the protagonists have superpowers like magic. But the expression of the following books become closer to ‘SF’ – the author explained the changes happened in that world (the truth of the past) by science logic (reasonable technologies but not magic), though still including supernatural (unscientific) factors in its core world setting. In contemporary Japanese YA literature, the phenomenon of mixing SF and fantasy elements is more common, such as the *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* series (Miyazaki, 1982-1994), *Kino's Journey* series (Sigsawa, 2000-), *No.6* series (Asano, 2003-) and a number of others. The apocalyptic situations described in these stories were mostly caused by the abuse of technologies, although in some cases fantastical phenomena also appear. Therefore, the label ‘contemporary dystopian YA literature’ will be adopted as a more precise scope for this research.

2.3 Thinking about Foucault's theories

After reviewing the theories of SoL, I found that Michel Foucault's theories could greatly facilitate the understanding and analysis of DYAL with information control themes because the issue of controls on the spread of information and knowledge (including publishing and other media, personal speech and education, among others) is at the essence of 'discourse power'. The argument of this thesis therefor underlines the significance of 'discourse power' in dystopian YA fictions. In this section, I therefore present a brief overview of Foucault's theories but focus on 'discourse power' in particular (2.3.1); question and reflect on some of the main points (2.3.2) and use them to develop some of the primary concepts for developing a framework to analyse DYAL (2.3.3).

2.3.1 Foucault's Theories of Discourse and Power

In the early sociological theories before the middle of the 20th century, the attention of most scholars on the question of power were based on 'contract' theory (represented by Weber) and 'economic' theory (represented by Marx). 'Though Dahl, Bachrach and Baratz, and Lukes, each advanced different operational definitions of the term power, all of these definitions were contained within the boundaries of the power as a domination paradigm' (Karlberg, 2005: p.3) However, since Michel Foucault, there has been a revolutionary change in the perspectives on power.

Foucault has argued that, 'Language is a finite body of rules that authorizes an infinite number of performances' (Foucault and Smith, 2003: p.27). He also pointed out, 'Language is a key weapon for the reigning dystopian power structure' (Baccolini and Moylan, 2003). To some extent, these two sentences capture the relationship between power, language and dystopian social structures: how power is actualised in language – the main carrier of discourse, particularly in the special forms of social organisation known as the state.

First, in *The Order of Things* (1966), Foucault argues that the development of knowledge is the result of interactions among different systems of thought in different historical periods. There is not one constant, absolute and stable 'truth'. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*

(1969), he discusses the concept of the ‘statement’, which is the foundation of his broader understanding of ‘discourse’. He emphasizes that the subject of the statement is not equated to the speaking subject:

The enunciative domain refers neither to an individual subject, nor to some kind of collective consciousness, nor to a transcendental subjectivity; but that it is described as an anonymous field whose configuration defined the possible positions of speaking subjects (Foucault, 2003: p.137).

The statement is not a sentence, not a proposition; rather, it is material existence. Moreover, the absolutely independent statement is impossible: ‘There is no statement that does not presuppose others; there is no statement that is not surrounded by a field of coexistences, effects of series and succession, a distribution of functions and roles’ (Foucault, 2003: p.112).

Following this claim, Foucault advances the definition of discourse as ‘a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment’ (Hall, 2013: p.291). A discourse refers to the rules of formation of statements which are accepted as scientifically true, and is an expression of what governs statements, as well as the way in which they govern each other (Foucault and Gordon, 1980: pp.112-113).

In *The Order of Discourse*¹⁶ (1970), Foucault proposes that,

In every society, the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality. (Foucault and Young, 1981: p.52)

In this lecture, he analyses the controls on discourse from three angles: Procedures of exclusion (exterior), internal procedures (interior), and conditions of access to discourse. Foucault particularly points out that all these conditions for the subjection and ordering of discourse are found mixed up or combined, despite their separation as an act of abstraction. These procedures and conditions of discourse decide how people think and discuss things

¹⁶ Also known as *The Discourse on Language*

in every specific era, and contribute to the foundation of knowledge within a mentality. It can be seen that '[In Foucault's theory], discourse operates in a more open, fluid and negotiated manner than models of ideology suggest' (Stoddart, 2007: p.206). Based on this understanding of statement and discourse, Foucault proposes his revolutionary concept of 'power' and also explains the relationship between discourse and power.

Foucault understands power as 'a relational force, power constructs social organization and hierarchy by producing discourses and truths, by imposing discipline and order, and by shaping human desires and subjectivities' (Karlberg, 2005: p.3). Power is a 'multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization' (Foucault and Hurley, 1990: p.92).

There are some key points in Foucault's analysis of power. First, unlike understandings of power that suggest it can be possessed, Foucault (1998: pp.94-96) sees power as a capacity which only exists in a relational way: at least two actors must be involved. Foucault believes power can only be exercised over free subjects where the potential for refusal or revolt exists. Power is the relationship that materializes in the flowing circulation. It is not a commodity or tool certainly controlled by someone, which was argued as such in the early mainstream Western sociology.

Second, if power is relational, then the state cannot *possess* power, but acts as a location or configuration of almost infinite micro-relations of power at every social level all working together, or even against each other, simultaneously (Foucault, 1980: p.122). It is a net-like organization, where power is deployed and exercised.

Third, power is always *productive* in that it creates types of behaviours. For Foucault (1998: p.94), almost all our behaviours are the product of some form of this 'microphysics of power' acting upon us in our daily lives. 'It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression' (Foucault and Gordon, 1980, p.119).

Finally, Foucault sees the mechanisms of power producing different types of *knowledge*, continuously investigating and collecting information about the existence and the forms of

life of subject populations. ‘There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations’ (Foucault and Sheridan, 2012, p.27). He (1981) also claims the substance of obtaining knowledge is not the aspiration to ultimate truth, but the will of power, which is reproduced in discourses. In other words, when a discourse becomes dominant, it is accepted as true (knowledge) so it has the dominant power. Power and knowledge operate interchangeably: different configurations of power-knowledge underpin Foucault’s theories of how power develops from *sovereign power* to *disciplinary power*, *biopower*, and eventually *governmentality*. It is through these diffuse forms of power that governmental institutions can control the conduct of whole societies.

An essential element of this ‘sovereign power’ in the past ‘was the right to decide between life and death’, which was the ultimate form of control over the subject through the overt use of coercion. Foucault deems this capacity of the power of the sovereign to ‘take life, or let live’ to be a form of power which operates through a means of deduction or subtraction: the power to seize taxes, property or even life itself (Foucault, 1998: pp.135-136). This power would be exercised through the formal mechanisms of sovereignty, such as ‘laws, edicts and regulations’ (Foucault, 2007: p.102). In this view, power operates on the individual through overt prohibitions and punishments which thereby seek to suppress forms of individuality. Power becomes a quantifiable and tangible commodity that an individual can possess, or not possess; a zero-sum resource which is distributed in society, something that can be held and then accumulated or depleted, so if an individual gains power it must always be at the expense of others. Foucault (1998: pp.136-137) also contrasts the sovereign form of power—which is seen as *deductive* in that it seeks to ‘seize hold of life in order to suppress it’—with other techniques of power which are *productive* in that they ‘exert a positive influence on life’. Power therefore need not be about subtraction, but also *production*: power enables life to be rendered as productive and efficiently as possible by managing and administering its routines so that now ‘the ancient right to take life or let live was replaced by a power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death’ (Foucault 1998: p.138). This power of managing and administering life could be found not in the official institutions of sovereign power, such as the government or the law,

but instead in unofficial institutions such as societal norms and peer pressures or unwritten rules of behaviour. Or culture. So this 'power over life' is a productive one that produces an effect by using unofficial rather than juridical channels and which functions through social norms by exercising power through both positive and negative reinforcement. The location of this version of power is hence very different from that of sovereign power. Rather than being a tangible commodity that can be possessed, these modern forms of power are intangible and are found everywhere and in everything. They represent a 'microphysics of power' that rely upon 'dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques and functionings' which work within a network of relations (Foucault, 1977: p.26).

In *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Foucault analyses the changes of punishment in the West, from torture to 'gentle punishment' (discipline and prison). He argues that the effects of new techniques and cultural shifts (e.g. ontology for the body being) to the appearances and changes of disciplines. 'The formation of the disciplinary society is connected with a number of broad historical processes – economic, juridico-political and scientific – of which it forms part' (Foucault, 1975: p.218). A coercive society or 'order' is replaced by one where governmentality and regulation are internalized by new regimes of power that regulate and constitute a reality to which the subject is subservient not through fear but through being.

Following his early theories shown above, Foucault argues that the substance of modern punishments is still embedded within power and discourse. 'Discipline' may be identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus; it is a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a 'physics' or an 'anatomy' of power, a technology' (Foucault and Sheridan, 2012: p.215). He states that at the present time, the 'panoptic prison' has become part of an all-encompassing sovereign institution (or system) in modern society, which is operated by the disciplines. The operation of this prison-surveillance implicate schools, factories, hospitals, military barracks and so forth.

Another important concept suggested by Foucault is ‘body politic’, which is actually the foundation of Foucault’s theory of discipline. The human body is ‘a set of material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge’ (Foucault, 1975: p.28). Therefore, human bodies are the biopolitical objects and channels for the operation of power. From ancient society to modern society, the emphasis on control over bodies has changed: from granting or depriving life to possessing and managing life – that is also the formation of disciplines.

This ‘biopower’ operates on the body not at the social level targeted by disciplinary techniques, but at the biological level, focusing on aspects such as birth, health, death, the duration of life, and the factors that cause these to vary (Foucault, 1998: p.139). Foucault argues that these biological factors are supervised using regulatory controls so that ‘power gave itself the function of the administering of life’ (Foucault, 1998: p.138). Thus, in the way that disciplinary power seeks the normalisation of the individual, biopower seeks the normalisation of entire peoples. While both seek to optimise the efficiency of life, Foucault views them as ‘two completely different systems of power’ (Foucault, 2007: p.66). He tries to show (2007: pp.70-73) how the study of human beings as an entity, through the collection of data and statistics, objectifies the population and turns them into subjects who are told how to be. While the concept of a ‘population’ had been understood since medieval times, Foucault saw the way that power was exerted upon society had changed in the modern period. Where the mercantilist system differed from the traditional sovereign view of the population is that it began to view the population as a productive force and not ‘the simple sum of individuals inhabiting a territory’ (Foucault 2007: p.70). This new technique of power seeks not to get subjects simply to obey commands, but to utilise a range of methods to manage the population *based upon their own desires* (Foucault, 2007: pp.70-73). The development of the collection of data allows power to be utilised with increased scale, moving from the individual to the population as a whole. With the information gleaned from statistical analysis, biopower can regulate norms through statistical averages and, most importantly, identify the outliers, or troublesome ‘aleatory instances’ (Foucault, 2003: p.246). With this information, biopower seeks not to change

any specific phenomenon in society or to focus on the individual, but rather to ensure that ‘security mechanisms have to be installed around the random element inherent in a population of living beings so as to optimise a state of life’ (Foucault, 2003: p.246). Biopower therefore becomes a form of large-scale statistical surveillance or ‘dataveillance’ of society, ensuring that the population falls within the statistical boundaries and reducing the scale of aleatory instances. This ensures the population maintains the shape of a distribution curve with outliers identified and action taken to limit them: as Foucault (2003: p.247) puts it, ‘to intervene at the level of their generality’. The central difference between disciplinary power and biopower is simply the scale of the monitoring and regulatory normalisation.

Foucault further suggests that ‘individuality’ can be implemented in systems that are officially egalitarian, but which use disciplinary regimes to construct and sustain non-egalitarian power relations. Disciplines hence create ‘docile bodies’ not by oppressing them but by constituting them. In his last work, *The History of Sexuality* (1978), Foucault claims that in history, either prohibition or encouragement of talking about sexuality is an integral part of the manipulation of power and the disciplinary emblazoning of the body. Even at present, this key point remains a typical focus in the conflicts around censorship in Eastern countries.

The culmination of these forces brings several strands of Foucault’s thought together in the idea of governmentality—because governmentality develops Foucault’s earlier thinking on power to explore how government administers the population through sovereign, disciplinary and biopower. Government does this through the ‘ensemble of institutions, procedures, calculations and tactics’ constituting a new science of authority. In essence, this is a coming together of all the technologies of power discussed above and the complex application of them within a wide field of differing power relations between the modern state and its subjects: ‘The things with which in this sense government is to be concerned is in fact men, but men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those other things’ (Foucault, 1991: p.93). This echoes an even older idea in Foucault’s thought, where ‘the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly

induces effects of power' (Foucault, 1980: p.52).

If the state, then, is no longer a single homogenous entity but is instead the site of a wide range of differing power relations which have become 'governmentalised', differing forms of the conception of the state, for example democracy or dictatorship, will utilise differing technologies of power. Alongside these is another form of power, 'police' power (Foucault, 2007: pp.317-318). The meaning here relates not to an institution, or police force in the conventional sense (though it may shed light on how that body operates in society), but to a more archaic version of 'police' as form of juridical and bureaucratic power that regulates the actions of individuals - endowing it with a wider meaning than usually associated with the term in English. Police power seeks to manage individuals and the space in which they operate to ensure they remain productive, both for their own benefit as well as for the benefit of the state (Foucault, 1988: pp.79-82). It replaces or encompasses older forms of 'pastoral' power as an apparatus of security deployed by government and is a technique where the state intervenes to improve the quality of life of individuals by managing its 'morals and virtue' (Foucault 1988:77-8). The 'things' to which Foucault refers relate to 'men in their actions': a deliberately broad definition which includes anything from their use of resources to their customs, habits and ways of thinking (Foucault, 1991: p.93). In this way, '*life* is the object of the police' and the purpose is to ensure that people not only survive and live but 'do even better than just that which, in turn, will foster the strength of the state' (Foucault, 1988: pp.81-82). In this way, police power becomes in the modern state 'totalising'.

These key points in Foucault's theories mentioned above are particularly relevant to my arguments in this thesis, which are about the circulation of power and resistance to it inside and outside DYAL. As analysed in section 2.1, the process of producing literature is an interactive process between social environment (including politics and economy), writer, reader, publisher and text. It essentially reflects how power and discourse operate as a productive network inside and outside those texts. Therefore, these theories are essential base of this research, which is helpful for analysing the development of (D)YAL in the

West and East (as shown in Chapters 4 and 5), and also for understanding the dystopian texts themselves (as shown in Chapter 6), the underlying reasons of differences between those texts and between the readers' understanding who are from different countries (as shown in Chapter 7). Hence, I would give some of my own thinking about Foucault's theories firstly, and then construct some concepts based on them, for preparing the framework to analyse the texts.

2.3.2 Reflecting on Foucault's theories

It is undisputed that Foucault's thought has had great and comprehensive influence on the development of almost all aspects of sociological theory, despite some of the criticisms levelled at his philosophy.

In Chinese educational texts (from primary school to high school), the mainstream definition of power is still the dualism of the ruled and the ruler derived from classical Marxism and which is based on economic relations. However, Foucault's theories reveal the basal substance of the manipulation of power (it should be noticed that here I do not mean the fountainhead or will of power), which is the foundation of almost all social cultural and political activities, Marxist or capitalist.

Power is everywhere – this point is most important. The conflictual nature of power does not only exist between the machinery of the national state and the individual, but also among groups, among individuals, and even inside persons themselves.

Another key point is the *non-independence of discourse*, which is revelatory for considering the issue of human behaviors (and related to the later analysis of both protagonists' behaviors in dystopian YA fictions and the YAL authors' own intentional ontologies throughout the narratives). Though Foucault pulled the concept of 'man' away from the key subject position of our intentional grammar (implying that the 'death of man' as an abstraction followed Nietzsche's Death of God as a prior abstraction), if we temporarily put the 'human' back into the position of speaking subject, we might begin to understand the non-independence of our thinking, speech, and any other behaviors; how they operate, and what they are influenced by: 'The subject who knows, the objects to be

known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations' (Foucault and Sheridan, 2012: p.28). To a large extent, of course, these arguments conflict with the core claims of secular free will and autonomy made since Kant.

According to Foucault, conflicts among 'powers' happen at innumerable points in different discursive fields. When considering the level of the human (but not as a metaphysical statement), these conflicts always result in the restructuring of groups and the realignment of individuals in the power-network. Moreover, 'justice' is also the result of the conflicts of such power, rather than at attachment to an 'absolute truth'. Nevertheless, a new question appears: There may be no true and false, but is there right and wrong?

The last important point to note is Foucault theory returns us to the argument about discipline. When we are considering for example, the censorship that happens in reality in many societies, and the dystopian literature writing in the 21st century, it might be found that Foucault's arguments about 'tameness' and 'resistance' between powers—and the relationship between knowledge and power—possess particular. This hypothesis will be discussed further in the next chapters.

In both Western and Eastern studies of his work, I have found that many critical evaluations of Foucault's theories focus on the issue of *determinism*. The neo-Marxist Nicos Poulantzas (2002) argues that Foucault undervalues the importance of state power, and fails to ground his theory of power as a diffuse process in a materialist conception of capitalism (although some other scholars also suggest that Poulantzas has misinterpreted Foucault in these terms). Historian Peter Gay (1995) thinks that Foucault and his followers overstate the extent to which keeping 'the masses quiet' motivates those in power, thereby underestimating factors such as 'contingency, complexity, the sheer anxiety or stupidity of power holders', or their authentic idealism. Stoddart (2007: p.206) also suggests that '(some) critics of Foucault argue that he places too much emphasis on the discursive realm, while paying insufficient attention to the materiality of social actors who exist within economic relationships of social power (Hartsock 1990; Smith 1990; Smith 1999).' Some critics go further and insist that of Foucault's discursive construction of truth eventually leads to nihilism.

The Chinese scholar Shan (2005) argues that Foucault does *not* avoid the issue of determinism successfully – both *Discipline and Punish* and *History of Sexuality*, he states, actually display the victory of specific power mechanisms. Qu (2016) points out that, though ‘subject’ is deconstructed in Foucault’s theories, *real society* is still constructed on the foundation that regards humans (man) as the subject of power. As long as humans’ volitional ability exists, there is no denying the difference of humans from the other objects in the world.

Sun (2014) argues that the practice of Foucault’s theories faces two difficulties. First, the explosion of the appeals of individual power and right and the conflicts resulting from this. Sun (2014) considers that the total capacity of power and right in a society depends on the developed degree of the economy – in other words, the inventory of resources. If the appeals exceed the limit, the effectuation of power and right will become more difficult. This argument is still based on Marxism. Second, he asks, who will be the arbitrator? Sun (2014) concludes that Foucault holds a skeptical attitude to the arbitration function within all the national political mechanisms. If these national mechanisms (politics) are dissolved in the practices of power indeterminate of all human agency, the foundation of the social community will be shaken, resulting in social chaos.

These criticisms lead me back to the differences in views of power within pluralist and elite political theories. The classical pluralist views of power consider that everyone has an equal amount of power regardless of social background (Parenti, 1970). Elite pluralists admit the plurality of power, while they believe this plurality is not equal. On the other side, elite theory rejects classical and elite pluralism opinions. Instead, it claims there is a small group of power elites who hold a very large percentage of power in society (Higley, 2010). It can find out some commonality between these viewpoints about the power structure of macroscopical society, and debates around Foucault’s concepts of power relationship.

Furthermore, in the elite theories, the ingredients of elites were different with the changes of the times: C. Wright Mills (1956) claimed that three important institutions created the power elite of American society: the business community, the military, and the government. But Putnam (1976) believed that the new dominant generation would be the scientists, the mathematicians, the economists, and the engineers of the new intellectual technology.

These changes of elites could be related to the changes in the dominant discourses in the 21st century.

However, across pluralist and elite political theories, or between Foucault and his critics, there remain essential questions: How does dominant the discourse arise? What is the motivating force for change of discourses? (In pluralism and elite theories, this question could be presented as ‘how do elites appear?’)

Foucault’s theories did not resolve this question convincingly. Even new techniques and cultural shifts could be seen simply as further discursive adjustments within reality-regulating regimes. In my opinion, if we limit the analysis of the operation of power within a specific range of human society, the answer to this question omits a very important variable which affects the manipulation of discourse and power, but which is seriously underestimated by Foucault: the individual’s subjective initiative.

Foucault argues that power shapes humans’ desires and subjectivities. This is the key point from which this study dissents.

In Foucault’s theories, the interaction among different powers is just like the interaction between forces in physics. However, in my opinion, the powers occurring in human society are not absolutely ‘objective’ in their existence. Powers are produced from discourses, and the origin of all the discourses that occur in human society is the ‘human’. Even though some forces directing subjects are not human – for example, books – these subjects are still produced by humans.

Hence human ‘consciousness’ is a very important variable acting in the net-like power organisation. Without this, power is a force just like the irrational perpetual motion machine. Though the occurrence and development of consciousness is a process full of exterior influences, and most of the time the discourses governing humans are affected by other exterior discourses, there are still some motivations which occur purely in the interiority of consciousness. This is the reason that people choose to do or not to do something; it is also the inspiration that drives people to create and invent something never known before. It is neither positive nor negative. I would argue that humans’ subjectivity is the main factor resulting in most of the innovations in history, and is also the reason why

history is not linear. In my opinion, human subjectivity is driven by both interior and exterior motives. In terms of the interior aspect, this mainly refers to human demands. Many thinkers have analysed this clearly, such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), Alderfer's ERG theory (1969), and McClelland's Achievement Motivation Theory (1961). On the other side, the exterior forces mainly point to social influence or impulses from the power-net, which is accurately described by Foucault.

Human subjectivity generates our drives and autonomy for acquiring free space and resources – which could be partly related to Marxist theories about the development of economy and the limiting of resources. The relationship between desire and autonomy is sometimes paradoxical, and sometimes harmonious. It can never be invariable. This is the reason why we develop new technologies and economies, or fight others, and also why we habitually constrain our instincts and delay the gratification of our desires, or cooperate with others. At the same time, I consider that 'rationality' and 'morality' are also results of this relationship. To some extent, it may be similar to Foucault's concept of the conflicts among powers. However, the origin of the relationship is 'needs' but not 'statements'. Needs could be said to be the impetus of all human activities, including the creation of statements, though human consciousness of needs is also partly influenced by exterior environmental elements. It should be noted that the effect of these exterior forces' cannot normally provide the full reason for individual decision-making. Otherwise, it hardly explains the contingencies that take place in the manipulation process of power: for example, the randomness that determines if an individual becomes an idealist or a careerist.

Based on this thinking about subjectivity, it might be much easier to understand an individual's or a group's decision about their activities: collaboration, resistance, escape, discipline, or obedience; the power holder's propensity for sheer anxiety; the fanatic of power, or the authentic idealist.

POWER AS CAPACITY			
ADVERSARIAL RELATIONS “power against” competition		MUTUALISTIC RELATIONS “power with” cooperation	
INEQUALITY “power over” coercion domination oppression win/lose	EQUALITY “balance of power” stalemate compromise frustration lose/lose	INEQUALITY “assisted empowerment” education nurturance assistance (win)/win	EQUALITY “mutual empowerment” synergy collaboration coordination win/win

Table 2-5: The schema of ‘Power as Capacity’ (Karlberg, 2005)

Karlberg’s schema of ‘power as capacity’ (2005) could give a reference on the categories of the relationship between powers, which is sorted out very clearly. Most of power relationships described in DYAL could find a corresponded type in this table. If combining with Foucault’s discourse-power and power-net theories, and Karlberg’s schema to think together, it could reveal the essential principle of most power conflicts shown inside and outside DYAL, particularly those around censorship and information control. Therefore, using Karlberg’s schema and Foucault’s theories as base, I build my own framework for analysing dystopian YA texts, which will be shown detailed in Chapter 6.

2.3.3 Group Power and Power Field

Following the concepts mentioned in the last section, I offer two further concepts: ‘group power’ and the ‘power field’. Further consideration of these is an essential part of the whole power systematic operation. These concepts perhaps could answer the questions such as how the power from large groups (e.g. the nation state) can dominate individuals.

A part of the concept of ‘power field’ originated from the idea from physics of the ‘gravitational field’. Power is like gravitation, and the individual can be seen as the material. When a group of individuals come together because of common desires or specific relationships, they will tend to form the same discourse, and create a group power

that is generally dominant over the power created by a single person. In other words, the result is shown as $1+1+1>3$. The ‘group power’ figures to the powers have similar characteristics (e.g. values or profit motives), which is essentially in accordance with Foucault’s concept (power is the relationship in the flowing circulation).

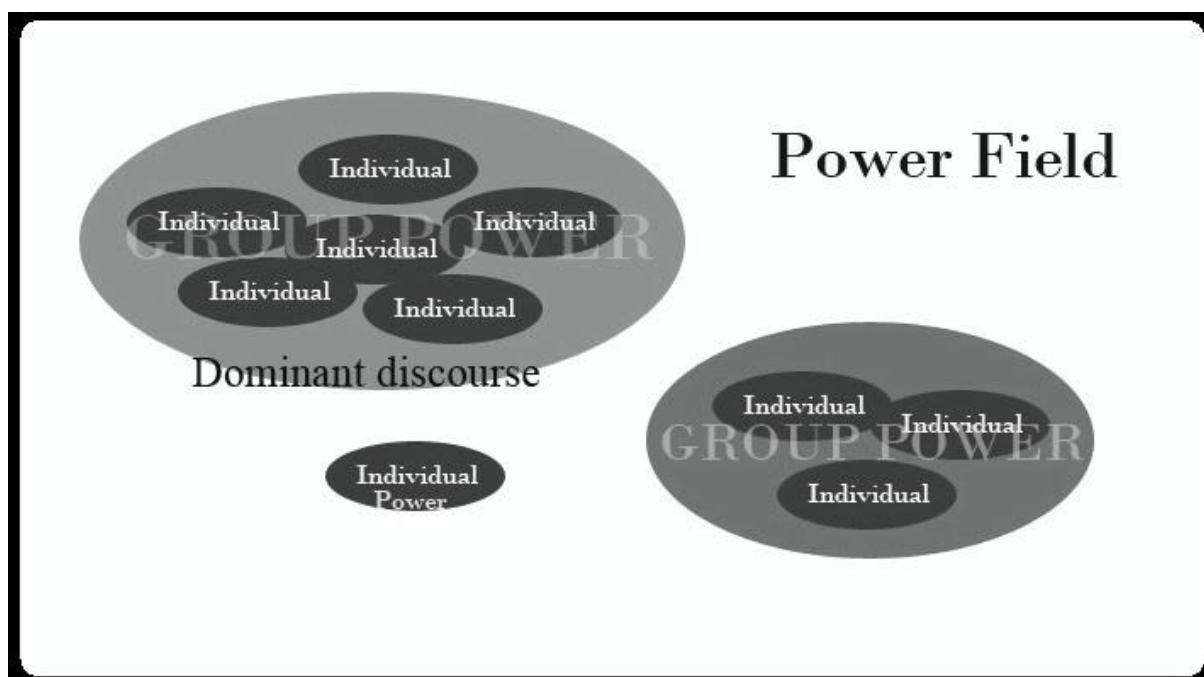


Figure 2-6: A simple of power field, group power and dominant discourse in the field. (In this power field, the two large ellipses mean two groups of power, while each group is constituted by many individual powers with some common purposes or profits or other points. The larger group leads the dominant discourse in this power field. At the same time, beside the two power groups, there still may have some individual powers which exists in this field.)

I would define ‘Power field’ as ‘an objective and limited social space where the power is produced and runs’. This social space is similar to Bourdieu’s concept of the ‘field’: the structured spaces that ‘organise around specific types of capitals or combinations of capital’, and which ‘denote arenas of production, circulation, [...] knowledge, or status, and the competitive positions held by actors in their struggle to accumulate, exchange, and monopolize different kinds of power resources (capitals)’ (Swartz, 2016: n.p.). Nevertheless, I would hypothesize the competition center of my concept of ‘power field’ as discourse power, but not based on social capital. In most cases, in each power field of a

specific period, there is a dominant discourse, though the conflict among powers might exist. The state of the power field is not steady, but always flowing and changing.

It should be noted that although an individual tends to show a certain type of practice (attitude and action – which also could be seen as discourse) in a certain field, he or she may show a different practice in a different field, which is decided by their identity in the field and the dominant discourse. For example, a civil servant in the government may channel a set of discourses in the office (power field A), but another set of discourses in his home (power field B). The change of individual identity between different fields could take the exchange of information, and influence the person's thinking.

Moreover, because of the randomness within human subjectivity, there always exists the possibility that a change in individual discourse can occur: a 'good thought' flashed in an bad ruler's brain; the consciousness-raising of freedom or other beliefs that result in resistance to a totalitarian system (which might even happen to an individual benefitting from the system); the attraction (love) appearing between individuals which changes their discourses; and so forth. As a result, it may become the breaking point within a group power, causing unrest in the whole power field. This model could be employed to support analysis of the individual's behaviors in the dystopian texts (e.g. the protagonist's decision), or in reality (e.g. the author's design of plot and characters).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a historical review of the theories of the sociology of literature, and has drawn upon key elements from them. Based on that, the conception of ‘spatiotemporal characteristics’ of contemporary dystopian literature was proposed. After that, a brief discussion of concepts of utopia and dystopia in the East and West was put forward, which is a preparation for understanding the diversity of DYAL in the East and West from cultural background perspectives in the following chapters. In the last section, another important central theoretical foundation of this research was reviewed: Foucault’s theories of power, knowledge and discourse. Following an understanding of his thoughts, the conceptions ‘group power’ and ‘power field’ were developed.

I have shown there is much to be gained from the Foucauldian frameworks. If referring to Foucault’s theory of power-net, it could easily be understood that the ‘power fields’ themselves are changing all the time, which is probably because of the development of technologies, new resources appearing in the field, society’s new needs, and changes to the resource structure in a new era. This process has become more obvious and rapid over the last decades. Besides that, the possibility of the appearance of new subjects who are different from traditional humans and have ‘self-consciousness’ – such as AI or post-humans (including superhumans) – also reveals the complexity of the subjects who own subjectivity and can give statements in the future. Concurrently, human society shows more and more anxiety because of all these changes and the conflicts among new and old discourses and powers. I would argue this is one of main reasons for the boom of dystopian YAL in the 21st century.

Given that one of the key power fields relating to the establishment of knowledge, the literary or artistic field, is always a noticeable one, filled with ‘struggles tending to transform or conserve this field of forces’ (Bourdieu, 1983, cited from Emanuel, 1996: pp.311-312) - which could in turn be particularly visible within the conflicts among national policies, censorship, self-censorship, and authors’ resistance through texts. Therefore, in chapters 4 and 5, I will initially give a brief historical review of the

appearance and flourishing development of (D)YAL in the West and East, in order to understand the operation of discourses in this power field (DYAL) in the three countries. This will support further analysis on the discourse-power issues shown in the selected dystopian texts in Chapter 6. However, before that, the methodology deployed to discuss and answer the questions in this study will be described in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction

The previous chapter explained the sociological and literary-theoretical foundation of this research. The concept of spatiotemporal characteristics of literature - especially dystopian YAL - was summarized, which revealed the basal relationship between literature, the author's social and historical background, and the reader's understanding. Secondly, the concepts of power field and group power were posited, which, were developed from Foucault's theories, address the reflection of power relationship from reality in literary works. As authors are socialized persons belonging to specific social groups, these power relationships displayed by them also have social attributes, relating them to the concept of spatiotemporal characteristics of DYAL (which has been mentioned in Chapter 2).

These concepts will be the foundation of a more detailed discussion around the development of YAL and certain texts in the following chapters. To make the structure and logic of the thesis clearer, this chapter will lay out the full research rationale – including the theories, the reasons for selecting texts, and detailed information about the data collection and analysis process employed in the fieldwork.

3.1 Grounded Theory and Research Design

Before further explaining the method and design of this study, I would especially clarify the definition of the concepts of 'young adult', 'young people' and 'generations' implicated in this study firstly.

In the West, the concept of 'young adult' was not used before WWII, although the earliest work for YA can be traced to the early 20th century (Cart, 2016: p.1). In the beginning, the term mainly pointed to 'teenager'; in other words, a person whose age is between childhood and adulthood (p.1). As Edwards (1954) expresses, 'it was too mature for

children and too uncomplicated for adults.’ (p.9) It is unique existence differing from both adults and children. In the 1940s, Havighurst suggests seven tasks that should be completed by teenagers, for ‘successfully climbing the ladder of personal development from childhood to adulthood’ (Cart, 2016: p.25). Since then, society realized more and more about the predicament of young people in this growth stage, which usually accompanies by psychological struggles and uncertainty about the future. Thereby, the fictions special written for the young people in this stage appeared, and are commonly named YAL (more details of the development of YAL in relevant countries in this study will be reviewed in Chapters 4 and 5).

At present, there is still no consensus among publishers, educators, librarians and booksellers about exactly what ‘YAL’ is (Aronson, 2002, cited from Bucher and Manning, 2006: p.4). Kaywell (2001, cited from Bucher and Manning, 2006: p.5) has listed some definitions of YA, from ‘an age group between 11 and 16’ to ‘people between ages of 12 and 22’. Though there are some slight differences between these definitions, they generally consider the teenagers and the early stage of adults as the age range of ‘young adult’. Meanwhile, the age range of YAL has been extended beyond the teenage years. The number of readers between 20 and 30 years old is substantial (a part of statistics of Chinese readers is given in Chapter 5). Therefore, for this study, considering the flexibility of the situation of young readers in different countries, I will adopt 12-23 years old as the defined age range of YAL (from middle school to university). At the same time, ‘young people’ will be used as a broader concept to cover the reader range of YAL, which sometimes would include persons between 23 and 30 years old – considering the people of this age range are still in the stage to adapt ‘becoming an adult’, and many of them are still like reading YAL.

In some parts of this thesis, when the concept of generation is mentioned that it mainly refers to divisions according to historical periods and relates to the specific contexts. Generally, I will refer to people born between the 1950s and 1970s as the ‘Cold War generation’, while those born in and after the later stage of the Cold War as the ‘post-Cold War generation’. Those within this population group were generally born after 1975 and

started to read and study after the 1980s. During this period, the political confrontation between large alliances was stepped down and, as a consequence, the number of publications increased remarkably with the then rapid development of the economy in both West and East. I will use the term ‘millennial generation’ to describe children who were born after the 2000s and have grown up in a digital era during which the political confrontation worldwide has again increased.

Moreover, in this thesis, due to a research scope that mainly focuses on American, Japanese and Chinese (D)YAL, the words ‘East’ and ‘West’ will refer to the areas where both writers and the majority of their readers live. In the other words, ‘East’ principally refers to the Eastern Asian cultural area centred on China and Japan, while ‘West’ mostly points to the Western world centred on North America and Europe.

For exploring these questions, this research adopts a number of theoretical frameworks. In its empirical dimension, it uses grounded theory: taking an inductive research approach to develop its own theory and framework. As Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss (1967: p.vii, cited from Strauss and Corbin, 1994: p.273) proposed, the central feature of this analytic approach is ‘a general method of [constant] comparative analysis’. As a qualitative systematic method, grounded theory focuses on contributing theories based on empirical data (Strauss, 1987: p.5). Researchers analyse the phenomena in order to isolate the core concepts and relationship of the observed subjects, and develop a sociological theoretical system on the basis of this (Strauss and Corbin, 1994: p.274). The main outcome of grounded theory is the new conceptions and thinking raised from empirical data, developed through an inductive research approach.

Given the scarcity of previous research in the field of Eastern DYAL, plus the use of empirical data, I felt that the inductive approach was the most appropriate for exploring the field. Hence, this study adopts multiple methods to collect data and develop theory. After an iterative process that involved observation of current phenomena in the field, the review of relevant theories and the collection of data, a primary theoretical framework could be created.

The methodology of this study chiefly centres upon approaches in critical literary studies that look to alternative materials rather than the canonical sources of knowledge that are normative in Western society. It must be noted that many of the claims I make about Chinese context and Chinese source citations cannot be traced back in the same way as sources from the West because historical sources are either lacking or may be unreliable. Therefore, I have looked to an alternative model of knowledge production that relies on three main sources: Internet sources (websites and forums); conversations with other Chinese readers, and my own professional experience. In addition, I need to point out that I will reference my claims in this thesis as far as possible but will not provide details when these could cause harm to any of my human sources.

Based on the review of early theories of sociology of literature mentioned in the last chapter, the following phase of this study reviewed the historical materials germane to the development of (D)YAL in the West and East. This enabled a summary of their contrasting characteristics and the ideological and cultural impetus behind these.

After that, through rethinking Working with Michel Foucault's theories about discourse and power, I generated the key conceptions and factors in the framework for analysing DYAL texts. I selected three texts from USA, Japan and China, to verify the framework; at the same time as inspecting the societies and discourse-power relationship shown in those texts, primarily to explore the differences behind texts from divergent social backgrounds. I chose these three countries for several reasons: Firstly, all of three countries have powerful political and cultural influences rather than most of the other countries in the world. Moreover, the United States is the country where has published the majority of the most popular contemporary dystopian YA fictions in this world. Japan has published the most of DYAL in the Eastern countries, while it is also the cross-point of Eastern and Western thoughts and cultures impacting and blending in the last century – the result of which is always reflected in its literary works. China is a country with strict censorship and a special political environment, thereby the DYAL developed there has a unique path and characteristics. The DYAL from the three countries could be seen as the representatives of some terms in this field, and there should be some interesting findings through the comparative analysis of them.

In the last part of this thesis, the readers' responses to related texts from the East and West is discussed. Thus, the spatiotemporal characteristics of the research subjects can be surveyed thoroughly from the three perspectives.

In this section, I adopt 'criterion sampling', derived from the purposeful sampling method, to collect and categorize the samples. 'Purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources' (Patton, 2002, cited from Palinkas et al., 2015: n.p.). When the selected range is limited and the samples are very diverse, this is an effective selection method. It requires the researcher's knowledge and experience about the situation of the related field, while the participants' availability and willingness to attend the study, and the ability to positively communicate experiences and opinions are also important (Bernard, 2002; Spradley, 1979). Furthermore, criterion sampling involves reviewing and studying 'all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance' (Patton, 2002, cited from Suri, 2011: p.69), which is frequently employed to construct a comprehensive understanding of all the studies that meet certain pre-determined criteria. According to the thematic of this study, the main purpose of including readers' responses is for entering into the worldview of the readers to show their diverse standpoints and the implications of these. A more elaborated theoretical base, and details about the readers' responses collection, will be outlined in sections 3.3 and 3.4. The limitations and challenges of the methods will also be discussed in section 3.5.

3.2 Selection of the Texts

In order to explore the similarities and differences of power-discourse relationship shown in Western and Eastern DYAL, I selected three books written in the 21st century by authors respectively from USA (the United States), China and Japan for a detailed analysis. All three plots unfold around the themes of knowledge, censorship and power, even though some of the authors' standpoints and assumptions are quite diverse or even opposite. This section will mainly introduce the basal information of the three fictions, and give the abstract of stories. A more detailed and deeper analysis of the texts will be given in Chapter 6, while the relevant readers' responses will be discussed in Chapter 7.

The three dystopian YA texts selected are the following:

Title	Author(s)	Number of volume	Publisher
<p>The <i>Great Library</i> series</p> <p>Including:</p> <p><i>Ink and Bone</i></p> <p><i>Paper and Fire</i></p> <p><i>Ash and Quill</i></p> <p><i>Smoke and Iron</i></p> <p><i>Sword and Pen</i></p>	Rachel Caine	Novel: 5	USA (2016-2019) Berkley
<p>The <i>Library Wars</i> series</p> <p>Including:</p> <p>図書館戦争 (<i>Library War</i>)</p>	<p>Hiro Arikawa (writer)</p> <p>Sukumo Adabana (novel illustrator)</p>	<p>Novel:4</p> <p>Manga:15</p>	<p>Japan</p> <p>Novel (2006-2007): メディアワークス(ハードカバー)</p>

図書館内乱 <i>(Library Infighting)</i> 図書館危機 <i>(Library Crisis)</i> 図書館革命 <i>(Library Revolution)</i>	Kiirō Yumi (manga illustrator)		角川書店（文庫） Manga (2007-2014): 白泉社
<i>Infernal Affairs</i>	Sizhe Zangyi	Novel: 1	China (2014) Fan fiction online (no entity published)

Table 3-1: Three selected fictions

The first work is the *Great Library* series. The author Rachel Caine is a bestselling YAL author according to *New York Times*. With over 50 books, she has a large audience of young readers, and is familiar with YAL writing. The writing style of the story is maturing, with some traces of influence from the other popular American dystopian YA novels and classic dystopian literature.

The story is set in a parallel universe where history has taken an alternative direction in which the Great Library of Alexandria survived and evolved into the most powerful organization on earth. This center of ancient knowledge grew, expanded, and evolved into an abomination with power and wealth beyond imagination: The Library makes the rules, not only regulating the kind of books people could borrow and read, but also strictly forbidding the personal ownership of books. Anyone who infringes these rules will face either life imprisonment or death (sometimes along with their families).

This heavy pressure gives birth to resistance and there are several factions in the story who take a revolutionary stance: the Burners burn books to demonstrate their ideals and protest against the Library itself; the book-smuggling families steal books from the Library and

sell them to rich Ink-lickers; the Ink-lickers pay handsomely for paperback books, yet they eat the books rather than reading them in exchange for a sense of distorted fulfillment. However, these factions are just minor troubles to the Library. More than anything, the Library fears the technology of the printing press because it has the potential to overthrow the entire power pyramid and thus it must be suppressed as well as hidden from the public. When a small group of bookworms (such as the protagonists) discover this fact, a revolutionary war soon becomes inevitable. The core of the whole story is still similar as some classic dystopian novels that breaking a fake utopian world through the way of violent revolution.

The second fiction is the *Library Wars* series, written by Hiro Arikawa. As a representative DYAL work of the Japanese light novel – manga – animation production mode, this series had an enormous number of sales and has made a striking impact in the Eastern Asian area: the novel has been among the top five on several Japanese best-seller lists, and won 2008 Japanese Seiun Award.¹⁷ It is also famous among Chinese fans of Japanese YAL and has been published in Chinese. There is no formal English version of the novel only the manga. A young fan (Melithiel) from the USA translated the whole novel series into English and put them online for free download, although the translation is not perfect (some words and sentences are incorrect). This research will therefore be based on the Taiwan Chinese version, the English formal manga, and Melithiel's English version of the novel, which will be the origin of the quotations.

The story of the *Library Wars* is set in a hypothetical near-future Japanese society in which the central government passed the Media Betterment Act (MBA) as law in 1989, allowing censorship of any media deemed to be potentially harmful to the society. After that, the Media Betterment Committee (MBC) was established to limit citizens' right to have access to free media.

‘[MBA was] proposed to restrict those who corrupt public order and morals and

¹⁷ Seiun Award, 星雲賞, the most famous Japanese speculative fiction award, voted on by members of the annual Science Fiction Convention. (http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/seiun_award). The total sales of the novel series amounts to more than 2.8 million copies (Adams, 2013), while the sale of Blu-ray Discs of the movie reached 28,000 in the first week.

violate human rights... The law was written vaguely and left much room for interpretation. The by-laws and enforcement regulations dealing with censorship could be supplemented as occasion demanded... It was never disclosed how the law had come to be. The end result was that all media must undergo the newly established committee's despotic censorship or confiscation.' (Arikawa and Furudori, 2008: p.37)

Under these conditions, the opposite faction who hope to protect people's reading freedom, promoted the improvement of the 'Library Freedom Act' (LFA), which claimed that libraries have the right to keep all published books (including those forbidden to be sold). Similar to the MBA, the details of the Act could be supplemented at any time.

After several times of serious bloodshed which were caused by the conflict between the libraries and MBC forces, under the support from local governments which were opposed to the MBA, the libraries started to set up their own forces for protecting staff and books. The heroine Iku Kasahara joins the Library Defense Force because she was inspired by a member of the force when she was still in high school. In a bookshop, when the force of MBC rushed in to confiscate 'illegal' books, the man saved a book she wanted to buy but was targeted for censorship. From this point on, the story generally happens within the libraries themselves and mainly revolves around the conflicts between different thoughts and values about censorship.

In contrast to some popular Western dystopian novels, no war or revolution happens in this fiction. Instead, the conflicts are limited within the special areas, and the scope and firepower of the forces are restricted. The story has discussed several sensitive issues, such as how to judge the influence of books to criminals; or how to balance the boundary between 'publishing freedom' and 'protecting adolescents and children'. The most attractive part of the story setting is that it did not describe a traditional totalitarian society, but a country with a democratic political system and strict censorship. The author's exploration under this setting is very interesting.

The third fiction *Infernal Affairs* is a Chinese fan fiction that was only released online. The core setting and plot of the story are not quite unique – it could find many traces of the influence from classic dystopian literature or Western SF movies (e.g. *Minority Report* and *Terminator* franchise). However, this story has its special meaning.

China is a country that has a very strict censorship system. This political and cultural environment directly impacts the publishing of dystopian literature, particularly those involving sensitive topics – such as political metaphors or descriptions of censorship and homosexuality. In the recent 10 years, it is rare to see any dystopian story involving such issues has been formally published on paper media. Therefore, the authors turn to create and post such kinds of stories online.

Compared with the traditional publishing industry, Internet literature is a new field raised in the 21st century. Though the Chinese government has already strengthened the controls on it, the Internet is still a space much freer than the traditional media for authors. The writers seek for covert and safe places in cyberspace to create the stories with rebellious minds and sensitive implications – in Chapter 5, a genealogical and historical review of this term will be given – and *Infernal Affairs* is one of these stories.

In fact, *Infernal Affairs* is a fan fiction developed from a famous Chinese Internet novel *The King's Avatar* series (Hu Dielan, 2011). The original novel (*The King's Avatar*) was launched on the Qidian Website and finished in 2014. It is a story about an imaginary RPG (role play game) online video game called Glory. The original series includes 1728 chapters and has achieved a 9.3 high score (out of 10) on Chinese biggest cultural hub site 'Douban' (similar to Goodreads). The novel was launched in a 'men's reading' channel although its target readership is not a particular gender or age. The main plot of *The King's Avatar* tells how the talented gamer, Ye Xiu (the protagonist), leads a new team to capture the champion of e-sport. The author designed more than 10 strong teams including dozens of main characters in the story - most were males. The personalities of those characters are diverse and all are described vividly in order to satisfy different readers' tastes. Because the selected range of the characters for fandom writers is so extensive, the fanfictions of *The King's Avatar* blossomed soon after the work became one of the most popular online novels in China. By August 2019 and only on the biggest fandom literature website 'LOFTER', there were nearly 600,000 posts under *the King's Avatar* tag, most of which are fan's creations (pictures and stories) derived from the original novel. It should be noted that, most of these fan fictions are targeted to women reader groups. In the other words, they

involve BL (boys' love) elements, and the main target group is the young female readers.

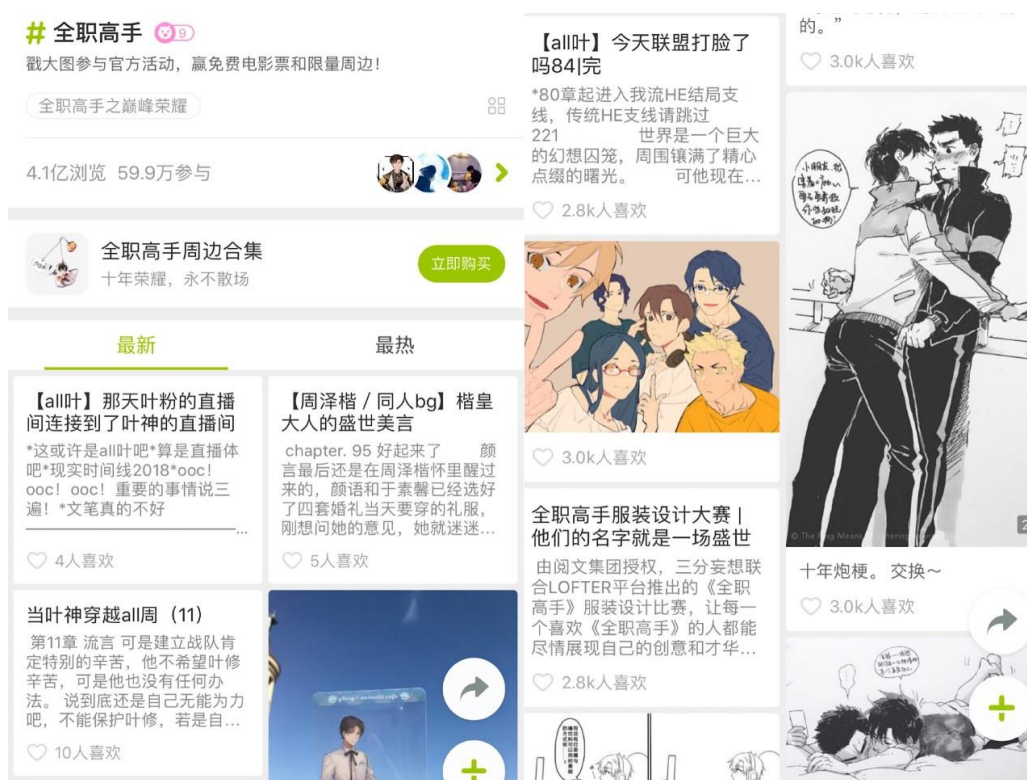


Figure 3-2 Fandom works of *The King's Avatar* on Lofter, which already had 599,000 posts in 2019

One interesting phenomenon is that the BL fan fictions¹⁸ written by females have almost captured the whole fandom realm of *the King's Avatar*, which might partly be because most of the characters are males. The female writers of these fan fictions usually employ two characters from the original fiction - their favourites - and create a new story for them. Many fandom stories are set in a different world from *The King's Avatar*, but the personalities of the characters are the same as the original ones (This kind of story is called an alternative universe [AU] story). As mentioned above, many stories are involved rebellious and sensitive factors: politics, military and war, censorship and so forth. Considering the special situation of China, these elements, as well as the property of 'BL

¹⁸ BL, also called as Slash in the West, is a genre of fan fiction which consists of original stories describing the romantic relationship between two characters of the same gender from the works written by others – the characters are mostly males, while the majority of authors who favour writing this type of literature are females. In the West, this genre appeared in the 1970s, created by female fans of the *Star Trek* series. At the beginning, it mainly focused on characters from existing fiction, such as *Star Wars*, *Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* (Kustritz, 2003). Nowadays, it also includes the stories that took place between the original characters created by the authors. This type of fiction is called 'BL' (boys' love) stories. In the East, it is called 'Shonenai', 'YAOI' or 'Tanbi' in Japanese and 'Danmei' in Chinese. This genre appeared in Japan in the 1960s, and went into China at the end of the 1990s. More analysis about Chinese female's writing in BL field will be given in Section 5.5 (p.165).

story' itself, endow these fan fictions with more significance of critical realism (there will be some more detailed reviews and analysis of this term given in Chapter 5).

Infernal Affairs is one such dystopian BL story related to war and government monitoring themes. It is one of the most famous fan fictions derived from *The King's Avatar*. The author was well-known by her numerous fan fictions. She employs Ye Xiu and Yu Wenzhou as protagonists, both of whom are the leaders of professional game teams and are good at tactics in the original work. The story is set in a world where the average level of technology is close to reality. The world had experienced two wars; the first one continued for a long period, therefore, in order to end it, some talented scholars invented a super machine (AI), which could monitor and predict the enemy's actions. In the second war, the military of the country was separated into camps and soon after, the country was divided into two parts: The Empire and the Alliance. However, when the Empire stole the technology of the machine, they were victorious. Once they had made an agreement with the puppet regime of the Alliance, the Empire launched the (electric) 'eyes', which soon formed a monitoring system called 'Sky-eye net'. The eyes can fly and listen to peoples' conversations and if any words are judged as problematic, armed soldiers (who may not be real humans) will suddenly appear. The accusation of a 'Thoughtcrime' shadows people's daily lives. Everyday people disappear; they are arrested and sent to a nameless place. People become very careful when talking or writing, because nobody knows what exactly are 'safe' topics. When the situation becomes more serious, some people even start to suspect the super machine is out of human's control and has developed self-awareness.

Ye Xiu graduated from military school and became a senior general in the first war. At the same time, he was the secret lover of Yu Wenzhou, his best friend since childhood. Later, he became a famous writer. After the country was divided, Ye joined the Alliance to resist the autocratic Empire, but then was framed and disappeared. Nevertheless, the resistance led by Yu Wenzhou and some others did not give up. They use the old machines to send messages to connect with each other and continue to research carefully on the solution to stop the super machine. 'More traditional, much safer,' Yu says, and continues to assume that antiquated machines are the safest options to stay away from the monitoring by high

technologies. 'Only the oldest ones cannot be discovered by the current technologies' (Chapter 1).

This novel was selected due to several reasons: the huge impact of the original work (*the King's Avatar*) in China; the popularity of the author of *Infernal Affairs*; the plot and the strongly realistic metaphors of the story, the concerns on the monitor taken by new intelligent technologies, and the challenging significance with its setting of special homosexual relationship between the two protagonists. Though the plot of the story is not quite subversive, it still has special critical realistic significance and could be seen as one representation of Chinese DYAL if considered within Chinese environment. On the other hand, the influence of Western dystopian literature and SF shown through the content, the way that the author created the story, and Chinese readers' admiration to it actually have revealed the dynamic relationship between society, writer, text and reader. Thereby, it corroborates the spatiotemporal attributes of DYAL again which was suggested in Chapter 2.

As can be seen from the above summaries, the main themes of the three fictions all focus on knowledge, the spread of true information and the struggles around them are linked to the ways the power of discourse works in dystopian societies. At the same time, the different characteristics of the three works indeed reflect the impact of the authors' different cultural identities on their creations. For example, the opposite position of libraries in the *Great Library* series (American) and the *Library Wars* series (Japanese) can be compared distinctly and get some interesting findings. The further analysis of these terms will be given in Chapter 6.

3.3 Using reader-response theories

The main research object of this study is ‘text’: the books are texts; the readers’ responses are also texts. Therefore, the method of textual analysis should be considered. As Allen (2017: n.p.) expressed, ‘Textual analysis is a methodology that involves understanding language, symbols, and/or pictures present in texts to gain information regarding how people make sense of and communicate life and life experiences.’ He emphasizes the cultural, historical, political, and social understanding of the environment within the text was made. However, as argued in Chapter 2, literature is the production of society, but it is not only the reflection of society. Texts not only mirror the world, but further help to construct it, therefore the power of literature is that it can help create alternative worlds, which can allow readers to imagine other worlds when we read these texts. In this process, the texts actively help to produce and interrogate the world, with all its contradictions, fractures, striations. The ‘creating-reading’ process of literature is dynamic and iterative. In this conception, the relation of the text to culture is one of circulation and exchange.

Based on this thought, for understanding this circulation in full scale, it is necessary to analyse the text from two aspects at least: the literary texts themselves (including authors’ background and thinking); and readers’ responses. This echoes the framework 2-3 I suggested in Chapter 2 (p.35) again - sometimes the responses from the middle stage (editor, translator, publisher or even censor) also should be considered, as they are important for the final forms of books on markets. However, in this study, as my primary attempt on this research direction, I would not extend the discussion range too wide, but mainly focus on the literary texts and readers’ responses.

Since the 1960s, reader-response theories have repudiated all of the major concepts underpinning the ‘New Criticism’ from the 1940s (the text is “autotelic” entity / complete within itself). By contrast, reader-response theories stressed that the meaning of a text is derived from the reader through the reading process (among the others: Moran and Penfield, 1990; Davis and Womack, 2002). There are multiple approaches within these theories, but all of them agree that the reader is an active agent who imparts ‘real existence’

to the work and completes its meaning through interpretation (Andrew, 1995). Generally speaking, reader-response theorists can be categorized as: those who are concerned with the reader's experience and psychology; those who concentrate on the linguistic/rhetorical dynamic of audiences; and those who deal with readers as cultural and historical subjects.

Classic reader-response theorists include Norman Holland, Stanley Fish, Wolfgang Iser, Hans Robert Jauss and so forth. Among them, Fish vehemently resisted efforts to find meaning from the texts themselves. Fish developed his 'social reader-response theory', which states that any individual interpretation of a text is created in a community of minds that shares a specific reading and interpretation strategy: the 'interpretative community' (Tyson, 2006). Hans Robert Jauss gives a historical dimension to this, which believes that 'a text is not simply and passively imbibed by the audience, but on the contrary, the reader makes out the meanings of the text based on his/her cultural background and experience...literature is a "dialogic" entity, a sort of dialogue between the text and the reader' (cited from Paul, 2020: n.p.). Wolfgang Iser especially stresses the positivity of readers, and argues that different readers will have different explanations of the same text. In general, reader-response theory is interested in audiences instead of texts as de-historized artefacts. The responses put readers back into the process of meaning-making. Readers are historical subjects, actively involved in making meaning, so they are dynamic in actively making meaning and it is culturally specific.

Though I disagree with those theorists' who totally abandon the analysis of the meaning in texts themselves, these arguments about readers' responses remain quite illuminating for me. Readers' understandings of a book are based on their own background and values, hence, their interpretations of the work may of course differ from the author's original thinking. This point also has been partly explored in structuralist theories. Nonetheless, there are still some gaps existing in the sense of how readers from different regions of the world understand the same book - particularly in the present complex social environment; the political conflicts among countries; the scale of international exchange; and cultural communications that are increasing simultaneously—all in combination with the changes in readers' habitus precipitated by the rapid development of technology. This point (the

comparison among readers' responses to the same work from different cultural groups) is generally absent or neglected in both those classical sociological literature theories and classical reader-response positions. In recent years, there have emerged some literary and educational studies which draw upon the multicultural reading field. However, with particular reference to the comparison between Western and Eastern readers' responses to DYAL, this is still almost a blank for sociological research—which consequently provides another motive for this research.

Thus, in this study, I combine the textual analysis and reader's response to contribute to a multidimensional analysis of the chosen dystopian works from West and East. Chapter 4, 5 and 6 will focus on the creating of DYAL (including the social and historical background of creation, and the content of texts themselves), while in Chapter 7, the analysis of readers' responses (discussion group data) will be highlighted. The readers (group members) will be dealt with as cultural and historical subjects (but not individuals) in reader-response theories. Through this combined analysis, the discrepancies between Western and Eastern authors' and readers' understanding of discourse-power relationships in DYAL, as well as the dynamic and iterative circulation of the text to culture intend to be revealed.

3.4 Readers' Responses Collection

As expressed in section 3.3, for understanding the similarities and contradictions between the viewpoints shown by the texts themselves and from the readers with different cultural identities, the analysis on readers' responses is necessary and important for this research. The data of readers' responses is mainly collected from two aspects: the public posts (comments) from online forums and websites; and the discussion from two focus groups organised.

In terms of online-post-collection, because that the posts are submitted on open websites, it is considered as the data is free to the public. These open data were mainly collected from large sites as follows:

Douban: Chinese biggest cultural hub site	https://www.douban.com/
Goodread: English biggest reading hub site	https://www.goodreads.com/
Weibo: Chinese biggest social media site	https://weibo.com/
Facebook: English large social media site	https://www.facebook.com/
The Kingdom of Lightnovel: Chinese forum for Japanese YAL fans	https://www.lightnovel.us/
Read Light Novel: English forum for Japanese YAL fans	https://www.readlightnovel.org/
LightNovel World: English forum for Japanese YAL fans	https://www.lightnovelworld.com/

Table 3-3: The list of websites where the readers' responses collected

The data is employed to support the historical reviewing of (D)YAL in Chapters 4 and 5, the text analysis in Chapter 6, and the comparative analysis around readers' responses in

the last Chapter. For ensuring the authenticity of data, most IDs of the reviewers quoted in the thesis were kept for verification, except those originally anonymous IDs.

In terms of group discussion data collection, inspired by Lang's (2009) case study approach, I organised two private focus groups of readers online, and recorded their discussion, to provide an analysis of their responses and opinions around (D)YAL, which mainly focused on the comparison of three texts selected in Chapter 5.

I submitted posts calling for volunteers on some of the websites and forums mentioned above, therefore, the participants enlisted online. The two focus groups were set based on the participant languages: Chinese and English. All the participants were made aware of the methods of protecting their privacy and data. Considering the need for the group members to discuss relevant issues honestly and be fully responsible for their participation, all participants recruited were above the age of 18 years. I did not limit the participation according to any professional occupation but given the need for familiarity with the genre targeted for this study, those coming from education and publishing fields had priority to join, and most of them were fans of Western and Eastern YAL.

Comparing with the other studies which employ participants through traditional off-line means (e.g. recruiting the students from one school), the participants recruited by this new way resulted in a more random and diverse group, with international backgrounds. The final list of 21 participants included Chinese people from 10 provinces of China and based in that country (for Chinese focus group), as well as people from Canada, Spain, Greece, Mexico and Argentina who can speak English (for English language focus group). The age range at the time of the study was between 21 and 35 (age 21-25: 11; age 26-30: 6; age 31-35: 4). Although the number of samples in this study is not large, the discussion has revealed enough diversity, contradictions and/or consistency of their opinions on the relevant issues.

For both focus groups, I organised two online discussions through SNS apps (Facebook message or QQ chatting group). Each discussion was led by the questions which I had prepared. The participants were encouraged to freely express their thoughts and opinions. I

managed the whole process, hence, when the discussion began to drift away from the original topic, I would intervene and remind them of the topic in question. Besides the chatting app, I also provided a private webpage (forum) for each group, which included an introductory note and the list of fiction involved in the research. The questions which had been discussed in the groups also were posted; the members therefore could reply or add some comments if they want.

Given the ethical risk of the research, the data collection did not involve the opinions on specific political problems of real countries, instead, it focused on the participants' opinions and experiences about the relevant works of fiction. At the same time, the analysis of the data provided in this thesis would focus on the overall trend of the whole group's thinking and responses to the topics, rather than on one individual. The anonymity of the participants has been strictly protected by using pseudonyms – more details about ethical issues and challenges of data collection will be explained in the next section (3.5).

The questions provided to lead the discussion of groups were based on the content of the stories selected. They were mainly focused on the participants' (reading) experiences, feeling and thinking around DYAL and texts themselves. The questions could be generally separated to five aspects: (the participants' opinions to) the authors' imagination/design about dystopian societies and futures; the power struggles shown in the selected works; the love storyline in DYAL; the personalities of characters in the stories and their choices; the other differences between the Western and Eastern DYAL. All the questions were kept neutrality without any guidance of tendency.

3.5 Ethical Issues, Challenges and Positionality

I received the ethical clearance from the College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee in May 2017 (attached as Appendix A). Procedures beyond the requirement of the Committee submission were also considered and implemented to protect my participants from any potential harm and violation of privacy, such as emotional stress. Since the very beginning during the recruitment phase, I sent out very specific descriptions about the purpose and the methodologies of my research as well as the possible distribution channels and potential reader groups of this thesis. Moreover, as Marshall and Batten (2004) point out, intercultural research calls for special attention and considerations when doing interviews. Although I am from the same cultural background as some the participants, the language of the institution where the study has been carried out, as well as the language of potential dissemination, is English. Therefore, when I sent out the recruitment information, two copies were provided for my participants: a cross-checked Chinese translation to guarantee understanding in participants' native language (Appendix B and C), and an original English version on the purpose and distribution of this study in case they needed to double-check for meanings that might have been lost in translation.

During the process of the focus groups' discussion, as the moderator, I paid very close attention to the interaction of participants, to make sure that no harm was experienced on participants in the process of interaction. For example, the discomfort possibly taken by cultural conflicts, or misunderstanding taken by different political background. The interpretations of human interactions are subjective in nature, and some of the quieter participants might find it more difficult to show their discomfort. The fact that the research was conducted through the Internet presented has even more challenges because as the moderator I did not have the full visual or tonal signals to identify potential harm-discomfort cues. Therefore, I planned to be more present and active with my moderation style than what I would have done in a face-to-face discussion group. If there were indications of interactions that seemed they might cause any discomfort, I would step in by either guiding the direction of discussion, or leading the group's attention away from the behavior in question (in case other participants jumped on the train of thought and

copied the behavior). In the actual group process, the discussion was mostly benign.

I was aware that the harm to participants could also come from sources other than the research process itself, such as attitudes concerning sensitive political issues. In such cases, I would take extra measures to guide the discussion towards focusing on the fictions. As a result, the whole discussion was respectful and did not touch on topics that had a negative impact on participants. None of the participants registered harm.

During the study process, I also noted the importance of my positionality as a researcher. As Gregory et al. (2009: p.556) defined, the positionality is about ‘the fact that a researcher’s social, cultural and subject positions (and other psychological processes) affect’, including the way of framing the questions; the researcher’s relations with those they research in the field or through interviews [and] interpretations they place on empirical evidence; the way of accessing to data, institutions and outlets for research dissemination; the likelihood that they will be listened to and heard, and so forth.

For this study, whilst the research process was successful in general, there were also limitations and challenges relevant to my positionality. For a start, I found it difficult to recruit Western young adult readers who might also be familiar with Eastern DYAL. Fortunately, I gained some volunteers through social media. Although the participant number of the English-language group was slightly lower than in my original plan, they did contribute substantial and impressive arguments to the discussion, based on their own social background and provide this research with multiple perspectives, especially on understanding the fountainhead and different formation environment of DYAL, and discerning contrasting trends across these cultural differences.

In the process of organizing the discussions, one challenge was coordinating the participants’ time to meet online, particularly the English-language focus group, because they were from different countries. Their cultural diversity offered rich and various opinions, but sometimes it also caused difficulties in understanding. This highlights the importance of a sensitive moderator.

Another challenge for me was keeping a neutral tone and avoiding falling into my own

language and thinking habits. I needed to be particularly mindful of my positionality during the stages of book selection and during the online discussions with my participants. My knowledge and decades of experience in reading dystopian fictions, as well as familiarity with fans, were undoubtedly helpful in understanding and analysing the participants' viewpoints. At the same time, I am a doctoral student at a UK university, which puts me in a position of power in leading the discussion. Nevertheless, I still tried to make the discussion more democratic, as everyone was allowed to express themselves. I took care of my choice of words and questions to not impact participants' opinions, but encourage them to express their original feeling and views.

The last challenge is from the uncontrollable drastic changes of the external situation. Events related to the political and cultural environment of China during the last stage of my research seriously affected me personally and extended the thesis process, however, I was eventually able to overcome them.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the adopted methodologies of this study have been described in detail. The sociological theories and literary critical theories have been combined and prepared for exploring the discourses expressed by authors in the fictions as well as the responses from readers. Meanwhile, the risks and challenges of this research have also been noted. Based on the discourses developed in this chapter, the next two chapters will firstly look at the historical contexts of DYAL in the three powerful countries with different cultural backgrounds, in order to inform this examination in depth. The three fictions from three countries also have been introduced primarily in this chapter, which is a preparation for further analysis and discussion in Chapters 6 and 7.

Chapter 4

From Dystopian Reality to DYAL (1):

USA and Japan

‘By the 20th century, the idea of an ordered world based on universally acknowledged laws had given way to a world based on ambiguity.’

Elliott, 2014: p.290

Introduction

In general, the history of YAL worldwide as a genre is reasonably young, not more than 100 years (Bucher and Manning, 2006: p.5). The blooming of dystopian literature in both the West and the East can be seen as a reflection of the power conflicts and people’s concerns within the context of the global political events of the 20th century. There are already plenty of academic works that have researched the history of YAL and DYAL in the West (among others: Hintz and Ostry, 2013; Basu et al., 2015; Cart, 2016). In contrast, very few English academic works have provided a systematic analysis of Eastern YAL – particularly DYAL. For example, *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers* (2013) does not address any Eastern works, although the book title and introduction do not indicate that it is limited to ‘Western YAL’. At the same time, a few opinions mentioned in the introduction chapter are also not applicable to Japanese and Chinese dystopian fiction. Besides, whereas most works discuss several types of themes in the Western DYAL, such as the social risks taken by clone or nuclear pollution, there is a dearth of studies involving a comparison between DYAL in the West and East.

In terms of Eastern academic scholarship, most Chinese essays continue to focus on classic works (e.g. *We*, 1984, *Brave New World*) and popular Western fiction (e.g. *The Hunger Games* series), but there is no book that provides a systematic exposition about the contemporary DYAL in both East and West.¹⁹ Hence, this chapter and the following one will provide a brief historical and cultural review of the development of DYAL in America,

¹⁹ There is a lack of data from Japanese academic research in this field because of language problems.

Japan, and China, starting with the rise of YAL and covering the relevant background of censorship in order to deepen our understanding of the original circumstances for the appearance of DYAL in the three countries. This introductory part will become the basis for discussion on the content of the selected works and their comparison in the following chapters. Because there already have been plenty of studies which mentioned the history of Western DYAL, in this chapter, the review of the (D)YAL in America will be more brief, while the discussion focusing on Japanese (D)YAL will be more detailed and given that the situation around publishing and the development of YAL in China are much more complex than in the other two countries, Chinese context will be provided in the next separate chapter.

4.1 USA

In the United States, ‘junior’ or ‘juvenile’ novels appeared in the 1930s (Nilsen and Donelson, 2009: p.58). Cart (2016: p.11) considers that the new field of writing for teenagers became established in 1942. However, before the 1960s, the content of books for YA mainly dealt with ‘white, middle-class values and morality’ and ‘the endings were almost uniformly happy and bright, and taboos may never have been written down (in these stories)’ (Nilsen and Donelson, 2009: p.61). Between the 1960s and the 1970s, more realistic topics began to be addressed in YAL. This period is considered the first golden age of YAL, when ‘challenging novels began speaking directly to the interests of the identified adolescent market’ (Owen, 2003). Society began to understand that childhood and adulthood ‘are not really as separate as people think they are’, and the growth process of many young people is more complex than the adults’ imagination (Cart, 2016: p.66).

The next decade saw the consolidation of YA authors and a growing market. In the 1980s, YAL paperback series flourished in America, and the authors started to explore more complex issues, sometimes based on society’s concerns, such as multiculturalism and political correctness. In the 1990s, the publication of realistic YA fiction declined, with the scholars such as Roan (1994), Hochschild (1994), and Aronson (2001), positing that the

main reason for that decline was the increase of negative stories availability on the media (TV, radio, film, and later the Internet) which resulted in readers becoming ‘jaded’ (Bucher and Manning, 2006; Cart, 2016). Hence, publishers were forced to change their direction and marketing strategies. From the end of the 1990s, as seen in the cases of the Harry Potter series and Japanese manga, speculative fiction and graphic novels became the new growth points of the Western YA’s reading interest.

Historically, the publishing environment in America has been much freer than in the two Eastern countries I review in depth in this thesis. There is no national censoring and rating system for books at present, despite some instances where rating criteria have been provided by religious or local organizations, such as the ‘plugged in’ criteria created by ‘Focus on Family’.²⁰ The number of forbidden books in American history is not high by Eastern standards and most book banning occurs in local schools and libraries. The most famous censorship case is the establishment of the Comics Code Authority (CCA) in 1954.

In the middle of the 20th century, American society began to attribute the problem of juvenile delinquency to the negative effect of comics (Marks, 2017). In 1955, the CCA was established by the Comics Magazine Association of America which set out a Code for censoring comic book publishing and requested the magazines should forbid the advertisement of sex instruction books, knives, realistic guns and fireworks, and also limited many other aspects of comic content.²¹ For example, the word ‘crime’ should not appear alone on a cover; all scenes of horror, excessive bloodshed, lust, sadism and masochism should not be permitted; walking dead and vampires were prohibited; nudity in any form is prohibited, while all characters should be depicted in dress reasonably acceptable to society, and so forth.

This Code impacted the American comic publishing industry for a long period until the 1990s. Since the end of 1990s, some famous American comic companies started to withdraw from the CCA, and the Code actually lost its efficacy (Marks, 2017). However,

²⁰ ‘Focus on Family’ website: <https://www.pluggedin.com/> According to the list provided by Foerstel (1998), dozens of censorship organisations existed in America.

²¹ The whole Code could be found in: <http://cblfd.org/the-comics-code-of-1954/>

this Code did not impact the field of literary works. The publishing environment of the United States generally could be judged as free and democratic. In my personal opinion, this environment also partly affects some Western authors' imagination about a high-tension dystopian society, and causes the dystopian worlds described in their fiction are lack a sense of reality to some degree. This point can be seen more clearly through the comparison of Western and Eastern DYAL, which will be discussed more later in Chapters 6 and 7.

After developing for nearly one century, the types of YAL in America nowadays are varied and cover almost all literary genres; the themes include school and family lives, adventure, war, history, romance, social problems and so forth. In all kinds of these YA fictions, the rise of dystopian works occurred much later, around the middle of the 1990s, though the overt dystopian tendency already appeared within science fiction (SF) after WWII (Baccolini and Moylan, 2003: p.1). Some scholars note that since the 2000s, numerous dystopian fictions can be found on the bookshelves of the YA section (Basu et al., 2013: p.2).

The development of DYAL in both West and East is closely tied to changes in the local political situation. As Basu et al. (2013: p.1) argue, 'dystopian writing engages with pressing global concerns: liberty and self-determination, environmental destruction and looming catastrophe, questions of identity, and the increasingly fragile boundaries between technology and the self.' Perhaps one of the reasons for the rapid development of DYAL over the last 20 years is due to the fact that younger generations are facing these more global concerns in their lifetime.

'Really good fiction has a staying power that comes from its ability to jar, to turn on, to move the whole intellectual and emotional history of the reader' (Gardner, 1994, cited from Cart, 2016: p.62). DYAL can help young people to face and think about the central fears and concerns of the contemporary world (Basu et al., 2013: p.5). Through reading, they can learn and experience the deconstruction and reconstruction of power relationships in those fictitious worlds, while probably give the reflection in their real living.

In the ‘list of dystopian literature’ on Wikipedia,²² ‘YAL’ appears as a separate type from the 1990s onwards. For this genre, it lists three books in the 1990s, 30 books from 2000 to 2010, and 30 books from 2011 to 2016²³. Although this list does not include all of the Western dystopian YAL published in the last 30 years, it covers more than 90% of the main publications in this genre, most of which are popular in both the West and East. I also skimmed the other two recommendation lists of DYAL on Chinese reading forum on Baidu, which includes hundreds of texts, and mainly focuses on dystopian fiction.²⁴

In *the Faber Book of Utopias*, Carey (1999) identifies the most important topics in the utopian and dystopian works. Following his thought, I conducted a review of major contemporary American dystopian YA fictions based on the lists released on Wiki and other book reading forums, and identified four main themes which I shall discuss in turn.

The first theme that appears repeatedly is ‘**revolution**’ (social conflicts) and ‘**consciousness-raising of freedom**’. In most American dystopian YA novels, from the *Hunger Games* series (Collins, 2008) to the *Great Library* series (Caine, 2015), the revolution is always launched by the adolescent protagonists with the aim of subverting totalitarianism, destroying blocked ‘fake-perfect’ society, or escaping from such societies. It should be noted that, in this theme, there are some differences between YAL and fiction for adults. In many Western modern dystopian books for adults, particularly the classic ones, ‘control of culture (represented by language and books)’ is often featured. As Baccolini and Moylan (2003: p.6) point out, ‘(in those dystopian novels) ...the process of taking control over the means of language, representation, memory, and interpellation is a crucial weapon and strategy in moving dystopian resistance from an initial consciousness to an action that leads to a climactic event that attempts to change the society.’ However, in the contemporary Western DYAL, this topic is not highlighted as it is in the fiction for adults because the conflicts in these DYAL mostly focus on the contradictions between the oppressors and the enslaved people, while the control of information is always a part of

²² The whole list could be found in: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_dystopian_literature

²³ The count was made in May, 2018.

²⁴ The whole lists: <https://tieba.baidu.com/p/2447014172> and <https://tieba.baidu.com/p/4717329606>

totalitarian rules, which is set as a part of background but not the key conflict.

By reviewing the main plots of published American dystopian YA fictions - from the early famous work '*The Giver*', to the most popular series '*The Hunger Games*', and also including *The Shadow Children*, *Uglies*, *Matched*, *Divergent*, *Article 5*, and so forth - it could be said that fiction with this social conflict theme takes a significantly dominant proportion in the category of American DYAL. Throughout the last decades, this theme is always the main concern of American authors.

The second theme I identified is '**eco-criticism**'. Numerous stories on the Wiki DYAL list involve elements such as post-apocalyptic societies (most of which result from over development of industry and use of nuclear or biochemical weapons while the others are due to natural disasters), clones, cyberpunk, food crisis, and population control. As important as the first theme, eco-criticism is also taken a large percentage in the Western dystopian SF for YA, which covers more than 40% of the works on the Wiki list.²⁵ In the last decades, it has become much more significant, probably related to people's anxiety and concerns taken by the swift development of technologies and serious disasters such as what happened in Chernobyl and Fukushima. As Kerr (2011: n.p.) proposes, 'Modern and unforeseen technologies are inescapable and the sources of profound unease... This technophobic trend has dominated Young SF over the past thirty years'.²⁶

The third theme considers **gender issues** (including gender equality, feminism and LGBT issues). Many protagonists of the most popular American DYAL in the 21st century are girls who have strong personalities. At the same time, more than 60% of the fictions on the Wiki list used young females as main characters (up to 75% of the works during 2011-2016). This change is related to the trend of all YAL in the last decades, and there are already many studies which have explored the phenomenon and its reasons in depth.

²⁵ For example, *The Giver*, *The Shadow Children*, *Life as we knew it*, *The City of Ember*, *Uglies*, *The Dead and the Gone*, *The Forest of Hands and Teeth*, *Article 5*, *Revealing Eden*, *The 5th Wave*...

²⁶ This theme and the third theme are not the focus of this study. Therefore, they will not be discussed deeper in this thesis, but may be explored further in the future.

It should be noted that, in this term, Basu et al. (2013: p.6) mention very few Western DYAL include queer relationships as a central focus, which suggests ‘a reluctance to subvert dominant mores’ - though I would suggest this point to be limited in ‘published works’. With the rapid development of the Internet, the number of YA fiction released online in a personal capacity has significantly increased. On the two biggest fanfiction websites²⁷, this number already totals billions – most of the works are written by females, and belong to ‘slash’ fiction. Many fan fictions post online have involved dystopian themes or elements. In contrast, at present, there is still a lack of studies in this field (fan fiction online), especially about works related to dystopian issues.²⁸



Harry Potter	(796K)
Twilight	(220K)
Percy Jackson and the Olympians	(75.3K)
Lord of the Rings	(56.7K)
Hunger Games	(45.7K)
Warriors	(25.8K)
Mortal Instruments	(17.6K)

Figure 4-1: An example of the number of fandom works available on Fanfiction website²⁹ Among these works, lots have involved dystopian and queer issues.

The fourth theme that often appears is **human desire and emotion** (mostly focusing on love and romance). The love story between the young protagonists tends to be an important storyline in American YA literature, not excluding the dystopian works. In most cases, it is the crucial element that drives the plot in these stories. As Basu et al. (2013: p.6) express, ‘Romance can play a key role in shaping the dystopian narrative and the possibilities for social change enacted in the novel’. Given my knowledge of the field, I would argue that this theme is always one of the key points which attract young people to read YAL; nevertheless, it also probably has a negative effect by ‘turning the story away from the social and political involvement that motivated the narrative in the first place’ (p.6), and

²⁷ <https://www.fanfiction.net/> and <https://archiveofourown.org/>

²⁸ Siobhan McEvoy-Levy conducted a study that implicated the fan fictions of *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* from a political perspective (2018). In general, online fan fiction is a very new academic field with plenty of gaps. I believe there must be numerous American online works involving dystopian themes which need further research.

²⁹ The website: <https://www.fanfiction.net/>

make the young readers' concerns deviate from the serious issues.

Most Western dystopian YA fiction on the Wiki list generally include two or more of the four themes mentioned above. The explosion of DYAL and the concentration of these themes, as Johnson (2016: p.14) claims, is representative of the ongoing transformation of society in the 20th and 21st centuries.

In my review, I noted that the first and second themes inherit ideas from early classic dystopian literature such as *We* (Zamyatin, 1921), *Brave New World* (Huxley, 1931), *1984* (Orwell, 1949) and *Fahrenheit 451* (Bradbury, 1953). Though with the progress of the times, there are more indications of new technologies displayed in American contemporary dystopian YAL; the basal imagination of social conflicts and solutions shown in those works has not changed much from their classic predecessors. Meanwhile, in most of Western DYAL, the solutions of changing those totalitarian societies are simple and clear: mostly fall to the 'revolution'. As a result, it makes the dystopian societies in these American works showing a similarity to each other, and makes the readers – particularly those from China - feel those societies are lack of a sense of reality.

Given my knowledge of the field, I would argue that there are two reasons behind this phenomenon of American DYAL: firstly, most of the Western dystopian stories for young people still reveal traces of distinct Western ideas – particularly 'American-style' – about freedom and human rights. It might be because most of those American DYAL authors grew up and have always lived in an open and democratic society. Echoing the framework (figures 2-3 and 2-4) shown in Chapter 2, their social backgrounds influence their writing logic and imagination of a fictitious society. Another reason is the authors' consideration of young readers when they are writing which, as Basu et al. (2013: p.5) argue, lead to the (Western) DYAL offering something like 'a training manual' to the young people on how to deal with problems and overcome dilemmas and provide them the primary concept of political activities. At the same time, the 'easily digestible prescriptions' suggested by many American novels may allow young readers to avoid thinking about the complexities and ambiguities of social problems more deeply. It may mean there are some gaps within

the narrative, to the extent that American DYAL could explore more deeply. From a sociological perspective, they are therefore significant for studying the writing ecology of American DYAL and the distribution of readers' interests.

4.2 Japan

While YAL was thriving in the West, on the other side of the world the literature for YA was also developing although the concept of ‘YA fiction’ has never become as popular in Eastern Asia as much as in the West. For a long period, the works for YA in Japan spread to children’s literature, manga, SF and other types of books.

In Japan, since WWI, manga has become the most popular paper media read by the young people. Since the end of the 1960s, after the social movements launched by students were violently suppressed by the government, many young people turned to fictitious worlds offered by fiction and manga for comfort and to satisfy their emotional needs (Yin, 2018). As a result, the development of Japanese manga has continued to thrive.

From the 1970s, the cover, layout and illustration of some Japanese novels, mostly fantasy, Sci-fi or romantic work, started to employ comic elements to attract young readers, which is generally considered as the sign of an early concept of the ‘light novel’ (Chem, 2005; Diviner, 2009). In the 1980s and 1990s, the ‘light novel’ gradually became a unique Japanese YA cultural icon which young people deeply identified with and which started to influence the young people’s reading in other countries, along with Japanese manga, animation and game - particularly in China and some Southeast Asian countries where the original YA publishing area was almost empty.

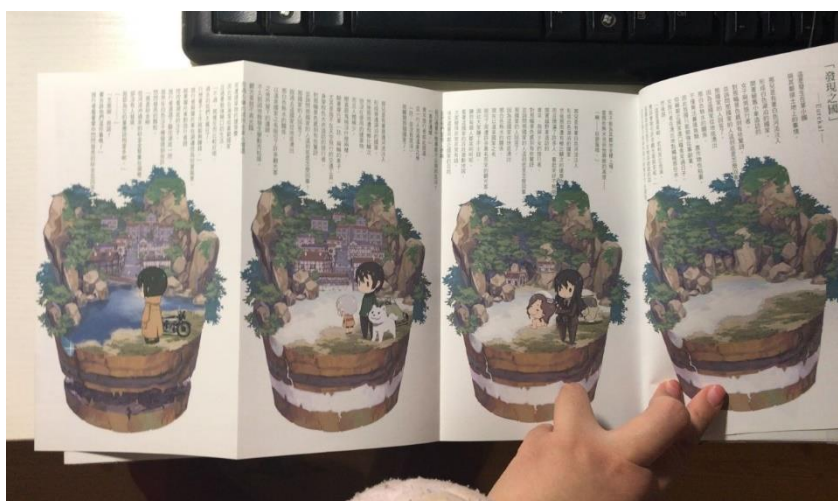
According to Saito (2016: p.316), the term ‘light novel’ was first used in a Japanese online forum in the 1990s, and then soon became popular and common in-group jargon among participants online ‘for the borderline novels that did not belong to conventional classifications of SF and fantasy’. Since 2004, the term has been used in the Japanese publishing industry (ibid, p.317), and spread to China and the Southeast Asian area. In 2007, Seven Seas Entertainment used this term firstly in the English language.

At present, there is not an exact definition of ‘light novel’ (or ‘raito noberu’) yet. Some scholars consider it as the publications which are closely tied to anime, manga and larger

media franchises (ibid p.315). In the early period, most light novels prioritized characters over story (ibid p.318), and mainly used dialogue to push the plot development, while the descriptions tended to be simple and short, avoiding complex and long sentences. It meant the content of those books seemed ‘empty’, and more like a word edition of anime. However, after 20 years of development, the content and writing style of the light novel has changed and is much more diverse.

Today, the term ‘light novel’ points to ‘a category’ rather than ‘a genre’. As Saito expresses (2016: p.316), ‘a group of novels are clustered together not according to the absolute meaning of genre but to its regulatory principle of constituting a community of interested consumers’. In the usual definition shown online, it points to a form of the novel especially for young readers, which has an average length of 50-70,000 words, numerous manga-style illustrations and even manga-style narrative (writing style). The vast majority of protagonists are teenagers and young adults. Normally, a light novel is published in a small size (A6). The concept implies the meaning of ‘light weight’ and ‘easy to read’. These special forms of the light novel have also influenced the authors’ writing on the content of novels, including those stories involving dystopian issues.

The strong correlation among the Japanese light novel, manga and animation is attractive for their audiences, and allows them to follow their favourite works in different media. As a result, when a novel becomes popular, it is usually rapidly adapted to the other two versions allowing the work to be spread more widely in an effective way.



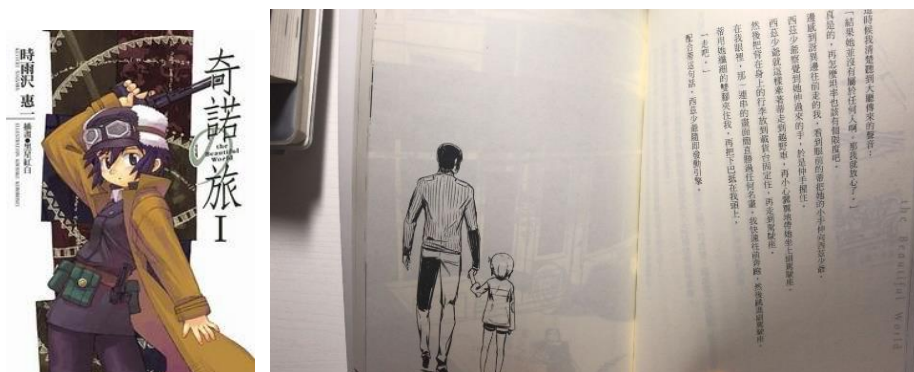


Figure 4-2: An example of the covers and illustrations of 'light novel' which includes dystopian stories: *Kino's Journey* (Sigsawa, 2000)

According to the special issue '*Light Novel Research*' (2005) published by the Japanese Research Institute for Publications, in 2004, the number of new light novels reached 2179. The total number of sales was about 8.32 million copies. As the following lists of the annual best-sellers of the light novel (series) in Japan (2014-2016)³⁰ shown, the sales of top novels were always more than 1 million copies in recent years. These ranks have not included the number of official sales overseas and piracy (mostly online).

Rank	Estimated Copies Sold in Period	Title	Publisher
		Author	
1	1,599,614	<i>The irregular at magic high school</i> Tsutomu Satou Illustration: Kana Ishida	ASCII Media Works
2	1,403,681	<i>Sword Art Online</i> Story: Reki Kawahara Illustration: abec	ASCII Media Works
3	1,106,631	<i>Kagerou Daze</i> JIN (Shizen no Teki-P) Illustration: Shizu	Enterbrain
4	826,719	<i>Monogatari Series</i> NisiOisin Illustration: VOFAN	Kodansha
5	640,119	<i>My Teen Romantic Comedy SNAFU</i> Wataru Watari Illustration: Ponkan8	Shogakukan
6	603,511	<i>Haikyu!!</i> Original Story: Haruichi Furudate/ Writer: Kiyoko Hoshi	Shueisha
7	594,667	<i>No Game, No Life</i> Yuu Kamiya	Kadokawa
8	545,890	<i>Shinyaku Toaru Majutsu no Index (New Testament: A Certain Magical Index)</i> Kazuma Kamachi Illustration: Kiyotaka Haimura	ASCII Media Works
9	387,330	<i>Kuroko's Basketball -Replace-</i> Sawako Hirabayashi Original Story/Illustration: Tadatoshi Fujimaki	Shueisha
10	376,830	<i>Log Horizon</i> Mamare Touno Illustration: Kazuhiro Hara	Enterbrain

Table 4-3: Top-Selling Light Novels in Japan by Series: 2014

³⁰ The lists were originally announced by Oricon Rank (Japan): <https://www.oricon.co.jp/rank/>
The pictures are from: <https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/>

Rank	Estimated Sales in Period	Title	Publisher
		Author	
1	1,220,217	<i>Is It Wrong to Try to Pick Up Girls in a Dungeon?</i> Writer: Fujino Ōmori/Illustration: Suzuhito Yasuda	SB Creative
2	1,175,978	<i>The Irregular at Magic High School</i> Tsutomu Satou Illustration: Kana Ishida	ASCII Media Works
3	1,050,446	<i>My Teen Romantic Comedy SNAFU</i> Wataru Watari Illustration: Ponkan8	Shogakukan
4	927,413	<i>Overlord</i> Kugane Maruyama	Enterbrain
5	883,833	<i>Naruto</i> Story Series Original Story: Masashi Kishimoto / Text: Akira Higashiyama, Others	Shueisha
6	788,895	<i>Sword Art Online</i> Story: Reki Kawahara Illustration: abec	ASCII Media Works
7	494,721	<i>Kagerou Daze</i> JIN (Shizen no Teki-P) / Illustration: Shizu	Enterbrain
8	413,663	<i>Kokuhaku Yokō Renshū</i> Writer: Tōko Fujitani/Original Concept: HoneyWorks/Illustration: Yamako	Kadokawa
9	405,666	<i>Shinyaku Toaru Majutsu no Index (New Testament: A Certain Magical Index)</i> Kazuma Kamachi / Illustration: Kiyotaka Haimura	ASCII Media Works
10	390,856	<i>Sword Art Online: Progressive</i> Story: Reki Kawahara Illustration: abec	ASCII Media Works

Rank	Estimated Sales in Period	Title	Publisher
		Author	
1	1,417,661	Novel <i>your name.</i> Makoto Shinkai	Kadokawa
2	1,174,562	<i>Konosuba - God's Blessing on This Wonderful World!</i> Writer: Natsume Akatsuki/ Illustration: Kurone Mishima	Kadokawa
3	1,020,673	<i>Sword Art Online</i> Story: Reki Kawahara Illustration: abec	ASCII Media Works
4	1,007,381	<i>Re:Zero</i> Writer: Tappei Nagatsuki/ Illustration: Shinichirou Otsukai	Kadokawa
5	711,154	<i>Overlord</i> Kugane Maruyama	Enterbrain
6	602,256	<i>The Irregular at Magic High School</i> Tsutomu Satou Illustration: Kana Ishida	ASCII Media Works
7	562,187	<i>No Game, No Life</i> Writer/Illustration: Yuu Kamiya	Media Factory
8	450,791	<i>Monogatari</i> Series Writer: NisiOisin/ Illustration: VOfan	Kodansha
9	449,192	<i>Is It Wrong to Try to Pick Up Girls in a Dungeon?</i> Writer: Fujino Ōmori/Illustration: Suzuhito Yasuda	SB Creative
10	435,482	<i>Kokuhaku Yokō Renshū</i> Writer: Tōko Fujitani/Original Concept: HoneyWorks/Illustration: Yamako	Kadokawa

Table 4-4: Top-Selling Light Novels in Japan by Series: 2015 and 2016

At the same time, Japanese YAL also gradually attracted more and more Western readers. In the USA, sales of Japanese manga ‘grew a remarkable 350% from \$60 million in 2002 to \$210 million in 2007’ (Brienza, 2009: p.101). It is easy to find the Japanese YA literature (and derivatives³¹) sold in the bookshops in most large cities in Europe and North America, as well as in the online bookstore (e.g. amazon)³². In addition, there is an abundance of large or small personal English websites about Japanese YA literature online³³. Although most of them mainly focus on manga and animation, the number of discussions relevant to light novels is also considerable.

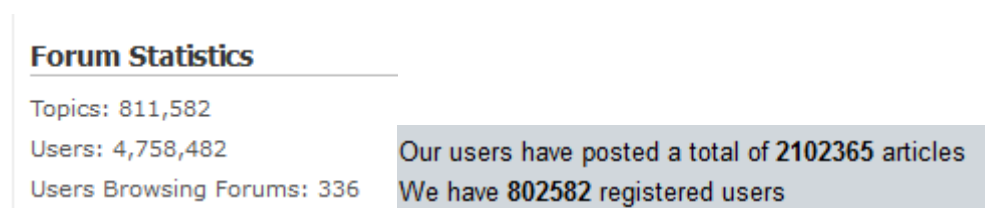


Figure 4-5: The user and topic (article) number statistics from two big English forums³⁴.

There is no doubt that, as a result, the popularity of Japanese YA literature has a deep impact on the socialization and formation of the mentality of contemporary adolescents and young adults. However, as with manga (the sales number is always several times of novel), the light novel was still excluded from the mainstream literary field and was generally considered as a sub-literature belonging to youth subculture. Even at present, in the conservative mainstream cultural environment of Eastern Asia, mangas and light novels are still isolated, despised or discriminated to some extent.

In contrast to the incredible number of light novel readers, the academic research in this field is still limited in both West and East³⁵. Although there are already numerous academic

³¹ For example, posters, toys, daily necessities and clothes.

³² Based on personal experience and primary statistics, the majority of sales of Japanese YA literature in Europe and North America are manga and animation, while just several sorts of best-selling novels are formally translated and published in English - but many are translated and submitted online by fans.

³³ Here are some examples:

<https://honeysanime.com/>

<https://myanimelist.net/>

<https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/>

³⁴ [Accessed 01.12.2017]: <https://myanimelist.net/forum/> ;

<https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/bbs/phpBB2/>

³⁵ Because of the limitation of language, the state of Japanese academic research on Japanese YA literature, particularly on light novel and manga, is not clear. Here points the research by Chinese and English.

papers on Japanese manga, in the field of light novel, Chinese and English research results are still very few. I only found about 30 Chinese papers in this specific field, while less than 10 results of English papers or studies on Google Scholar³⁶. Most relevant English studies merely mention the concept or introduce it generally and primarily³⁷. There is a giant gap for deep exploration in this field.

Until now, there have been some English studies on Japanese SF or dystopian world (mostly means Apocalypse) in Japanese literature (among others: Matthew, 1989; Napier, 1995; Tanaka, 2011), but they also do not discuss the specific angle of YA literature and rarely pay attention to the Japanese texts focusing on totalitarianism.

In general, the 2000s could be seen as a turning point of the emphasized point of dystopian themes in Japanese YAL. Different from the West, DYAL did not become an independent genre in Japan, but scattered in the light novels, mangas and animations for young people. If focusing on ‘books’, it could be said that most of the Japanese dystopian fictions for young people belong to the light novel, and have similar characteristics of this category of books: written with significant anime and manga art style (more illustrations, more dialogues, shorter sentences and more intelligible words); the plot tends not to be heavy, even if the story involves serious background or sensitive issues (e.g. *Shimoneta* makes the resistance movement against the code for forbidding pornography as a comedy).



Figure 4-6: The main character, the terrorist ‘Blue Snow’ in *Shimoneta: A Boring World Where the Concept of Dirty Jokes Doesn't Exist* (Akagi, 2012)

³⁶ The count was made in October.2017.

³⁷ In Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese Literature (2016), there is one chapter ‘Narrative in the digital age: From light novels to web serials’, which could be said to be the newest formal English academic study in this field. However, it is still a ‘basal introduction’.

The story conceives a dystopian near future of Japan. All the citizens are forced to wear the high-technology devices called Peace Makers (PM) at all times. PM can analyse an individual's spoken words and hand motions for any action that could break the law. 'The word "DICK" can get you arrested' (Akagi, 2012). The people and organizations who create and spread pornographic materials are defined as terrorists. 'Blue Snow' is a famous 'terrorist', who always appears with only a bedsheet on a naked body and shouting vulgar words and throwing pornographic pictures. Her real identity is the daughter of a politician who was imprisoned because he opposed the radical censorship code.

Since the early 20th century, many Japanese fictions for YA already described post-apocalyptic worlds or involved relevant eco-critical and post-human elements³⁸. This motif continued to flourish in the 21st century³⁹. On the other hand, before the 2000s, only a few Japanese manga contained totalitarian elements, represented by *Phoenix* (Osamu, 1967), *Galaxy Express 999* (Matsumoto, 1977), *Toward the Terra* (Takemiya, 1977) and *Battle Angel Alita* (Kishiro, 1990). Since the beginning of the new century, there has been a boom in dystopian YA works that particularly focus on the setting of totalitarian societies or mix totalitarian and apocalyptic factors as background setting:

Name of fiction	The world described
<i>Kino's Journey</i> (Sigsawa, 2000)	Apocalypse, totalitarianism (in some cities), fake utopia
<i>Overman</i> (Tomino, 2002)	Apocalypse, totalitarian society

³⁸ Based on many scholars' research, in my personal opinion, there are two reasons for this literary phenomenon: 1, the impact of WWII and nuclear explosion; 2, the subsistence crisis consciousness of island country.

³⁹ Some of representative works: *Metropolis* (Osamu, 1949), *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (Miyazaki, 1982), *Apple Seed* (Shiro, 1985), *Akira* (Otomo, 1988) *Ghost in the Shell* (Shiro, 1989), *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (Anno, 1995), *Ergo Proxy* (Shuko, 2006), *Attack on Titan* (Isayama, 2009), *Puella Magi Madoka Magica* (Urobuchi, 2011). It should be noted that majority of the most famous Japanese work with this theme are manga and animation. In contrast, there are few light novels focusing on the relevant themes before 2000. Some Japanese SF involved the theme. but I do not count them here, because they do not specially target a young reader group.

<i>No. 6</i> (Asano, 2003)	Apocalypse, totalitarian society, fake utopia
<i>Library Wars</i> (Hiro, 2006)	Totalitarian society
<i>Genocidal Organ</i> (Project Itoh, 2007)	Totalitarian society
<i>Harmony</i> (Project Itoh, 2008)	Apocalypse, totalitarian society, fake utopia
<i>From the New World</i> (Kishi, 2008)	Apocalypse, totalitarian society, fake utopia
<i>Psycho-Pass</i> series (Katsuyuki and Urobuchi, 2012)	Totalitarian society, fake utopia
<i>Shimoneta: A Boring World Where the Concept of Dirty Jokes Doesn't Exist</i> (Akagi, 2012)	Totalitarian society, fake utopia
<i>Poison City</i> (Tetsuya, 2014)	Totalitarian society

Table 4-7: A list of well-known Japanese DYAL published after 2000.

In recent years, it can be found that, the forms of dystopian issues shown in Japanese YAL have become more flexible. For example, the manga *Screaming on the Border of Hell* (Hengoku no Schwester / Minoru, 2015) describes that in the Middle Ages, the young daughters of females who are framed and burnt as witches would be sent to a fully enclosed abbey, where they will be disciplined under cruel high-handed management. The story is about how a group of female teenagers resist and survive from this mini dystopian society. Another instance is *The Promised Neverland* (Shirai and Demizu, 2016), which tells a story about how a group of talented children escape from an ‘orphanage’ which looks utopian but is actually a ‘farm’ where the ‘demons’ raise them as food. The world in the story is not the typical society as those shown in the classic dystopian literature, but the basal metaphor of the story is similar: the power conflicts between oppressed people (children) and dominators (demons, who mean totalitarians only to those human children). These fictions have displayed the flexible narrative forms of dystopian issues shown in

Japanese YAL.

The rise of contemporary Japanese and English DYAL happened almost at the same time. Though the number of Japanese DYAL is not as substantial as the Western ones, there are still some significant works, which are famous among Asian young readers. Furthermore, with the spread of Japanese popular culture - particularly Japanese animations in the West, they are becoming gradually known by Western readers.

Despite the fact that the target customer groups of the Western YA fiction and Japanese light novel and manga are almost the same; their narratives, the deeper thinking modes and notions behind narrative are quite different, as well as the different emphasized points around the same theme. In my opinion, Japanese dystopian works reveal more variety on the topics related to the reality, and also show the different features of writing style and character design from the Western ones.

I would argue that one reason for this phenomenon is that Japanese culture was influenced deeply by both Western and Eastern thought. In a long history, Chinese culture had a deep impact on Japanese society. The traces of this influence can even be found in contemporary Japan. On the other side, Japanese society started to study Western culture in all fields after the Meiji Restoration (since 1860s). Finally, the effects of the conflicts and blend of Western and Eastern thought, faiths, cultures and political systems are revealed in every aspect of Japanese society, including the content of contemporary literature.

The scholar Ho from Hongkong (1991) argued that there are two intrinsic differences in discussing the Japanese utopian tradition before the 21st century: 'Utopia' is a foreign concept for Japan, and the concept itself is not very clearly defined to some extent. The same problem also exists in discussing Japanese dystopian literature.

On one hand, the traces of Western classical dystopian literature still can be found in the recent Japanese DYAL. One example is the scene of 'book-burning' as the typical extreme way of censorship:

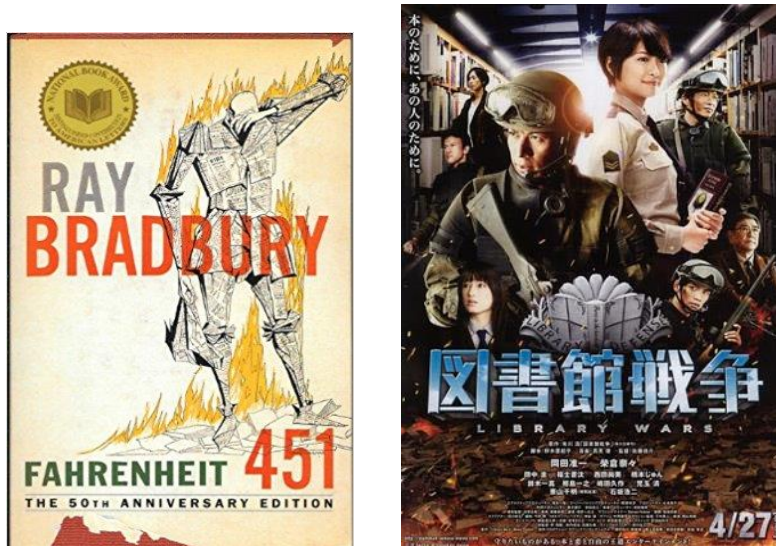


Figure 4-8: The cover of *Fahrenheit 451* and the poster of *Library War* (film)



Figure 4-9: The beginning scene of *Shimoneta* (animation)



Figure 4-10: The illustration in *Poison City*

On the other hand, Japanese authors reveal their unique Eastern thinking modes and philosophy, either in the plot of story, or in the design of characters. The four main themes shown in the Western DYAL are also present in most of the Japanese dystopian works but with particularities which differ and which I will briefly discuss in turn.

Love: Although love between young people is also a very important issue in Japanese light novels, it is not as obvious in Japanese DYAL. In some works, there is no love storyline (for example, *Battle Angel Alita*, *Kino's Journey*). In other books, it is a subordinate element in the development of the plot (e.g. *Psycho-Pass*). Sometimes it is faint and indirect, for example, in *No.6*, the relationship between the two boys is something between love and friendship. Also, in the four volumes of *Library Wars*, the protagonists keep[their unrequited love for each other secret in the whole first and second volumes. Generally, the love relationships between protagonists shown in Japanese DYAL are more implicit than those shown in American works.

Gender Issues: There are also numerous Japanese dystopian YA fictions which set females as key characters, but the proportion is not as high as in the Western DYAL. In fact, the number of Japanese DYAL is not enough to affirm the proportion as evidence of the rise of feminism. Nevertheless, if counting in the wider range of Japanese light novels and mangas, the proportion of female protagonists is distinctly more than male protagonists in the last 30 years.

Besides, in the 1960s and 1970s, there were a group of Japanese female authors who had high-level literary quality, but their political propositions could not be presented freely and be treated fairly in a society with serious gender discrimination. Therefore, they expressed their opinions through manga. Due to that, the Danmei (BL) fictions for female readers rose since the 1970s, which always have a deep relationship with issues of breaking taboos, gender revolution, rebellion and so forth. In plenty of Japanese Danmei works, dystopian themes are not rare. The representative works are *No 6* (Asano, 2003) and *From the New World* (Kishi, 2008), both of which include the queer relationship between the main

characters.

Eco-criticism: The introspection around industry civilization is one of the main concerns which presents in Japanese works for young people, from manga *Phoenix* (Tezuka Osamu, 1956), to novel *No.6* (Asano, 2003). In contrast with the Western YAL, the eco-critical issues revealed in Japanese books are very few related to the disasters caused by extraterrestrial lives or meteors, but mostly focus on the natural disasters which happen on Earth (especially those are caused by humans themselves), such as the disasters similar taken by earthquakes, tsunami, and nuclear destruction due to atomic bomb. For example, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (Miyazaki, 1982) described an apocalyptic world destroyed by high-technology war. The worlds in *No.6* (Asano, 2003) and some other dystopian works also reveal similar characteristics.

Social Conflict: Compared to Western DYAL, it is difficult to say the distinctly subversive / violent revolution or class struggle is the mainstream of Japanese works. If we focus on the issue about the society with monitoring system, compared with the typical dystopian societies in the Western books which demonstrate the characteristics of *1984*, Japanese dystopian YA works which involve this issue generally display more complex and critical realism.

Firstly, besides some atypical stories such as *The Promised Neverland*, though the societies described in many Japanese dystopian fictions (e.g. *No. 6*, *Shimoneta*, *Psycho-Pass*) are also ‘fake-perfect’ worlds which are dominated by strict-control policies, the processes and patterns of the conflicts displayed in these books are diverse and complex. In some Japanese dystopian fictions such as *Library Wars* or *Shimoneta*, the societies are not typically totalitarian; instead, the resistance force and central government form a balance – which means none of the forces win total victory at the end of the stories.

Secondly, the authors’ thoughts on the solutions to the social problems are not as clear as the distinction between black and white. Are the controllers of the old society absolutely evil targets who should be defeated? What are the boundaries of education and censorship

for making a ‘harmony’ society? Besides subversive revolutions, are there any other possible solutions to the conflict between personal freedom and collectivism? The answers to these questions usually are uncertain in the Japanese DYAL.

Moreover, contrasting to the contemporary Western DYAL, there is a special and significant concern about the censorship on culture shown in Japanese DYAL, which is represented as the controls on publishing, education, the freedom of expression, or some sorts of specific knowledge (e.g. sexual knowledge). In the fictions which involved such topics, the real law, statement or affairs around censorship are always implicated, which could be seen as another performance of the realistic characteristics of Japanese DYAL. The manga *Poison City* started with the censor around the true news of the cleanup campaign of controversial stuff in Akihabara (the most famous and largest center of comics in Japan) and convenience stores, for preparing the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. This background of the manga could lead the readers to remember the similar affair which happened in the reality, ‘The expressions of non-normative sexual orientations in the forms of lolicon and Yaoi manga may undergo strict regulation by the government due to their general disagreement with international cultural and moral norms’ (Yang, 2014). With the development of the plot, a law called ‘Healthy Book Act’ was established. The dispute around ‘sensitive issues’ in books became heated. At the same time, one character in the story mentioned a similar which happened in American history – the establishment of CCA. Besides this manga, another typical instance that implicated this theme is *Library Wars*, which will be discussed more detailed in Chapter 6.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the development of (D)YAL in America and Japan and provided a summary of four basic themes in DYAL in both countries: social revolution (conflicts) and consciousness-raising (usually in relation to freedom); eco-criticism; gender issues; human desire and emotion. The first theme relates to the focal point of this study which is why it will be analysed further in the following chapters. The overview reveals the differences between the Western and Eastern social and historical backgrounds in which contemporary authors to create dystopian works.

If we consider the social forms and cultures of America and China as the opposite ends of a spectrum, Japanese culture and social form could be said to be on the middle point. The country has been deeply influenced by Western culture and politics in modern history, but still has kept the Eastern characteristics. These differences have been mapped into the DYAL in the three countries and they help us understand the diversity in the authors' ideas and the ways in which they deal with the relationship of power in their writing.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the development and current situation of Chinese (D)YAL. As Hockx expresses (2015: p.2), 'For the Western people, it is difficult to imagine a government that considers itself obliged to regulate culture in all its aspects (form, contents, production, distribution, canonization). However, the socialist system in China worked exactly that way.' If it can be said that the imagination of American authors about dystopian society is the conjecture which mostly bases on classic dystopian literature, the news about the other countries and the censoring history in the West which has passed more than half of a century (e.g. Nazis period in Europe, Stalin period in the Soviet Union, or McCarthy period in America), Chinese authors' creation could be said as much closer to their present real living. In the last 100 years, China itself can be seen as a testing ground of utopian and dystopian social practices and as a result, the writing environment for authors is complex and fast-changing. China is still a post-socialist country controlled by a one-party regime at the beginning of the 21st century, thus, the published academic studies

about censorship and publication continue to be impacted by politics. Meanwhile, the foreign studies in this field mostly focus on adults' literature, but have paid few attention to Chinese (D)YAL. Given this complexity and the lack of studies published by non-Chinese scholars, in the next chapter, I will present a more detailed historical review on Chinese (D)YAL.

Chapter 5

From Dystopian Reality to DYAL (2): China

Introduction

There are two significant characteristics of reading for contemporary Chinese young people: firstly, although children's literature (CL) had become an independent genre in China after 1919⁴⁰ (Fan, 1996), works for young adults were not separated from this larger category until the 2000s. There was little original Chinese YA fiction, and it was always sold with CL together in bookshops. For a long time, Chinese young people's (12-25 years old) reading comprised adult literature, classic literature, Sci-fi, popular science readings, children's literature and foreign YAL⁴¹. It meant that the age stratification of Chinese young people's reading was very vague – which is the reason I would include CL in this chapter. Secondly, it is not surprising that at the same time, publishing was affected by politics, having a deep impact on the creations of the writer and the formation of the reader.

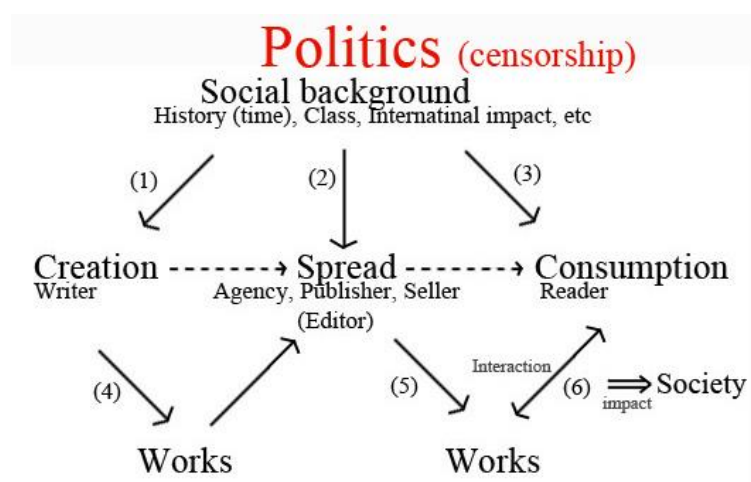


Figure 5-1: A framework of the traditional publishing ecosystem (print media) in China. Compared with developed countries, the direct influence from politics is much stronger than the other elements from a social background. Politics impacted every part of the publishing process: from writers, agencies and publishers to readers.

⁴⁰ Texts for children existed for a long time before 1919 in China, which could be traced to *The Thousand Character Classic* (Zhou, about AD 500). 1919 is the dividing line of Chinese 'old' culture and new culture, when the 'new culture movement' (5-4 movement) happened, which called on people to learn Western thoughts, values and science; write and read vernacular literature, and also support individual freedom and women's liberation.

⁴¹ Before 1980, it was mainly Soviet works; after 1980, Western and Japanese works started to become the majority.

I will not discuss Chinese CL in a very detailed way, because it is not the focus of this thesis. But as the basis of Chinese YAL, and an important point on the whole discourse and power conflict net, it will be involved. The whole development of Chinese CL and YAL is an intensely conflictual process between the official (governmental) discourses and unofficial (people's) discourses: on one side, the works are the carriers of the creators' discourses to seize dominance in the power net; on the other side, they are also the result of power struggles of all sides (obedience or resistance to the official ideology and censorship). Though sometimes American and Japanese works take a similar role too, Chinese works show this feature much more strongly in general, because of the special political environment and because Chinese history is quite different from that of more developed countries. If we say the Western CL and YAL show concerns about the utopian or dystopian futures to young readers, it could be said that Chinese CL and YAL themselves are the results of utopian or dystopian social practices.

However, there are very few English studies that mention these aspects. Only a small number of English papers and books involve the topic of Chinese CL and YAL, most of which are not comprehensive. On the other hand, because of Chinese political environment, there is also a lack of systematic and objective Chinese study implicating sociological and political perspectives in this field.

Therefore, in this chapter, I will be examining the developing process of Chinese CL and YAL from an historical perspective, especially emphasizing the following elements, to reveal how the discourses and powers work in this field: (1) the influence of foreign publications on Chinese young people; (2) the circuitous development of Chinese CL and Sci-fi; (3) prospering Chinese Internet literature which is significant for Chinese YAL and DYAL today, but is seriously ignored by academics; (4) the utopian and dystopian implications in the literature for young people, and finally, (5) the relevant censorship from the government till present.

Owing to the lack of objectively official and academic references, some support materials were collected from unofficial Chinese websites, forums and blogs. In order to ensure the

validity of these materials, I will choose them based on my experience, knowledge, the origin of information, and the other online responses to them. Most unofficial materials have been posted and discussed online many times, such as the information about the truth of stopping issuing some publications, or the 5515 project⁴². The writers of most materials or their friends were stakeholders working in the field.

5.1 Before 1949

In more than two thousand years of history dominated by feudal dynasties, besides several primers, Chinese children and young people's reading was essentially the same as adults. From the end of 19th century to 1919, Western thought started to be introduced into China. Influenced by that, there were more stories which appeared for Chinese children and young people. 1911 to 1949 was a period of great unrest for China, because of continual wars (the democracy revolution, WWII, and the civil war). In these turbulent days, the earliest magazines focusing on children and young readers were established, which supported the space for the development of Chinese CL and YAL⁴³. The works at that time have obvious features of the era (Fan, 1996); the content tied to the concerns about the reality, such as the war of resistance against Japanese, the national liberation, or the misery and growth of poor children in that time. China was an ailing and benighted country at the time, with most people were illiterate, numb and ignorant. Thus, as Zhang (1999: n.p.) points out, since the beginning, Chinese CL undertook not only the function of children's literacy and education, but also the responsibility of the whole national awakening.

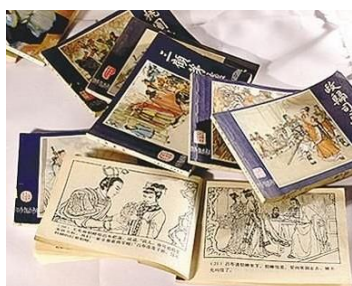


Figure 5-2: The typical 'Little picture book'.

⁴² More details of the discussions will be given in the following sections in this Chapter. The details of 5155 project will be given in P.139.

⁴³ For instance, 'Children's World' (The Commercial Press), 'Little Friend' (Zhonghua Press), 'Open Adolescent', 'Middle School Student' (Open Bookshop) and so forth. (Fan, 1996)

Against this background, a kind of picture-story book called the ‘Little Picture Book’ became popular. Its embryonic form could be traced back more than 1000 years. The modern little picture book appeared in about the 1910s, and was mainly targeted at children and readers at early educational stages. The form was an A6 size book with every page including one picture and a short paragraph of words. The author usually published the stories in newspapers and magazines in serialised form, and then collected them as books. After the 1930s, some authors started to create stories tied to poor peoples’ experiences (e.g. *Sanmao* by Zhang Leping), but not only limited to religious stories, classic literature or folk tales. On the other side, the Communist Party of China (CPC) also issued many little picture books for promoting its policies, e.g., communism, popularizing new marriage law, or calling people to fight against the Japanese army (Yi et al., 2008). These books were welcomed by the people, especially children.

Sci-fi was another striking category of books. At that time, China still had a huge gap with the Western countries in science and technology. Therefore, some famous writers, reformists and sociologists, such as Lu Xun and Liang Qichao, translated and introduced Jules Verne’s works to China, for ‘raising Chinese people’s scientific consciousness’ (Zheng, 1999). From the end of the 19th century, the earliest Chinese original Sci-fi stories were created, while some of them showed the authors’ forcefully political appeals for democracy and constitutionalism - in other words, a kind of Western style Utopian vision - such as *A Journey to Utopia* (Xiaoran Yusheng, 1906) and *The 10,000th year in Guangxu Dynasty* (Wu Yanren, 1908). Although the authors did not intend their target readers to be young people, the fact was that most of them were (Zheng, 1999). Since then, in China, for a long time, Sci-fi was positioned as the medium which was responsible for popularizing scientific and technological knowledge to the public, and had a close relationship with the political movements.

There are not so many Sci-fi stories written during the war period, but one novel should be

noticed here, Lao She's *Cat Country* (1933). The plot of this novel is somewhat similar to *Planet of the Apes*. It is the first novel involving the issue of Mars exploration in Chinese Sci-fi history. Meanwhile, it shows bitter criticism on the negative Chinese national characters and 'freedom without ideals'. Most scholars consider it is the first Chinese Sci-fi story which describes a 'dystopia'⁴⁴ (among others: Liu, 2003; Liu, 2006; Song, 2017). Lao She had studied in the UK and the plot shows that the writing of this book may partly be influenced by Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (Song, 2017).

⁴⁴ Because of those descriptions of 'negative Chinese national characters', this novel was criticized by the new government after 1949 for 30 years. Even Lao She himself also considered it as a failure and refused to publish it again in China, though it was popular overseas. Ironically, in 1966, the beginning of Cultural Revolution, when the Nobel Committee almost gave an award to this novel, Lao She committed suicide, and his experience was very similar to the plot of the book. In 1984, it was published again in China.

5.2 1949-1965

After the founding of New China (1949) and until 1966 (the beginning of Cultural Revolution), there was the first short golden period of Chinese CL and Sci-fi. The government attached great importance to young people's reading. In 1954, the first national award for CL was founded. Over the period, the quality and quantity of the texts for young people were growing at a rapid clip. At the same time, a huge number of Soviet works for children and teenagers were translated into Chinese (Fan, 1996).

During this time, little picture books became much more popular with the reading public. Under the planned economic system, the presses did not need to be worried about the profit problem of this kind of book⁴⁵. There were about ten thousand kinds of little picture books published during the 17 years. The content of these books continued the styles popular before 1949, centering on two categories: The first one was mainly the tool of the CPC's propaganda, such as defending land reform policies and the Korean War; the other part was the adaptation of famous historical stories and classic literature.

However, because of Chinese political environment of the day and the influence of Soviet works, generally, the authors during this period focused on the educational function of the texts, while mostly ignoring the aesthetics of literature. As a result, many works were not to the child's taste or attractive to young readers, as evidenced in the words of the famous Chinese author Mao Dun (1960) who criticized these publications in the 1950s and 1960s as 'the politics becomes the leader; the aesthetic has been absent; the stories are stereotyped; the characters are modeled; and the words are dry' (Fan, 1996). Cai (2016) also argues, 'during the 17 years, in the CL works, the actions and thinking way of young characters in the CL works became more and more adult.'

In the 1950s, many Chinese CL (and YAL⁴⁶) works still focused on the tribulation of the country. Numerous famous child characters in this period were 'little heroes' during the

⁴⁵ It was one of the key reasons for the decline of little picture book at the end of 1980s.

⁴⁶ There was not any boundary between CL and YAL at that time. All of the books for people under 18 years old always put together in the bookshops.

war, such as Wang Erxiao or Liu Hulan's stories, which have been collected into textbooks and are well-known by all Chinese children. Meanwhile, some stories were the obvious imitations of Soviet works. After 1960, when relations between China and the Soviet Union soured, as in many other fields, Chinese CL closed the door to the world. The content of most works succumbed to the fever of proletarian revolution, to anti-imperialism and anti-revisionism⁴⁷ (Zhang, 1999). Influenced by these forces, novels assumed absolute domination in the field of Chinese CL, while the other types of CL – such as fairytales and fables – gradually withered.

Though novels for children bloomed in those days, they were mostly for 9-14 years old students in senior classes of primary school and junior middle school. Books aimed at 15-20 years old readers were almost absent and readers over 16 years old generally read the same books as adults.

On the other side, the magazines and newspapers in that period had a clear target reader group, generally based on the readers' age and hobbies. For readers between 15 and 25 years old, there were '*China Youth Daily*' (newspaper), '*Liaoning Youth*' (comprehensive magazine), '*Germination*' (Literature magazine) and so forth. Likewise, all of these media were directly controlled by the China Communist Youth League (the organization for young people, belonging to the CPC) and were deeply affected by politics and the CPC's ideology.

⁴⁷ This phenomenon is related to 'Marxist Revisionism'. In the 1960s, Chinese politicians believed that enemies from Western countries and the Soviet Union wanted to use thoughts of revisionism to damage the country and let it fall into unrest again.

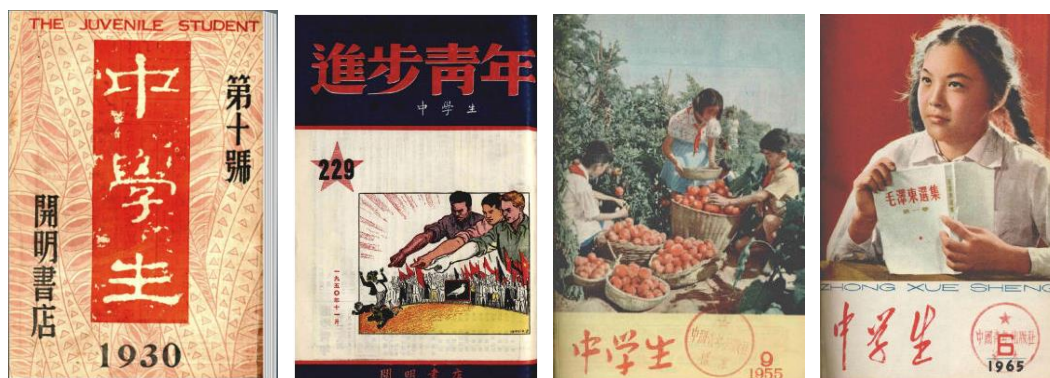


Figure 5-3: The covers of magazine ‘Middle School Student’ in 1930, 1950, 1955 and 1965⁴⁸. The words on the 1950 cover: ‘the proletariats disclose ugly truth of the imperialists’. The 1965 cover: a senior school female student holding ‘*Quotations from Chairman Mao*’.

The magazine was issued firstly by Open Bookshop in 1930, and continued to be issued after 1949, but during the 1950s and 1960s, it took the obvious political colour, though sometimes the covers were still displayed the flavour of life (e.g. the 1955 one). Nevertheless, even showing such a Red position, this magazine still could not escape from the fate of interrupting publishing between 1967 and 1979 (Cultural Revolution). It resumed publication in 1980.

In the same period, Sci-fi still was a noticeable part of Chinese young people’s reading. At the time, it was urgent for the new government to improve common people’s cultural and scientific understanding. Thus, the function of Sci-fi, of popularizing scientific and technological knowledge, was further emphasized (Kong, 2003; Liu, 2014). Some scientists were even required by the government to write Sci-fi works, as a mission. Meanwhile, because the Soviet Union admired Jules Verne so much, Chinese national publishing department introduced his whole set of works for the first time (1957-1962), which had a deep impact on the Cold War generation. Following that, Chinese Sci-fi publishing experienced the first prosperity period.

Until the 2000s, Sci-fi was always sorted as ‘popular scientific writing’ and ‘children’s literature’ in China⁴⁹. Two factors brought this result. Firstly, in accordance with the historical materialism promoted by the CPC⁵⁰, Chinese Sci-fi emphasized ‘science’, but few revealed humanistic concerns or were concerned with literary value. To some extent,

⁴⁸ The pictures are cited from: <http://202.96.31.36:8888/reading/moremagazines>

⁴⁹ Though encouragement from the government contributed to the first upsurge of Chinese Sci-fi, it also caused some negative effects, which seriously constrained the subsequent development of Sci-fi in China. Since then and until several years ago, most Chinese publishers and critics, and even common people, still considered Sci-fi as children’s literature or popular scientific writing, rather than real mature literary works.

⁵⁰ Communist Party of China

indeed, ‘literariness’ was considered as ‘unscientific’ generally in that time (Zheng, 1999). Influenced by these government attitudes, most Chinese Sci-fi authors actually majored in science and technology, which meant they were essentially scientists rather than professional writers of literature. Compared to literary works, indeed, their works mostly come across as popular science writing. Secondly, in 1950s, the government defined ‘Sci-fi’ as a kind of literature aimed at children and adolescents, which stimulated magazines for 9-14 years old readers (e.g. ‘*We Love Science*’, ‘*Children’s Time*’ and ‘*Chinese Juveniles*’) as the main media publishing short Sci-fi stories⁵¹. As a result, there was no ‘saga’ Sci-fi novel published between 1949 and 1966.

Generally, this upsurge of Chinese Sci-fi exhibited several significant characteristics:

Firstly, most works presented obvious optimism, or showed the simple imagining of ‘communistic utopia in the future’, but none of the texts included any concept of dystopia. Particularly, under the influence of Chinese large-scale economic construction (the Great Leap Forward) in the 1950s, the ‘communist utopian world’ became the main topic in Chinese original Sci-fi. It was a reflection of the whole society’s desire for a new future, for a new government and a new social system (socialism). It was also a reflection of the Communism inspired by Soviet Sci-fi.

Secondly, most works focused on imagining the technologies of the future, but few on humanistic concerns. For example, one of the most famous Chinese Sci-fi texts, *Xiao Lingtong’s Travels in the Future* (Ye, written in 1961, published in 1978), describes how people’s lives are changed by the technologies in the future, such as floating cars, household robots and 3D films⁵².

Thirdly, most works were deeply influenced by political environment:

(1) Political thought limited the plots of Sci-fi stories. Besides, the government could stop

⁵¹ Between 1949 and 1990, works for people under 14 years old were not separated, while special literature for 15-20 year-old people was almost non-existent. Since the 1990s, the CL bookshelves started to separate the books by age ranges; the YAL was separated much later, almost after the 2000s.

⁵² This feature of Chinese Sci-fi in that period is partly the result of the background of the writers, as mentioned previously. Another reason is the writers also avoided subconsciously the troubles which might be incurred by the implication of political issues.

some works being published by political consideration. *Xiao Lingtong's Travels in the Future* was written in 1961. But 1959-1961 was the great famine period in China. Thus, the novel could not be published because it was 'out of step with the reality', and was therefore frozen for 17 years, until the Cultural Revolution ended.

(2) Influenced by the Cold War, same as the CL, some Chinese Sci-fi works expressed the global confrontation with imperialism and (Marxist) revisionism.

(3) As an impact of the Great Leap Forward, the extreme left-wing trend of thought also showed in some Sci-fi works. Those works usually describe the grandiose success of Communism or communist productivity. For example, *The Elephant without a Nose* (Chi, 1956) imagined that Chinese people bred pigs as big as elephants.

5.3 1966-1976

During the Cultural Revolution (CR), because of the stringent political environment, most of the literary works, magazines and newspapers for children and adolescents issued before 1966 disappeared in China. Many writers, including CL and Sci-fi authors, suffered both physically and mentally. Countless books were destroyed. There are only a few Chinese studies about CL which I read for this thesis have mentioned publications during this time, and I could not find any Western research focusing on Chinese CL during the period. However, it is not true that the period was an entire vacuum period for children's books.

Firstly, though many books were destroyed in this period, there were still some books which were hidden secretly, and afforded an opening for the Cold War generation children and teenagers to go on to foreign literature and fantasy literature.

Chinese professor Wu Yan, who has researched Sci-fi for almost 30 years, remembered that, 'when I was young, most libraries were closed, including those located in the place where my parents worked in. However, my friends and I still took some Soviet Sci-fi works out from there secretly, by breaking the glass of the window. Since then, I was totally captivated by this type of literature' (2014). The author of *'The Three-Body Problem'* Liu Cixin also talked about his first Sci-fi readings: he found Jules Verne's novels ('forbidden books' in the 1970s) which had been hidden by his father under the bed, and started to read them one by one (Wang, 2015).

Secondly, although fairytales and fables completely disappeared in young people's lives, as well as many kinds of stories – such as horror, fantasy or mystery fiction, there were still some novels and magazines for children and adolescents which managed to keep being publishing during the CR period. Wang (2018) has given a Chronicle of Chinese CL in these 10 years, which mentioned hundreds of novels for children.

From July 1966 to the end of 1969, because of the terrible political environment, it was an

empty period of general book publication. From 1970, there were about 10-20 novels and short stories for children and young people published annually, as well as some picture stories (for children under 6 years old), dramas, reportages and poems. After 1972, the number of novels and short stories rose to 50-100, while the number of other kinds of CL rose to 100-200 every year (Wang, 2018). Meanwhile, following Chinese No.2 leader's indication that 'it should solve the problem of the spiritual food for the next generation', some little picture books of 'red revolution stories' were published (Yi et al., 2008).

At the same time, from 1968, a new type of magazine for children younger than 9 years old, '*Little Red Soldier*' was issued in Shanghai. The official publishing houses⁵³ of the other provinces followed that, by issuing their own '*Little Red Soldier*'⁵⁴. In the 1970s, some publishing houses further issued magazines for adolescents (9-14 years old), such as '*Beijing Adolescents*', '*Shanghai Adolescents*' and '*Revolutionary Successor*' (Tianjin). Young adults over 15 years old generally read the same things as the elders – though the choices were very limited.

The publications of Chinese CL during the CR period have some special features. It could be said that all of the publications in this period were strongly led by politics⁵⁵, and mostly were deficient in literary interest. The themes of novels for children and for adults became quite similar, mainly focusing on three kinds of topics - 'class struggle (in children's lives)', 'catching the spies' and 'little heroes in the wars' (Wang, 2018: n.p.). Realist novels took absolute precedence over all other publications, while fantasy works and foreign works completely disappeared. Because almost all the older writers were imprisoned or sent to exile, the CL writers in this period were mainly young people about 20-30 years old, most of whom had not written anything before 1966. Their writing purpose was not for

⁵³ Before the 1980s, the publishing houses were totally controlled by the government and ran within the planned economy system.

⁵⁴ During that special period, all the magazines for children issued in different provinces were called by this same name. Generally, they were the logical magazines, and were only issued within the area of one province. Between 1968 and 1973, the issued number was a few; the magazines were mainly sold in bookshops. From 1974 to 1976, many schools organised all the students to subscribe to the magazines. Therefore, the issued number became huge. (Min, 2012)

⁵⁵ Even the head page of little picture book for children was required to put the sentences from *Quotations from Chairman Mao*'.

remuneration, but obeyed the requirements of the red political environment⁵⁶.

As with the other categories of literature, CL was in the service of Chinese politics in this period. The ‘revolutionary language’ strictly limited the narrative style and creative processes of literature, as well as characters’ words, actions, emotions and psychological activities in the texts. The characters in the stories always fell into ‘good’ or ‘evil’ templates. The protagonists must have high political awareness, and could not repeat mistakes – even children should realize a mistake immediately after being suitably educated by older revolutionaries. As in some works published before the revolution, the ways of talking and the actions of young characters were highly similar to adult characters. In contrast, the childlike nature of the characters was much less evident. In many CL works in that period, the description about the special reality could be found. For example, children’s daily lives were seriously disrupted by politics and often they could not stay in the classroom to learn the necessary knowledge, but needed to go into factories, the countryside and barracks, to ‘study’ with workers, farmers and soldiers⁵⁷. Sometimes, children and adolescents even got involved in violent and bloody political activities or so-called ‘class struggles’⁵⁸.

Therefore, ironically, though the characters in the stories always talk about utopian dreams, the features shown above actually resulted in those works’ strongly dystopian implications to the reality in that particular time. In the other words, Chinese CL during the period appeared to reproduce in much darker and more violent terms a feature of foreign YAL - ‘the protagonists must learn about the social forces that made them what they are’ (Trites, 2000: p.3).

However, it should also be noted that, even under the difficult environment of CR, some CL works did not completely give up the attempt to show aesthetic concerns, life interests and the creation of more vivid and believable children characters. The covers of the

⁵⁶ During this time, writers could not get payment directly for their works. But the publishing houses (and other institutions) under command economy could support their life requirements.

⁵⁷ In other words, it was a kind of social practice. It meant that the whole generation born in the 1960s and 1970s lacked enough school education.

⁵⁸ These activities included the denunciation and murder of their own teachers.

magazines for children and YA sometimes showed few scenes related to politics, but rather more daily life fun and activities (as in the picture below). There were also some excellent little picture books which had high artistic value and were welcomed by children. In the two of the most famous novels for young people - *Sparkling Red Star* (Li, 1972)⁵⁹ and *Red Rain* (Yang, 1973), the linguistic aesthetics and the narrative style were much better than the other books in the same period. In the stories, the characters' growth revealed more dramatic tension and humanistic details. Though some Chinese scholars considered them as political propaganda works (Zhang, 1998), and thought the characters still had the problem of 'adult-like children', their significance in relation to people's desire for humanism and literary aesthetics in a time of great social stress ought not to be ignored⁶⁰.



Figure 5-4: The covers of the magazine 'Little Red Soldier' in the 1970s. The first one is very 'political', but the second one displayed children's common taste and daily life.

⁵⁹ The novel was finished in 1965, but failed to be published because the Cultural Revolution started. The writer hid the manuscript. In the 1970s, the political environment became easier than in the 1960s. Hence, the novel could be issued, although it had to be edited and some 'political content' added (Qilu Newspaper, 2011).

⁶⁰ The authors and editors made great efforts in keeping humanistic details of the original works. The huge success of the two novels was partly because of the limited number of publications at that time, partly because of the promotion of film adaption and musical, but mostly because of the young readers' and audiences' praise for the content.



Figure 5-5: *Red Rain* (Yang, Xiao. 1973)

This novel was issued in total about 3,000,000 copies during CR (Mao, 2014). The author was one of the most successful CL writers in the 1970s and 1980s. The film was on show in 1975⁶¹.

The book told a story about a young boy's struggles with a criminal witchdoctor⁶² in a town, who grew up with help from people and the leader of the party branch. He finally became a 'barefoot doctor'⁶³.

Some of the young readers of those forbidden books, red magazines and novels became the main force of Chinese children's literature and Sci-fi after the 1980s. The experiences of their childhood and adolescence during the CR period also became their inspiration later. For example, both Jin Tao's *'Moonlight Island'* (1981), and Liu Cixin's *'The Three-Body Problem'* (2006) used the social background of CR as a backdrop to advance the narrative. Liu has said, 'The story requires a person who has lost all hope for humanity. In all of mankind, only two things could do this. One was the Cultural Revolution, the other the Nazi Holocaust' (cited from Geng, 2014: n.p.). Both of the novels had enormous social repercussions, and drove people's attention back to the forbidden years.

⁶¹ More introduction about the film:

<https://www.yimovi.com/en/movies/red-rain-also-known-as-hongyu-the-new-doctor-spring-shoots>

⁶² Before 1949, there were lots of 'witchdoctors' in Chinese rural areas. They used superstitious ways (like 'driving out the devil') to 'treat' patients – mostly were swindles (Jia, 2014).

⁶³ 'Barefoot doctor' was a commendatory term during the Cultural Revolution, because it meant the doctor had grown up as a proletarian, and his family was 'good' (the parents were farmers, workers and so forth, but not capitalists or 'intellectuals'.)

5.4 1977-2000

In 1978, The Third Plenary Session of the CPC confirmed the policies of ‘Emancipating Minds’ and ‘Reform and Opening-up’. It made China open the door to the world. Subsequently, the country used up another 15 years finishing the process of turning a command economy to a market-oriented economy, including launching the publishing industry (Hong and Xiao, 2003; Hong, 2010). Thereafter, the development of cultural industries took off very rapidly: the annual number of Chinese publications (including books, magazines and newspapers) in 2001 was more than 10 times the number of those in 1977. In 1978, there were about 200 million children throughout the country with only 2 official publishing houses, 200 experienced editors and 20 writers working in children’s literature (Baensch, 2003: p.85; Zhang, 2017: n.p.). After the 2000s, there emerged more than 30 official publishing houses for children and adolescents in China, while more than 500 other publishing houses and companies were involved in the field (Zhang, 2017).

In the 1980s, though, there were some dissonant notes such as the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign (1983)⁶⁴, generally, Chinese people who experienced the CR catastrophe held positive expectations for a better future – a developed, open and internationalized country which had drawn a lesson from its own dark history. Reflected in books, TV shows, films and music, the whole cultural atmosphere of the 1980s was bright, idealistic and free, which was based on this positive imagination⁶⁵. This idealistic atmosphere ended in the 1990s, partly due to the impact of the ‘Tiananmen’ event (1989)⁶⁶ and radical changes in the socialist camp (1989-1991), partly due to social conflicts and some negative influence taken by the development of the economy.

The 1990s was a drastic transition period for most categories of Chinese literature. In the

⁶⁴ This will be discussed more detailed in section 4.5.4.

⁶⁵ One example is ‘Song of Greeting Guests’, which was popular in China since 1984. The lyric is, ‘Hundreds of flowers are in full bloom; friends are coming in this season...let us join hands, to build a bridge of friendship to five continents.’

⁶⁶ Tiananmen Square Event, as known as ‘64’ event, happened on 4.6.1989.

early 1990s, China joined the international copyright treaties, as well as the WTO, and also finished the process of turning to a market economy. In the late 1990s, the Internet went into China, and changed the ecology of Chinese literature again. At the same time, the conflicts between different beliefs about socialism and capitalism, capitalism and individualism continued. These confusions and conflicts influenced many aspects of Chinese culture, including CL and Sci-fi authors' writing. Besides the arguments about ideologies, some more multiple opinions and small debates appeared in the developing public (unofficial) discourse space, which no longer focused on politics (Xu, 1999). The authors started to create various works with more humanistic thoughts.

The market-oriented economy took the challenges along with the opportunities. Many presses fell into crisis, or lost the developing direction, because they could not fit into market competition. The more serious problem was that even though the Cultural Revolution had ended, Chinese governmental intervention and control in the cultural fields still were stronger than in most other countries⁶⁷. Some scholars have pointed out that the real force which limits the development of Chinese publishing is the government's 'Cold War thinking' (Hong and Xiao, 2003).

There are always (informal) requests from the government that restraint the (political) ideologies shown in published literary works, including CL. Because of the special situation of Chinese publishing industry, this kind of controls are effective: Though the official Chinese publishing houses had turned to 'enterprise' from 'the propaganda department of government' in the 1990s, and became self-sustaining entities, the government still held the absolute controlling power over ideology. China is one of few countries in which all the legal ISBNs of books are managed by the government⁶⁸. All the official publishing houses are required to submit the relevant application form of every publication to the government, including the title, introduction of the content and other details, in order to get the ISBN.

This difficult space between governmental control and market competition made the

⁶⁷ It became much tightened after 2012.

⁶⁸ It is easy to buy ISBN by any person in Western countries. In Japan, it is also not difficult to apply for one from the national library, but not from the government. For most countries, ISBN is only a tool to manage the business of publication.

situation of Chinese publishing industry very complex. For example, though the private company basically has no right to publish books, there are many companies ‘co-operating’ with the official publishing houses to get ISBNs through a variety of means. Some official publishing houses even do not even issue the books by themselves, but the majority of their annual profit comes from reselling ISBNs to private companies, and also then part of the profit of publication from those companies. Some international companies abroad adopt similar solutions, ‘One of the most effective ways is variety of “joint venture” or “co-operation”, particularly with one department of the government, or some persons or institutions having the official background’ (Hong and Xiao, 2003: n.p.). During one period there was even a phenomenon that several various magazines or books used the same ISBN.

Nevertheless, the most negative effect of this situation has been the split between the national ideological culture (official), the ‘elite intellectual’ culture (this generally points to those Chinese authors whose works are mainly published in the official printed media⁶⁹; some of whom have funding support from the government), and popular culture (which could be called ‘grass-roots culture’, including Internet literature). This situation continues down to the present.

5.4.1 The Cultural Productions from Overseas

With the end of Cultural Revolution, Chinese people’s repressed desire for reading and gaining knowledge exploded forth; the people in this new setting were especially passionate about understanding the world outside. Besides, in many fields, there was a huge distance between China and the rest of the world, which urgently needed to be reduced. In contrast with this race to catch up, the kinds of new books appearing were limited and hardly matched with people’s appetites at the time. On the other hand, before joined international copyright treaties in 1992⁷⁰, the situation of introducing and publishing foreign works into China was chaotic because of the lack of copyright acts. As a result, in the whole of the 1980s, the number of books, videos and other cultural productions from

⁶⁹ Printed media: traditional books, newspapers and magazines.

⁷⁰ China joined in Berne, UCC Geneva and UCC Paris in 1992; joined in TRIPS in 2001 and WCT in 2007.

Taiwan, Hong Kong areas, Japan and the Western countries rocketed⁷¹, which accelerated the rise in the young people's desire to read. The bloom of foreign productions considerably benefited the post-cold-war generation, and influenced the creations of Chinese writers⁷².

北京地区海外译制动画片播出情况表（1984年）

首播日期	台号	时间	片名	总集数	首播结束日期	备注
1984.01.22	CCTV1	09:00	三千里寻母记	52	1984.07.15	每周日播出2集
1984.02.03	BTv1	13:00	神马驹			外国动画片
1984.02.18	BTv1	19:30	丑小鸭寻母记			
1984.02.26	CCTV1	18:30	眼睛			蟋蟀杰明尼系列
1984.06.01	CCTV1	19:50	爱丽丝漫游奇境			
1984.06.02	BTv1	19:35	一千零一日	9	1984.07.28	系列木偶片
1984.07.02	CCTV1	10:15	一个男孩和一根草			日本木偶片
1984.07.04	CCTV1	10:15	丑小鸭			日本木偶片
1984.07.17	CCTV1	10:00	大西洋底来的人	17	1984.08.23	科幻片 每周二四六播出
1984.07.28	BTv1	20:35	聪明的一休	15	1984.08.25	每周六播出3集
1984.08.15	CCTV1	09:00	第一名			动画片
1984.09.23	CCTV1	15:00	接蜡烛的故事			日语节目 日本著名童话
1984.09.23	CCTV1	15:00	金色的鹿			日语节目 木偶片
1984.10.14	CCTV1	18:25	白雪公主			美国动画片
1984.10.21	CCTV1	18:25	睡美人			美国动画片
1984.10.28	CCTV1	18:25	瑞士罗宾逊一家			美国动画片
1984.11.04	CCTV1	18:25	鲁滨逊漂流记			美国动画片
1984.11.11	CCTV1	18:25	灰姑娘			美国动画片
1984.11.18	CCTV1	18:25	海底两万里（上）	2		美国动画片
1984.11.25	CCTV1	18:25	海底两万里（下）	2		美国动画片
1984.12.02	CCTV1	18:25	小雪花			德国

【资料来源】中国国家图书馆

【数据资料】《电视周报》（1984）

【数据整理】老猫

【编辑制作】老猫 仲清宇



Figure 5.6: In 1984, there were only 21 foreign cartoons which were broadcast in the Beijing area – 7 from America, 5 from Japan, the others from the Soviet Union, Germany and other countries. (Laomao, 2008. Reference: Chinese National Library)

1989 could be considered as the end of liberalism and idealism in China. After the

⁷¹ For example, *Jane Eyre* (Lindner, 1847, introduced into China in 1980) and *Gone with the Wind* (Mitchell, 1936, introduced into China in 1984), were owned by nearly every urban family. The pirate Disney picture books were sold on the streets in every city. The childhood of the generation born between 1975-1985 was filled with American, Japanese and European cartoons, and examples of famous works are: Disney cartoons, Barbapapa, Popeye, Momo (Michael Ende), The Mole (Czech), The Smurfs, Transformers, Robotech (Japan), Astro Boy (Japan), Flower Fairy (Japan), Ikkyu-san (Japan) and so forth. While most of the cartoons shown on the TV were authorized, the books were almost pirated, including Disney comic books.

⁷² Some Chinese works in the 1980s obviously showed the influence of western stream of consciousness novels, absurd dramas and the magic realism works of Latin America.

‘Tiananmen’ Event happened, the controls on culture once again became strict. At the same time, the relationship between China and the West became very strained. It was partly relieved after 1-2 years. However, before China joined copyright treaties in 1993, the process of officially introducing books into China slowed.

The ‘Tiananmen’ Event was an important and special factor in Chinese contemporary history. Though there are some studies existing abroad, it remains a forbidden topic in China. As with the Cultural Revolution, the government does not tend to let people know much about the details of such matters⁷³. However, the event and the radical changes which happened in other socialist countries in the early 1990s deeply influenced many aspects of China, from economy to culture. In one year, 13% of Chinese sociological journals and 150 films were forbidden. Millions of books were adjudged as illegal and banned (Pei, 1998: p.152)⁷⁴. The influence of these events on the CL as first seems light, but 1989 was also the turning point in the situation of foreign CL and YAL in China, which may or may not be a coincidence⁷⁵.

The Disney Company decided to halt co-operation with Chinese official TV channel (CCTV) in 1989, and returned to China only in 1994⁷⁶. During this period, only a few Western animations continued spreading in China, such as *Ninja Turtles*, *Tom and Jerry* and *Denver, the Last Dinosaur*. Instead, Japanese manga and animation rapidly became Chinese young people’s new and most favourite taste, and this continued through the whole of the 1990s. Besides, the productions from Taiwan and Hong Kong areas also took on a noticeable profile in the markets.

⁷³ Most of Chinese young people born after 1985 vaguely know about it. Nevertheless, there are still some young authors who tried to record it in different ways, even in fan fictions.

⁷⁴ In the 1990s, Western films and TV series were still regularly broadcasted on Chinese TV, which were less related to contemporary politics and mostly were classic, comedy or fantasy ones, such as *Growing Pains*, *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, *The Sound of Music*, *Jane Eyre*, *The Count of Monte Cristo* and so forth. They were generally welcomed by Chinese people. According to incomplete statistics, in the 1990s, the only Western TV series with significant contemporary political content shown on Chinese official TV channels was ‘Yes, Minister’, of which was only broadcast 6 episodes.

⁷⁵ Chinese reference in this field is blank, while the foreign references almost focus on the politics.

⁷⁶ There was not any proof showing that Disney’s leaving was related to politics. After 1994, Disney took several excellent cartoons to Chinese children, including *Gargoyles* and *The Lion King*, which were quite successful in China. The cooperation was suddenly stopped in 1997 again. All of Disney cartoons were banned, because the company made a film about Dalai Lama. In the end, Disney made an apology to Chinese government.

Though Japan laid sanctions with the Western countries against China in 1989, the deadlock was soon broken in 1990. The Japanese Prime Minister opted to continue his government loan to China, which changed the isolated situation of Chinese diplomacy. After that, Japan and China entered a new ‘honeymoon period’. Along with that came an abundance of Japanese cultural productions into China, represented by mangas and animations. For example, instead of the US *Transformer*, *Saint Seiya* became the most popular cartoon among Chinese children. The more relaxed relationship between the mainland and Taiwan after 1987⁷⁷, and Chinese people’s expectation of the return of Hong Kong in 1997, also meant that cultural products from these two areas became popular in China. In contrast with Western works, publications from these areas (where Western thoughts mixed with traditional Asian thoughts) were felt to be a better fit with Chinese readers’ aesthetic standards and values⁷⁸.

In about 10 years, the mangas and novels from these three areas took the majority of Chinese young people’s (age 10-25) reading for leisure - almost their entire out-of-school reading, though more than half of the books were still pirated. Before the Internet became popular, there were lots of ‘lending bookshops’ in most of Chinese big cities, which were full of pirated books – mainly romantic and Kong-fu novels from Taiwan and Hong Kong, and also lots of translated Japanese mangas and novels⁷⁹. Prices were very cheap (about 5 pennies per book), and could be afforded even by primary school students⁸⁰.

The ‘lending bookshops’ workers certainly did not care about the problem of the books’ age grading. All the books were put together. As a result, the young people’s reading was mixed with books for all different ages – from children to adults. These books impacted their process of constructing the personalities deeply, and also developed someone’s habit

⁷⁷ In 1987, Chinese central government allowed people from Taiwan to go to the mainland to visit their families separated after 1949.

⁷⁸ This point was more obvious shown on Chinese youth’s attitudes on Japanese manga and American superhero comics – even at present, their acceptance of the second one still was generally lower than the first one.

⁷⁹ It is believed that an industrial chain existed in the 1990s, which focused on translating and producing pirated books, particularly from Japan, though most of translations were directly transferred from Taiwan or Hong Kong versions. Some research believes that the local governments protected this industrial chain, which was the main reason for this long-standing phenomenon (Hong and Xiao, 2003). This is one issue that the developed countries always criticize about Chinese government. It was estimated that in the middle of the 1990s, the pirated American publications in China valued about 2 billions dollars every year (Hong and Xiao, 2003).

⁸⁰ In the 1990s, for Chinese children, the general price of a normal breakfast was about 10-15 pennies.

of reading books without age boundary⁸¹. The first force of Chinese YAL writers and manga illustrators mostly appeared among the young people born after 1975. Their creations from the 1990s and the 2000s display the deep influence from the foreign works which they read during their childhood.

At the same time, the number of authorized foreign CL publications also increased after 1992, although the number could be not compared with the 2000s. The majority were novels, fantasy stories, fairytales and folktales - accounting for 80% of all CL publications (Chen, 2011), which were still mainly for children under 14 years old. They were sold in legal bookshops, but were rarely found in the lending bookshops.

About this period, one magazine and one publishing house should be specially noted. '*The Comic King*' was the first Japanese manga magazine to be published in China. In one year, its monthly sales reached a peak of 550,000. The chief editor aimed to 'set up a manga studio like Osamu Tezuka's studio, and open an era of Chinese original manga' (Yan, 2013). To achieve that, the editors adopted a shortcut. At the beginning, the content of the magazine was 100% filled entirely with famous Japanese manga, in order to attract young readers. After the issue number boomed, a competition of Chinese original manga was held. Hundreds of talented illustrators joined the competition. Through that, the initial Chinese new-style manga illustrators appeared in public view.

Unfortunately, the magazine only existed for one year, and then was compelled to cease publishing, because a senior officer of central government showed a picture in the magazine in a meeting and considered that 'it will teach the children bad things' (Yan, 2013). China lost a golden opportunity of developing original manga, and experienced a severe brain drain in this field – the next flourishing period happened 20 years later.

⁸¹ Many customers of those shops still have the hobby of reading Japanese mangas even after the age of 30 or 40 years old, while their choice of Taiwanese and Hong Kong Kong-fu and romantic novels mostly turned to reading similar types of Internet fictions.



Figure 5-7 The picture that caused the magazine to stop publishing.

The publishing house was Hainan Photography and Art Press, which was a local official press. In 1991, it introduced several mangas at the same time, which were the most popular ones in Japan – including *Black Jack* (Osamu Tezuka), *Dragon Ball* (Akira Toriyama), *Saint Seiya: Knights of the Zodiac* (Masami Kurumada), *Ranma ½* (Rumiko Takahashi), *City Hunter* and *Cat's Eye* (Tsukasa Hojo). These works precisely covered the different genres which were absent in China but were strongly desired by young people (10-25 years old) in that period. For many Chinese urban young people who have read this magazine and these mangas, they were their enlightenment teacher of the new style of reading, which was subversive and irresistible (Yan, 2013; Wan, 2017; Hanfeng, 2018)⁸².

Differing from the crudely made ‘little comic books’ (A6 size) issued in the 1980s, the cover designs and printing forms (A5 size) of these mangas were much closer to the original Japanese ones, which had not previously been seen by Chinese young people. Moreover, the editors also separated the mangas into different volumes from the Japanese

⁸² I did not find any usefully formal academic materials on the development of Japanese manga in China in the 1990s. All the references are the articles on digital media, written by the manga authors and researchers who experienced the affairs. There is not exact publishing number of those manga. But according to the issue number of first version on a volume (50,000), it could be calculated that Hainan Press launched in total more than one hundred million volumes at least. One article also mentioned that in 1993 and 1994, the total publishing number of Japanese manga in China reached several hundreds of millions every year (Hefeng, 2018).

ones – to make them thinner and cheaper: every volume only needed about 20 pennies, which was affordable for the students. It has to be said the editors of Hainan Press had precise consideration about the market.

The most interesting point is, that although these publications were pirated, they were published and sold through the formal channels. The press planned to sell the books as ‘children’s literature’. Thus, for passing the censorship system of the government, the editors carefully changed all the words and pictures involving erotic elements in the mangas. For example, the lines of one character in *Dragon Ball* was changed to ‘I want sausage!’ from ‘I want knickers!’ The naked breasts or bodies were redrawn, adding ‘black underclothes’ or other things (according to the plot) such as bubbles when the character was taking a shower (like the red circle parts in the picture below).

The other instance is *City Hunter*, which include plenty of plot and pictures associated with pornography. As a result, the content of every volume was cut down to about 90 pages from 200 pages. It meant the stories were almost retold as the different ones⁸³.

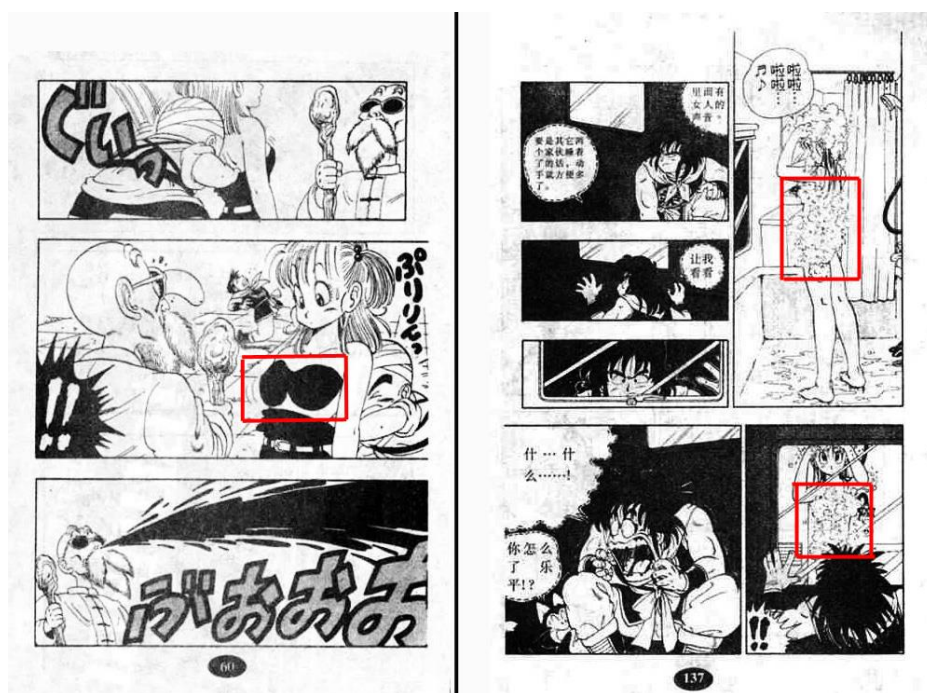


Figure 5-8: Two pages including adapted pictures from the 1991 Chinese version of *Dragon Ball*.

The red-circle parts were naked breasts and bodies in the original version.

⁸³ It is based on my own reading experience of the two different versions. On some comic forums, many Chinese readers have told stories about when they grew up and had a chance to read the original mangas, they were shocked by the characters and plots which seem totally different.

The reason that Chinese government refused to establish a rating system for books, films and games has always been unclear. A reasonable speculation is that the government could not give up the privilege or the grey income taken by the censorship. Nevertheless, as a result of not having a rating system, all adults in China have to watch the ‘clean’ cultural productions with the same censorship standard for children. In recent years, the protest about this situation from the post-cold-war generation has become stronger online, though it is still ignored by the government.

In 1994, in order to join the WTO successfully, Chinese government embarked on a large scale task to rectify black market business involving foreign pirated productions. At the same time, the elder generations targeted the Japanese mangas and labeled them as ‘junk reading’ which could damage children and young adults’ mental health. All the negative behaviors of young people – disliking study, stealing, fighting – were attributed to the mangas. The parents appealed to the government to eliminate mangas, just like they appealed to eliminate Kong-fu and romantic novels from Taiwan and Hong Kong in the 1980s, or to eliminate the video games after the 2000s⁸⁴.

Owing to pressure from both sides of government and parents, Hainan Photography and Art Press was compelled to stop publishing manga in 1995. However, it only meant the manga publishing industry moved underground (as the grey chain mentioned earlier). Until the 2010s, there was still an abundance of pirated Japanese mangas sold on the black market.

There is no doubt that the influence of Japanese comics on Chinese young people born after the 1970s was deep, particularly on their writing and creating of YAL, Chinese manga and Internet literature after the 2000s. In contrast, this influence has not been positively admitted by the mainstream of the older generation. Even at present, there are still debates

⁸⁴ There were many times that the TV news mentioned such kinds of things from the 1980s to the 2000s. A lot of comic fans also talked about their parents’ negative thinking about manga, and their ‘fight’ against parents, for reading mangas secretly.

around it in Chinese academic field. For example, one paper argues that, 'the invasion of Japanese manga in the 1990s made us lose the whole generation, and lose all of battlefields.' (Yang, 2005) In my opinion, as most of those young people's online posts have shown, the positive meaning of this influence is much more than the negative side. Impacted by the content and narrative styles of Japanese manga, the post-cold-war generation's writing became more flexible and multiform, getting rid of the rigid form which was guided by politics and was popular in the last decades.

5.4.2 Chinese Original Children's Literature

In the 1980s, Chinese original CL developed prosperously and came into the second 'golden age', though YAL was still not separated from CL range, and the works specific for teenagers were limited. Many texts for children returned to social perspectives and humanistic concerns (which were advocated by the new culture movement in 1919) (Cai, 2016). Characters returned to the nature of children and adolescents, in other words they had fewer adult features. Some works in the early 1980s focused on assessing and revealing the damage caused by the Cultural Revolution, while some others were full of positive speculation about the future. However, many works still had a strongly didactic tone at the beginning. It took decades for this tone to gradually fade in Chinese CL.

Since the 1980s, the popularity of TV and the economy, which was becoming more market-oriented, has changed the ecology of Chinese CL. After experiencing the last golden age, the little picture books left public view. Going into the 1990s, Chinese CL appeared to be a polarized situation. On one hand, a few CL magazines successfully solved the crisis of economic transition and maintained stable development. At the same time, several famous CL writers emerged, like Qin Wenjun, Zheng Yuanjie, Cao Wenxuan and so forth. Most of them were born in the 1950s, and became the main force of Chinese original CL in the following 20 years.

On the other hand, until the end of 1990s, most of Chinese CL workers, authors and illustrators still had not acquired enough cultural respect or actual income they deserved.

The government declared that ‘the country should attach importance to CL’, but it mostly seemed to be propaganda, without many real benefits for the people working in the field. As a result, some good CL authors turned to writing adult literature; while many CL publishing houses continued falling into financial difficulty – some outstanding CL magazines even had to stop publication in the late 1990s (e.g. ‘*The Future*’, ‘*Giants*’, ‘*The Morning Flowers*’) (Fan, 2015).

At the end of 1990s, a marked phenomenon of Chinese original CL was that while the numbers of publishing houses, authors and publications were large, esteemed high-quality works were a few.

In 1995, after observing the huge success of *The Comic King* and Hainan Photography and Art Press, Chinese central government decided to launch a project called ‘5155’, which meant they planned to spend 2-3 years to build 5 animation bases, to publish 15 huge series of comic books for children, and to establish 5 comic magazines. The project failed due to three factors: the ideological intervention from the government, the lack of understanding of the market, and the impact from the pirated Japanese mangas. As a comment from a website noted (anonymous, 2008), ‘It was not the problem of Chinese comic industry. It was the problem of the whole Chinese cultural and market system. Besides, if it chooses to, Chinese censorship can kill all the mangas and animations’.

The only constructive result of this hundreds-of-billions-cost project was that some excellent Chinese original manga authors grew up reading those magazines⁸⁵.

5.4.3 Chinese Original YAL

As mentioned above, until the 2000s, Chinese YAL was not clearly separated from generic CL. Books for children under 15 years old were mostly published by the presses which specially focus on CL; while the books for 15-25 years old young people might be

⁸⁵ Those authors did not get much income from the magazine. Sometimes there was even delayed payment of the copyright fees. Most of the cost for the project was divided by the officers and principals at all levels.

published by any presses, and possibly be put in any place in bookshops.

The books which distinctly focused on teenagers as the target readers generally appeared after 1995⁸⁶. At that time, the fast and huge changes in Chinese society meant that the growth environment of the post-cold-war generation was quite different from that of the previous generations. This in turn often generated severe conflicts of ideas with the elders⁸⁷. In 1996, the novel '*Blossom Season, Rainy Season*' written by a 16-year-old student Yu Xiu, exploded among the young people. Its account of school life from the viewpoint of a peer assumed obvious resonance among young readers. Subsequently, numerous younger and bestselling authors appeared. They wrote YAL while they themselves were also young adults.

On the other hand, the magazines followed a tradition of separation, in order to focus the reader groups in different ages: babies, 5-7 years old children, 9-12 years old children, middle school students (13-15 years old), and the young people over 15 years of age. Some magazines which had stopped publication during Cultural Revolution resumed publishing, such as '*Middle School Student*'. Some other magazines which were founded during Cultural Revolution changed their 'political style' names (like '*Little Red Soldier*') and content style. The design and content of the magazines became much closer to the young readers' taste. For the young adult readers over 18 years old, there were also some magazines, such as *Reader's Digest*, *Young people's Digest*, *Germination* (accepting young people's literary submissions), *Liaoning Youth* (the local comprehensive magazine for young people)...

⁸⁶ The represented YA works in this period: '*The Young Girl's Red Hairpin*' (Chen, 1995) and '*The Death of a Female Middle-school Student*' (Chen, 1998).

⁸⁷ It is also the main reason that the generations born after the 1970s hardly accept the official ideologies – the average age of the leaders in the central government is more than 60 years old.



Figure 5-9: ‘Middle School Student’ in 1980, 1995 and 2015. Comparing with the covers in the 1950s and 1960s, shows the evident differences – more sense of humanism and less of political colours.

At the end of 1990s, three important things happened, which would again change Chinese young people’s writing and reading habits: the popularity of the Internet in China; the popularity of comic news magazines; and the first ‘New Concept’ essay competition. Their powerful influence was actually revealed after the 2000s. Hence, I will discuss them in detail in the later sections.

5.4.4 Sci-fi

In all kinds of books for Chinese young adults, Sci-fi was a special category. After the termination of Cultural Revolution, almost all the aspects of society had to be rebuilt. Chinese central government advocated the target ‘to realize the four modernizations’⁸⁸. Therefore, Sci-fi returned to its old top-position of popularizing science (Liu, 2014: p.34). From 1978 to 1983, the influence of Sci-fi on common people was unprecedented in Chinese history (Zheng, 1999). The number of Sci-fi magazines and newspapers rapidly increased (*Tree of Wisdom*, *Scientific Literature*, *Science Fiction Weekly*, etc). The circulation of those Sci-fi books, magazines and newspapers was also amazing. One editor of *Scientific Literature* remembered that, in 1980 and 1981, the circulation per issue of the

⁸⁸ It means the modernization of industry, agriculture, national defence, science and technology.

magazine was about 200,000 (Li, 2015). This number even was not the best grade among the same type of magazines. In 1978, the first edition of '*Xiao Lingtong's Travels in the Future*' was published 3 million and quickly sold out.

In fact, this upsurge was the continuation of the last time (1950s and 1960s). Most of the important authors in this period had been known already before the Cultural Revolution, such as Ye Yonglie, Zheng Wenguang, and Tong Enzheng. Besides, some famous works published during this period actually had been finished before 1966, and waited for more than 10 years to be published.

At the same time, a huge number of western Sci-fi books with the other Western literature quickly arrived in China through various channels (Liu, 2014: p.34). For example, from 1977 to 1984, 56 works written by Isaac Asimov were introduced into China, including his popular scientific writing and Sci-fi novels (SF, 2015). The humanistic concerns showed in these Western Sci-fi works indeed attracted Chinese readers, as the absolute new reading experience. It could be said these books completely changed Chinese Sci-fi fans' reading taste, and affected some of their future writing – the trace could be found in Chinese Sci-fi works published in the 1990s and 2000s.

This wave of Chinese Sci-fi (1977-1983) showed three characteristics:

Firstly, this upsurge came along with Chinese people's optimism for the new future after the havoc, and the ardor to the development of real science and technology – which was another type of utopia differing from the impracticable communist dream during the Cultural Revolution. Under this context, there even appeared a new type of Chinese Sci-fi, which could be named as 'technological Sci-fi' (Liu, 2011). Comparing to 'literature', those Sci-fi books were rather like practical introductions to various new technologies. However, because of the lack of literary flavour, this type of Chinese Sci-fi finally disappeared.

Secondly, compared with the works during the 1950s and 1960s, most of Chinese Sci-fi

texts in this period were more complex on the plots and the creation of characters. At the same time, with painful memories about the Cultural Revolution, some Sci-fi writers started to focus on humanistic concerns and realistic criticism.

Thirdly, most of the works in this period still revealed obvious political characteristics, particularly the traces of Cold War. Many texts involved 'superpower' as the negative role, and generally named those superpowers as 'S' or 'M' (S means Soviet Union, while M means America). For instance, *Fly to Sagittarius* (also known as: *Forward Sagittarius*, Zheng, 1979), is a story that starts from an accident made by a spy from 'M', which caused a spaceship to launch ahead of schedule and far off course. It would be an interesting study to compare Chinese Sci-fi novels of this period with Western Sci-fi works which also contain references to the Cold War.

This upsurge of Chinese Sci-fi was suddenly stopped by a culture critique campaign (Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign) in 1983. After that, Chinese Sci-fi fell into a long winter again.

Evidence that there had been some debate about the rationality of Sci-fi in China happened earlier than 1983⁸⁹. When British Sci-fi author Brian Aldiss visited China in 1979, he was asked: 'How do British Sci-fi works teach young people scientific and technological knowledge?' He answered that the standpoint of Sci-fi should be the social reality, but not 'science'. His answer caused another debate about the function of Sci-fi in China. Though some Sci-fi writers supported Aldiss' opinion, many scholars and popular science writers disagreed (Chen, 2015). They suggested that Sci-fi books are the texts which should be written to children and adolescents. Therefore, romantic love, violence and the other realistic concerns should not appear in Sci-fi (Zheng, 1999). Because of that, the Sci-fi story *A Tender Dream* (Wei, 1981), which describes that a human man decides to divorce his robot wife, was judged as a pornography work. Basically, these debates were summarized as: Which should be the core of Chinese Sci-fi - Science or Humanism? (Liu,

⁸⁹ It started from an article published in *Chinese Youth Daily* in 1979, which criticized 'A Miracle on Mount Everest' (Ye, 1976) is a novel of 'pseudoscience', because it is 'impossible' to find 'a soft dinosaurian egg on Mount Everest, and then let it hatch out successfully'.

2014; Wu, 2020)

These debates continued to 1983, when the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign (ASPC) happened. Sci-fi was defined as a kind of ‘pollution’ formally on *People’s Daily*, to be seen as one of representatives of Western-inspired liberal ideas and individualism. Spiritual Pollution is ‘a deliberately vague term that embraces every manner of bourgeois import from erotica to existentialism.’ (Song, 2013: p.58). Some critics in that period then argued that the thoughts of capitalist liberalism and commercialism are eroding Chinese Sci-fi writers; and ‘some Sci-fi works have already been out of the scope of “science” and showed the negative disposition on politics’ (Chen, 2009). They proposed that Chinese publications should display Chinese socialist spirit and turn away from ‘Western pollution’, which could be implemented through censorship.

The Campaign continued for only one month, but it affected many cultural fields, such as the popular songs from Taiwan and Hong Kong, and photos of gymnasts which were defined as ‘indecent’⁹⁰. However, the damage to Chinese Sci-fi was longer-lasting, and had a worse effect.

The government regulators of publication distributed official documents several times to forbid publishing Sci-fi works on all the media. Meanwhile, the government also stopped all the support to Sci-fi publishing. At the time, all Chinese publishing houses, magazines and newspapers were within the planned economic system. Thus, once the government stopped the funding and issuing support, the whole Sci-fi industry immediately fell into a hopeless situation. The writers could not publish their books because of the censorship, which caused many famous authors (Ye Yonglie, Zheng Wenguang, etc.) to stop writing Sci-fi anymore. Translation work of foreign Sci-fi texts was also delayed. Isaac Asimov’s ‘*The Foundation Series*’ has already finished, but could not be published until the end of the 1990s.

From 1986 to 2000, only one Sci-fi magazine existed in China: *Scientific Literature*, which

⁹⁰ It was not until the 1990s that novels and popular songs from Taiwan and Hong Kong could be legally issued in the mainland of China. In the 1980s, almost all the relevant things were pirated, which were sold in the grey market.

changed its name to *SFW* (*Science Fiction World*) in 1991. During the late 1980s, the circulation per issue fell to around 6,000-10,000 (comparing 1980: 200,000). The magazine was required to be self-financed, which was very difficult to achieve in the China of the 1980s⁹¹. For almost 10 years, it depended on the profit of the other books for children published by the press to support the magazine and the editors' living.

The negative effect of the Campaign continued for a long time. Even after the situation became better in the late 1990s, *SFW* was still attached to 'Children's literature' tag carefully on Sci-fi, and emphasized the function of popularizing science and technology.

The environment in the early 1990s was still hard for Sci-fi publishing. Only a few foreign Sci-fi works could be published, most of which were the 'safe' works of Jules Verne, Isaac Asimov, Alexander Belyaev, and some Japanese Sci-fi authors. The development of Chinese original Sci-fi was faltering.

However, after Chinese economy turned to a market economy system, some new opportunities and supports appeared. The self-financed magazine *SFW* reaped benefits from its earlier misfortune. Compared with Chinese mainstream literature, which was still existing within the planning economy system, Chinese Sci-fi got more freedom in advance. From the late 1990s, the publication numbers of both foreign Sci-fi and Chinese original Sci-fi surged. The circulation per issue of *SFW* returned to 250,000-400,000 (Wu, 2009).

Another new supporting force is from the Sci-fi fans born during the 1960s and 1980s. At present, they have become the backbone of Chinese society, working in the universities, literary magazines, publishing houses, film companies and news media. These young people took the qualitative leap of Chinese Sci-fi. As the editor of *SFW*, Yang Guohua argued, 'When those fans grow up, and become the elites of the society, their influence on the development of Sci-fi starts to unfold' (Li, 2015).

Compared to the works in the 1980s, Chinese original Sci-fi texts created in this period showed much more variety of themes and more humanistic concerns. The writers started to

⁹¹ For maintaining the magazine, the editors even had to work on another series of books for children: 365 stories.

focus on individual experiences of common people. The texts were less compliant with the government's official political stance. In contrast, the Sci-fi works involving dystopian factors (e.g. ecocriticism) started to appear. Some of them even implicated sensitive issues, for example, the stories published on SFW - *It isn't death, but love* (Su, 1996) and *City of Silence* (Ma, 2005), although they had obvious elements of imitating *1984*, *Fahrenheit 451* and other similar works.

The real bloom period of Chinese Sci-fi is in the 2000s, which will be discussed in a later section.

5.5 After 2000

The 2000s was a new era for Chinese CL and YAL. The new generation of writers had grown up; they were young adults and wrote for their peers and younger generations. The development of technologies (Internet and smartphone) significantly changed the ecosystem of Chinese CL and YAL – particularly YAL. In 1997, there were only 620 thousand Internet users in China. In 2014, the number increased to 632 million (Lian, 2017)⁹². With the dramatic change made by the new technologies, cyberspace has become the new land for young writers and readers. A new and more interactive digital publishing system (and discourse ecosystem) which is completely different from the traditional publishing system has been established. Along with it, the new battle around creative writing and censorship has continued to the present, which will be discussed in more detail in this section later.

In terms of traditional publishing, the proportion of CL and YAL in the whole book market was increasing every year. In 1999, the proportion was about 9.5%; in 2009, the number rose to more than 12% (Sun, 2009); in 2016, the proportion has become more than 23% (Jiang, 2017). At the same time, the type of best-selling book for children also changed from popular science to fiction (novels); the proportion of literature in the CL market was increased from less than 25% (2000) to more than 35% (2009) (Sun, 2009). The category of CL in bookshops became detailed: school story, Sci-fi, mystery, suspense, thriller, adventure, Kongfu... However, after 2010, Chinese original CL field appeared empty of worthy successors; only few older writers occupied the top rank for years and the number of new impressive works was limited.

On the other side, the introduction of the *Harry Potter* novels and movies detonated young people's preference for fantasy reading and writing. Differing from the animal stories and fairy tales for children or realistic fictions for teenagers in the 1990s, the new storm of fiction was represented by the Western and Eastern fantasy and mystery (e.g. magic and dragon of the West, Xiuzhen and Kongfu of the East).

⁹² All the dates and quotations from Lian Shusheng's *New Media Genre Study* (2017) have no page numbers because the electronic book I bought from Amazon has no page numbers.

The introduction of foreign CL, especially picture books became popular after 2000. According to my working experience and observation in this field, the competition on bidding for the copyright of the most popular and award-winning foreign CL works⁹³ became white-hot after about 2010, but the heat decreased after 2017 – because the central government changed the policies to foreign CL publishing.

I will not discuss Chinese CL further in this part, but instead will focus on YAL, because YAL had already separated into an independent category after 2000, while censorship of CL did not change much from the 1990s onwards.

5.5.1 YAL (printed media)

As mentioned earlier, the 1980s was the golden age of Chinese printed media (including newspapers and magazines) but during the 1990s, the impact of the market economy caused many print media to fall into crisis.

The literature magazine ‘*Germination*’ was launched in 1954, targeting mainly literature fans and writers (mainly between 20 and 40 years old). In 1997, its issue number dropped to about 10,000 (contrast: the number in the 1950s was more than 200,000) and the magazine was on the verge of bankruptcy. In this case, the magazine was revamped, and replaced its reader group with older students and young adults (15-25 years old). In 1999, by co-operating with the 7 top-ranked Chinese universities, ‘*Germination*’ held the first ‘New Concept’ essay competition, which was targeted at high school students. The competition followed three guidelines: ‘new thinking way’, ‘new narrative’ and ‘real experience’⁹⁴. The top winners could even get the chance to be matriculated by the famous university without examination⁹⁵. Encouraged by that, thousands of students entered for the competition.

The competition rescued *Germination*: the issue numbers rocketed to 500,000 per month.

⁹³ For example, The Caldecott Medal, the Newbery Medal, Hans Christian Andersen Award, Kate Greenaway Medal, Japanese Picture Book Award and so forth.

⁹⁴ For a long time, most Chinese students were used to writing essays full of ‘empty conventional words’. Therefore, this competition had much significance.

⁹⁵ The competition for entry into Chinese top universities through the examination is always intense. Among the hundreds of thousands of students in one province every year, only dozens of students can be matriculated by those universities.

At the same time, through the competition, some young writers born in the 1980s became the YAL best-sellers in the following years, for example, Zhang Yuera's *Swore Bird* sold about 250,000 in the first month⁹⁶; Han Han's *Triple Door* sold more than 2,000,000 copies until 2010 (Sohu, 2010). Their works were considered to be influenced by this 1980s generation's thinking which was different to the older generations, including a more conspicuous struggle and resistance to the adult world.

The influence of the competition was far-reaching. At the beginning, Chinese teachers in the high schools did not easily accept these new-style essays, however, increasing numbers of teachers began recommending the essay-collection book of the competition to the students. The 'writing questions or topics' in Chinese examination in the National Matriculation Test also became more flexible and creative after 2000 and were closer to the new styles revealed through the competition.

However, there were still some problems and debates around the competition and the winners. Some younger readers of the award-essay collection book found that a few essays were just the 'adaption' of stories from Japanese manga. They could be awarded because the judges were older adults who never read mangas and thought the stories were the young writers' original ideas. Guo Jingming - the winner of the third and forth competitions, one of the most famous and successful '80s' writers⁹⁷ - cannot get away from the charge of 'copycat'. His first well-known novel *City of Fantasy* (2003) was criticized because the plot and characters were highly similar to the Japanese manga *RG Veda* illustrated by Clamp (1989); the work *Lost in the Dream* (2003) was judged by the court to be a plagiarism of a Chinese novel *Inside and Outside Showbiz* (Zhuang Yu, 2003)⁹⁸. Guo received very different comments from these three groups: older adult writers, his fans, and Japanese-manga fans who were born during the 1980s and 1990s. For the third group, Guo's success is always considered as proof of the influence of Japanese culture (light novel/game/manga and animation), and also proof of Chinese people's lack

⁹⁶ The data is from the introduction page of the book on the biggest web bookshop in Taiwan: <https://www.books.com.tw/products/0010456337>

⁹⁷ In 2012, he was ranked 4th on Chinese rich writer list and ranked 14th on the Forbes list of celebrities.

⁹⁸ Because of the distance and language differences, Japanese authors may still not clearly know about these things even now. Guo never received legal penalty for his imitations of the Japanese works.

of law-consciousness about copyright⁹⁹.

Generally, older Chinese literary writers support these young writers' success. Nevertheless, there are always criticisms that their works are 'full of the infatuation with luxury life and consumerism' (Shi, 2015: n.p.), 'leading by individualism and negative values' (comments from the book website).

Meanwhile, in those published YAL works, there is a lack of deep exploration on the sensitive issues (the political issues are totally avoided), and serious thinking about humans and society. It is not only because of those young authors' personal choices, but also because under strict censorship, the space for such kinds of exploration is very limited, and 'not safe'. The chase to consumerism in those YAL works, and the totalitarian reasons behind this phenomenon, reflects the reality of the special social environment. In the other words, a society is a '*brave new world*' on the surface, but '*1984*' inside.

5.5.2 Manga

In about 1998, three heavy books appeared in Chinese bookshops. They were in colour, A3 size and had hundreds of pages. It was the first time that Chinese manga fans touched the theoretical books about Japanese manga and animation, which had deep analysis and systemic introductions. Many works had their debut with Chinese fans. Those books were more like the encyclopedias of contemporary Japanese manga and animation. I still remember when I spent several weeks hungrily reading those books without wanting to lose a single word. Any small picture could encourage me to stop for a while and imagine many things. Judging by the content, it could be said those books were mainly aimed at young adult readers. Those books sold out very soon, but more were printed.

The editors and authors were mainly from a special column of Japanese comics published in a famous game magazine at that time. The success of those books encouraged the editors to issue a new type of monthly magazine mainly about the introduction, analysis and news

⁹⁹ It is paradoxical that though these fans know about those works through the pirated versions, they cannot accept Guo's success based on the plagiarism of those works.

of Japanese manga and animation. Soon, other similar magazines appeared on the market¹⁰⁰. Some of them also carried fan fiction and original manga from Chinese authors. It should be noted that, as with the YAL works, the editors and authors for those magazines were also very young; most of them were between 20 and 25 years old¹⁰¹.

From then on, the number of Japanese comic fans in China rapidly rose up again after Hainan Photography and Art Press closed down. In the 2000s, several kinds of Japanese mangas were being translated and published with authorization in China through the official channels. Nevertheless, the numbers were limited and the topics were safe for children – for example, *Detective Conan*, *One Piece*, *Dragon Ball* and so forth. They could not satisfy the real requirements of Chinese market.

Alongside the legal publications, the pirate market of Japanese manga and animation developed and became prosperous. With the development of the Internet, piracy also changed: more and more young fans voluntarily translated and shared the pirated works (mangas, light novels and animations) free online without receiving any economic income. As mentioned earlier, the people who did such actions were mostly like the fire thieves for Chinese readers. For the readers, it became much easier to download large numbers of translated works to their computers¹⁰². Though such actions were illegal, reading the pirated works was still an important way for Chinese young people to be aware of the world outside, and also an effective way to evade censorship.

In contrast, the printed piracy publishing industry waned. After 2010, it is hard to find the pirated mangas sold in Chinese big cities. On the hand, with the development of online shopping and as the 1970s and 1980s generations started to have financial independence, the older fans began to buy authorized mangas published in Taiwan and Hong Kong through the Internet¹⁰³.

¹⁰⁰ They were usually published in full colour and used lots of original pictures from Japanese magazines; most of them had multifarious gifts, such as stationery printed with animation characters, or a CD/DVD with selected pieces of Japanese animation and OST (without authorization). Though those magazines have formal ISBN numbers, they still exist in the grey zone of copyright.

¹⁰¹ The chief editor of *Dreams*, Feiyu Yan, was 21 years old when the magazine was launched (1999). The chief editor of *Shinkansen*, Chi Cheng, was 22 years old when the magazine was launched (1999).

¹⁰² For example, I downloaded a translated light novel collection package, which included more than 10,000 volumes (as txt style). The total size of the package was about 1 G.

¹⁰³ Unfortunately, from 2017, the central government started to tighten up the controls on online shops which sell foreign books and many of them were closed.

In 2002, the magazine ‘*ComicFans*’ was launched. The chief editor, Jin Cheng, was an illustrator of ‘little picture books’ in the 1980s. He always hoped to find a way of developing Chinese original comics, but his company had failed three times already in the 1990s. Finally, he thought of a way of using Japanese comics to attract readers and authors, and then lead the development of Chinese comics through the magazine (WH, 2013: n.p.). He was successful this time. In 2004, the magazine was issued, peaking at 300,000 annual copies.

Following that, Jin Cheng started to hold a ‘Golden Dragon Award Original Animation & Comic Competition’. After 2006, the competition became famous and the winners soon became the main force of Chinese original manga. Some authors’ works (e.g. ‘*What the Master Would Not Talk of*’ by Xia Da) were even introduced into Japan and issued as a Japanese manga magazine.

After 2012, with the development of the smartphone, several large Chinese Internet companies released comics apps and websites and Chinese original comics experienced an upsurge of interest. Because of the influence of Japanese comics, the style of most Chinese mangas is closer to Japanese styles than to the Western comics. At present, hundreds of small studios have been established. They provide the manga online weekly or monthly and the income mainly depends on the readers’ subscriptions. The most popular ones still have the chance to be printed as paper books.

The topics and categories of mangas online are diverse, such as school stories, romantic stories, humor or thriller stories, fantasy stories... However, despite some works including apocalyptic and ecocritical factors, it is still hard to find dystopian manga that address more sensitive issues.



Figure 5-10: One page from the manga ‘Under One Person’ online (Mier, 2015). It can be seen that the illustration has clear trace of the influences from ‘Japanese manga style’.

In addition, the readers can directly leave the comments on the relevant page and other readers can choose to read the manga with or without the comments by choosing open or close ‘barrage’ (the button on the bottom left). This function provides a highly interactive space for readers and authors.

5.5.3 Sci-Fi (printed media)

Coming into the new century, for Chinese Sci-fi, the stress derived from direct political control was reduced; in contrast, the stress derived from the market competition increased (Wu and Bogstad, 2013). Represented by the *Harry Potter* series, fantasy literature boomed and grasped the attention of the majority of Chinese young readers. In 2017, the number of sales volumes of *Harry Potter* had been over 20 million in China (Fan, 2017); while the series have been listed on ‘the Required Reading Books for Students’ by Chinese Ministry of Education (Wang, 2020). In this more open and stable environment, Chinese Sci-fi continued to have a steady development. A Chinese popular science study (Dong and Gao, 2017) counted the famous Chinese Sci-fi writers from the 1900s to the present by eras: there were only 8 writers who were well known from 1949 to 1983, but 12 writers in the

1990s, and 22 writers in the 2000s¹⁰⁴. Furthermore, in 2015 and 2016, Chinese writers won the Hugo Award, which was the first time in the history. Since then, numerous Chinese Sci-fi works have been translated into other languages. In the academic field, an independent postgraduate program about Sci-fi was established in Beijing Normal University in 2003. At the same time, some Sci-fi writers and readers born in the 1970s and 1980s also became teachers and scholars in this field in universities worldwide. From then on, academic research about Chinese Sci-fi quickly developed.

There are several reasons why Chinese Sci-fi has become more internationally accepted. The first one is that the writing of this new generation of Sci-fi authors, who were famous after the late 1990s, was more literary, diverse and secular. These authors were deeply influenced by the foreign Sci-fi worldwide and consider Sci-fi as ‘literature’ more than ‘popular science writing’ or a ‘national propaganda tool’, and they developed diverse writing styles. Compared to the older generations whose stories mostly focus on the ‘grand narrative’ (e.g. human civilization’s future, national honor and so forth), the stories written by the young writers generally pay more attention to individuals’ lives and feeling. The characters in their stories have more vivid individualities. One example of this difference can be found between Liu’s *Three-Body Problem* (2015 Hugo Award, when the author was 52 years old) and Hao’s *Folding Beijing* (2016 Hugo Award, when the author was 22 years old).

Besides, differing from the West, there are few full-time Sci-fi writers in China¹⁰⁵. Most famous Chinese Sci-fi writers could be said to be part of the social elites: the vice president of the technology company; the senior engineer of the power plant; the department director of the Xinhua News Agency (the official state-run press agency of China) or university professors. Their careers lead them to maintain a high awareness and reflection on social phenomena and problems. In every aspect of Chinese society, conflicts happen daily,

¹⁰⁴ The shadow from politics which looms over Chinese Sci-fi field is not only has to do with censorship, but also with administrative intervention. After 2007, the local government nominated two people who have little understanding of Sci-fi and little ability to perform as the leaders of the *SFW*. Because of this, the quality of the biggest Chinese Sci-fi magazine dropped dramatically. The results of a 20-year run were seriously damaged.

¹⁰⁵ It is mostly because the income of a full-time writer usually would not be enough to support the author’s living.

resulting from the complex political environment and rapid economy development. ‘Chinese Sci-fi works by getting ideas from the absurd reality shown by the (social) news, and has even developed a genre called “realistic Sci-fi”...Chinese young Sci-fi writers are much easier to be touched and inspired by the reality’ (Gu, 2013).

Because of the strict censorship, from environmental pollution to food security, from ‘disappeared’ university students to sentenced authors, most of sensitive topics cannot be written about directly in China. As the famous Sci-fi author Chen Qiufan said, ‘The mainstream of literature lost voice in those fields’ (cited from Gu, 2013). It made Chinese realistic literature look feeble. Instead, Chinese Sci-fi seems have more space to deal with censorship, though sometimes the refusal reasons given by the censor were ridiculous. ‘Dealing with the censorship, is mostly like a guerrilla war’ (Pan, cited from Gu, 2013). Chinese Sci-fi authors are used to projecting their concerns about reality onto the imagined world in the future or the past, using veiled ways. For instance, Hao’s *Folding Beijing* shows the author’s worries about class differentiation and isolation which may happen in a ‘utopian’ society. To some extent, this situation exactly reflects the arguments of the sociology of literature which has been mentioned in Chapter 2.

However, as long as Chinese political environment maintains the status quo, all the printed works - including the fantasy ones, are still dancing in heavy fetters. The publishing of the Sci-fi works which involve social criticism and sensitive topics always faces more difficulties than the others. For almost 30 years (from 1991 to the present), only a few printed works set a distinct dystopian society as the background of the story and were mostly written by young authors under 30 years old. In my opinion, it reveals that in terms of challenging taboos, the younger generations of Chinese Sci-fi writers who grew up after the Cultural Revolution have less mental burdens than the older ones.

Among these works, according to my knowledge, there are only two short stories on the *SFW* involving information and knowledge control: *Not Death, But Love* (Su, 1996/26 years old) and *The Silent City* (Ma, 2005/25 years old). Traces of the influence from the early classic foreign dystopian novels can be found in these two stories.

In terms of dystopias, the rise of Chinese Internet literature should not be ignored because

compared with the printed works, the writing online is much freer. Though the government has gradually tightened up censorship on the Internet in recent years, it is still hard to completely control non-commercial creations online and Chinese Internet fiction involves more sensitive, particularly dystopian elements. This new field still has a plenty of scope for academic research.

5.5.4 (YA) Internet Literature

Since the new culture movement in 1919, Chinese mainstream literature has assumed that writers have responsibilities to society and should comment on with social issues (Lian, 2017). To some extent, it puts the intellectuals' duties onto writers' shoulders. This thinking contributed to the fact that works written mainly for people's entertainment remained unappreciated for a long time. This impact extended to the appreciation of Kong-fu and Romantic novels in the 1980s, manga in the 1990s, and Internet literature (IL) in the 2000s. However, by being tied by the strict control of censorship for decades, and with the rise of new media, 'mainstream literature' gradually lost momentum, while the IL grew vigorously in the free cyberspace.

From the late 1990s, the young Chinese writers (the post-cold-war generation) started to explore the new creative space online (Hockx, 2015: p.30). At the time anyone could create a personal website, therefore, plenty of literature websites and forums were established and quickly collected huge numbers of writers and readers. In 2002, the number of Chinese literature websites was over 10,000 (Lian, 2017)¹⁰⁶. Anyone could post a creation online without 'eligibility verification'. As Ouyang (2006: n.p.) argues, 'IL reformed the old system of (Chinese) literature; overturned the existing sense of literature hierarchy...broke the traditional writers' monopoly on media, and developed the approach - through which the literature could be back to the public.'

¹⁰⁶ In 2005, Chinese government started to enforce 'Measures for the Archival Administration of Non-operational Internet Information Services' (<http://en.pkulaw.cn/display.aspx?cgid=56963>). China is the only country in the world which enforces this kind of law. Due to that, thousands of websites were dead, and some other people chose to build websites on foreign servers – the access speed to these website became slow and unstable, because of the 'Great Firewall'. It is also a part of the reason that some big websites which stayed in China quickly grew to be monopoly firms.

Generally, the main platform of Chinese Internet Literature experienced five stages in the new century: BBS and forums (usually attached to portal sites and university sites) – personal and small literature websites – blogs – large (business) literature websites – new mobile media (Hockx, 2015, Lian, 2017). Among them, at present, the large (business) literature websites still own the copyright to the absolute majority of works online.

In Michel Hockx's *'Internet Literature in China'* (2015), he discusses in-depth the general development history of Chinese Internet Literature, as well as the cultural and political push factors behind it. Hence, I will not explain in more detail about this part, but will mainly make some complements and corrections here. As he pointed out (p.21, p.108), the special circumstances encouraged the booming development of IL in China – one important reason was that IL did not require 'book numbers' (ISBN) which were necessary for traditional publishing and were completely controlled by the Chinese government.

Benefited from the popularity of the smartphone and the development of e-finance, micropayment became very convenient for Chinese people¹⁰⁷. It encouraged the rapid growth of large business literature websites. After fierce competition and diverse failed attempts, Qidian (Starting Point, founded in 2001)¹⁰⁸ and Jinjiang ('JJ', founded in 2003)¹⁰⁹ successfully developed a business model for maintaining running and became the leaders of Chinese IL websites¹¹⁰. The commercial mode takes income and loyal fans to the author, which also means loyal users for the websites. In 2009, when the non-commercial female literature website 'Lucifer-Club' celebrated its 10th birthday, it had 6,5000 registered users. At the same time, the commercial female literature website 'Jinjing' already had 5,800,000 registered users (Lian, 2017).

The new industry grew sharply. In 2012, around 40% of all Internet users in China 'made use of applications providing access to online literature' (CNNIC, cited from Hockx, 2015:

¹⁰⁷ Generally, in China, reading a chapter of the novel online only needs several pennies. In the traditional finance system, the service fees would be much higher than the real payment.

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.qidian.com/>

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.jjwxc.net/>

¹¹⁰ In January 2019, Qidian was No.1571 on Alexa Traffic Global Rank, No. 196 on Alexa Chinese Rank; Jinjiang was No.1498 on Alexa Traffic Global Rank, No. 192 on Alexa Chinese Rank (Ref.: <https://www.alexa.com/>).

p.4). In 2016, Frost & Sullivan forecasted that the market would reach 6,333 million yuan (£718 million) by 2017. The actual number was 12,760 million yuan (Liang, 2018). In December of the same year, the users of Chinese IL websites reached 378 million, taking 48.9% of all Chinese Internet users (Li and Luo, 2018). Chinese IL already has become a kind of industry, a part of digital capitalism, while the commercial IL writers become ‘word workers’ or even ‘piece workers’¹¹¹. For example, the Top.1 author of Qidian, Tang Jia San Shao, has kept writing 8000-10000 words (approximately equal to 2500-3500 words in English) daily for more than 15 years. He also has a personal company for the promotion of his fiction, and managing the fans’ groups on different social media (e.g. Weibo, QQ, Wechat, the comments on the websites and forums and so forth). As the figure shows below, the running mode of IL completely differs from traditional publishing. As a result, the temporal and spatial attribute of IL is different, which has led to changes on the narrative structure of IL.



Figure 5-11: The business running mode of Chinese IL companies (adapted from Xueqiu's framework, 2017)

It could find out that, compared to the traditional publishing ecosystem (figure 2-3, p.35), the authors and readers have more frequent interactions in this new mode. The readers subscribed to the fiction can pay and read it by chapter. The economic supports (transferred into the author's account weekly or monthly) and direct comments (which could be checked anytime) from the readers strongly influenced

¹¹¹ It is because the reader pays by chapter.

the authors' writing. The editors from the website would not edit the content of the works, but are just responsible for the communication with authors on remuneration, censored issues, authorization and so forth. The income of the IL companies is mainly from the readers' payment, paper publishing and the authorization of adapted productions.

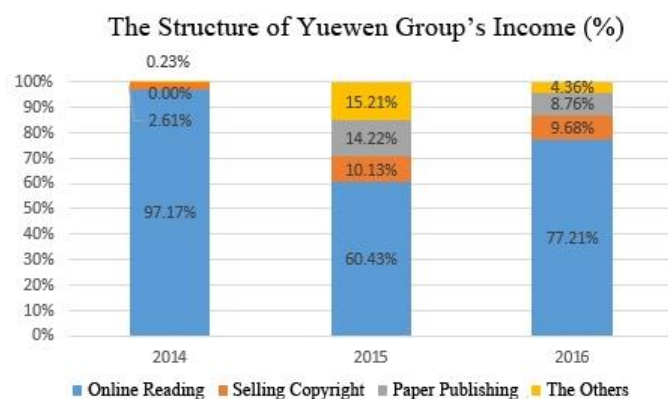


Figure 5-12:

The structure of Yuewen Group's income

(Xueqiu, 2017)

(Qidian is the biggest IL website run by Yuewen Group)

Besides the free space for creating, another important reason for the rapid development of Chinese IL is that the average age of the writers is very young. These people have more time, energy and enthusiasm for creating. The CNNIC statistical data in 2014 showed that 10-19 years old young people accounted for 24.5% of Chinese netizens, while the 20-29 years old ones accounted for 30.7% (Lian, 2017). They made up the majority of Chinese IL readers and writers. One piece of research showed that 77% of the online fiction readers are younger than 29 years old (more than half of which are under 21 years old) (Ren, 2016). Another survey showed that people between 18 and 35 years old take 84% of 'Jinjing' users (Lian, 2017). Meanwhile, the Iresearch report (2018) displayed that young people under 25 years old have taken 44% of the IL writers. It means tens of thousands of writers are students. As a result, these young writers and readers make Chinese IL to be the factual 'YAL'.

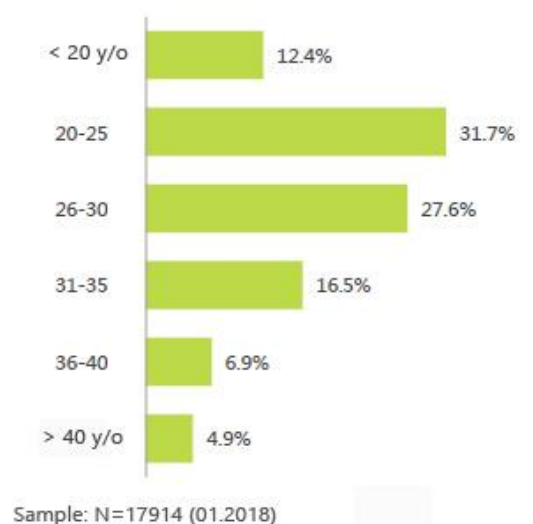


Figure 5-13: The proportion of Chinese IL writer's age range in 2017.

The average age of the IL writers is 27 years old (Iresearch, 2018: p.36).

As mentioned earlier, these young IL authors are the generation that is deeply influenced by Japanese and Western culture. Thus, their writing absorbs the characteristics from both sides, from the character design to the narrative style, which quite differs from the older generation's writing (mainstream literature and traditional literature), but also has unique Chinese features and thoughts. It is a reason that the Western young readers accept and are attracted by Chinese IL much easier than the other kind of Chinese literature. In 2014, 'Wuxiaworld'¹¹² was established by a Chinese-American, and grew rapidly to be the biggest English Chinese-IL website. Following that, the monopoly on Japanese light novels in the Western young people's reading market was broken (Mo and Chen, 2016). As the creator of Wuxiaworld 'RWX' (Jingping Lai) said (ditto), 'For the Western readers, even Jinyong's Kong-fu novels are "too China" and hard to be understood. In contrast, the category "Xuanhuan" in Chinese IL absorbs many Western fantasy elements, and has a strong sense of game, which leads the Western young people to resonate easily. Actually, Chinese IL has become the bridge between Chinese public culture and foreign contemporary culture.' He also pointed out that there are few excellent IL works written by Western authors, because the good ones are easily published. Thus, Chinese IL filled the

¹¹² The address: <https://www.wuxiaworld.com/> Similar to the Japanese comics and light novels in Chinese, the translators on such English Chinese-IL websites work for free and based on personal favours. The readers could willingly donate to the website and translators. The works on Wuxiaworld are mostly translated from Qidian for males. There are also some other websites (and apps) for females, such as Wattpad. There are numerous English version of the hot Chinese BL novels on them. For example, 'Guardian' (Priest, 2012) has 1 million reads and thousands of comments already up to December 2018.

space in the market¹¹³. Though there are some debates and criticism around racial and gender discrimination in Chinese works (for males), generally, these works are very attractive to Western readers. At present, 'Wuxiaworld' has 5 million accesses daily - 85% of the visitors are 18-35 years old males¹¹⁴ (Lai, 2017).

Chinese young IL authors always are brave in trying new things and seem to be challenged to write new topics¹¹⁵, despite having different writing purposes. Most of the newcomers and non-commercial authors write mainly based on personal interests, which has contributed to a variety of narrative styles and topics. Some fiction even involves very sensitive issues. On the other hand, for commercial writers, particularly those who have been popular and generally become full-time writers, besides their own interests, their works are always influenced by external factors much deeper, such as the popular trend, the readers' favours, the website editors' advice, or the censorship on the commercial literature websites. One instance was that, when Tianxia Bachang started to write his thriller novel '*Candle in the Tomb*' on the forum, the novel involved plenty of descriptions on people's living, thoughts and special oral language in the period of Cultural Revolution and the 1980s. After the novel was moved to Qidian and became VIP work, most of the sensitive content was deleted. 'The political tension and the spirit of the times in the work was played down a lot...it might be a result that basing on the safety consideration, the website discussed with the author.' (Lian, 2017)

The final result of the phenomena above is that the most popular online fiction on commercial websites always show some similar features (stressing sensory stimulation, pursuing entertainment rather than criticizing reality), and tend to not implicate 'unsafe' topics. Be encouraged by the payment by chapters, the word counts of those works always achieve stunning numbers (tens of thousands of words as usual). The plot structures also are generally not as rigorous as the fiction published by the presses.

¹¹³ It should be noted that this situation does not include some special categories of IL for females.

According to my knowledge, there are plenty of brilliant BL novels and 'Slash' fan fiction online written by Western females, which are rarely published.

¹¹⁴ They are from about 120 countries: 35-40% from North America, 25% from South Asia, and 29% from West Europe (Lai, 2017).

¹¹⁵ The Iresearch report (2018: p.9) showed about 80% of IL writers in their survey would like to try writing about new topics.

As the result of this commercial system, many of Chinese IL works are characterized by ‘shallow, short-lived, humorous and implicating eroticism...cheap and mass-produced’ (Lian, 2017). Some scholars also debase the value of IL, for example, ‘the popularity of Xuanhuan literature proved the contemporary young people are lack of imagination and have chaotic values’ (Tao, cited from Lian, 2017: n.p.). In my opinion, these are mostly prejudices from people who do not understand IL well. In fact, there are many excellent IL works, which are deep thinking but are not famous. The IL is not only a Neverland where Chinese young people escape from the stresses of reality, but also the place where they resist dystopian reality, and think or explore the social and political problems in an indirect and safe way. Particularly in those stories with a fictitious country or world, young authors have shown a variety of political propositions and hypotheses about the future of civilization.



Figure 5-14: The numbers of fiction in each Qidian category (accessed on 15.01.2019)¹¹⁶. It still keeps hundreds of new fiction to be registered online every month.

According to the picture, writing the stories in the fictitious period and/or world is most popular (Xuanhuan, Fantasy, Wuxia, Xianxia, Sci-fi), while the numbers of realistic and military stories are much less than the other kind of stories¹¹⁷. This result is caused by both of the market demand and the press from censorship.

Between the two biggest Chinese IL websites, Qidian mainly looks to male writers and readers (though it also established a sub-site specially for female writers and readers in

¹¹⁶ More details about the categories could be found on: <http://www.novelrankings.com/qidian-ranking/categories/> and <https://www.wuxiaworld.com/page/general-glossary-of-terms>

¹¹⁷ In my personal opinion, the small number of sport stories is not closed to censorship, but just the readers' favours.

2009); while Jinjing mainly appeals to females¹¹⁸.

The categories on Qidian and JJ mostly are similar, but also have some differences: The majority of fiction on JJ is love stories (yet there is still one of main categories called ‘no couple’)¹¹⁹, and the readers can search more detailed categories based on couple’s styles. Although much of the fiction on JJ also involves military, historical or sport factors, there are no independent categories for them. Another difference is that most of the couples in the love stories in Qidian are heterosexual (particularly, in plenty of stories, the male protagonist will have more than one female lover); while the proportion of BL (homosexual) stories takes about 1/3 of all the stories in JJ.

In the same way as some other countries, women’s writing is also a special field in China, which has plenty of scope for research. Influenced by Confucianism, the whole of Eastern Asia was the worst-hit area of women’s oppression. In China, the field of literature was held by men for thousands of years – even women’s writing which appeared in the modern age was still from the perspective of the ‘male gaze’ (Liu and Gu, 2013). After 1949, ‘mainstream literature’ was also mainly controlled by men. Until the end of 1990s, there were few works which were specially written for women, and by women.

As mentioned earlier, since the 1980s, women’s novels from Taiwan and Hong Kong, and some Japanese mangas for girls (including BL comics – certainly, pirated) were popular in China. They had become the enlightenment of contemporary Chinese (young) women’s writing. Benefited from the development of the Internet, for the first time in history, Chinese women have equal opportunities and space to write and to be read as men have. At present, several large Chinese literature websites for females already have millions of works. It could be said that the 21st century is the first time that women’s writing becomes

¹¹⁸ The proportion of male and female users of JJ is 7:93 (Lian, 2015)

¹¹⁹ ‘Love story’ means that at least one important part of the plot is always the development of the main characters’ romantic relationship. The search results of love stories on JJ (accessed in 15.01.2019): BL (boys’ love) 4759 pages; BG (boy and girl’s love) 9091 pages; GL (girls’ love) 491 pages; no couple 668 pages. The total number of online fictions on JJ is about 3 million (Jinjiang, 2018). I could not get the clear number of different type of love stories on Qidian, because the website does not support the search depending on couple styles (BL/GL/BG). According to the search results, the general number of love stories in Qidian could be estimated to be more than 2 million. The total number of fictions on Qidian is about 96 million (Xueqiu, 2017).

a real independent and large category in China. Especially, it developed online primarily, and then continued to the printed media. In other words, Chinese women's writing is mainly contributed to by the young authors' works online. Therefore, it has become an important field to observe contemporary Chinese young females' ideologies, values, self-imagination and so forth.

Based on the huge number of creations, Chinese women's writing almost has involved all topics and genres. The imagination and female psychology displayed in that fiction is very complex. Although some works are still written through the 'male gaze', many works have revealed the different characteristics from male works. For example, in the majority of Chinese men's online fiction, the women are always the roles of waiting to be rescued. Even if they have beauty, high positions and power (e.g. great witch, Elf princess, swordswoman and so forth), they still act as weak and silly girls in front of the very 'ordinary' protagonists without excellent abilities and handsome appearance, and easily fall in love with them. Though there are similar works in female writing (e.g. a girl from a normal family is loved by a rich man), a lot of fiction describes the more equal relationship between the characters – particularly in the 'BL' fictions¹²⁰.

In all Chinese female works, the 'BL' fictions should be specially noted. Actually, it is different from 'realistic homosexual literature'. The BL stories mostly happen in the hypothetical worlds, or are the fan-fictions of famous works (such as *Harry Potter*)¹²¹. Generally, they are not as depressed and heavy as the Asian homosexual literature, though it does not mean the BL fictions have not complex thoughts. Besides, the BL fictions always emphasize the affection between characters. Most of protagonists in BL stories will

¹²⁰ It has to be said that the two men's relationship in some BL works is the transmutation of traditional BG relationship, which means one role is the other's dependency. Nevertheless, it is not the mainstream of BL fiction. Especially, it rarely appears in the best-selling stories. On the other side, the number of independent and powerful female characters in the BG stories written by females is also increasing in the recent years.

¹²¹ The proportion of BL stories in fan-fiction written by Chinese females is very high. For example, the number of fan-fictions of '*Kings Avatar*' (a famous Qidian novel filled with a variety of male characters, written by a male author) on Lofter is more than 600,000 – the majority of which are BL fiction.

not build up sexual relations without an emotional foundation¹²².

Chinese BL writing was deeply influenced by Japanese BL culture (Tanbi) and Taiwan BL novels in the 1990s (pirated works), and combined the characteristics of the Western Slash fan-fiction in the 2000s (which was spread through the Internet). It was started in the small forums established by elite females (the students in Chinese top universities) at the end of the 1990s. Nowadays, there are millions of active female authors and readers on several large online platforms¹²³. The statistical data in 2015 (Zhao, 2016) showed that about 60% of readers were under 22 years old when they touched BL fiction, while 45% of them felt likely to read this type of stories. Moreover, it is interesting to find that the majority of writers and readers of BL fictions are heterosexual (Deng and Wu, 2009: p.215); the others are bisexuals and lesbians.

At present, the number of studies on Chinese BL culture is still limited, while some of them are full of prejudice¹²⁴. About the reason that Chinese young women favour the BL fiction, there is not any certain conclusion yet. Ren (2013) argues, 'The favour of BL fictions is the females' choice without alternative in the patriarchal society.' Yin (2018) considers that 'love' in the BL fictions is always pure and perfect, which is attractive for females who are baffled by the reality. Besides, I have noted that in discussions around BL fiction on Weibo (2018), some comments reflect diverse thinking:

'Including me, many young women's consciousness of equal rights awoke because of BL novels.' (anonymous)

'The reason I started to read BL novel was that in the 1990s, I could not find any BG novel with equal relationship.' (Ni)

'Reading BL story is a safe way for females to make sexual fantasy. Some sexual descriptions in the BL fictions are also full of violence and force, but I would not feel uncomfortable or sick like when I read the BG novels with similar descriptions, particularly those written by the males.' (Civet7777)

¹²² Even in the erotic BL works, the characters also usually develop an emotional relationship – some are quite impressive – but not like the possessiveness shown in most of erotic works written by (Chinese) males that women always are described and used as private things, animals or slaves.

¹²³ The representatives: Jinjiang, Lucifer-Club, Lofter, Gongzicp, Mtslash. Some writers also choose the foreign websites such as AO3.

¹²⁴ For instance, Su (2009) argues 'the popularity of BL culture in China is a result of cultural colonization of Japanese comics'. Zheng (2017) believes 'BL fictions are full of sexual descriptions, which are harmful for young fans.' It also can find Lian (2017) is more familiar with male online literature (Qidian) than BL fiction – some of his opinions about BL also have some biases. At the same time, the English studies are rather fewer.

6000 likes. She said, ‘even writing the fan-fiction about the same character, the female writers from different countries would show huge cultural differences.’ She and the following comments conclude that, the (male) characters in Japanese works usually have low self-assessment, even if they are very cool in the original works. They have a lack of a sense of security, and always feel inferior and nervous in the relationship. However, the sexual description in Japanese BL fictions is usually radical, immoral and dark sometimes. In contrast, Western writers tend to spend lots of words to describe the feeling and psychology of the characters – in the other words, a sense of individualism. Sometimes, the sexual relationship among the characters is open, but more natural and brighter than in most Eastern works. Chinese female writers are also yearning for ‘radical, immoral and dark’ relationships, but are bound by traditional morality and censorship. To some extent, these diversities have revealed the impact of reality in the literature, especially, the different living situation of females in the Eastern and Western societies, which could be explored more from sociological angles.

Generally, it could be said that the popularity of Chinese female Internet literature, particularly BL fictions, is closely related to the revolution of female discourse rights in the patriarchal society (Lin and Luo, 2013; Di, 2014). Besides, the IL is also a platform of female experimental writing. Some of the excellent works have mixed the deep thoughts of equal gender rights, anti-authoritarianism, anti-racism, eco-criticism and so forth, which is more evidence of the influence from the West on these young writers. Hence, I would disagree with Lian’s argument (2017) that, ‘the signification of enlightenment, freedom and independent consciousness which was the base of Chinese modern literature does not exist in the IL’. Due to that, I selected a dystopian BL fiction as one of the sample texts, which will be analysed in the next chapter.

Though the Internet seems to be a utopian space for young writers, the government never gave up the attempt of contesting discourse power on it. The cultural and political circumstances of China have become worse in recent years, which also influenced the

tendency of IL. Some posts online even criticized the new trend of IL as, ‘the restoration of feudalism’. This will be analysed further in the following part.

5.5.5 Chinese Dystopian Works Online

As discussed above, because of strict censorship, it is rare to find the dystopian theme in print media in China, however, the number of dystopian creations online has been increasing in recent years, perhaps as a result of this censorship itself. The forms of these creations cover a wide and flexible range: the short stories and images on Weibo, non-commercial novels and fanfictions, freephone/PC games, and interactive word role-play games (RPG). Almost all of them were created by young people under 30. The following are examples of some of these forms:

Images



Figure 5-17: ‘Utopia’

(Illustrator: ‘DBZ Master of Utopia’, drawn a few years ago and re-drawn in 2018)

The pigs try their best to become strong and win the fight. However, the winner will be made into ‘delicious pork noodles’.

It is one in a series of 9 pictures with similar themes. The post has been forwarded more than 11,000 times on Weibo.

Comments about the picture (anonymous):

‘It corresponds with this year (2018).’

‘Thinking about reality.’

‘Too depressing.’

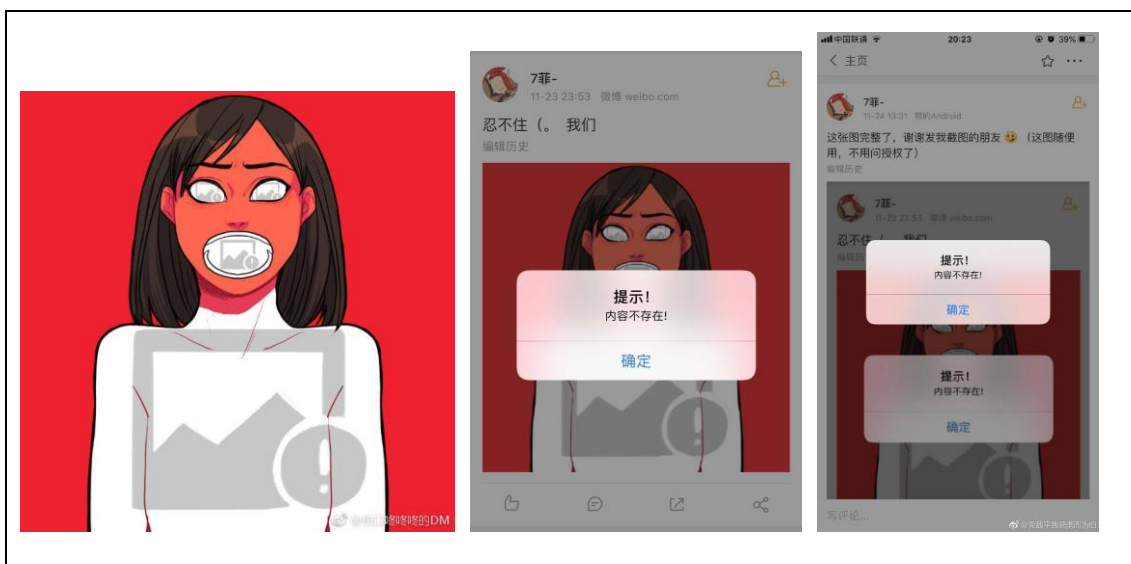


Figure 5-18: 'We' (Illustrator: 7Fei, drawn in 2018)

The images were created when the government began offering rewards for reporting 'indecent and illegal publications'. They imply the damage done by censorship. The author first posted the drawing on Weibo; it was deleted by censors within a short time (picture 2 is the notice to those who want to open the original post: 'the content does not exist'). The author captured the screenshot and posted again (picture 2), saying 'it is complete now'. Picture 2 was also deleted shortly afterwards (picture 3).

Freephone/PC RPG (role-playing game):

Since 2015, Chinese government has changed the 'one-child' policy to encourage people to have more than two children. Led by official propaganda, public media has become vocal in pushing women to 'go back home' and have more children. There is even a call for legal surrogacy in China. Against this background, in 2017, an independent game developers' studio was set up by some young people (20-30 years old, mostly women). They have created several free games with dystopian or realistic themes such as:

(1) *Eva Obligation in 1982*: In a fictitious empire with a serious aging problem, all the 26-year-old healthy females must perform 'surrogacy service', unless the individual has made a great contribution to the empire. Anyone who disagrees will be put into prison. The name of the game was inspired by Orwell's '1984'. Development on this project has stopped, because the developer considered it too dangerous to continue (posted on her personal Weibo page in 2018):

‘I really do not know what I can write for 1982. I am doing self-censoring and self-castration every day. This game is just a VIP ticket to “have a tea with policeman”...Totalitarianism cannot be written. Religion cannot be written. Nothing is safe. I do not know is there any existing meaning of this game if I have done so much self-castration? I still want to be alive.’¹²⁶

Some fans replied, ‘it is so sad that the castrated part is the most attractive part.’

The score of the Demo version of this game on Taptap is 9.6/10 and it had 141,000 follows (till 11.2018).

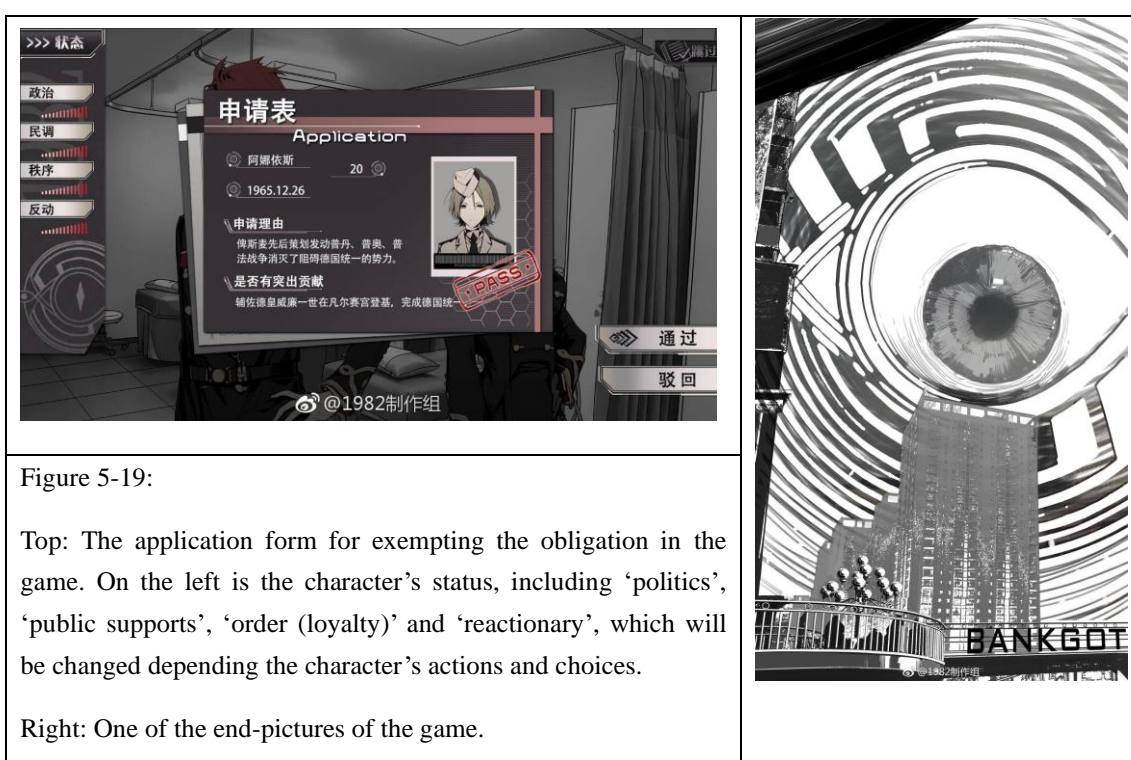


Figure 5-19:

Top: The application form for exempting the obligation in the game. On the left is the character's status, including 'politics', 'public supports', 'order (loyalty)' and 'reactionary', which will be changed depending the character's actions and choices.

Right: One of the end-pictures of the game.

(2) *Administering the Country on Twitter*: The basis of this game is that in an unspecified year of 21st century, the Union launched the 'Conscience' system. Through that, all the people could vote on social media to decide on national issues. Following that, the professional 'surveillance guard of public sentiment' and 'facilitator of public sentiment' appeared. The introduction of the game also wrote, 'when the politics become entertainment; public opinion is close to religion...have you thought about that: Could we really get both freedom and equality?' The game was inspired by news of the election of Trump and the controls on public media in China. There are a variety of characters holding

¹²⁶ The author set her Weibo 'posts accessible in 6 months', therefore this post could not be seen now.

different political opinions for the players to choose. However, this game has been banned.

(3) *One Word Weighs a Thousand Kilograms*: ‘If an affair is not reported by a newspaper, it means it never happened.’ This game plays on the idea about what journalists should do when government asks the journalists to lie or keep quiet. This game is being developed now by the studio. The player will act as a journalist to find and write the news. The titles and standpoints of the news will influence the development of the plot. The issues involved in the game include corruption, feminism, social justice and truth.

Interactive online RPG:

This is a new type of interactive game which is popular among young people using Chinese social media in recent years and can easily be created and joined. The creator of the game designs the main line of a story (along with a simple setting of the world), and then anyone who is interested can design his/her character and join by writing or drawing related stories – the players are expected to follow the rules set by the creator. In general, the players’ creations will influence the end of the story main line. This type of game seems to be a variant of traditional RPG (e.g. *Dungeons and Dragons*), but does not need any rule book or computer program. Since 2012, hundreds of games have been established on Weibo and the other platforms. Many of them have involved dystopian elements or they are designed to be similar to the Orwellian world in *1984* (Orwell, 1949). Compared to literary works and PC games, censorship still has not yet been an issue for this field. The impact of this kind of interactive minority games on young people as well as the boundaries between imagination and reality, are worthy of further research.

Non-commercial novels and fanfictions:

In the field of IL, dystopian works are separated into detailed categories. One popular category involves the themes of eco-criticism (most are about the apocalypse and post-human civilization) and gender equality (most can be found in female writing),

because these issues are not very sensitive. In contrast, the number of works involving totalitarianism and censorship as main issues is still limited. Some writers tend to post fiction with very sensitive topics on the non-commercial websites, forums or even foreign websites, such as AO3. This is because at present, on almost all large Chinese literature platforms (e.g. JinJiang, Lofter), the censorship system will automatically delete any chapter including ‘illegal words’; therefore, many authors choose to post this kind of fiction on foreign websites and provide the links in the related works (another way which is usually adopted is adding sensitive words to the pictures, but the newest system can already recognize the words in the pictures).

Other writers choose to hide critical thoughts in works with the other main themes. For example, the Western-fantasy style fiction ‘*The Growth Diary of a Dungeon*’ (written by Braised Plum in Brown Sugar, 2018) tells a story about a female ghost that died in an accident, went on to possess a destroyed dungeon and then fell in love with a devil. In this world, an intelligent race with non-human features is oppressed and the heroine tries to create a new equal order. There is a paragraph which could make the readers easily think of the history of Germany, or China and Taiwan:

In these years, someone escaped from the other side; someone escaped to the other side. The ‘Wall’ has separated the world for more than 10 years – separated families and friends. The people isolated on one side kept silence about the part they had lost. If they spoke about it, nothing resulted except making life harder...only at the midnight, they would stare the distant place which could not be reached, and they missed the people who could not be talked about (Chapter 99).

Here is another paragraph which could be related to the metaphor of censorship and the ‘Great Firewall’ which isolates China from the world:

The censorship in the empire is still not relaxed. All the media are dancing in fetters. Only the news from the other side – which could be seen as jokes – is welcome...Anyhow, the readers cannot climb over the Wall and check the original truth. The media on the other side also could not come to sue the infringement problem (Chapter 98).

In another Sci-fi BL story written by Huangcunzhang, ‘*The User Guide of Robot Andy*’ (a love story between a robot and a disabled man, which happens in a post-nuclear-war world under despotism), there are also some sentences and paragraphs which involve critical

thinking and feeling about censorship, freedom and human identity, for instance:

Andy is perplexed. He knows the freedom he desires is not shackled by humans. How about humans? What is human? Why is human higher than him?...The human who owns freedom will never understand the meaning of freedom. Only the oppressed groups can experience and deeply understand that kind of defect and pain (Chapter 6).

...The dome is the thing that killed all your creativity and passion. I do not like many things, but I know that only depending on this kind of despotism, human can be alive. The ideal regime will cause many people to die. There is not enough resource within the dome (Chapter 6).

The whole era is very ironic. He knows clearly about it. But he can not cry and shout, and also cannot ask for any help (Chapter 8).

It is not as easy as equating optimism to ‘freedom’ and negativism to ‘despotism’ which is done in some famous Western dystopian YAL. Sometimes, Chinese and Japanese works reveal paradoxical attitudes with no certainty about these issues.

Compared with many Western dystopian YA works, the descriptions in these Chinese works are rather closer to the present reality and the real feeling of Chinese young people towards a post-socialist society. In all of Chinese dystopian online works, from the narrative structures, the design of characters and world, to the plot, it’s possible to see traces of influences from Western classic dystopian literature (such as *1984* or *Brave New World*); contemporary Western dystopian YAL and Japanese comics and light novels. However, the authors’ imaginations are mostly inspired by the present circumstances in which they are living, and the issues with which they are concerned. In contrast, as mentioned in earlier sections, Western and Japanese writers’ imaginations about high-censored dystopian societies are mostly based on the gaze to ‘the other’ and history¹²⁷. As a result, the internally temporal and spatial natures of the dystopian works are quite different. It is also the reason that Chinese fiction that involves dystopian issues are generally more realistic and heavier.

Another important difference between Chinese and Western DYAL is the age of the authors.

¹²⁷ This point will be explored further in Chapter 6.

It is hard to find any references or statistics about the average age of Western YAL writers. However, it seems that most of the Western writers in this field were born between the 1940s and 1960s; only a few were born after 1975. Japanese writers are mostly younger when they entered this field, but still over 30 years old on average¹²⁸. In contrast, the age of all of Chinese writers' group who have been involved with dystopian issues (particularly the sensitive topics which implicate politics and censorship) are younger than the Western authors. It would seem that within the whole of Chinese YAL field, Chinese DYAL reveals a phenomenon where young writers feed young readers. This younger generation's understandings and perspectives on 'utopia and dystopia' therefore are a unique feature and are inextricably tied to the reality.

¹²⁸ For instance, Lisa Unger was 46 years old when *The Great Library* was published. Suzanne Collins was 44 years old when *The Hunger Games* was published. Hiro Arikawa was 34 years old when she wrote *Library War*. Yusuke Kishi was 49 years old when he wrote *From the New World*.

5.6 The Dilemma of Chinese Internet Literature and the New Censorship Trends

Chinese IL has benefited the post-cold-war generation and millennial generation in many ways: they can find favourite stories, the space to present themselves with more freedom, and friends with the same interests much more easily. Especially for the one-child-policy generation without brothers and sisters, the Internet provides a space to build up alternative social relationships¹²⁹.

On the other hand, as Hockx (2015) and Lian (2017) mentioned, IL has greatly challenged the existing balance of discourse in China. The power of authorities, editors, professional critics and the government has been weakened because authors and readers can directly communicate. At the same time, many independent discourse groups are appearing, based on similar interests and with their own unique words and ways of communication.

A Chinese Internet poet, 'Fence', expressed that the 'the Internet is an anarchistic society' (He, 2008: p.34, cited from Lian, 2017). However, this idealistic view may have applied to Chinese Internet society before 2008, but not to the present and it is unlikely that Chinese government will ever ignore and give up control of the Internet. As Hockx (2015) argues, Chinese government still strictly regulates the publishing world through drawing a clear yet ever-shifting ideological bottom line. With the explosive number of Chinese 'netizens', their controls have been tightened in recent years, even though the flexibility and complexity of the Internet, means it is not very effective in some aspects. The conflict between free individuality and traditional authorities – the contest for cultural discourse hegemony – continues.

A study of Chinese IL and YAL would not be complete without a discussion about censorship. If American and Japanese fiction can be compared to the crops growing on fertile land, Chinese literature could be said to be the weeds growing in the rocks' crevices.

¹²⁹ Many of the 1980s and 1990s Chinese generations have the experience of making friends who have similar interests online, and forming an SNS 'family' group – they will call the others 'sister', 'brother' or even 'mom / dad' (sometimes), though all of them are youths under 25 without blood relationships and may live thousands of kilometres from each other (this experience mostly happens when they are teenagers).

Nevertheless, the reason for the current situation cannot not be simply imputed to ‘totalitarianism’. There are complex and ingrained cultural elements behind all the conflicts and dilemma, which should be briefly explained before discussing Chinese censorship.

China has had a history of Confucian feudalism for more than 2000 years, one cultural core of which is ‘respecting and obeying the universe (heaven and earth), the Emperor, elders (parents and forefathers), teachers (and sages)’. Meanwhile, since the Cheng-Zhu school became the major Confucian school about 1000 years ago, Confucianists turned to claiming that people should suppress desires and all the desires, including sexual desire, were considered as unhealthy and filthy (Xu, 2006). This thought deeply influenced the country for 1000 years and still impacts on Chinese people living today. In the 1980s, booksellers who sold ‘erotic and obscene works’ could be sentenced to the death (BBC, 2018). In 2017, because of some parents’ protests, a good sex education textbook for pupils had to be recalled¹³⁰. In 2018, a teenager’s parent found the child reading some BL fiction which involved descriptions of a sexual nature, and she reported the book to the government, causing the author (a 32-year-old female) to be sentenced to 10 years’ imprisonment (Known as the ‘Tianyi Case’. Du et al., 2019).

It should be noted that the definition of ‘erotic and obscene works’ in China is different to that in Western countries. As Hockx (2015: p.117) pointed out, US laws consider ‘serious artistic and literary works’ as exceptions to the ‘harmful’ products which appeal to prurient interest, whilst Chinese government’s definition of ‘erotic and obscene works’ actually includes ‘any fiction that involves a concrete description on sexual conduct over some percentage’¹³¹. Some phrases in the government’s announcement also are not clear and are open to different interpretations. The result is that any of these phrases could become an excuse for abusing the penal system (e.g. ‘explicitly publicize pornography’ – which was one legal basis of the Tianyi Case).

¹³⁰ http://www.sohu.com/a/128145263_102256

¹³¹ It does not have an open and certain standard, mostly depending on the officials’ personal judgement. Even if the fiction only includes some sexual paragraphs as a part of the plot, it still may be judged as an ‘obscene work’.

Hockx and some other scholars consider China as a ‘postsocialist society’ (2015: p.2). I would define it as ‘a post-socialist society with a heavy colouring of Confucian feudalism’. China never experienced a real capitalist period. The country was still run under feudalism in 1911, but turned to ‘Communism’ in 1949. The transition was too short to build up a system of modern thought and habits. It partly means that many aspects of the running mode of contemporary Chinese society still take feudalist colour. In the other words, many officials still use feudal nobles’ thoughts and measures to deal with public affairs and policies, including censorship. Accordingly, numerous Chinese people still agree with the old idea that ‘the officials should be the parents of people, and love people as their parents.’ In general, China is not a rule-by-law country, but a rule-by-human country until now. Even at present, ‘obeying (and eulogizing) the authorities still is an important part of Chinese civil education. This situation has made the foundation of Chinese dictatorship system, which impacts every aspect of Chinese people’s lives, including the censorship in cultural field.

However, the students studying in the top good schools and universities – who are generally from the middle-class and the elite class – would accept more education about independent, critical and creative thinking. In my opinion, these are the roots of most conflicts in cultural fields currently in China. Moreover, as shown earlier, the post-cold-war generation grew up in quite a different environment from the elder generation, from technologies, material living conditions to a free social atmosphere, consciousness and beliefs¹³². As Marx and Engels argue, the economic base determines the superstructure. The new generation’s spirit demands are much higher than the elders’ ones, which include a demand on displaying real self, independence and freedom. Besides, due to the huge differences of political and cultural environment, their reading is also divided from the older generation. The degree of their approbation for Chinese works written between the 1950s and the 1970s is much lower than for the works written after the 1980s. The critic Li has said (Sina, 2015: n.p.), ‘This generation almost only read the books written by their peers. Maybe it is the unique phenomenon of China.’ The historical review

¹³² For most Chinese people, it was even hard to have any meat on daily dining-table before 1980. In the 1990s, KFC and MacDonald’s became a ‘popular luxury’ among urban youth. After 2000, it has become the normal street-side fast-food in China.

of Chinese YAL in this chapter has also verified this point.

Because the older generations still want to control and manage the younger generations through old modes and ideas, they tend to believe and obey ‘authorities’ (including parents, experts, teachers and the government). This situation is reflected in Chinese censorship and IL (YAL) in ways that I will now discuss.

Hockx (2015: p.113, p.126) has pointed out two ways in which Chinese censorship controls work: firstly, by employing editors as censors (mainly in printed literature) and secondly by setting sensitive keywords (mainly in the IL). However, he considers that these two ways are not very effective because of the length of IL and the possibility of disguising keywords and using euphemisms. Nevertheless, to some extent, I feel his argument is too positive because these two ways are only a part of the whole Chinese cultural control system. In addition, the policies and approaches of control are constantly changing, and have obviously tightened in recent years. In the following discussion, I will suggest additional ways in which controlling IL and printed literature can be seen: the Great Firewall (GFW), the recruitment of young writers, limiting topics, controls on ISBNs, setting forbidden keywords in the IT system of websites, and encouraging people to report ‘illegal works’ to the government.

In the first place, the Great Firewall (GFW) is the foundation of all the controls. As the millennial generation who are younger than the GFW have started to grow up, its influence has started to be visible. As Yuan (2018) points out, in China all the most popular banned websites, such as Google, Twitter and Tumblr, have substitutes which serve the same functions ‘although they come with a heavy dose of censorship’. Research led by two economists from Peking University and Stanford University showed that young Chinese people have been used to these domestic websites and appear uninterested in knowing what has been censored online. My personal observation is in accordance with this result. Many Chinese students tend to use domestic apps and websites even when they are studying abroad. The GFW not only fosters an environment in which people are gradually

used to not demanding sensitive information, but it also lets the controls become more convenient and easier for the government.

In terms of the IL, because websites abroad are hard to visit, most Chinese writers choose to submit their works on the homegrown websites. At the same time, after several years of market competition, a few large websites have become monopolies in this field, such as JJ, Qidian (belonging to Yuewen Group). In 2009, Shengda IL website (the predecessor of Yuewen Group) held 80% of the copyrights of all Chinese online literature and started to expand into games, film and comics adaptation rights (Lian, 2017). For the national government, it is much easier to control a few large websites instead of than thousands of small and independent sites, because the large companies are less willing to oppose the government¹³³. In contrast, the situation of writers has become more difficult due to the stricter censorship settings by those websites.

There are various ways to reach the outside world. The most common approach is using VPN, which is called ‘ladder’ by Chinese people (meaning help to climb the ‘Wall’). Nevertheless, the individuals who use VPN are a very small part of the huge number of Chinese netizens. As Hockx (2015: p.11) notes, ‘Chinese government officials accepted the reality they would never be able to monitor everything.’ In my opinion, it is not that they ‘accept’ the fact, but that they do not ‘care’ about that minority. Coincidentally, with support from the government, monitoring technology is rapidly developing in China. The people who want to ‘climb over the wall’ also have to renew or change their tools repeatedly, which is very inconvenient and can result in some of them give up continuing to visit forbidden websites.

The GFW has isolated China from the world in many ways, cultural and political. A popular satirical comment online is, ‘We banned ocean shipping in the Age of Shipping¹³⁴, and now ban the Internet in the Age of Information.’ As a result, it is harder for Chinese young people to connect with people, ideas and interests from the other parts of the world.

¹³³ This phenomenon also exists in other countries. For example, there is some evidence which showed that YouTube tries to control and reduce the subscriber count of some channel anchors with political views opposite to American mainstream ideology (reference: the YouTuber Nathan Rich). However, Chinese companies are more excessive than most of the companies from other countries.

¹³⁴ Banning ocean shipping was one of reasons which changed China from being the leader of the world to a weak and undeveloped country.

Furthermore, because readers who understand Chinese language are mainly inside the Wall, most of whom cannot physically travel outside China, the amount of the reading as well as the feedback which an author could get on the wider sites is less than on the domestic sites. Gradually, it seems that writers lose interest in posting their fiction through VPN.

A second factor that supports the control of IL and printed literature is the recruitment of young writers, especially IL writers, into formal writers' organizations which are managed by the government. In China, there are different degrees of writers' associations (belonging to the nation; a provincial government or a city government). The senior writers in the associations enjoy an allowance and other benefits given by the government. They also have more opportunities to publish their works and become a member of 'authorities' in the field. Therefore, despite the fact that joining the associations means the writers should obey the government's ideology and support all the policies (or at least not criticize them directly), it still holds an attraction for many young people. Early in 2005, the famous first-generation IL writers Anni Baby (31 years old) and Zhang Yueran (23 years old) became members of Chinese Writers Association. In 2014, Fujian Province Association recruited 65 IL writers. The leader of this association suggested that the association should organise seminars and symposiums to 'improve the writers' qualities' (Lian, 2017). Following that, some local associations, especially for IL writers, were established. The standard of the recruiting member mostly focused on the writer's fan numbers and influence. The main required duty of members is propagating the positive images of China (and Chinese government).

A third factor of control involves limiting the topics. As Hockx (2015: p.11) says, a Harvard research team has found that the two taboo topics of literature in China are 'criticism of the censors and pornography'. Actually, criticism of any political issue is the high voltage line for all the texts online (including posts). In 2007, an urgent announcement from Chinese General Administration of Press and Publishing (Xinwen Chubanshuzongshu, commonly known as GAPP) required all the IL websites to take 15

online novels off the shelves, because ‘they involved serious political problems’ (Lin, 2017: n.p.). After that, many IL websites deleted the ‘Military’ category. The negative impact continues to the present, which is one reason that the number of works under this category in Qidian is much lower than the others (as shown in the early figure). In 2012, ‘bloody and violent content’ became a target for elimination. Due to that, online fiction involving the topics of criminal gangs and officialdom almost disappeared (Zhang, 2014). In February 2018, thousands of accounts were banned on Weibo, simply for disagreeing on the changing of the constitution¹³⁵.

On the other hand, following Confucian thought, current Chinese society does not support talking about sexual desire directly. Beside some ‘classic literature’, fiction - mostly YAL (particularly BL novels) including sexual content are not permitted to be published¹³⁶. There is a National Office for ‘Eliminating Pornography and Suppressing Illegality’ (known as ‘Sao Huang Da Fei Bangongshi’, SHDF office) housed at the GAPP. In 2004, for the first time, the office investigated and punished IL websites which made pornography into the main selling points. In 2007, obeying the office’s announcement, 348 IL websites were published or closed. Since then, it has happened regularly. In 2009, 1414 IL works which included pornographic and erotic content were forbidden: 20 websites were closed and more than 30000 pages were deleted. In 2010, 197 websites were punished. After this, some famous large IL websites started to set a ‘self-censorship system’, which is mainly constructed around ‘sensitive keywords’. In 2016, Baidu closed hundreds of Tieba¹³⁷ related to the IL works. In 2016, the SHDF office led a ‘Cleaning Internet’ action on a large scale. As a result of that, the oldest famous BL fiction website ‘Lucifer’ closed to new user registration. (Lian, 2017; Lin, 2017). In 2018, a new informal

¹³⁵ In 2018, accounts being banned happened frequently, mostly because the person expressed some opinion on public issues. One time, some young musical fans’ accounts were banned just because they submitted and discussed the video that the fans sang ‘*Do You Hear the People Sing*’ in the theater after the *Les Misérables* show in Shanghai. According to my records, there were about 4-5 times of ‘Chinese Internet refugee waves’ happened on the foreign SNS websites in the year, most of whom were young people (under 30 years old). Almost all of them were Weibo users, and turned to foreign websites through VPN.

¹³⁶ Only very few BL online novels had the chance of being published. It mostly depends on the author’s influence and the editor’s (canvassing) ability with bureaucracy.

¹³⁷ Tieba: Known as post bar, a kind of SNS platform which is similar to a Facebook discussion group. Every tieba focuses on one topic, for example, a disease, or a book.

notice ruled ‘puppy love should not appear in the middle-school stories’¹³⁸. At the same time, in most TV series adapted from BL fictions, the love relationship between characters had to be changed to love between brothers or friends. In 2019 March, a post on Weibo advance noticed a new crackdown on pornography to ‘keep a good Internet environment for the 70th anniversary of state founding and the 100th anniversary of CPC founding’, which specially mentioned that ‘BL fictions’ will be the focus target. This post caused loud discontent among young people (mostly females) online, and was deleted soon. A comment from a young female (ID: WhiteBlade) could represent the majority of young people’s opinion,

‘I hope the related government department can understand, human need sex for the reproduction, and sex is not only for reproduction, but also for pleasure. Even the animals have homosexual behaviors. One day, when China completely eliminates all the sexual textbooks and pornography websites, Chinese people may need to use mitosis reproduction.’¹³⁹

Hockx (2015: p.115) defines BL and slash (fan fiction) as belonging ‘to the general area of erotic fiction’. Based on my 20 years’ reading experience, most on-commercial BL fiction writers would like to include some sexual paragraphs as a part of story (e.g. the proof of characters’ naturally developing relationship). A minority of BL fiction would mainly focus on pornography content, but still along with a plenty of emotional description. As many BL studies have argued, BL fiction gives a space for females to express and discuss their sexual desire (Zheng, cited from Pepper Tribe, 2019). However, with controls on the IL becoming tightened in the recent years, lots of BL writers have to give up the sexual paragraphs, or submit them to foreign websites (e.g. AO3) or transfer the words to a picture, and post the links – which still has risk and is inconvenient for the readers.

In 2017 July, Jinjing sent an email to all the writers registered on the website, which gave the detailed new rules about the content of IL:

1. Not allow any direct description about the intimate touching between the body parts under neck; including any detailed description of sexual activity, sexual

¹³⁸ The writer Su Xiaolan’s Weibo (18.12.2018) proved this new rule had been implemented when her novel was reprinted, a paragraph had to be rewritten. The editor told her ‘the characters only can fall in love after graduating (from high school)’.

¹³⁹ This post and the other Chinese posts cited from the following parts have been kept as screenshots as references. I did not put them in the main body of the thesis to take up too much space.

psychology, sexual imagination, and genitals. Not allow any other bloody and violent content.

2. The length of the paragraph of any indirect or metaphor description on sexual activity should not be too long. Showing ‘the whole complete process’ is not allowed.

3. Not allow to post any link leading to the sensitive content, including email address, online public drive, and SNS group.

The other IL websites soon noticed writers with similar content. A sarcastic joke that ‘the parts under the neck are forbidden’ was rapidly spread following that. It was a normal choice that the large IL websites made for self-preservation, when they understood the serious result of retaining ‘forbidden content’ further, after several actions taken by the SHDF office. The large websites always tend to be more conservative and prudent on the management of sensitive topics. As Hockx (2015: p.10) said, ‘Large websites hosted by big companies...would delete potentially risqué posts much more vigorously than smaller sites that have less to lose and are willing to take risks.’

From 2018 to 2019, the controls on topics in the whole cultural industry have become much stricter. The picture below is a photo of a meeting in 2019 March, which was held with one of biggest media-services provider, Aiqiyi¹⁴⁰. The presenter is introducing the current mine fields (topics) which TV series and film producers are suggested to avoid: nations and religions; copyright conflicts; social problems and the dark side of human nature; famous historical characters and classic literature; feudal superstitions; bloody violence; ‘vulgar’ works (including erotica and all kinds of pulp stories); youngsters; underworld (gang); time travel; the conflict inside the feudal royal palace; policemen.

¹⁴⁰ The website mainly provides TV series and films, but also allows people to share their own videos.



Figure 5-20: The Aiqiyi meeting photo. The title on the screen is: 'The policy mine fields – please pass round!' (Li Yaling, Weibo, 2019)

Fourthly, for controlling sensitive content of literature more concretely and effectively, the Chinese government adopts several measures for off-line publishing and online literature.

1) For the off-line publishing industry, controls mainly focus on ISBN. In China, not only books, but also TV series, films and games have required numbers which could be issued legally to the market. Only the government has the right to decide to give how many numbers and to whom. Only national publishing houses can get an ISBN number and as a result, private publishing companies who don't have this right need to make underground deals. In the last 2 years (2017-2018), the issue numbers were cut or even stopped without any clear reason. As a result, the publication of many books was delayed and the whole of Chinese game industry almost died, with only giant companies (e.g. Tencent, NTES) that owned various business items able to survive. This situation affected mainly middle-class young people who are the main force of game industry and also the main customers.

ISBN control causes another dilemma to IL – especially to BL fictions. Because any IL work including sensitive topics or an erotic plot cannot get legal publishing approval, some writers have had to adopt another measure: creating a small number of self-published publications without an ISBN number which are only sold to subscribers (fans). However, this self-publishing activity is on the illegal boundary and has risks. There is a law term to

claim that ‘propagating erotic and obscene works’ is an illegal action, which is very vague on the definition of ‘erotic and obscene’, and has been overused on some cases. Combining with ‘publishing illegal works’, these are the other two legal bases of the Tianyi Case.

In addition to obtaining ISBN numbers, print books must be submitted to the government for legal approval before being published. In this process, the editors censor any part in the manuscript which may cause problems. The government does random checks on books every year and depending on the results, the publishing houses may get punished. The problem hidden in this process is that standards are not exact and that to a great extent, these depend on the censors’ personal judgment. An IL writer, ‘Wandering Frog’, wrote on Weibo (12.2018),

‘The key point is what the standards are, and if they will be executed or not...The fact is you will never find a formal government document to explain the details of the rules. Many works are over the line and have no problem to be published, such as Jia Pingwa and Mo Yan’s books¹⁴¹. But we (the IL writers) could not touch the things what they can write...’

This phenomenon could be seen as a proof that China is a ruled-by-humanity country, but not a ruled-by-law country. Actually, the range covered by these rules is too wide to be strictly observed. As a result, many people in the publishing industry – writers, publishers and readers - walk into the grey zone. Law enforcement and punishment become a Russian roulette game that ‘the poor fish will be caught’.

2) For the online literature, there are two main measures of government control.

The first one is setting forbidden keywords in the IT system of websites: the banned words will be converted into ‘***’ or ‘□□□’. Because IL works are always millions of words long and the number of works on the big websites is huge, it is impossible to check fiction by chapter. Therefore, most of the large sites adopt this convenient approach. However, they usually tend to follow the line of least resistance to avoid trouble. The forbidden lists are generally excessive, not clear, and irregularly changed. For instance, at one point, the words ‘CPC’ ‘gun’, ‘poison’, ‘hallucinogenic drug’ could not appear, a situation which

¹⁴¹ Jia Pingwa is a Chinese famous author. Mo Yan is 2012 Nobel Literature winner, famous for his work *Big Breasts, Wide Hips*.

extremely hampered the writing of criminal novels. Another post on Jinjiang forum in 2017 discussed some banned words which may be associated with sexual imagination: ‘viscous’, ‘groan’, or spring scenery (sometimes this points to a young girl being nude in Chinese).

Furthermore, due to the characteristics of Chinese language (the characters could form words with different meaning), the list turns out to be more problematic, as the following example shows:

<p>蓝色猫眼石 → 蓝**眼石</p> <p>The original meaning: A blue (蓝色) cat-eye gem (cymophane gem 猫眼石).</p> <p>The meaning of banned part: lecherous cat (色猫, which is a metaphor of lecherous person in Chinese).</p>
<p>是个大麻烦 → 是个**烦</p> <p>The original meaning: It is (是) a big (大) trouble (麻烦).</p> <p>The meaning of banned part: marijuana (大麻).</p>
<p>十有八九 → 十有**</p> <p>The original meaning: It almost has 80% - 90% possibility.</p> <p>The meaning of banned part: 89 (which could be pointed to 1989, the 64 event).</p>
<p>2小时后庭审结束 → 2小时**审结束</p> <p>The original meaning: After 2 hours (2小时后), the trial (庭审) will be over (结束).</p> <p>The meaning of banned part: Behind yard (后庭), a kind of metaphor of anus in Chinese.</p>

Figure 5-21: The problem of showing correct words under the keyword-censor-system (The characters in same gray-scale [colour] form a word or phrase, while the bold characters form the sensitive keywords).

To avoid this kind of censor-system, the writers generally adopt pinyin, puns, homophones or euphemisms (Hockx, 2015: p.127), or use some special symbols to separate the characters, like "|" "/" "-" "~" "." (e.g. 大|麻). However, these solutions make serious trouble for the authors' writing and uploading process and also disturb the reading experience. Besides, it still has the risk of being found by the censors or being reported to the government.

The second means is encouraging people to report ‘illegal works’ to the government.

Encouraging people to ‘report’ or ‘inform’ on each other prevailed in the Cultural Revolution period. After 50 years, the new generation of national leaders reactivated these political means. In 2018, a draft of ‘rewarding report illegal publication act’ appeared on Weibo, causing intensified debates. It seemed a good solution for a limited number of government censors. Nevertheless, some people are worried that it might destroy the public trust system and lead the country in the same way as the Cultural Revolution or the Soviet Union in the past. In fact, after the new act was posted, the number of informers increased. They disguised themselves as consumers to ask e-business sellers or authors about the content of books. If the reply confirms the book includes erotic description, the informer takes a screenshot and reports the author, seller or book to the government.

The GAPP officials invariably insist that suppressing erotica is based on a ‘social consensus’ (Hockx, 2015: p.120). It is not the whole truth. If using the standards of Western developed countries to check the reported productions, most of them will not have any problem. I would conclude that the informer reports the cultural productions generally based on various motives:

- For the reward (money)
- For ‘making some funs’
- For getting a sense of identity from the government, thereby having a feeling of ‘patriotism’ or becoming a part of ‘authority’. The common Chinese people’s discourse power is strictly limited. In my opinion, this should be considered as one reason that some people indulge in reporting actions.
- The informer disagrees with the values shown and reported production, and expects that the ‘parent officials’ can solve the problem. For example, the BL fiction which is considered as a normal novel without any problem by a girl born in the 1990s, may be considered as a ‘obscene book with incorrect values’ by her parents who were born in the 1960s. The parent considers that the book will ‘give a bad education to children’ and then reports it. This is also a reflection of Confucian feudalism in Chinese society (Referring to ‘Tianyi Case’ below).
- Because of jealousy, revenge or the other mentalities – according to the known cases,

most of the people who report based on this kind of motives are the young people. One instance is a PC game that failed to get permission for publication; some fans of this game then reported another game which has got approval ‘including illegal content which was not found by censors’.

I would give two typical informing cases here, which drew lots of debates online. The first one is ‘Shenhai Case’¹⁴². ‘Mr. Shenhai’ is the pen name of a female writer Tang born in 1991. She was a Master student studying in Wuhan. Until 2017, she was one of the BL best-sellers, and had more than 100,000 followers online. As with many other BL writers, she was also used to self-publishing her works at her own expense and advance booking number. Before she was arrested, the selling of her new book already got more than 2500 advance orders within one month (the final income would arrive 280,000 CNY, approximately equaling £31,000), and she was preparing for a signing session.

In about 2015, Shenhai met another younger female writer ‘Hua Fengchi’ (pen name) who also studied in Wuha, and became friends. However, their friendship was broken soon because of different standpoints on something. Later in 2017, someone (Hua was suspected) reported to the government that Shenhai ‘sold illegal publication for huge profits’. In December 2017, Shenhai was arrested (26 years old); more than 18,000 copies of her works were confiscated. After being arrested, she expressed that she had wanted to publish the novels legally, but that there was no possibility.

The worst part is that Hua studied in the law faculty, and works in an important government department after graduation (in 2018). She is familiar with how to ‘legally’ make trouble in order to extend Shenhai’s detention and postpone the court session. For example, she provided ‘new evidence of erotic content’ every several months, which caused the court staff to investigate the case repeatedly. Shenhai suffered detention for more than one year, and tried suicide twice. However, because of Hua’s hindrance, she was sent back to the jail after medical parole. The first court session was on 11th March 2019. In

¹⁴² The case is sorted from the following posts and news:

The *Apple Daily* (Taiwan) news <https://tw.appledaily.com/new/realtime/20171222/1263998/>,
<https://www.163.com/dy/article/EDF45HEB05374CU0.html>
 Shenhai’s friend’s Weibo page, <https://www.weibo.com/u/3210794803>

May 2019, Wuchang District People's Court of Wuhan City made a judgment of first instance. Tang was sentenced to 4 years imprisonment and a fine of 120,000 CNY (Du, 2019).

The other one is Tianyi Case¹⁴³. 'Tianyi' is the female writer Liu's pen name. She was born into a poor family with a traditional 'son preference' in 1986. In childhood, she had been sexually harassed by a strange man and suffered from domestic violence¹⁴⁴. Her biological father passed away early; her mother remarried after that. The family did not give her love and not support her education, therefore, she became a worker in the factory after graduating from a technical secondary school.

In order to earn extra income, she started writing BL fiction online in the middle of the 2000s, and soon became famous for vivid and violent pornography between her male characters. In 2018, she already had 70,000 followers on Weibo.

The erotic description was the main body of her novels. Sometimes, the relationship between the characters would challenge ethical boundaries, including BDSM, Stockholm syndrome, the relationship between a young adult (under 18 years old) and an adult, and so forth. For example, the book ('*Invasion*') which caused her penalty, started with a description of a 17-year-old male student forcing his teacher (male) to have sexual activity with him.

Differing from the crime in the reality, the sexual assault described in the book implicated a kind of sexual interest. The teacher actually was a conscious rescuer. He understood the fragility inside the student, and accepted him as a lover in the end. The person who was hurt became a winner; the dominator of sexual assault was the liberated one. An article

¹⁴³ The case is sorted from the following posts and news:

The report on *Xinjing Newspaper*, <http://www.bjnews.com.cn/inside/2019/01/04/536523.html> ,
The *NY Times* news, <http://cn.nytimes.com/china/20181120/tianyi-china-erotic-novels-prison/dual> ,
Chinese BBC news, <https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/chinese-news-46279358> ,
The *Lianhe Zaobao* (Singapore) news, <http://m.unzbu.com/time/20181121/51407.html> ,
Tianyi's friend's Weibo page, <https://www.weibo.com/kongjie001>
The screenshots of Tianyi's Weibo page (which has been banned)
The post on Douban website <https://www.douban.com/group/topic/128045180/>

¹⁴⁴ In China, domestic violence was considered as 'an issue within the family' for a long time. Generally, the police would not take any measure to help the suffering women and children. The law in this field is also lacking. There is only an act against domestic violence which was passed in 2015, but there is no implementation.

written by Pepper Tribe (2019)¹⁴⁵ analyses the idea that, some female readers who favour these kinds of stories actually hope to find a way to deal with their own experiences and negative emotions through reading the novels.

Likewise, Tianyi sold her works through self-publishing and the advance sale approach. She found a young female Lin (under 30 years old) online to help her design the cover, by paying a small fee (500 CNY/per novel, approximately equaling £55). *Invasion* was published in a private printing shop in another city, and was sold in an online shop on the e-business website Taobao.

China has not got strict censorship of products sold online, and has not got a rating system for publications. The seller could not know the real age of the consumer. As a result, a child (the rumors said she or he was under 15 years old) bought the book from the website. Unfortunately, the child's parents found the book, and decided to report it as an 'obscene illegal publication' to the government. An official disguised as a consumer to buy the book, and then returned it, but put a tracker in the package. Following it, police found the shop.

In 2017 October, Tianyi (32 years old) and the other related people were arrested. In 2018 October, the result of the first court trial was given:

- The author Tianyi was sentenced to 10 years and 6 months in prison, and 50,000 CNY fines. According to the related law made in 1998 (*The Explanations to Several Problems about How to Apply Penal Code in the Illegal Publishing Criminal Cases*), if a person earns profit more than 5,000 CNY (equaling about £550) by producing and spreading pornography works, that constitutes a crime. If the profit is more than 10,000 CNY, it will be judged as 'aggravation', which will get a penalty from 10 years to a life sentence. Tianyi had published about 7,000 copies, which may take more than 150,000 CNY as profit (equaling about £17,000). Therefore, her crime was judged as 'aggravation'.
- The cover and typesetting designer Lin earned 3,100 CNY (equaling about £350) together from Tianyi between 2015 and 2017. She knew the novels were about homosexuality and pornography, but did not read the content of the books in detail,

¹⁴⁵ One of the largest Chinese feminists we-media.

and turned all the profit (3,100 CNY) to the government after arrest. However, the court considered her as Tianyi's 'accomplice', and sentenced her to 4 years in prison and a 10,000 CNY fine.

- The printing shopkeeper was also sentenced to 10 years and 6 months in prison, and 270,000 CNY penalties. The same as Lin, he knew the content of the novels, but did not read it in detail. His charges were 'producing and selling pornography works', and 'illegal business operation'.
- The shopkeeper's assistant, Yang, was sentenced to 2 years and 6 months imprisonment, and a 10,000 CNY fine.
- The online shopkeeper, Yuan, was sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment, and a 5,000 CNY fine.

These two cases caused a great uproar on the Internet. Particularly around the court trial of the Tianyi Case, the majority of thousands of comments considered it was too harsh and excessive – mostly argued by the post-cold-war generation. Some people also compared it with the other trials of sexual crime cases in the reality, and criticized the fairness and justice of the legal system, or the credibility of 'rule-by-law' in propaganda.

Some comments online ¹⁴⁶ :
'The sex toys can be sold in our country; the advertisements of aphrodisiac drugs or abortion could be found everywhere; but erotica is not allowed.'
'If the individual's sexual preference does not disturb the others, he or she has the freedom to read any kind of erotica. It is not a wrong thing.'
'It is too absurd. The adults are not allowed to read erotica, but the man can legally get a 14-year-old girl to be pregnant. The couples can not watch pornography video websites, but must have children – two children are better.'

¹⁴⁶ Their comments have been kept as screenshots.

The husband who killed the wife got freedom from prison only after 6 years; the man who raped a baby was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment.¹⁴⁷

‘What does 10 years mean to a young female?’

‘I was born in 1997. The teachers and parents have never given me any sexuality education. All of my sexual knowledge was from erotic books and videos. When I was in the high school, there were many (small) illicit brothels nearby the school, and none of adults cared about that. When the sexual activities actually have been a common thing among young people, the books are still forbidden. I feel confused.’

The other doubted viewpoints focused on the rationality of the case. Some people believed that the real reason for the strict sentence was just because the officials of the public security organs wanted to finish the key performance indicator (KPI) before the end of the year. Besides, according to the rumors, BL fiction will become the new focus of suppression targets. The two cases might be set as warning examples.

At the same time, there were opposite sounds which supported the court, and some of which were from the post-cold-war generation, too. Someone believed that ‘the laws are the justice, which should be obeyed completely; illegally publishing and selling erotic and obscene works is not a small issue, which should be sentenced strictly’¹⁴⁸. Another kind of comment concerned the children’s healthy growth, for example, ‘if I am a parent, I would report the book too...if the children imitate the plot of the novel, who should be responsible for that?’

On the Internet, some lawyers considered that the related law term is not applicable for current China, because society changed a lot, and the purchasing power of 150,000 CNY is very different in contrast with 20 years ago. However, in the second instance in 2019 March, the court insisted that the existing term is the only legal explanation at present, it should ‘protect the authority of law’, until the new law terms appearing¹⁴⁹. In January 2020,

¹⁴⁷ All the mentioned cases happened in the last 5 years. Some young Chinese feminists argue that they also prove China is a patriarchal country.

¹⁴⁸ The whole post: <https://www.zhihu.com/question/264382970>

¹⁴⁹ The video record of the second instance, <http://tingshen.court.gov.cn/live/5033024>

the court finally upheld the original verdict.

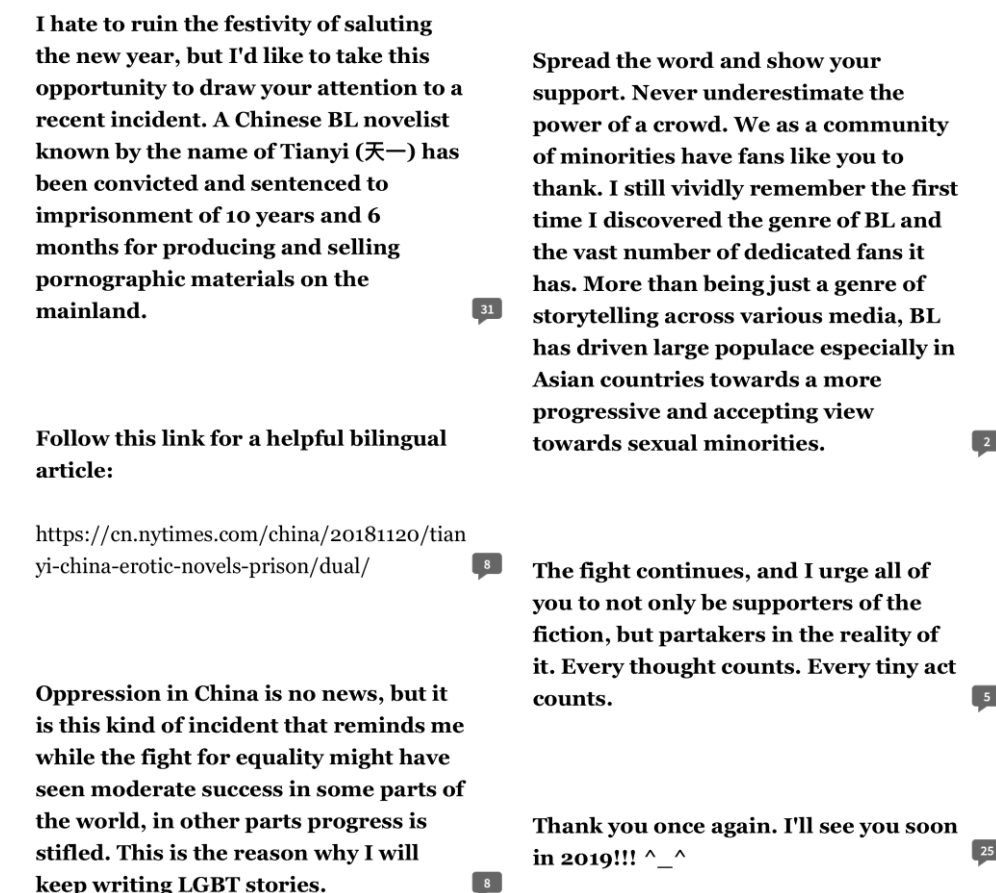


Figure 5-22: The translator of 'Guardian' RaibowSe7en wrote her thoughts about Tianyi Case after the updated chapter on 1st January 2019.

The actual impact of the two cases is devastating. Since December 2018, many BL writers stopped updating new chapters and selling self-expense publications online, while a few writers turned to foreign websites through VPN. At the moment, a sense of insecurity pervades in this field. However, it is also hard for Chinese BL writers to publish overseas. The differences in language and culture, the lack of a formal publishing approach, and the scattered reader groups are the main impediments.

The viewpoints from the BL field do not stand on the same position. Some comments believe that, those authors know what is forbidden but still publish the books, thus they are punished. It will have no problem if they only write the legal content. Some consider that there are still some websites in the Wall where one can post 'forbidden texts'. However, as

a BL researcher Shanxiong Shuizhi (Weibo, 2019) was worried,

‘The erotic BL fictions have been the fugitives in China for a long period. In the last 10 years, the BL writer groups becoming numb and have forgotten what really free writing is...We almost developed a kind of escape instinct.

‘We continue strengthening self-censorship. The rules for “protecting security” continue renewing. When the people who “knowingly violate specific rules” are punished, the ridicule is always from the “well-behaved” ones in the same field. Comparing with escape or more compromise, I prefer to do something to change this morbid state.’

She also kept optimism, ‘Chinese BL was born in repression, and has been used to live in dark. Its basis would not be easily to be eliminated’.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of the history of Chinese CL and (D)YAL, as well as the strong censorship throughout the whole development. The multi-influence factors on the whole creating process of Chinese (D)YAL have been clearly displayed, from outside and inside the country. The origin of the current Chinese YA authors and readers' favours, and thoughts thereby has been revealed.

Particularly, I have discussed how the main factors associated with the Chinese censorship system and how this has had negative effects on the healthy development of literature, especially IL and YAL. The evidence to show that authors cannot express themselves freely and convey their all ideas in their texts has been provided. I also argued that the integrality of Chinese language has been broken by the sensitive keyword system and have shown how, particularly in terms of BL writing, censorship has resulted in any references to the gender revolution or the sexual revolution being expunged from the texts. It can be summed up in the words of a young teacher from Guangzhou University, Zhang Ying (BBC, 2018), 'The target of those censor activities is not only erotica. What they want to forbid is an imagined possibility of the rise of an uncontrollable heretic-culture'. In this context, I would argue that writing or reading BL fictions have been given a more critical meaning that goes beyond entertainment.

Moreover, as analysed above, the current Chinese censorship system damaged the credibility of law principles. The part about speech freedom in the Constitution has already become a mere scrap of paper. The law system has turned into a tool for some people to suppress others.

Access to the Internet and the Internet itself does not necessarily equate with having freedom. The development of technologies gives people more possibilities to discover the information ocean and create their own contribution to it, but at the same time it provides governments with the tools to build and reinforce a 'panoramic prison'.

Another negative impact of Chinese censorship is that it causes Chinese adults to not get out of a 'childlike state'. Early in 1993, the sociologist and novelist Wang Xiaobo has

pointed out that it is unfair to require adults to sacrifice their rights for ‘protecting children’. The government treats adults as children. The result is adults are hampered in becoming independent individuals on a psychological level.

Besides, Wang also argues that for the intellectuals, censorship not only molds a kind of ‘sexual environment’, but also molds a kind of ‘knowledge (or intellectual) environment’. As a result, on the spirit level, the intellectuals have been exiled from this country, which lead to the limitation of cultural creation.

Based on the review shown in Chapters 3 and 4, it could be seen how DYAL connects the past and present crossing the boundaries of the imagination and the reality, as well as the national boundaries. Hence, the analysis of these dystopian YA works should be meaningful.

The contemporary DYAL works have displayed a variety of issues, which could not be completely covered in this thesis. Among these issues, is that in my opinion the issue of information control and censorship is tightly related to the cultural crisis in reality, and especially shows the comparison of the distinct conflicts and communications between Western and Eastern thoughts and habitus. Thus, for a clearer comparison, the works with this issue are selected as the focus of this study.

In the next chapters, based on the framework of the spatiotemporal characteristics of contemporary dystopian literature outlined above, some dystopian YA literary works with the specific issue of information control and censorship will be presented for a more detailed discussion around these questions. Following this part of the discussion, a further framework for analysing the content of this type of DYAL from a sociological perspective will be given.

Chapter 6

Societies in the Dystopian YA Literature

Introduction

‘Novelists disclose the imagination as a social form. Their works often show imaginations as characters juggle various possibilities within their socially structured situations.’

Rogers, M (1991: p.47)

‘Young Adult novels are about power.’

Trites, R. (2000: p.3)

The purpose of this chapter is to design a primary framework for mapping discourse and power in the DYAL. The framework will be developed based on the foundation of Foucault’s theories, the concept of ‘group power’ and ‘power field’ mentioned in Chapter 2, combining the elements of text structure. After that, I will analyse the three dystopian YA fictions from America, Japan and China (which have introduced in Chapter 3) by using the framework. The stories of all three works are focusing on the topic of censorship and information control.

To enable a more legible comparison, a simple framework will be established first. It will help to reveal the changes of plot and design in the texts clearer. The comparison of authors’ thinking threads on the design of the plot, as well as the main roles’ characteristics and acting modes, therefore could be given. The spatiotemporal characteristics of those texts could be demonstrated. The first part of the analytical framework includes a comparison of these plots, the main characters and their actions and of the internal discourse-power relationships in the texts. This comparison will also emerge later, during the discussion of the readers’ responses from the focus groups in the next Chapter, allowing similarities and differences between interpretations to emerge.

6.1 Mapping the Power-Discourse Structure in Dystopian YA Fiction

Based on the simple framework of group power and power field mentioned in Chapter 2, it can be found that in one power field, the relationship among group powers is uncertain. Generally, I believe one purpose of the power game could be considered as ‘reducing loss’, which means a balance of powers. Nevertheless, the changes with new possibilities (eg. space and resources) always result in new conflicts, and require participants to rethink and reconstruct the issues about discourse and power, while some new relationships probably appear in the old power fields.

In the real world, the changing of eras is pushed by this kind of conflict and reconstruction. Since the rapid period of development in the latter 20th century, countries in both the West and East have come into an anxious period. The crisis of resources, the deterioration of the ecological environment, the changes in gender power relations amplified by new technologies—all of these have aggravated the power and discourse conflicts in the social reality. In my opinion, the burgeoning of dystopian YA texts in the last decades also probably is one result of this. Through those works, authors and readers can explore the answers to the questions existing in the reality, from past to future.

According to the historical reviews of American, Japanese and Chinese DYAL in Chapters 3 and 4, traces of the relationship between the development of DYAL in these countries and their actual environment (including politics, economy and ecosystem) are clear and distinctive. However, it can also be found that the authors’ imaginings of characters’ personalities and actions, and the setting of entire invented worlds in books, are tightly tied to their cultural background. Therefore, the dystopian YA works from different cultural environments have shown significant differences in content, particularly in the structure and changes of discourse and power they reveal. I would suggest that it could be seen as a reflection of the temporal and spatial characteristics of DYAL.

For a more comprehensive discussion of DYAL, and to compare those differences more clearly, I present a primary analysis framework which focuses on the discourses and powers shown in the novels.

Based on the fundamental 5W1H questions of text (*where, when, what, who, why and how*), the constituents of the framework for DYAL analysis can be structured:

Who – Individual power/group power (GP), composed by protagonists and the other characters; Main factions of discourses
When – The chronotope in which story happens (e.g. near future, far future)
Where – The location in which the story happens; The power fields (PF), such as home, school, library, company, government, judicial and other social spaces (most are institutions, and could be differentiated to single office or room)
What – The current dominant discourse in the PF; The censored subjects or the critical issues
Why – The cause and effect of the current situation; The motivation of the characters' actions
How – The discipline (control means) from the dominator and purpose; The resistance from the ruled principle and purpose; The changes in the characters' discourses and actions; The propagating medium: books, Internet, TV or others

Table 6-1 Primary constituent of the framework for DYAL analysis

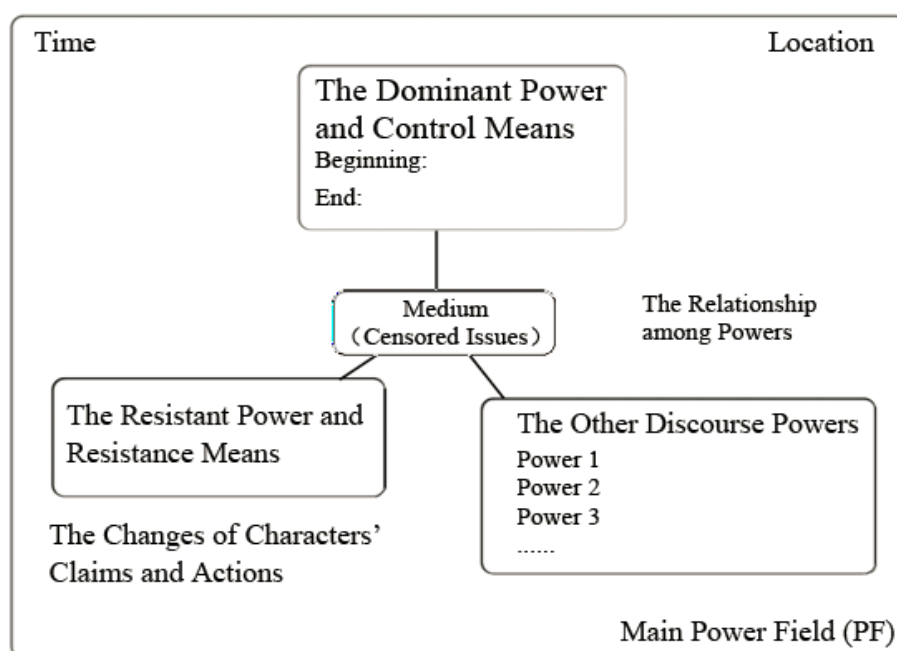
Fiction Name

Figure 6-2: Discourse and power mapping framework for DYAL

If every character is considered a power point, they can be placed in different group powers (GP), depending on their identity and discourse. Most especially, an individual can have multiple identities, which means he or she may belong to more than one group power at the same time. Sometimes, these kinds of multiple identities will take the conflict of discourses inside one person. For example, in the novel *Library Wars*, a character can be a librarian who opposes the government's censorship (in the library PF), but also is brother to a censor (in the family PF). This causes the main dramatic conflict for this character.

The time and location in which the story happens are also important and this can be seen as a reflection of the temporal and spatial attribute of DYAL. Does the story happen in the far future, the near future, or a totally fictitious spacetime? To some extent, this implicates the author's concerns with the focus on reality. Based on my analysis, DYAL authors tend to design the cultural world in their fiction close to their familiar background. For instance, the story of *The Hunger Games* happens in a fictitious America; *Library Wars* sets the story in a near-future Japan; much of the plot of *The Great Library* series is spent in Europe. However, in terms of 'time setting', Western DYAL generally places the story far into the future with a weak relationship to current reality, or a totally imaginary era;

conversely, some Eastern dystopian works are set in a time with a stronger logical relationship with the present. The story of *Poison City* happens after the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games; *Library Wars* is placed in an alternative era following the 1970s; *Infernal Affairs* is set in a vague time, but the society in the story is under the serious control of ‘Sky-eye net’, which is similar to current-day China’s surveillance and dataveillance culture.

If the review of the themes of DYAL is applied, it can be found that all the themes have a close relationship to human desire. However, because of the specificity of dystopian literature, the power conflicts shown in the texts are very intense, especially around the topic of control and resistance. Therefore, the other constituents of the framework (what, why and how) are focusing on the relationship of discourses to power (competition or cooperation), as well as any shifts in the ratios of these, making in turn the author’s perspectives on the changing relationships of discourse and power in the writing much clearer.

Around these key points, other key questions revolve. Some are presented below, as reference:

[1] Power field

What is (are) the main power field(s) in the text?

What is the dominant discourse in each power field?

What are the main means of expressing the discipline of the dominant power shown in the text?

What is the purpose of the discipline?

What are the characters’ practices and discourses in each power field?

Are there any differences among the character’s practices in different PFs?

[2] The change of character’s action \longleftrightarrow The change of discourse

Is there any change of dominant discourse over time, in the same field?

Has the character’s action (practice) or discourse changed over time, in the same field?

What is the motivation for the character’s change?

[3] Objective medium of discourses

What is (are) the kind(s) of objective medium of discourses in the text?

Who (character or group) dominates (or expresses) the discourse in this medium?

Who (character or group) controls (holds) this medium?

Is there any specific character who is distinctly influenced by any objective medium in the text?

[4] Author's discourse

What are the author's discourse and standpoint expressed through the text?

What is the similarity or relationship between the world in the book and author's background?

.....

Hence, for analysing the selected texts, and in order to limit the main focuses and compare the differences in the fiction from three countries, I will use the analysis presented in Table 6-3 including the following constituents.

	<i>Title</i>
Time and Location	
Main Power Field (PF)	
Main Factions of Discourse Powers	
The Dominant Power and Control Means at the Beginning	
The Resistant Power and Resistance Means at the Beginning	
The Dominant Power and Control Means at the End	
The Changes of Main Characters' Claims	

and Actions	
The Relationship among Powers in the PFs and The Final Result	This term could refer to ‘Power as Capacity’ (Karlberg, 2005, referring to: Table 2-5, p.63)

Table 6-3 Discourse and power mapping framework table for DYAL

6.2 When the Library Becomes Enemy: *The Great Library* (American)

As introduced in Section 3.2, *the Great Library* (series) is a dystopian story written by Rachel Caine, which takes place in a parallel universe where the super class of the Library controls the world. The young students led by Jess Brightwell are against their dominance and try to find a new way to liberate knowledge and truth.

If using Table 6.3 to analyse *The Great Library*, the story could be summarized as follows:

	<i>The Great Library</i>
Time and Location	An alternative near future Europe (but not as advanced in technology)
Main Power Fields (PF)	Library and almost the entire world
Main Factions of Discourse Powers	<p>The Library: They preserve knowledge, use knowledge as power, and decide what knowledge is appropriate for the masses, practice obscurantism to control the mass.</p> <p>Burners: They believe life is more important than book, yet they also use methods of obscurantism to gain support against the Library.</p> <p>Book Smugglers: the people who steal books and resell them to earn a profit, work against the library but only benefit themselves.</p> <p>Ink-lickers: rich people who buy books to eat just fulfilled their vanity.</p> <p>True Bookworms (protagonists): the people loved books and want to make a difference in the world.</p>
The Dominant Power	<p>The Library</p> <p>Censorship, control over distribution of knowledge, government</p>

and Control Means at the Beginning	branch of law enforcement, automata, and the High Garda force (the army under Library control)
The Resistant Power and Resistance Means at the Beginning	Burners Book smugglers Bookworms in the Library
The Dominant Power and Control Means at the End	By the end of the third book, the Great Library has already lost control in many areas. A violent revolution has happened across the world. ¹⁵⁰
The Changes of Main Characters' Claims and Actions	At the beginning, most of young characters trust the library, including the protagonist. In the third book, their standpoint turns to the resistance and distrust of the Library. However, their attitudes are not consistent with the violent Burners, but mostly close to democratic idealism.
The Relationship among Powers in the PFs and The Final Result	'Inequality' in adversarial relationships The final result is not yet known (till 2018).

Table 6-4 Discourse and power mapping in *The Great Library* series

Rachel Caine mentioned her original idea about the beginning of the story in her YouTube interviews:

‘...the real reason that I decided to create this darker vision of the Library is that any institution that lasts this long has a huge baggage associated with it ... and no one likes to give up power. Politics is part of anything, and the more power, the greater the

¹⁵⁰ I wrote this part in 2018, before I got the fourth book. I did not get the rest two books of the series, but read their introduction online in 2020. Generally, the protagonist and his friends got the final victory and won the fight for control the Library and broke the old system.

stakes of political struggles. The Library, I thought, would have started out with the very best of motives, but lost its way, and begun deciding what people should or shouldn't know. After all, censorship was, until relatively recently in historical terms, just a fact of life.'¹⁵¹

This statement could lead to a classic social discussion—that of a conflict between power of authority and freedom of individual, along with a vague statement of 'censorship for the greater good'. These matters then combined for Caine into a single topic: civil rights. The Library was supposed to be the guardian of knowledge and guide society into the right direction. But knowledge is power, and power corrupts. Caine had described an interesting situation in her book: what would happen if the protector of human culture had fallen and became the tyrant haunting the world?

In *the Great Library* series, the following social conflicts and issues have been displayed:

1, The impact of censorship to the society, and the decision maker.

In the series, the Library got the power to decide what is best for society, yet their motives alter over the years, and right now they only think about how to remain in the power, thus their censorship had stopped society from progressing.

2, The significance (and position) of knowledge in the society.

There are multiple factions in the series: the bookworms believe the distribution of knowledge is more important; the smugglers care for nothing but personal profit; the burners don't really care about knowledge itself but are more interested in overthrow of the Library; the Library just want to secure their power now and has no interests in distributing knowledge, since they believe knowledge itself is power.

3, The criteria of judging 'the greater good'.

In the story, the author's answer tends to 'no'. If the criteria of 'greatest good' are only defined by the ruling class, it will easily fall into a wrong path, and oppose the population's real needs and interests.

The most interesting part about this series is that it created a brand-new power structure,

¹⁵¹ The whole video: https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcYPSIfPja70sPYX1lXHvryET_8DfXX2

based on the principle that power is allocated in accordance with the amount of knowledge a faction could control. The regime was not totalitarian in its origin; it was meant to preserve the human culture and guide society through dark times. Yet as time passes by, its ideals changed, and it became the new tyranny while still holding onto an old ideal of simply ‘guiding people’. Just like the symbol of the Library in the books, the regime made a power pyramid through the selective distribution of knowledge. It still claimed that the control of knowledge (censorship) was for the greater good, yet who did actually constitute the greater good becomes a tricky question. In fact, there is no absolute good or evil, but rather different stands and ideals, along with choices and consequences. The information and knowledge exchange in our world is freer compared to the Library universe, yet are we truly living overall in a better world? This is the critical question posed by *The Great Library* series.

Another critical point revealed in the story is about the security of information. In its world, every citizen can obtain a ‘diary’ from the library. The operation principle of the diary is similar to iPad, though not running by electricity but by magic. The user can get a projection of any book in the library to the diary (if they are allowed to be read them); on the other hand, the user also can write down anything on the diary and the content will be directly sent to the archive keeping in the library. People commonly trust the security of diary, because the library strongly declared that the personal archive keeping will not be open to anyone, until he or she is dead. However, in fact, the upper class of the Library can check the archives at any time unknown by anyone. Hence the lead the protagonist’s talented friend’s idea about a printing machine becomes known by the manager of the Library.

This plot reminds me of the PRISM information leakage in 2014. In fact, it has a strong resemblance to that whole event, while the diary probably could be seen as a metaphor of digital technology in reality. It might be evidence of the influence of society on the DYAL author’s writing. During the writing of this thesis, it has become clearer that the issue of information control in open and democratic cultures has become even more vital in all types of societies – including those used to censorship and the capitalist ones. The data

surveillance societies more common now - with the development of information technologies, true tyranny invades the bedroom, the private self, which prevents rebellion and revolution. Thereby, the idea of privacy and the private self has also raised to be more important. In terms of arousing the reader's awareness of abuse of power and the risks taken by new technology, this innovative setting absolutely has its special significance.

However, simultaneously, when the author employs this setting in relation to characters' actions, some problem also emerges. As a book smuggler, the protagonist should not trust the Library very much. Nevertheless, even after he experienced numerous things and almost certified the library as an enemy, he still chooses to write all his secrets in the diary, which finally causes the arrest of his girlfriend. In my opinion, this action is not very logical, and hardly reflects the experience of a person who really grows up under a totalitarian system. In fact, similar confusing action also happens to the other protagonists of some other American dystopian YA fictions –the protagonists tend to adopt individualistic heroic and imprudent actions, which generally appear less often among the characters in the Eastern dystopian YA fictions. During the discussions set up with the readers, this question came up and, The Chinese group also disputed whether some of those characters' actions were plausible, and considered that according to their experience, their actions were unrealistic. To some extent, it exposes the distance of Western authors' imaginations from real totalitarian societies.

It can be found that, though there are different factions existing in the story, their standpoints were generally distinct. Even the students' standpoints shifted soon after they found 'truth' – with much anger and less resistance. The upper class dominates the world through controlling the information circulation channels and the censorship on knowledge with the help from the High Garda force. The conflicts between different power groups are shown as polarized confrontations with violence, but not the confrontation and changes that happened within a political system. The totalitarian domination is destroyed and ended by a violent revolution (the 'Inequality' mode of power relationship). There is no important

‘centrist’ who can influence the situation in the story. In other words, in this story, the author determined that people could have possibilities to fight against inappropriate censorship and can change the situation when the dystopian totalitarian system has been fully established. However, the solution is similar as in most other Western dystopian YA fictions, and there is little thinking about what will happen after ‘revolution’.

In the focus groups’ discussion, most members from both sides considered the idea that the Library became the totalitarian class as innovative, which attracted them to read this story. About the discourse-power conflict mode in the story, most participants from both sides thought it was rational, because in real human history there was a long period when the upper classes controlled abundant knowledge, but only released a few crumbs to people (e.g. the Medieval Age). As a member in the Chinese group said, ‘monopolizing knowledge is a powerful way to control the world, probably more effective than only using armed force.’ In contrast, some other Chinese participants pointed out that the balance between different power groups at the beginning was weak and not very realistic, because the privileged class had not enough force to suppress resistance when the extreme case happened. Therefore, their domination was quite easy overthrow. This could be cited as another point that makes the story have some distance from the reality. Those different opinions expressed in the discussion have displayed how the participants linked their own knowledge and experience about the real world’s past and present to the hypothetical world in the story, which actually has verified the framework 2-3 and 2-4 in Chapter 2.

At the time of writing this thesis, the rest books of the series had not been published yet, so we will have to wait and see what happens in the end of the series.

6.3 A Mirror of the Censored Reality: *Library Wars* (Japan)

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the *Library Wars* series is a dystopian fiction written by Japanese writer Hiro Arikawa, set in a hypothetical near-future Japan and which revolves around censorship and people's freedom to read. The following table allows an initial analysis of the novel which reveals traces of the novel's realism and its differences from most Western dystopian YA works, mainly, that there is no 'subversive revolution' happening in the story.

Title	<i>Library Wars</i>
Time and Location	The alternative near future, Japan
Main Power Fields (PF)	Library, bookshop, school
Main Factions of Discourse Powers	<p>Media Betterment Committee – MBC: They watch over all media, and have the power to restrict any publication, film, or musical composition that is deemed a 'threat' to public order and morality.</p> <p>Library Future Planning Committee: They claim that the library should become an organization on the same level as MBC, and the temporary concession with MBC should be accepted in order to achieve the final victory of the fight with censorship.</p> <p>Library Defence Force: They claim the libraries have the right to keep all published books (including those forbidden to be sold) and protect people's freedom of reading.</p> <p> --'Principle' faction: The tough faction which insists on the principle of LFA.</p> <p> --'Administration' faction: The wavered faction which tends to have some concession with the government.</p>

	‘Reflection on Cultivating Healthy Children’ Committee: Children should read ‘healthy’ books (A Parent-Teacher Association)
The Dominant Power and Control Means at the Beginning	Central government (MBC) Censorship and MBA, Armed force with guns
The Resistant Power and Resistance Means at the Beginning	Libraries LFA, Library Defence Force with guns
The Dominant Power and Control Means at the End	The new balance between different factions has emerged. After a new Act suggested by Library Future Planning Committee passed, both the MBC and Library Defence Force are forbidden to use guns. But censorship itself is still the focus of conflict.
The Changes of Main Characters’ Claims and Actions	The main characters do not change. But some minor characters’ claims have changed after some accidents happened (e.g. Satoshi Tezuka, Touma Kurato), from neutral to supporting the library force.
The Relationship among Powers in the PFs and The Final Result	‘Equality’ in adversarial relations (stalemate and compromise) There are some local violent conflicts, but no subversive revolution happens. Throughout the whole story, generally, the resistant power and dominant power form a balance – which means none of the forces won absolute victory. However, the armed conflicts and violence have been forbidden at the end.

Table 6-5 Discourse and power structure mapping in *Library Wars* series

The author of *Library Wars*, Arikawa, has said that the primary idea of the story was born when she heard her husband introduced ‘*Statement on Intellectual Freedom in Libraries*’ to

her¹⁵². The Library Freedom Act in the story originates from this true library statement, which was revised in 1979¹⁵³. The main terms of the Act in the novel are identical to the Statement. As one aspect of the influences of Western culture on Japan after WWII, the Japanese Statement was mainly impacted by the American ‘*Library Bill of Rights*’ revised in 1934, and ‘*Freedom to Read Statement*’ revised in 1953 (Li, 2000).

The Statement has no legal effect, but it shows the general attitude of the Japanese Library Association. Similar to the American statements and even the later IFLA Statement,¹⁵⁴ it also emphasizes ‘the right and freedom of (obtaining) knowledge’. A slightly different point is that the Japanese one gives a particular review and introspection on the history of strict censorship:

4. We should remember that in Japan libraries once did not fully ensure the people's right to know, but on occasion participation in 'thought guidance' of the people. In view of this, libraries should fulfil their responsibilities to defend and expand the people's right to know. (1979)

This term explicitly points to the Japanese history of strict censorship and destructive interference on civil rights. Earlier, before WWII, the Japanese *Meiji* government had forcefully controlled and censored the publishing of newspapers and books. After 1931, Japan's military government ‘accelerated reading guidance at schools and libraries especially toward young people’ (Souka, 2013: n.p.). During the period of WWII, the Japanese political police continually checked library collections, and sometimes confiscated them. In April 1952, the *Subversive Activities Prevention Law* was enacted. It is a law that occurred in the context of the Cold War, which ‘empowers the government to restrict the activities of or even to dissolve organizations involved in certain terroristic subversive activities’ (Maki, 1953). However, the security intelligence agency's actual scale of action was randomly expanded. The activities of many associations and communities were seriously influenced, including some libraries' daily work: for example, plainclothes policemen examined book check-out records; remained in libraries to monitor

¹⁵² 有川浩「LIFE&WRITE バイオグラフィと全作品解説」『野性時代 vol.38』2007年1月号、角川書店、ISBN 4-04-722088-4。

¹⁵³ The full terms of Japanese Statement on Intellectual Freedom in Libraries (図書館の自由に関する宣言): <http://www.jla.or.jp/library/gudeline/tabid/232/Default.aspx>.

¹⁵⁴ The Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom established by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in 1999.

people's actions; and interfered in their freedom to select books (Kamachi, 1952; cited from Liang, 2011). It directly pushed the occurrence of the primary version of *Statement on Intellectual Freedom in Libraries* in 1954. Since then, 'neutrality' has been a strong keyword for librarians in Japan. In the same way that the LFA in *Library Wars* series is a reflection of the Statement in reality, the MBA refers to *Subversive Activities Prevention Law*. There is a brief mention in the novel to the real historical facts of Japan and the claims of the Statement continued to be strongly expressed as the main spirit of the protagonists.

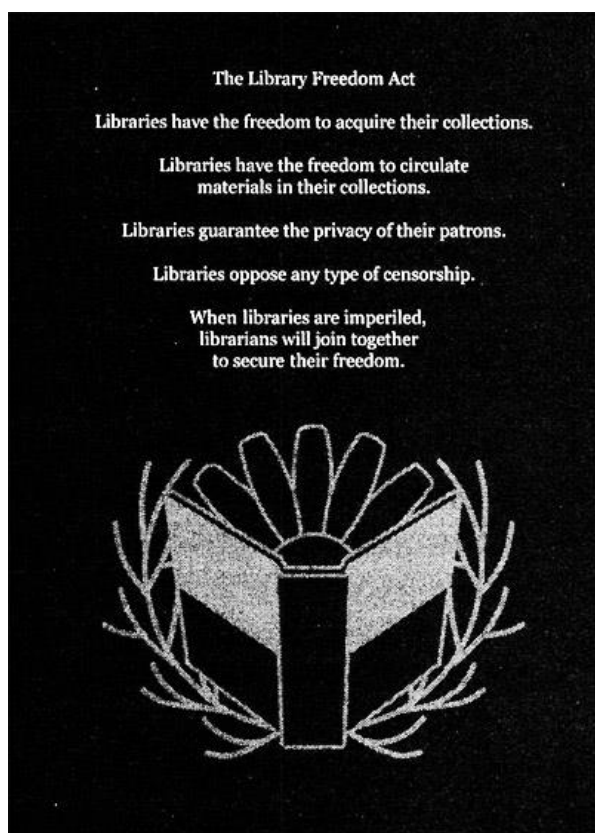


Figure 6-6: The Library Freedom Act in the *Library Wars* (Arikawa and Yumi, 2007: p.4)

As mentioned in Chapter 4, besides *Library Wars*, there are also numerous other Japanese YA fiction works involving factual laws, statements, or affairs around censorship in the stories and the quotation of factual laws and events brings the societies in those novels closer to the real contemporary world. Therefore, when the Eastern young people read the stories, it is possible that they may be more easily immersed in and empathic towards the characters. On the other hand, the social problems around censorship revealed in these

fictions are also quite realistic, because the similar problems always happen in the real world, particularly in the Eastern Asian countries. This has proved the framework 2-3 in Chapter 2 (the influence of social background on the author's creating and reader's sympathy for the story) from another aspect.

In *Library Wars*, several critical social issues can be examined:

1, The criteria of selecting books for children.

When choosing books for young people, which aspect is more important – the children's preferences, or adult committee's opinions about the 'educational meaning of books'? The novel showed a case: A school library bought the books totally depending on children's feeling of 'fun', which caused the parent committee's protest.

2, The influence of texts to readers.

Two cases in the novel: (1) The media suspected that a juvenile murder was influenced by the books he had read, but the library refused to provide his reading record to police, according to the term of 'protecting reader's individual privacy' in the Library Freedom Act. The library believed they should insist the impartiality of law to everybody, and was worried that if they compromise, the abuse of government power will encroach on civil rights further. (2) A terrorist attack on a nuclear power station happened. The MBC believed that the criminals were inspired by and learned some related knowledge from the novel 'The Crisis of Nuclear Power Station'. Therefore, they planned to censor the author's other works, and also restrict his future writing. The Library Task Force protected the author, enabling him to escape to one Western country's embassy, to strive for the support of international opinions and the defense of the freedom of expression¹⁵⁵.

3, The criteria of judging and prohibiting 'vulgar or dirty words'.

The case in the novel: Some words that were once used among common people or

¹⁵⁵ A similar plot takes place in another Japanese dystopian manga, *Poison City*. The excessive censorship is originally caused by a criminal case: in a juvenile murderer's home, a huge collection of horror manga and animation was found.

paupers have been forbidden in publishing. One example is the old appellation of 'barber' in Japanese.¹⁵⁶ The attitude of the MBC is '(they) did not want to draw any attention to itself. The Committee wanted the citizenry to remain indifferent about which words they made taboo and hunted down' (Arikawa and Melithiel, 2007. *Library Crisis*, p.109).

4, The effective and possible approach to struggle with inappropriate censorship.

The instance in the novel: One library force member's brother, Satoshi Tezuka, wanted to change the situation through peaceful internal political reform. He belonged to the faction 'Library Future Planning Committee'. At the beginning, he believed that it is valuable to give some temporary compromises, in order to exchange for the success of reform in the future. This standpoint was opposite to the attitude of the library defence force. There was a significant conflicting dialogue which happened between Satoshi Tezuka and the heroine (Iku Kasahara):

Satoshi: 'Then what do you think is the best way to change our society? Surely you don't think it's the fine way.'

Iku: 'Well... If a politician...'

Satoshi: 'Are you going to wait for politicians to move on themselves?'

Iku: 'Maybe if there was some kind of citizen action...'

Satoshi: 'The citizenry won't act, unless they are severely, personally inconvenienced. Only a small number of them will care enough to mobilize. There may be some discontent, but as long as the problem does not have any more catastrophic consequences, the vast majority of people will learn to adapt. It's easier to grumble about something and adapt to it than try to change it' (Arikawa and Melithiel, 2007. *Library Schism*, pp.236-237).

However, at the end of the story, Satoshi Tezuka's mind has changed, and has come to an agreement with the library force – who also changed part of their claim. The main changes in fact happened in the power field 'government', but not 'library'. As table 6-5 showed, the powers finally have gotten to a new balance.

¹⁵⁶ As the English translator of *Library War* said, 'One of the hardest things about being a translator is that sometimes there is no word in the target language with the same connotation as the one you're trying to translate' (Melithiel, 2015). In the novel, the word which is allowed by MBC mostly means 'hairstylist', but the word which is forbidden generally means the barber works with simple tools and old-fashioned ways – sometimes that word also implied 'the barbershop serves dirty business'.

The significant difference of the *Library Wars* (series) from the other dystopian YA works with same theme is that the society shown in the novel is not a classic ‘fake utopia’, meaning that there is no ‘hidden truth or secret’ waiting for the protagonists. Instead, all the main affairs appearing in the book are ‘everyday’ and realistic.

The operation of powers could be said to be the most interesting point of this fiction. The regime is not traditionally totalitarian; it describes itself as a ‘democracy’. The establishment of every act and law is legal. The central government does not forbid the book before its publication, instead, the book can be censored after issue and if it’s considered ‘inappropriate’, it will not be allowed on the market. The license of writing ‘promises’ the freedom of expression which should be a basal condition of a ‘democratic country’, while the censorship is only ‘the means to protect people’. On the other hand, the library forces are funded by local governments, and the central government cannot interfere directly. This setting is very close to the real political system of Japan, which displays the separation of regional autonomy and the central regime. The fictional library’s resistance to censorship could be summarized by a sentence in the book: ‘fighting power with power’.

In this novel, the characters in the story cannot be simply divided into those which are ‘revolutionary’ or ‘rulers’, ‘just’ or ‘evil’. Most characters are normal people who have complex attitudes and opinions on various social issues, and choose different actions based on their beliefs. Even the staff working in the same library are separated into different factions. One striking instance is Satoshi, who finally changed his standpoint and promoted the first step of repealing the MBA. However, his political choices at the beginning of the story cannot be judged as being ‘good’ or ‘bad’, they reflect the correct way to fight for rights in his mind at that time. This is the complexity of the power conflicts revealed in this novel, which is very close to what happens in the reality outside the book.

In an interview about another of her works, Hiro has said she would describe some of her characters as the representatives of real persons, including those negative and unpleasant figures. In fact, the complexity of humanity has been emphasized in the portrayal of many protagonists in the Eastern dystopian YA fictions. Unlike the mainly impulsive and innocent Western hot-blooded protagonists, many characters in Japanese and Chinese

DYAL tend to take cautious actions, which finally result to their ‘imperfect feature’. Sometimes, they can even commit a cruel action or give up something after taking careful and practical thinking. For example, in famous Japanese animation director Hayao Miyazaki’s manga *Nausicaa*, the heroine ends by killing millions of embryos of ‘new human’, insisting on her belief on another possible future. In the *Library Wars*, there is not such a cruel choice, but the actions taken by Satoshi Tezuka, the conflicts between him and his brother, the changes that happened on him later have shown the author’s idea about the design of characters. To some extent, the inconsistent actions and non-linear development of these characters, as well as the open ending of the story reflects the authors’ Eastern-style non-dichotomous thinking. These characteristics of *Library Wars* and the other Japanese dystopian YA fictions have exhibited the features summarised in Section 4.1.

In this novel, it is clear to see the author’s effort to reveal an alternative future besides classic dystopian imagination, and to explore how a ‘democratic society’ unfolds dystopian characteristics. According to abundant reflections and reviews around the novel, manga, animation and film of *Library Wars* online, it is undoubtedly that the display of such realistic and sensitive issues in this work, which are set differently from social systems shown in most famous Western dystopian YA fictions, already have attracted readers’ attention and led them to think about the related issues in the reality. This point has also been proved during the discussion of the two focus groups which I organized.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, two focus groups were organised to discuss the topics around the three selected dystopian texts (introduced in this chapter). During the discussion, some Chinese readers considered the social system in the *Library Wars* – the central government stipulates strict censorship, while allows local libraries to own freedom and armed forces - is still impractical, because it relies on an extremely delicate balance between different power groups. Similarly, the English-language group tended to believe that it would be impossible for the government to allow the institutions such as libraries to have their own forces (military). However, both sides admitted this fictional idea is very attractive for reading about.

For both focus groups, the form of power struggles shown in the *Library Wars* and the characters' actions and complicated humanity were the main points of their interests. Generally, The Chinese group expressed higher empathy with the characters and their situation in *Library Wars* than for those in the *Great Library* series. A more detailed discussion of the participant groups' analysis of these novels, around the design of characters' actions, love and collectivism, can be found in the next chapter.

6.4 A Surveillance: *Infernal Affairs* (Chinese)

Infernal Affairs is a boy-love (BL) story written by Chinese author Sizhe Zangyi (2014). As described in Chapter 3, it is a fan fiction of a Chinese Internet novel *The King's Avatar* series (Hu Dielan, 2011). The story is not very long and sets the characters of *The King's Avatar* in a fictitious world where the country in the story is under the super-AI's monitor, and the protagonists belong to underground resistance.

The following table helps to analyse the discourse-power relationship in *Infernal Affairs*

Title	<i>Infernal Affairs</i>
Time and Location	A fictitious world with a high modern technology level, and all the characters have Chinese names.
Main Power Fields (PF)	Social media and public area
Main Factions of Discourse Powers	<p>The Empire: People should be monitored and controlled strictly.</p> <p>The Alliance (puppet regime): They claim that the compromise with the Empire is only to protect people. Actually, they do not care about people's rights, but just want to benefit themselves.</p> <p>The secret underground resistance: Freedom of speech.</p>
The Dominant Power and Control Means at the Beginning	The totalitarian regime with the Sky-eye net constructs by the monitoring super-AI.
The Resistant Power and Resistance Means at the Beginning	<p>The people who advocate the belief in freedom.</p> <p>They secretly contract with each other through sending messages by the old machines which are not controlled by super-AI yet, such as telegraph.</p>
The Dominant Power	The resistance which claims freedom won at the end.

and Control Means at the End	The country turns to a democracy society.
The Changes of Main Characters' Claims and Actions	The standpoints of most characters have not changed throughout the story.
The Relationship among Powers in the PFs and The Final Result	<p>'Inequality' in adversarial relationships</p> <p>The resistance gets the victory, which is based on many people's sacrifice. People celebrate the freedom and surviving from the scored controls of Sky-eye net. The protagonists (Ye and Yu) live peacefully in seclusion after that.</p>

Table 6-7 Discourse and power mapping in *Infernal Affairs*

Although the story is not long and its world similar to the totalitarian society in most classic dystopian works, this fan fiction continues to display some of the special characteristics of Chinese DYAL. Firstly, although the protagonists (Ye and Yu) loved each other deeply, they chose to sacrifice their love and even their own lives, for their belief in freedom. This kind of dilemma is often described in Chinese (and some Japanese) novels, where protagonists tend to place more importance on beliefs than on personal emotions and lives. In this story, love is important, but it is hidden behind the intense political struggles. Ye and Yu never directly express their love throughout the novel. They only kiss each other once, at the end of the story, after their resistance ended the super-AI's domination. I would suggest that this is a reflection of the influence from the Eastern culture, where modestly is prized more highly, more restrained expression of romantic feeling, rather than less inhibited expression in Western DYAL.

Secondly, the story strongly displays the importance of 'group power'. The final success is not only attributed to Ye and Yu, but also to the support of their many friends. Yu designed a count trial to express his 'Thoughtcrime' with secret assistance from a chief judge -who

was his friend and a key power of the resistance. The expression was spread over the country due to the 'technological fault' made by some young members in the newspaper and broadcasting station. Just after the trial, Yu was 'killed' outside the court. People hidden in different forces made the message of his 'death' spread vastly, and also rescued him from the president's army successfully. Throughout the text, there is evidence of the author's clear attitudes about the importance of assistance and association among people.

'They have not names, because names are dangerous; they have not standard organization; ...even if they are dead because of the resistance, no one will remember their names or bury their bodies. But they still work secretly under the "sky-eye net". The only thing makes them together is one belief: freedom.' (Chapter 1, online)

Thirdly, despite the fact that the society and the relationship of power-discourse at the beginning is similar to those in the early traditional dystopian literature, the details of plot development are more realistic and truer. Different from the general trends in Western DYAL with similar themes, the resistance force in *Infernal Affairs* did not expect to get the final victory through a violent revolution – there was not any large-scale violent conflict at all. The successful implementation of the revolt plan mostly depended on accurate interlocking design and silent cooperation between the protagonists and their comrades. The turning point of resistance's situation is not that they got to control any powerful armed force, but that they control the communication channels, such as newspaper and radio station. It could be said that this design of the plot has revealed the author's thinking about the possible means rather than violent conflicts to grab the power domination from a totalitarian regime with absolute strength, which can relate to the real affairs happened in both East and West, such as passive resistance by Ghandi, or overcoming oppressive regimes by peaceful protesting through networking.

Moreover, the technology similar to the 'sky-eye' has really existed in China, and may have been the inspiration behind the author's imagined world. It might be that these realistic details sparked negative comments from Chinese readers in the study. In the focus groups' discussion, most Chinese participants showed high empathy for the description of super-AI's monitor and considered it was 'quite realistic with strong metaphors', while some Western participants felt a bit distant from it. The Greek participant mentioned that this story led him to remember the dark period in the last century in which his country was

controlled by a totalitarian regime. However, he still only can image the situation when reading the story, but could not have true feeling about it. To some extent, this difference of reading experience between the Eastern and Western participants, as well as the other unique features shown in this story which have been mentioned above, are the other instances to deduced how the authors and readers relate their own past and present to the hypothetical futures in framework 2-4 (p.40 in Chapter 2) again.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed analysis of three specific dystopian YA fictions written by American, Japanese and Chinese authors. The analysis focused mainly on two issues: the traction between the world of political and social reality as it is experienced and the fictional story and the story which reflects on the author's creating and reader's response; and the discourse-power issues revealed in the texts. The latter issues reveal some of the differences and similarities between the Western and Eastern DYAL. This refers back to the frameworks discussed in Chapter 2 and to the summary of the four features of the Western and Eastern DYAL in Chapter 4 and shows that they can be useful for identifying these issues and for a comparative study of this genre.

In the next chapter, a further comparative discussion between the Western and Eastern DYAL will be provided, combined with more data from the focus groups' responses with the aim of exploring the internal discourse-power connection between the literature and society in more depth.

Chapter 7

Dialogues between West and East, Literature and Reality

Introduction

In 2018, a bookshop in Shanghai called ‘Monsoon’, which had been famous for its high quality of books related to social thought and lectures for 20 years, was closed for multiple reasons. Some people believed that the closure of the bookshop was connected to the changing attitudes of the government to cultural censorship. On Chinese biggest cultural hub site ‘Douban’ (similar to Goodreads), a comment under the news said, ‘Bookshops are provoking for someone, because they have recorded the truth and illusion of history and allow people to meet together to exchange their thoughts. If you think about *Library Wars*, then you can understand.’

This affair was a good example to exemplify the power struggle on knowledge in contemporary China, while the online comment showed how people related it to the discourse and power issues expressed in DYAL. As discussed throughout this thesis, dystopian YA fictions are the reflection of authors’ concerns on the real world, and thus they raise readers’ awareness, but they also raise questions: What are the boundaries between the freedom of creation and ‘healthy controls’? What are the responsibilities of authors? What is the appropriate solution against excessive censorship – treating violence with violence, as in *Library Wars*, or trying the peaceful change within the government? The critical realism of DYAL makes the interactions between the fictions, the readers’ thoughts and the reality much tighter and valuable for sociological analysis.

On the other hand, the text analysis in the last chapter has displayed that some differences between the Western and Eastern DYAL, from the design of characters’ actions and thinking, to the futures that the authors tend to hypothesize, as well as the gap between authors’ thinking reflected in the texts and readers’ responses. This chapter will give some further work on discussing readers’ responses to those dystopian fictions, which would also reveal more diversity between East and West.

This chapter will bring together several themes of DYAL in order to look at some of the differences in more detail. These themes are the following: (1) the imagination about ‘Self’ and ‘the Other’ implicated in the fictions; (2) the issues around love and sex; (3) the dispositions on freedom and discipline; and (4) the choice of individualism or collectivism. The data from the two focus groups and the collection of online comments will be integrated into the analysis. Considering the ethical risks, all the participants’ names have been anonymized. In order to distinguish between the members of the different groups clearly, the names of The Chinese group members will be one single capital letter, such as [A], [B], [C]; while the names of the members in English language group will be shown as two capital letters, such as [AT], [AZ], [DA].

At the end of the chapter, the final conclusions and implications of the study will be summarized, including the possibilities proposed for future research.

7.1 ‘Self’ or ‘the Other’: The Imagined Dystopian Society

I got the names of ‘Self’ and ‘the Other’ from Orientalism, but the concepts have a different sense. In Said’s original theory, ‘Self’ points to the Occident (colonizer), while ‘the Other’ points to the (colonized) Orient (Moosavinia et al., 2011: p.105). But in this study, ‘Self’ only refers to the author’s own cultural position which he or she is familiar with, while ‘the Other’ refers to every strange thing outside the author’s ‘Self’. In other words, for a Chinese author, his ‘Self’ stands on Chinese culture, while Western culture is ‘the Other’ to him. These two concepts are an important composition of the spatiotemporal characteristics of DYAL.

Most of the dystopian YA works from either West or East tend to construct the beginning of the story based on the authors’ familiar culture (Self). This leads the target readers, usually from the same cultural background as the author, to empathize with the story more quickly and easily. Nevertheless, as expected, the setting and the implicated ‘Self’ selected by the authors from the three countries – Japan, China and America – generally are quite different, as can be seen in this brief comparison:

Japanese DYAL:

- Most of the stories happen in Japan in an alternative future (e.g. *Poison City*, *Library Wars*, *Psycho-Pass*, *Shimoneta*, *From the New World*);
- Almost all the main characters are Japanese (race), or have Japanese names;

Chinese DYAL:

- A few stories are directly set in a city of China in an alternative future (e.g. *Folding Beijing*), while the others set in completely fictitious worlds;
- Most of protagonists have Chinese names; a few are described as the Western race and use Western names (e.g. *The Dome* series);

American DYAL:

- Some famous works have used the names of real Western cities (e.g. *Divergent* trilogy,

Hunger Games series, *The Great Library* series), but the majority of dystopian YA fictions set in completely fictitious worlds;

- Almost all the protagonists have the Western names, but diverse races appear, however, compared to whites or blacks, the protagonists described as Chinese or Japanese races rarely appear.

It is notable that, for the most part, the imagined dystopian societies created by American authors are actually based on ‘the Other’, despite some places use the Western city names or the landscape being described as Western. The political systems depicted in these fictions tend to follow a typical totalitarian style: a dualistic society controlled by an evil regime. As discussed in Chapter 4, given the political history and cultural environment of America, I would speculate that most of their imagination around such issues has mainly been influenced by classic dystopian literature as well as the history of ‘Other’ countries and the news about some particularly autocratic societies. At the same time, the final answer to the social conflicts portrayed in these American fictions always tends to be ‘thorough revolution’.

In contrast, the conflicts proposed in Japanese and Chinese DYAL are generally more complex and realistic, such as those in *Library Wars* and *Infernal Affairs*. This suggests that it is the history, the political and cultural environment which leads the imagination of Eastern authors about dystopian societies to be mainly structured on their ‘Self’, rather than ‘the Other’. The initial findings of this study show this is a crucial difference between the Western and Eastern DYAL. This is supported by the fact that some Chinese readers (from the focus group and online forum) noted that they found it hard to empathize deeply the narrative of some American dystopian YA fictions because they felt there was a gap between their own feeling and experience of a society with high-level censorship and monitoring and these narratives. Despite this, they enjoyed reading these stories.

Another reason for this gap or sense of distancing from the narrative has to do with the thoughts and actions of the protagonists. The text analysis on *The Great Library* and *Library Wars* in Chapter 6 revealed some differences between the characters’ thinking and choices in the Eastern and Western DYAL. For example, if we compare the protagonists of

Chinese and Japanese DYAL with the characters in American DYAL, the latter usually display a sense of ‘direct thinking’ and ‘taking impulsive action’ which in fact would hardly appear on the characters who grew up in a totalitarian society. For example, in some Japanese and Chinese dystopian YA fictions, the characters’ actions and speaking usually tend to cautious, forbearing and implicit. By contrast, in *The Great Library*, even though Jess should be a cool and meticulous character - considering his experience as a book smuggler who grew up with a death risk, when he thought the heroine might be dead, he loses all the control and camouflage and bangs on the door like a madman on a train full of enemies. When he finds out she had tricked him and hid in his carriage, his first reaction is not worried, happy, asking her the reasons or helping her to be more safety, but is angry to mad and says to her, ‘You used me’ (p.256).

Some online comments from Chinese readers have talked about this characteristic of Western DYAL protagonists:

‘In *Hunger Games*, the only point that could not persuade me is, in an area where people are facing living problems, those children’s brains are still filled of middle-class romanticism and family values.’ (Ni, 2018)

‘I’m confused that why those teenagers in the Western YAL are always showed so irritable...perhaps this is a kind of cultural estrangement?’ (Song, 2018)

‘Sometimes I feel the protagonists are not like real teenagers. They are extremely impulsive in the environment described in the books, which is not very reasonable.’ (Dongxi, 2018)

Some of the participants in the Chinese focus group also discussed:

[I]: ‘I feel the personalities of most protagonists in American DYAL are straight-lined, and their standpoints and beliefs will not change much throughout story.’

[L]: ‘And the personalities of characters in Japanese DYAL always like wool balls.’

‘Wool ball’ probably is a suitable description for many Eastern DYAL character’s actions and thoughts, which emphasizes the sense of ‘not straight’. One instance is Satoshi Tezuka’s change on his standpoint in *Library Wars* - which has mentioned in the last chapter, whilst there are more similar examples which could be easily found in Japanese

dystopian YA fictions¹⁵⁷. The Chinese focus group explored the reasons of this difference about the characters' personalities between the Eastern and Western DYAL:

[B]: In comparison with American DYAL, the Japanese works always could make my heart heavier, and sometimes uncomfortable. I usually feel there are some horrible things hidden behind the texts when I read Japanese DYAL.

[F]: Maybe the social problems shown in the book let you feel uncomfortable.

[I]: Reading *Ink and Bone* did not make me have the sensation of asphyxia as when I read some Japanese or Chinese dystopian fictions.

[L] The personalities of characters in Japanese DYAL generally are more flexible, while their actions are mostly in gray zone, like Satoshi Tezuka. I think it is caused by the whole Japanese literature environment...My personal opinion is, that is just the Japanese people's favour on the character's changes.

[M]: I also agree with it. I believe it relates to Japanese people's habits of mind.

Similarly, if thinking about the actions and thoughts of protagonists shown in Chinese DYAL, it will be interesting to find that even if the characters used Western names, some of their behaviors still are closer to Chinese style. Hence, it could be said that in both Eastern and Western DYAL, whatever the appearance of the protagonists, they are mostly shaped based on the author's 'Self', although some supporting roles may be shaped from 'the Other'.

On the other hand, the readers' responses shown above actually also have revealed how their standpoints of 'Self' and 'the Other' work throughout their reading. When their standpoints disaccord with the author's, the cultural shock may occur.

Besides the design of social background and characters in the story, the authors' start points of 'Self' and 'the Other' also would conduce to the differences on the other aspects between the Eastern and Western texts: their expressions on the issue around love and sex, freedom and discipline; their propensities to individualism or collectivism; and their assumptions about the future - these will be discussed in the next sections.

¹⁵⁷ For example, at the end of *From the New World* (Kishi, 2008), the resister protagonists became the new generation of 'secret keeper' and rulers. In *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (Miyazaki, 1982), the heroine finally chose to kill thousands of embryos, which were the hope of 'new generation of perfect human'.

7.2 Love and Sexuality: The Empowerment to Adulthood

Throughout history and across cultures and societies, sexuality has always been a main issue of contention in the discourse-power nexus in human society. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault (1990: p.27) argues that, ‘There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses.’ When comparing Foucault’s examples, the instances of American censorship before the 1960s which are given by Wang (1990), and the censorship cases in contemporary China, some similarities can be found, especially the forced silencing of people’s sexual expression. For example, the list of most banned books in the US always includes young adult novels and the most controversial issues always include sexuality amongst other things. Even at present, in most of developed areas in the world, ‘it is easy for young people to access all sorts of media, where criminal acts, bloody descriptions, death, war, drugs and divorce are gratuitously offered – yet, interestingly, not sexuality, as it remains a paradoxical taboo’ (AZ, a participant from English-language group, 2017).

Nevertheless, ‘sexuality’ has become a conspicuous presence in both Western and Eastern DYAL. Texts that portray sexuality are a special focus of censorship. In an illuminating example, one finds very similar expressions in the three different texts presented below: Foucault’s description of the school in the 18th century, a passage from contemporary dystopian YAL, and the announcement of SHDF office of GAPP in 2017.

- ✧ ‘Salzmann even organised an experimental school which owed its exceptional character to a supervision and education of sex so well thought out that youth’s universal sin would never need to be practiced there.....a certain reasonable, limited, canonical, and truthful discourse on sex was prescribed for him - a kind of discursive orthopedics.’ (Foucault and Hurley, 1990: p.28)
- ✧ ‘Japan is transformed into a pure nation with the world’s most wholesome public morals. The concept of dirty jokes does not even exist. With all filthy things eliminated, the children grow up healthy and happy as they carry a bright future on their shoulders.’ (*Shimoneta*, Chapter one)
- ✧ ‘Taking strict action against online obscene, pornographic, and the other harmful material is a necessary requirement for the construction of a socialist harmonious society and for the purification of a healthy environment for youngsters and teenagers to grow up in.’ (SHDF office, 2007, cited from Hockx, 2015: p.116)

In these three paragraphs, it is easy to find the similarities such as the need to purify discourse of sexuality, the reference to sex and how this is linked to the engineering of particular social environments, such as a pure Japanese national, a socialist, harmonious society as well as the enclosed and separate space of the experimental school that Foucault refers to. This is also a typical instance that how DYAL connects the imaginary text and the reality in the term of censorship on sexuality, which could easily evoke readers' empathy - particularly Chinese readers', because of the political and social environment of their countries.

On the other hand, sexuality is also a weapon for young adult characters to resist the terrible world and express themselves in the DYAL. As Trites argues (2010: p.115), YA novels often expose sexuality as a discursive concept, and set it as a common metaphor for empowerment. Sexuality is the main arena of discipline from adults' world, but also the main means for young adults to oppose that discipline, to engage with others, and as 'a rite of passage to help them define themselves as having left childhood behind' (p.82).

Because of the lack of comprehensive statistics on the Eastern dystopian texts at present, it is hard to evaluate and compare the average degree of sexual descriptions in the Western and Eastern DYAL. According to my reading experience, the published English-language dystopian YA novels generally would not set sexuality as the core theme of the whole work. In contrast, some published Japanese fictions have made radical attempts in this regard. For example, *Shimoneta* and *From the New World* might be considered as reflecting the struggles around contradictory attitudes towards sexual issues in Japanese society. In China, published dystopian fictions would completely avoid sexuality, whilst some stories posted on the Internet might directly deal with this of issue¹⁵⁸. This phenomenon can be linked to the influence of the social environment on the writing and publishing arena (the Figure 2-3 framework in Chapter 2).

By contrast, 'love' is a more common theme that appears in almost all Western and Eastern

¹⁵⁸ For example: *The Dome* series (Huangcunzhang, 2018.)

dystopian YA fiction. In my opinion, love acts as a metaphor for empowerment in a similar manner to sexuality, although less radical and aggressive. Meanwhile, as discussed in Chapter 4, the treatment of 'love' differs in American and Japanese DYAL. I would argue that many contemporary Western dystopian YA novels tend to regard love as a final answer, whilst in some Eastern fiction, it is a more subordinate element in the plot. In *Library Wars* and *Infernal Affairs*, the characters regard their beliefs more important than love. It is interesting to observe that while Anglophone DYAL treats love as supreme, the attitudes towards love in the Eastern DYAL echo the sentiments expressed in the following passage by the Hungarian poet Sándor Petőfi's, written two centuries ago: 'Liberty, love! These two I need. For my love I will sacrifice life, for liberty I will sacrifice my love.'¹⁵⁹ This could be regarded to a connection of universal value between the Western past and Eastern present.

From the focus groups' discussion around love and sexuality in DYAL, it is striking that in both groups, the majority of older participants (age above 25-year-old) tend to either have a lesser interest in love or make more negative comments on the treatment of love in Western narratives, though they still admit the importance of love in YA fiction:

[AT] I do not have any problems with love when it is approached as an element that contributes to enrich the story, or to develop its theme. Yet, I am personally not very keen on stories in which love is the final, magical solution which makes any problem to be solved, an approach that Western stories sometimes follow by idealizing or exaggerating it.

[MA] I think that when that ingredient becomes too much and ends up eating the main story (taking down a totalitarian reign, for example), the book loses power in its storytelling. But I do think that feelings such as love are noble and very relevant in stories about ending evil reigns/governments.

[AZ]: To me, (sometimes) it's a cheap and worn out trick. I want love to make sense in a story, to grow organically between the characters...Real romantic love is a really hard thing - never a convenient solution, as it is often depicted.

[N]: I tend to think it as a commercial means to attract teenager readers, because they are at the period of defining themselves and being conscious with adult's emotional desire and sexual impulse. It is a natural phenomenon due to the requests from the market.

¹⁵⁹ <https://modernpoetryintranslation.com>

[B]: I dislike such kind of stories which put love as final answer. Love may act as a source of courage for the characters, but victory should be achieved through other things – intelligence, willpower, rigorous plans and activities.

However, most of the younger participants' (age between 20 and 25 years old) attitudes on setting love as the final answer of the story is more acceptable than the older group, which actually reflects the differences of reading needs on this issue between different age groups:

[A]: Why not? Love is one of the most important human virtues. To some extent, it could be called a 'belief'. As shown in many classic literary works, love is meaningful to the spirit and mentality and gives the possibilities of changing individual's life. That is good.

[C]: I can accept these love stories well. Love can make the stories funnier.

[M]: I can understand why the authors set love theme so important. And I would read those stories with well-designed plot, regardless of whether the final answer is love or not.

[W]: It is ok for me. Generally, love is just the essential result along with the development of plot.

While some online commentators criticize Japanese literature such as *Shimoneta* as vulgar or superficial, most members of the two focus groups expressed positive opinions regarding the presence of sexuality in (D)YAL and felt that it should not be forbidden or censored so strictly in YAL content.

[AT]: I learnt quite a lot from YA books, which also gave me a deeper and more accurate vision of sexuality. In my opinion, censorship is not a good idea and is not helpful most of the times. I do not think sexuality should be censored in YA books as far as it adds literary value to the story and is presented and tackled from a respectful perspective.

[DA]: I don't think it is necessary to block it because when we do it, we create a taboo about sexuality. But I also think that everything has its time, especially when it comes to talking to children about sexuality.

[AZ]: I believe that late pre-teens and teens should be able to read about sex in their books, but believable, relatable sexuality, not pornstar or harlequin-literature type fantasies.

[M]: I think that sexual description in texts can affect the readers. It does not need to be banned, but a rating system should be established.

[X]: The creation of literature should not be limited. Particularly in DYAL, such kind of content can sometimes lead me to think about the social problems happened by my side.

[N]: Most of young people will not descend to wrong-doing only through reading R18 works. They only read to satisfy their curiosity. The school and family education should be more responsible for guiding young adults, but not novels.

Furthermore, some Chinese participants connected sexuality in literature to the issue of sexual education. Almost all Chinese participants admitted that they acquired sexual knowledge through reading pirated mangas, adult novels, online literature or watching animation when they were teenagers or even children, because sexual education was lacking in most areas of China and sexuality was a taboo topic in traditional Chinese families.

While contemporary education has become more liberal and more willing to discuss issues related to sexuality, there still exists a disconnect between the treatment of sexuality in education and the reality relevant to sensitive issues. As shown above, young people always find ways to access forbidden knowledge. At the moment, it has become much easier for them to find such information through the internet. Nevertheless, the lack of formal sexual education in developing and undeveloped areas prevents young people from having adequate knowledge or resources, especially when subjected to sexual violence and other criminal behaviors. Besides, if the government tries to interfere harshly, it may mean to damage the cultural industry in an extreme way, just as some results have been shown in Chapter 4 and 5. This is fast becoming a serious social issue in the East, a fact that dystopian writers are well aware of. As a result, sexuality is increasingly starting to be dealt with in Chinese and Japanese dystopian YA works. It could be said that, the imaginary measures for keeping people's 'innocence' and 'perfection' from sexuality, and the results led by that shown in the Eastern DYAL, mostly are the exact metaphor of the authors' concerns about censorship in the real world.

In conclusion, I would argue that the presence of love and sexuality in dystopian YA fiction functions to arouse young adults' consciousness on the empowerment to their adulthood, despite sometimes the expression is exaggerated. It is interesting to find that, while the expression of 'love words' tends to be suppressed and reserved in many Japanese and

Chinese dystopian YA stories, some Eastern texts boldly set censorship on 'sex' or 'sexual action' as the central theme of the story. In contrast, the Western DYAL always set 'romantic story' or 'love between characters' as the key story line, while very few Western texts directly adopt censorship on 'sex' as main theme. Nevertheless, according to both Western and Eastern readers' responses, they agreed that, although censorship is necessary for some situations, the guidance of the applications of knowledge is more important and constructive rather than simply banning sensitive content. Through reading these books, the readers could become aware of contentiousness of sexuality and web of power relationship that surrounds and constructs the discourse on sexuality, then may then lead them to reflect on the societies in which they live.

7.3 Freedom or Discipline: The Library as a Power Field

When people have the freedom to choose, they choose wrongly.

The Giver film (Noyce, 2014)

The modern library was a production of modern politics, a space designed for public enlightenment and the spreading of knowledge (Rong, 2009). In this regard, the library and the school have much in common, in terms of their social function and perceived mission.

Foucault argues (2012: p.170), ‘discipline makes individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise.’ The success of disciplinary power depends upon three instruments: hierarchical observation; normalizing judgment; and the examination, which leads to critical thinking about education, censorship and all the features of specific places and institutions (e.g. school, military camp, hospital and library). According to this perspective, the library could be seen as the place where the discipline is reproduced, just like the school; or, in the other words, where the ‘power fields’ and the power-net extend.

In the contemporary dystopian YA fictions that form the core of this study, the representation of the library conforms to traditional notions: it is the bastion of knowledge, feeding the fire of civilization. However, the practices *within* the libraries in *The Great Library* series and *Library Wars* series make them highly unconventional spaces. As revealed in Chapter 6, in *The Great Library*, the library has become the ruthless supreme authority in the world. Important knowledge and truth are held by the upper elites of the library and these are, in turn, the key object of power struggles. As a result, the library functions to arrest the development of human civilization rather than promote it. There is also a special army that includes terrible killer machines (Iron Lion), tasked with chasing book thieves and smugglers. In *Library Wars*, the library seems, at first, to be the last stronghold protecting citizens’ reading rights. Although the central government has passed MBA (censorship laws), it

allows local libraries to own their armed force to protect books. However, the presence of an armed defense force transforms the library into a virtual battlefield. The primary positions of the library in these two series are opposite to each other. In one series, it represents freedom, and the base of people's resistance; but in the other series, it becomes a tool of totalitarianism.

About the setting of library in these dystopian works, the participants in The Chinese focus group expressed their views forcefully:

[M]: That is possible and reasonable (that the setting of the library in *The Great Library* series could exist). It reminds me of the 'burning books and burying literati' event which happened in Qin Dynasty. It was also the dominant force trying to consolidate power through limiting the spread of knowledge. As a result, the development of Chinese civilization was slowed down.

[X]: Yes, as in many countries in the Middle Ages, only nobles could learn to read and write. Besides, the Church in Europe also suppressed the development of technology. It will be not surprised if comparing such kind of things with our history.

[W]: Though it does not accord with reality, it still quite logical.

[E]: It is just like a black box of knowledge; whoever owns the box would have the power to gain resources. In fact, this is becoming the reality, if considering the serious situation of class solidification around us.

[B]: The superpower of librarians described in the novel makes me think about the ancient flamen, who also had the privilege to learn reading.

[C]: Me too. As well as the monks in the Middle Ages...

[B]: In my opinion, comparing with traditional totalitarian practices, this kind of domination (through controlling knowledge) would perhaps make the regime more stable.

At the same time, the English-language group discussed the possibility of such a knowledge regime in reality:

[KP]: It is more difficult because everything now is digital. It could be easier done in difficult times, like war times.

[AT]: Yes, if we substitute the word 'library' for 'knowledge and the way to access it', it could happen in certain contexts.

[MA]: I agree with KP. Nowadays the control comes through internet and TV, not necessarily through books.

These responses demonstrate again how readers connect the content of DYAL to their own

experiences and knowledge. They reveal the spaces where DYAL and real human history worldwide intersect, and possible historical inspirations of the fictitious regime portrayed in the novels. The stories could be seen as the ‘reflection’ of the real world, to lead their readers to rethink history, and help them forge a connection between a fictitious future and the real present – examining how information is controlled through modern technologies and class prerogatives.

I would also point out that the nature of the libraries in both *The Great Library* series and *Library Wars* series shares many characteristics: they are power fields without attributes (referring to the concept of ‘power field’ mention in Chapter 2.3.3). The opposition between them is due to the attribute/presence of dominant discourse within them. While the setting of *The Great Library* appears at the beginning subversive, an analysis of this novel conducted in Chapter 6, from a discourse-power perspective, reveals its hidden internal logic. As analysed in the last Chapter, the practices employed by the Library managers to control knowledge in this novel do not much differ from the actions that privileged classes carry out to control any valuable resource at various points in history.

Referencing the discussion above, when talking about the logic of the plot of *Library Wars*, it is interesting to note the diversity of the responses between the two groups. In the English-language group, the answers generally were ‘it could not happen’, though the members discussed some other possibilities. The Chinese group, on the other hand, found the representation of libraries in the novel to be unrealistic. However, they still believed in the possibility of local resistance or organizations based on private libraries existing in such kinds of society.

(The Chinese group)

[F]: The confrontation between the libraries and the central government...I feel it is barely realistic. The only real example I can think of is the underground library in the conflict area of Iraq. However, this kind of complete war states will disappear in the future.

[S]: Even if the dystopian states become true, I am not sure what kind of role the libraries will play.

[E]: Impossible. The central authority is always strong and powerful.

[F]: I have to say the government in this book is too weak.

[B]: In reality, the government will not allow that. The library is established for safeguarding and spreading knowledge...Whenever it starts to have its own private forces able to resist the government, its nature would have been changed already.

(English-language group)

[DA] I do not think it could become true. The government does not want that people are informed about what is going on and demands their rights.

[AT]: I am not sure, although I think that the idea of *Library Wars* is really original. The libraries are funded by the government. Therefore, I think they have no chance to create any army to oppose it.

[MA]: I do not think it can happen. Yes, there will be people that will try to protect those books, but I do not think there will be something like a defense force.

[The researcher] In The Chinese group, some participants thought it might happen in a turbulent society.

[DA] It reminds me of *Fahrenheit 451*...it is a crime to have books in your house. And a few people know where all the books are, and they keep telling the stories to the others. Or maybe what could happen is that people only will read books relating to their fields and some other books will be ignore.

[KP]: In a sense it does happen. It is the overspecialization of our times. People focus on a very narrow field and seldom have time to read anything besides that (in their profession).

Their discussions revealed their thinking about the connection between the power of controlling knowledge and political power, which was developed from their reading of this book and the other related works. Interpreting the discussion, there are features suggesting that their disagreements are partly because of the contrasting social and cultural experiences and knowledge developed in the real world. Readers are prompted by the story to think about more political issues in their own realities, and invest the hope of freedom, even in an extremely strict society. This may be one of the most important functions of DYAL within this genre, as well as validating key elements of the frameworks raised in Chapter 2.

Furthermore, not all the participants agreed with the authors' standpoints on the freedom of resistance. One participant from The Chinese group, [A] commented,

‘I do not agree with the idea within some works that encourages people to struggle with the government to gain access to “sensitive knowledge”. However, I can understand that this is just an expression of people’s admiration for freedom. It is still an extreme form of individualism. Particularly in term of technology, sensitive knowledge always has potentially high destructive power. If someone does such things in the reality, he or she will be not much different from a terrorist.’

Her contribution raised several very sensitive and critical topics, chiefly about the power of knowledge - which counterintuitively can inflict huge damage on real societies; also about the boundary between resistance and terrorism; and equally in relation to the issue of characters’ choices between individualism and collectivism. This last vital theme will be discussed further in the next section. Both the dystopian fictions and their readers from East and West have formulated divergent answers to these moral and political dilemmas, and probably will proliferate these into the future. Nevertheless, both the fictional narratives themselves, and the responses and debate that they generate from readers, verify in this study that discursive power consistently complicates and entangles the interactions of the imagined and the real across the whole DYAL creating-publishing-reading experience.

7.4 Individualism or Collectivism: The Choice of Power Group

On looking backward at the history, one can find many environmental and cultural reasons for the bifurcation of individualism and collectivism between the West and East. For example, it has been suggested that the agricultural civilization and the long heritage of clan culture and Confucian culture led China and Japan to appreciate collectivism (Wang, 2014). In contrast, studies examining cultural changes in individualism in the U.S. suggest that there has been a rise in individualism (Ogihara, 2017). However, either in the West or in the East, the existence of ‘individual’ and the uniqueness of everyone’s personality becomes more prominent, especially among the younger generations, while the traditional opinions about Japanese and Americans regarding individualism/collectivism have been subverted (Takano and Osaka, 2018). As a result, individualism and collectivism are existing simultaneously in China and Japan, and cause people’s contradictory minds and actions. In my opinion, the description of individualistic and collectivistic actions – including conflicts and compatibility - in some Chinese and Japanese dystopian YA fictions, is also a reflection of Eastern people's concerns on redefining their social position and the future of society form. Especially, the contradictoriness of character’s tendency on individualism or collectivism could return to the concepts of ‘group power’ and ‘power field’ that I suggested in Chapter 2.3: the character’s actions and minds would be influenced by the power group where he or her sets in currently, while when staying in different group or different power field, they may show different attitudes or actions.

In my review, I noted that in DYAL written by Chinese and Japanese authors, the existence of ‘power group’ (collectivity) is generally clearer than in American DYAL, even though some characters with strong personalities and sharp minds. For instance, in *Library Wars*, the protagonist Iku was a strongly rebellious female, while the ‘power group’ she belonged to (Library Defence Force) also showed monolithic collective consciousness. In this group, Iku is not a leader, nor more important than the other members.

If giving a comparison on the characters' actions in the Eastern and Western DYAL texts under review, it could find out that, the tone of individual heroism in many Eastern stories

is generally not so strong as shown in most Western texts. In both *Library Wars* series and *Infernal Affairs*, the positions of the protagonists are not much higher than the other characters, as well as the final victory is the result of all the people's efforts who in the resisting camp, which is mostly like 'the victory of a group or a camp's plan'. The other characters are not only supporting roles in background, but the essential part of key plot. The result that the super AI in *Infernal Affairs* could be closed is depended on all the characters' perfect cooperation in every section. In contrast, the events in the story of *Great Library* series have more sense of 'random' – a random revolution led by the protagonist and a few friends.

The Chinese focus group also give their opinions about this bifurcation:

[X] I feel the Western DYAL would like to focus on the description of individual actions. In comparison, the Eastern works emphasize the sense of collectivity much more.

[A] Though I think the Eastern fictions also have showed the individual heroism, the number of the Eastern works which displayed the power of collectivity and groups is much more than the Western ones. It might relate to our traditional culture.

[S] And Japanese traditions.

[A] I think the readers can find their own position easier when reading a story of a group, to put himself or herself instead of a member of the group.

The group's responses proved/strengthened the arguments about the cultural differences in collectivism shown earlier. The point that the member A mentioned about the reader's empathy to a character is also interesting. More characters in a group probably mean more choices for readers to empathize with. It could call more related data collection in the future.

The other two Chinese members and a member from English-language group gave their opinions that the setting of 'group power' in the story might help the plot more logical and critical:

[B] The power of the individual is limited. Therefore, I think the dystopian story which involved collectivity looks more logical. Otherwise, it hard to explain how a teenager can get victory in a totalitarian society.

[M] Sometimes the group also can get negative results, such as low efficiency. If the DYAL includes critical thinking about this term, it will be

funnier to read.

[AT] I would say that collectivism as a means of achieving victory is a more believable approach, given the hard context that dystopias often present and the complicated challenges that characters are forced to face in this type of story.

As the story *Library Wars* showed, a group may have spies, or someone may change his or her standpoint because of various reasons. This setting can make the story more realistic, while make the plot twist and turn more vivid.

Moreover, the English-language Focus Group explored the change of Western YA authors' attitude about team cooperation or 'collective power' from another aspect:

[MA] I think that individualism and collectivism answer to different literary styles and I believe that the collective hero is currently the literary model for modern societies. The fact that a group of people can start or lead a revolution, take down governments or change significant laws becomes nowadays a more hopeful and possible horizon.

[AZ] Basically, I think the individual hero stems from "the chosen one" archetype that goes all the way back to the ancient epics. Interestingly, in the West, the idea of group really took off with Roleplaying Games, as the idea of "The Party" was modelled after Tolkien's Fellowship. In dystopian literature, where the characters are often "the best of the downtrodden", and are therefore much more human, a group combining different skills and virtues makes much more sense.

This argument can be verified by many American dystopian YA fictions, including *the Great Library*. However, I would point out that most American dystopian YA fictions still set the protagonist as the leader of a group, more than 'a normal member in a term', while the 'group' which the main characters belong to in those fictions tends to smaller than in the Eastern fictions, normally not more than 3 or 5 persons. American DYAL generally give a sense that the turning point of the story is pushed by the protagonists' individual actions and decisions; in contrast, the changes of situation happened in the Eastern DYAL tend to be described as the combination of all the characters' actions – for example, the success of the plan that escorting the author to American consulate in *Library Wars* (Vol.4), or the success of the plan that destroying super AI in *Infernal Affairs*.

As conclusion, for the Western DYAL, the past traditions make it tend to show the

characteristics of individualism and personal heroism, though the authors have started to pay more attention to the effect and attraction of the group. In contrast, the Eastern DYAL generally looks the group power as an important part to push the development of the plot. Nevertheless, the fading of collectivism and the changes of time also make a sense of contradictory attitudes around collectivity, while the unique personality of characters have become emphasized.

7.5 Final Conclusions and Implications of the Study

‘Some horrible things have happened in this world, while people are still not aware. - When I notice that, my recognition of the world has totally changed.’

Tetsuya, 2014. *Poison City*

‘Knowledge is innocent; it is human beings who are not innocent.’

[B], a participant from The Chinese focus group

7.5.1 Returning to the Research Questions

For young people – particularly those living in sensitive political environments - literature is not only a way of understanding and imagining the world, but also an effective tool for expressing their own discourses and for contending with the powers that impact on their reality. Based on this research, I would argue that its sociological properties are the essential and indivisible part of YA literature, especially for dystopian YA literature, which invariably focuses on sensitive social issues.

This study has hence suggested a sociological approach for analysing contemporary DYAL. The review of sociology of literature (Chapter 2), and the historical review of the development and changes in (D)YAL in America, Japan and China (Chapters 4 and 5), have helped to verify a framework of the interactions among those involved in the production process of literature (also established in Chapter 2). In particular, Chinese chapters have displayed in detail how (D)YAL developed in such a complex and unique political and cultural environment, and how it has been shaped in its present forms. They show how Chinese (D)YAL has maintained the balance between obedience and resistance as it reflects reality, and provides evidence to vouchsafe the framework applied in this study.

The research questions posed in Chapter 1 were the following:

What is the role of censorship, power and knowledge in the selected DYAL texts?

In what ways are the social and cultural experiences of authors and readers reflected in their views of dystopia?

In Chapter 6, I designed a framework derived from Foucault's theories of knowledge, discourse and power which allowed an insight into the authors' thoughts on the representation of society in their works. The analysis of three texts from three countries based on this framework, uncovered the relationship between power and knowledge—and the relevant conflicts around discourses revealed in those dystopian YA fictions closely reflect Foucault's theories. The analysis revealed that the selected dystopian fictions addressed issues relevant to each context, with 'discourse power' being the core point of contention among the different forces in the stories; while knowledge (information or truth) is the carrier of discourse and is the target of these forces. The analysis also exposed how the fictitious futures in dystopian fiction relate to the writers' knowledge, experiences, cultural habits and concerns in reality (both past and present). The ways that the authors assume and describe the relationship between ideological powers and the changing process of discourse power in their stories, are deeply influenced by their own social environment.

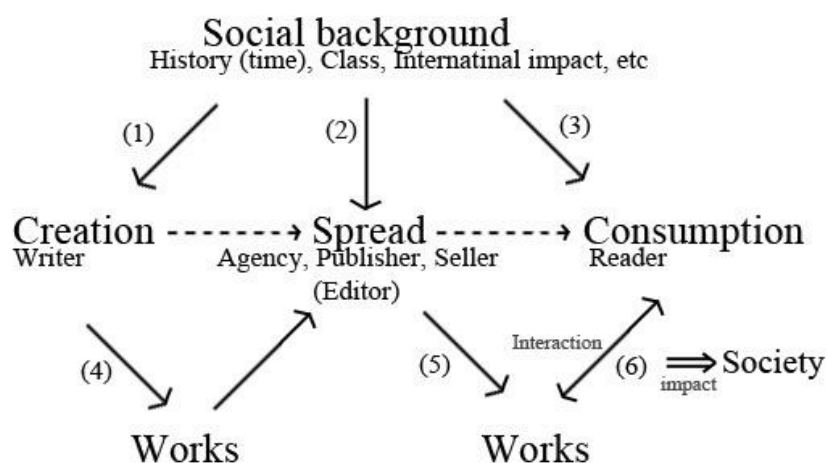
In general, I found the futures displayed in the 'Eastern' DYAL are not as hopeful or redemptive as the ones shown in the Western fictions. This may be a consequence of long historically sedimented traditions Eastern thought and experience, as well as the more intense and stressful social environment of some Eastern countries more recently. On the other hand, the complex and diverse characteristics of the Japanese DYAL, in particular, reflect the conflict and integration between Western and Eastern traditions and cultures in that country. In some Japanese dystopian fictions, the control and discipline are less visible, or are considered as the basal supports of the societies, centred on democracy and freedom. There is often a delicate balance between these, which is different from the distinct confrontation dynamic shown in most Western dystopian YA fictions. Moreover, the emotions (particularly love) of characters described by Eastern authors are generally more ambiguous and indistinct than those described in the Western DYAL. I would argue that this mainly results from the historical, cultural and political environment in which the authors grow up. This aligns with the spatiotemporal characteristics of DYAL proposed in Chapter 2, and one of the contributions of this study is that exploring these characteristics

through the lens of the sociology of literature helps to shed light on this alignment.

In Chapter 7, my study took a different angle and examined key points of DYAL from ‘East’ and ‘West’, combined with readers’ responses to the texts, to address the second research question. In both the Eastern and Western dystopian texts, the plots are generally more exaggerated and outlandish than the events that have happened or are happening in reality, potentially attracting the young readers’ attention and encouraging them to think more deeply about their reality. However, there will always be gaps between the authors’ perspectives as displayed in the original texts and the understanding of readers, particularly those from contrasting cultural backgrounds. The cultural impact can be seen when the readers try to bridge those gaps, raising issues about ‘Self’ and ‘Other’. In this study, I have proposed the concepts of ‘Self’ or ‘the Other’ for helping understand the differences between Eastern and Western DYAL - as well as the readers’ responses to them from a sociological perspective. As I have shown through the analysis, the authors’ moral imaginations and experiences determine how they design the discourse power relationship in their writing, therefore the texts from different cultural and political backgrounds show different characteristics and paradoxes within the relationships and conflicts among protagonists. The readers’ responses showed that reading texts from different cultural backgrounds can indeed provide readers with multidimensional perspectives which could be a first step in helping to develop more critical thinking about texts. This can be seen in the readers’ responses to the fictions that involved themes to do with libraries and control of knowledge (information), which allowed the authors to guide into reflecting on the issues of discourse and power. However, there were cases where the readers were unable to understand or accept the culturally unfamiliar setting of the plot and characters and sometimes misunderstandings and confusion arose. This may explain why some dystopian YA fictions are less popular or accepted in countries with different cultural and political systems to those of the narrative.

At the same time, the authors’ writing and readers’ thinking also reflects their own understanding about issues of discourse and power, and even shows how the cultural and political impact shaped their thinking and habitus. In this circular dynamic, ‘text’ is at the

core of different discourses. It could be said these DYAL fictions open a special space for dialogue which may be harder to express in other spaces. These spaces involve libraries, writers, books and readers and thus also provide a meta-discourse that confirms the power of readers and texts to at least question and perhaps even begin to create change. Analysing these dystopian texts and the external aspects (authors' creation and readers' responses) with the methods used in this research, reveals how discourse power runs throughout the whole circulation (social and cultural environment – authors - stories - readers) of texts, both inside and outside. This again proves the use of the framework I proposed in Chapter 2:



To some degree, the analysis of the three selected texts and the readers' responses to them could be seen as proof of the idea of the internal non-static relationship between social factors (history, politics and culture) and the process of writing and reading dystopian YA fictions. While the connections between DYAL and materiality occur through representational encodings and refiguring of social energy and cultural imagery of the kind on which dystopian literature tends to depend (e.g. the relationship of imaginative writing to discourse power), they are not reducible to naive moral instruction or referential correspondences.

Any culture in part consists of the stockpile of accumulated meanings upon the repetition of which its members rely on, and which are germane to the constitution and materialization of power within the culture and in the lives of its members. Dystopian literature is itself a mimetic relation of production in that it is intimately connected to

status hierarchies, oppressive regimes of control, resistances to, and subversions of these, and struggles elsewhere in the culture. This can be seen, for example, in the sexual subversion shown in some dystopian YA works discussed earlier. As revealed by the readers' responses, if committed readers indeed eschew the Western myth of an overarching utopian or dystopian metanarrative (e.g. from Christianity to Communism), they nevertheless also dispute the suspicious ideal of a purely local, discontinuous knowledge to be controlled and regulated by 'the authorities'. Therefore, I would argue that DYAL is a historical and cultural production of human society: from creating to reading, the whole process has a cyclical sociological causality, which is exchange and interactivity rather than mimesis or reflection.

7.5.2 Reflections on Methodology

In this study, I adopted a composite research approach to explore the relationship between dystopian YA literature and society and between authors, texts and readers. I found the sociological theories were helpful to understanding this relationship more deeply. The analysis has shown that dystopian literature is not isolated from reality: fictitious worlds in stories are deeply ingrained in the lived experiences of authors and readers, including their views about the 'Other'.

During the process of collecting data online, it became clear that although it differs from traditional field methods, my approach offers advantages (and the move to online research during the pandemic also supports some aspects of this). It made it possible for people living far away from each other to participate in the research through discussions in cyberspace (itself a digital zone readily interpreted in both utopian and dystopian terms). The online method also meant that the recruitment of participants was not restricted by distance and my sample could cover a wider range of contexts. Collecting data online was also shown to be a fast, effective and low-cost method for researchers.

Nevertheless, collecting data online also has its drawbacks. It was a challenge for me to organise a suitable time for all the participants to meet online, particularly as they lived in different time zones. Moreover, in my case, the discussion online depended mostly on

written communication which could be less spontaneous and more open than oral communication. While it was good for the participants to have more time to think and organise their language, it was more difficult for me to have a more immediate connection to the participants' reflections. I learned nonetheless to manage the discussion and interviews and to pay careful attention to the responses.

I have learned a lot during the whole research process, from locating the research questions and objects, finding out the applicable theories and designing the frameworks, to recruiting participants online and organizing their discussion in cyberspace. Every step was new and challenging for me, but also filled with surprises. My working experience and personal reading interests provided me a base to select the books and construct this research. As a researcher from an Eastern country, I hoped to fill one of the existing gaps which are a result of the lack of in-depth English studies on the Eastern DYAL. However, it was still a challenge for me to work out the most appropriate method and theories for this study and these continued to evolve throughout the three years of the study. However, I feel that my understanding of the relevant sociological and literary theories has deepened, and I can see possibilities for engaging with them further in the future. In terms of the empirical research, I learned to take an objective stance and avoid revealing my own standpoints and thinking when collecting data through the group discussions.

One thing that surprised me in a positive way was that the participants showed more diverse, stronger and active opinions than I had imagined, and while they revealed inconsistent understandings on some specific topics (e.g. sex and love, the logic of the character's thinking and actions), their active and strong responses testify to the audiences' autonomy in the non-static 'creating and reading' circulation, while the diversity of their opinions directly induced me to think about the concepts of 'Self' and 'the Other' in this study.

7.5.3 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Like other studies, this one had its limitations. Regarding the selected literature, given I

was mostly familiar with English, Chinese and Japanese cultures and the dystopian texts published by these three languages, I chose the novels from these three countries, even though there are excellent dystopian fictions published by the other languages which also involve the themes of information control, library and censorship. I also had to limit my selection to one text from each country, which was difficult given the range of DYAL published in English, Chinese and Japanese. I therefore selected the books which I considered as well-known representatives suitable for this study, but there is an extensive field waiting for more exploration in the future.

Regarding the empirical side of the study, one of the limitations I struggled to overcome was the difficulty in recruiting Western young adult readers who might also be familiar with Eastern DYAL and by the time I discovered the most optimal forums online (such as the Light Novel group on Facebook) it was too late to change the groups of participants. Therefore, the participant numbers in the English-language group were slightly lower than I had planned and the data regarding Western readers' responses to Eastern DYAL is partial. In addition, due to the limitation of time, languages and recruitment channels, I did not find out any suitable participants from the United States and Japan. I'm certain that involving participants from these countries, as well as others, would offer future studies significant new routes and findings.

Further research in the field of DYAL could build upon the findings of this study by applying my analytical framework to other dystopian YA texts to establish if it works for texts from countries other than those which I focused on here. More extensive research in this field could provide further insightful reflections on the discourse-power relationship constructed in contemporary DYAL. The framework also has the potential to be adapted to the teaching of these texts in schools, as a way of approaching significant issues in the study of history, literature and politics, such as discourse and power. In addition, based on the primary results of this thesis, a discourse-power framework might be developed for analysing the production process of (D)YAL in different cultural contexts.

In addition, some of the critical questions raised in the study could be explored further, for instance, the concept of childhood innocence seen through the lens of the development of technology. How will childhood and adolescence change as technology continues developing in the future, as represented in some of the dystopian fictions mentioned here? As revealed in *The Great Library*, *Shimoneta* and other dystopian YA fictions, desire is a characteristic of human nature that encourages people to explore the unknown regardless of their age. In the digital era, the way we access libraries and information is changing and it is much easier for children and young adults to access information (and also be exposed to misinformation), which means that it becomes more difficult for censorship to work effectively. At the same time, the development of technology is also changing the global political power structures and class solidification, and confrontation has become a serious issue on a global scale.

Finally, I must mention the theme of pandemics which are also common in dystopian YA fictions. In Chapter 4, I had already mentioned how this theme (along with other disaster themes) can result in changing the direction of civilization; since 2020, this theme has become more significant and meaning for all of us. How will these political changes in the real world as a result of the Covid pandemic influence DYAL authors' writing and readers' thoughts? This is a valuable question for further discussion and the answers could be explored through a sociological approach that could have an impact on education and social culture.

7.5.4 Final Thoughts

The future of human society is uncertain and depends on humanity's choices. DYAL remains an enduring and vital resource for authors and readers to explore these potential choices and to imagine them in practice in their unlimited possibilities. If we believe that experimenting and making mistakes is a part of human nature, demonstrating 'undesirable' futures might be one of most important functions of DYAL. The dystopian YA fictions from West and East mentioned in this study offer metaphors for many social problems in reality and sound an alarm for their readers. In particular, they allow readers to interpret the

diverse ways in which power operates in sensitive discourse fields, affording a better understanding of how society works— something which is a major component in young adults' socialization. This study has defended the relevance of the sociology of literature from a new angle to provide an exploration of the spatiotemporal characteristics of DYAL and thus demonstrate the circular relationship between society, author, text and reader. At the same time, the new framework of analysis designed special for DYAL (table 6-3) can reveal both the internal logic and the paradoxes of discourse-power relationship within the stories more clearly, opening a possible new direction for the comparative study of DYAL.

I quote the sentence written on the walls of Sage Academy in *From the New World* to conclude this thesis:

‘The power of imagination is what changes everything.’ (Vol.2 p.495)

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Appendix A: Ethical Approval



University
of Glasgow

College of Social
Sciences

2 May 2017

Dear Lan Ma

College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Project Title: Books in the Future: An Exploration of Discourse and Power in the Dystopian Young Adults' Literature (1990-2015)

Application No: 400160073

The College Research Ethics Committee has reviewed your application and has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. It is happy therefore to approve the project, subject to the following conditions:

- Start date of ethical approval: 2 May 2017
- Project end date: 1 October 2017
- Any outstanding permissions needed from third parties in order to recruit research participants or to access facilities or venues for research purposes must be obtained in writing and submitted to the CoSS Research Ethics Administrator before research commences. Permissions you must provide are shown in the *College Ethics Review Feedback* document that has been sent to you.
- The data should be held securely for a period of ten years after the completion of the research project, or for longer if specified by the research funder or sponsor, in accordance with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research: (http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_227599_en.pdf)
- The research should be carried out only on the sites, and/or with the groups and using the methods defined in the application.
- Any proposed changes in the protocol should be submitted for reassessment as an amendment to the original application. The *Request for Amendments to an Approved Application* form should be used:
<http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/forms/staffandpostgraduateresearchstudents/>

Yours sincerely,

Dr Muir Houston
College Ethics Officer

Muir Houston, Senior Lecturer

College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer

Social Justice, Place and Lifelong Education Research

University of Glasgow

School of Education, St Andrew's Building, 11 Eldon Street

Glasgow G3 6NH

0044+141-330-4699 Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet (English and Chinese)

Participant Information Sheet

参与者知情单

Project Title:

Books in the Future: An Exploration of Discourse and Power in the Dystopian Young Adults' Literature (1990-2015)

Name of Researcher: LAN MA,

PhD student in the School of Education in the University of Glasgow

Contact email: L.ma.1@research.gla.ac.uk [English] andrettacat9@vip.qq.com [Chinese]

课题名称:

未来中的图书: 关于当代反乌托邦青少文学(1990-2015)中的话语与权力的探讨

研究者: 马兰

格拉斯哥大学, 教育学院在读博士

联系方式: L.ma.1@research.gla.ac.uk [英语] andrettacat9@vip.qq.com [中文]

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

你被诚挚邀请加入一项研究。在做决定之前, 请先了解这项研究的内容以及运作方式。这非常重要。请仔细阅读以下信息, 如有任何疑问、或需要更多信息可向研究者提出。请认真考虑是否要加入这项调查。

感谢阅读。

With the rapid development of new technologies, power and discourse in the 21st century is being redefined and restructured in unprecedented patterns. This change is particularly reflected and inspected in the content of contemporary literary works, including dystopian

YA (Young Adults') Literature. Young people like yourself are growing up with digital technologies around. As a result, your thinking about the operation of future media will differ from any previous generation. I would like to know more about the effects of these new technologies and social changes on young people like yourself.

随着新科技的快速发展，话语和权力在 21 世纪以前所未有的形式被重新定义、构建。这种改变尤其对于当代文学的内容造成了深远影响，包括对反乌托邦青少文学。像你一样的年轻人伴随着数码科技成长。由此，这一代人关于未来媒体的运作的思考与想法将与上一代人不再相同。我希望能够更多地了解这些新科技和社会变革对于像你一样的年轻人们的影响。

The aim of my research is to understand how readers think about the content of dystopian literature for young adults, the changes of these works in the last twenty years, and therefore, your experiences of reading these types of works.

本研究的目的是理解读者们对于反乌托邦青少文学的内容、包括过去 20 多年间这些作品的变化的想法，以及你们在曾经阅读此类作品时的个人经历与感悟。

Participation in the research is voluntary.

是否参与这项研究是义务的以及自愿的。

There will be two web-pages which are built on the social media (English-Facebook; Chinese-Duban) and is only opened to the participants. On the web-page for the reading group, the introduction of the books and comics involved in the research will be given. The discussion will be mainly around the participants' opinions and reading experiences about the relevant works. The data collection will not involve the opinions on specific political problems of real countries, but mainly focus on the discussion about fictions and the development of books in the future.

The group will start in May 2017, and stop in October 2017.

Each group will have a maximum of 15 people. The estimated time commitment of participants is approximately 1 hour per week. The group pages will be only open from 8am to 10pm / UK time during which time the researcher will keep track of posts. The researcher will have the editorial rights to remove or manage any inappropriate post.

Given the sensitivity of some issues involved in the research, the anonymity of the

participants will be strictly protected. The identified personal information (such as names) will not be included as a part of research data.

The summary of research results will be provided upon request.

本研究将会在网上建立两个页面讨论组（英文基于脸谱，中文基于豆瓣，均为私密小组，中文参与者只需加入豆瓣）。在这些只面向参与者的讨论组中，研究者将会给出研究涉及的相关作品的介绍。讨论将主要围绕着参与者对于作品的观点以及阅读经历、感受。数据收集将不涉及针对现实国家的具体政治问题的观点，而是主要集中于涉及的作品内容本身、以及未来图书的发展。

讨论组将于 2017 年 5 月启动，至 2017 年 10 月结束。

每个讨论组最多为 15 人。预计所需参与时间为每周 1 小时左右。讨论组页面将只在英国时间上午 8 点至晚上 10 点开放，以便研究者管理帖子。管理者有权修改或删除任何不适当的帖子。

鉴于研究涉及的一些话题的敏感性，参与者的隐私将得到严密保护。所有能够鉴别个人身份的信息（诸如名字）将不会被包含在最终发布的调研数据中。

如参与者要求，研究结果概要将可提供。

The participants should note that anything posted or written on the online discussion group is considered data and can be used for research purposes (unless they explicitly say they don't want something included). The data will be stored on the researcher's computer, which would be accessed by password. It will be used by the researcher only for academic purposes but not commercial and other purposes. Results will be made available to peers and/or colleagues as: Thesis (e.g. PhD), Journal Articles, Books and Conference Papers. After obtaining the PhD award (June 2018), the participants' personal electronic data will be wiped.

参与者需注意，任何发布于网上讨论组的内容将被视为研究数据，并且可能用于本研究（除非参与者明确提出不希望公开某部分）。数据将被储存于研究者的电脑之中，需要密码访问。研究数据将只被用于学术目的，而非商业或其他目的。研究成果可能会被其他学者阅读、调用：包括研究者的博士论文、出版的学术期刊文章、书籍以及学术会议发布的论文等。在研究者博士毕业后（预计为 2018 年 6 月），参与者的个人电子信息将被删除（以确保隐私安全）。

Confidentiality will be respected subject to legal constraints and professional guidelines.

参与者以及研究数据的机密性将依据法律约束和专业指导方针进行。

This research is funded by the College of Social Sciences (University of Glasgow) through a CoSS scholarship.

This project has been considered and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee

此项研究由格拉斯哥大学社会科学院以奖学金方式提供支持。

此项研究已由学院研究道德伦理委员会审查并批准。

Any further information of the research can be contacted with the researcher (by email).

The concern about the conduct of the research can be contacted with COSS Ethics Officer:

Dr Muir Houston, email: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

关于此研究任何更多的信息可通过邮件询问研究者。如对本研究内容抱有疑虑可联系社会科学院道德伦理办公室：Dr Muir Houston, email: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix C: Consent Form (English and Chinese)

Consent Form

授权书

Title of Project:

Books in the Future: An Exploration of Discourse and Power in the Dystopian Young Adults' Literature (1990-2015)

课题名称:

未来中的图书：关于当代反乌托邦青少文学（1990-2015）中的话语与权力的探讨

Name of Researcher: Lan Ma

研究者：马兰

I confirm that I have read and understood the Plain Language Statement/Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

我确认我已阅读并明了参与者知情单关于此项研究的内容，并且有机会向研究者提问。

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

我理解我的参与是义务的、自愿的，并且可以在任何时候退出研究，不需给予任何理由。

I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym.

我已了解参与者们的信息将被匿名保护。

I understand I have the right to delete or improve any of my own posts in the groups before the group pages are finally closed.

我理解在讨论组最终关闭之前，我有权删除或修改任何讨论组里我自己的帖子。

I give my consent to the use of data for this purpose on the understanding that:

- All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.
- The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- The material will be retained in secure storage for use in future academic research
- The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.
- I agree to waive my copyright to any data collected as part of this project.

基于以下条件，我授权此研究使用我的数据：

- 所有的可以鉴别个人身份的信息（包括名字以及其他）将被匿名处理。
- 数据资料将一直被秘密储存并被机密处理。
- 数据资料将被秘密储存以便将来的学术研究。
- 数据资料将来可能会被用于出版，包括纸媒或数字媒体。
- 我同意放弃我对于在此项研究中个人提供的数据资料的版权。

I agree to take part in this research study ☐

I do not agree to take part in this research study ☐

我同意加入此项研究 ☐

我不同意加入此项研究 ☐

Name of Participant 参与者姓名

Signature 签字

Date 日期

Name of Researcher 研究者姓名

Signature 签字

Date 日期

End of consent form

Appendix D: An Additional Bibliography

This is a primary and incomplete bibliography of Chinese SF and YA literary works implicated utopian or dystopian themes, most of which have been mentioned in this study.

Many Chinese works are lack of Press information - the early ones mostly were published on newspapers or magazines, while the newest ones were only posted online. Therefore, I just list the names of authors and works here.

Verne. J and Yi, R. 1900. Xiu, Y. *Around the World in Eighty Days*

Verne. J and Liang, Q. 1903. *A Captain at Fifteen*

Verne. J and Lu. X. 1903. *A Trip to the Moon*

Huangjiang Diaoshi. 1904. *The Moon Colony*

Xu. N. 1905. *A New Story of Mr. Conch*

Xiaoran Yusheng. 1906. *A Journey to Utopia*

Wu, Y. 1908. *The 10,000th year in Guangxu Dynasty*

Xu, Z. 1909. *An Electrical World*

Lao She. 1933. *Cat Country*.

Chi, S. 1956. *The Elephant without Nose*

Ye, Y. 1976. *A Miracle on Mount Everest*

Ye, Y. 1976. *Xiao Lingtong's Travels in the Future*

Zheng, W. 1979. *Fly to Sagittarius* (another name: *Forward Sagittarius*)

Wei, Y. 1981. *A Tender Dream*

Su, X. 1996. *It isn't death, but love*.

Ma, B. 2005. *City of Silence*

Liu, C. 2006. *The Three-body Problem*

Hao, J. 2012. *Folding Beijing*

Zhang, R. 2012. *Aether*

Sizhe Zangyi 2014. *Infernal Affairs (online)*

Zhensui 2015. *Sky beyond the vision (online)*

Huangcunzhang 2018. *The Dome series160 (online)*

Appendix E: Questions Prepared for Focus Group Discussion

This is the original list of the questions I designed for the focus group discussion. During the process of discussion, some questions were adjusted depending on the current situation.

Nationality:

Age:

Name (pseudonym / code):

1. Personal story about dystopian works

(1.1) What are the first dystopian works (title) you know? How did you know it?

(1.2) How do you generally get the information about this type of works? Do you always pay attention to the new book publishing in this field? (If yes, will you focus on the books from any country?)

(1.3) Have you discussed (talked) about these books with your peers in the past?

(1.4) Do these dystopian texts have any meaning or significance to you?

2. About the contemporary dystopian YA literature

(2.1) What do you think about the rise of this type of works in the 21st century (the reasons)?

(2.2) What do you think about the content of these books, particularly their differences from the classical dystopian works for adults in the early 20th century?

(2.3) What do you think about the differences between American and Japanese dystopian YA literature?

(2.4) What's your opinion on the young protagonists of those works? How do you think about the love narrative in most dystopian YA literature?

(*2.5 for Chinese participants) Have you read any Chinese dystopian YA text in the past?

Your comments?

3. About the selected texts

(3.1) The opinion about the societies described in the texts;

(3.2) The opinion about the solutions to the dystopian issues given the texts;

(3.3) The opinion about the position of the library and controls on knowledge described in the texts;

(3.4) The opinion about the love stories shown in the texts;

(3.5) The opinion about collectivism or individualistic heroism shown in the texts;

(3.6) The opinion about censorship on sexual books or knowledge inside and outside the texts

(3.7) Like or dislike the texts, reasons.