

Youth fantasy fiction and its journey of literary importation
into Thailand through translation in the 2000s¹

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Abstract

At the dawn of the 2000s, youth fantasy fiction was widely circulated around the globe, and Thailand was one of the countries to participate in this trend of phenomenal enthusiasm of youth fantasy fiction. The objectives of this paper are to explore the influx of translated youth fantasy fiction in Thailand from 2000 to 2010, the phenomenal enthusiasm of youth fantasy fiction, and the impact of the translated youth fantasy fiction on the fields of Thai youth fiction and Thai literature. Through Bourdieu's sociological lens and Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, this paper reveals that the introduction of youth fantasy fiction has brought about numerous impacts to the field of youth fiction in Thailand, including the emergence of a new youth fantasy fiction sub-field, the strengthening of the field of Thai youth fiction and the reproduction of aspects of fantasy fiction by Thai writers. However, the obvious impacts that the surge of youth fantasy fiction had on the field of Thai literature were not as strong as the impacts felt by the field of youth fantasy fiction, especially due to the fields' structures and their operating dynamic.

Keywords: Bourdieu, polysystem theory, fantasy fiction, sociological approach, youth fiction

บทคัดย่อ

ช่วงต้น ค.ศ.2000 วรรณกรรมเยาวชนแนวแฟนตาซีได้รับการเผยแพร่อย่างล้นหลามทั่วโลก และประเทศไทยเป็นหนึ่งในประเทศที่มีส่วนร่วมในกระแสความสนใจอันแรงกล้าอย่างเป็นปรากฏการณ์ต่อวรรณกรรมเยาวชนแนวแฟนตาซีครั้งนี้ วัตถุประสงค์ของบทความนี้คือ เพื่อสำรวจการเดินทางเข้ามาของวรรณกรรมเยาวชนแปลแนวแฟนตาซีในช่วง ค.ศ.2000-2010 ความสนใจอันแรงกล้าอย่างเป็นปรากฏการณ์ต่อวรรณกรรมเยาวชนแนวแฟนตาซี และผลกระทบของวรรณกรรมเยาวชนแปลแนวแฟนตาซีที่มีต่อการวรรณกรรมเยาวชนไทยและการวรรณกรรมไทย ภายใต้กรอบการศึกษาเชิงสังคมวิทยาของบูร์ดิเยอ และทฤษฎีพหุระบบของอีเวน-โซฮาร์ งานวิจัยพบว่า การเข้ามาของวรรณกรรมเยาวชนแนวแฟนตาซีในประเทศไทยก่อให้เกิดผลกระทบต่างๆ ในวงการวรรณกรรมเยาวชนไทย เช่น การก่อกำเนิดวงการวรรณกรรมเยาวชนแนวแฟนตาซี การเสริมความแข็งแรงให้กับวงการวรรณกรรมเยาวชนของไทย และการสร้างวรรณกรรมเยาวชนแนวแฟนตาซีในภาษาไทยโดยนักเขียนชาวไทยเอง อย่างไรก็ตาม ผลกระทบที่ชัดเจนจากการเข้ามาของวรรณกรรมเยาวชนแปลแนวแฟนตาซีในวงการวรรณกรรมไทยนั้นไม่สูงเท่ากับผลกระทบที่มีต่อการวรรณกรรมเยาวชนไทย เนื่องจากโครงสร้างของการและพลวัตของโครงสร้างดังกล่าว

คำสำคัญ : บูร์ดิเยอ, ทฤษฎีพหุระบบ, วรรณกรรมแฟนตาซี, วิธีทางสังคมวิทยา, วรรณกรรมเยาวชน

1. Introduction

The first decade of the twenty-first century saw a massive rise in popularity of youth fantasy fiction in the market of youth literature. The upsurge of youth fantasy fiction, especially that written in English, resulted in widespread dissemination and exchange of youth fantasy fiction worldwide through translation. The entry of fantasy fiction via translation into countries worldwide, in turn, has had an impact on various aspects of literature and the daily life of readers, including the overwhelming volume of publications of this type and the “reading culture” among the youths (Masters, 2017).

Thailand was no exception as its literary milieus were also active during this upsurge of youth fantasy fiction popularity, and witnessing the emergence of large-scale demand for youth literature of such genre. Consequently, those in the field of Thai literature welcomed this influx of translated youth fantasy fiction during the first decade of the 2000s, and as shall be seen throughout this paper, a number of Thai publishing houses and translation agents took the opportunity to publish various titles of youth fantasy fiction translated from other languages, especially English, such as the literary sets of *Harry Potter*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Percy Jackson* etc. Such publications flourished in Thailand and became a literary sensation that brought about various impacts for readers and those in literary fields in the Kingdom, including the creation of the new field of Thai youth fantasy fiction, the strengthening of the already established field of Thai youth fiction, the emergence of young Thai writers of youth fantasy fiction and Thai youth fantasy fiction as a new sub-genre.

This paper explores this emerging literary phenomenon in Thailand – especially in the sphere of Thai literature, during the first ten years of the twenty-first century when the massive influx of youth fantasy fiction made its initial mark on the field of Thai literature. The paper also focuses on revealing the effects of this literary phenomenon during the period of 2000-2010, especially facets relating to the field of Thai literature and the field of Thai youth fiction.

This paper begins by reviewing related literature and explaining the methodology supporting the research. An overview of the timeline and rationale of the influx of the youth fantasy fiction will be revealed and discussed as the basis of the paper’s investigation. Through the sociological lens, the paper will then discuss the impacts of youth fantasy fiction that have travelled across the linguistic and cultural borders via translation to influence the facets relating Thai literature, and the field of Thai youth fiction in particular.

2. Theoretical framework and literature review

This paper is based on a research conducted through a sociological lens aiming to scrutinize the roles and impacts of youth fantasy fiction that has been introduced into Thailand mostly in the form of translations. It largely employs Pierre Bourdieu's sociological concepts, especially the concept of *field* and *capital*, to comprehend relations within the literary spheres involved and the impacts resulting from the formation of such connections and realms. The research also adopts Itamar Even- Zohar's polysystem theory to elucidate the roles and impacts of the youth fiction genre, especially within the sphere of Thai literature.

2.1 Bourdieusean sociology

Among the terms Bourdieu explained in his various books and papers, field, habitus and capital are the key concepts that help clarify social phenomenon. Bourdieu's central concept of *field* can be defined as a network or matrix of relations between positions within a social sphere. Fields, then, are the social spheres where social agents perform their practices and actions in order to dominate or subordinate other (groups of) agents. In fields, agents practice their actions in pursuit of the accumulation of various kinds of capital by producing, creating, circulating and disseminating cultural products (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97). Each field is structured by positions within it, therefore fields consist of available positions to be taken or are already taken and occupied by agents who are interested in investing their struggle in pursuit of capital. Positions in a field are connected to one another by dominance and subordination, and there are dominant/dominating positions and dominated/subordinate positions (Bourdieu, 1996, p.231). All agents participating in the field conduct their struggle in order to proceed to the higher (dominant/dominating) positions in the field.

Another Bourdieusean concept which defines the uniqueness in terms of his relational sociology is habitus (Maton, 2014, p. 48). Habitus can be described as the long-lasting dispositions of agents derived through inculcation and education (Maton, 2014, pp.50-51), and "as principles which generate and organize practices and representations (Bourdieu, 1990, p.53)." In this sense, habitus is what drives them to manage, collect and arrange the capital they aspire for. Habitus together with the position of the agents in the field is what determines practices performed by such social agents (Maton, 2014, pp.50-52).

Capital, according to Bourdieu (1986), is what constructs agents' dynamicity of struggle during their participation in a cultural field, as agents perform their practices in pursuit of gaining capital related to the field. Capital is various kinds of stake and profit that are gained and acquired by agents during their time in the field and is the accumulation of labour which drives

practices of agents at a specific juncture and place. Capital in Bourdieusean sociology covers three types –economic capital, cultural capital and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Economic capital refers to stakes with monetary or financial values –this kind of capital can readily be exchanged for money, or it can be money itself. The second kind of capital is cultural capital. The cultural capital in its embodied form deals with the process of inculcation and education as the obtaining feature. In this sense, cultural capital includes knowledge, skills, etiquettes, lifestyles and personal tastes (Moore, 2014, p. 102). The acquisition of this kind of capital is performed through the process of time investment in various businesses by social agents (Bourdieu, 2006, p. 107 as cited in Moore, 2014, pp. 106-107). Social capital, which marks the third type of Bourdieusean capital, is the stakes and profits social agents gain through socialization and partaking in social groups (Bourdieu, 1986, pp.248-249).

Bourdieu's sociological concepts have been widely adopted by scholars and students in the field of Translation Studies. Several translational research works have employed Bourdieusean sociological approaches as their investigation tools for observing translation practices as social practices or phenomenon. These include studies by Alkhawaja (2014), Grau-Perejoan (2016) and Kayhan (2016), all of which adopted Bourdieu's approach to examine the roles of translators as agents of translation in specific areas. Bourdieu's sociology is also employed in Translation Studies research on the role of translations, and this includes work by Milani (2017). In the field of children's literature translation, Bourdieu's sociological lens has been employed by researchers, such as Alsiary (2016) and Liang (2010). Alsiary's focus is placed on the sociological norms dictating the translation of children's literature introduced into the Saudi Arabian literary sphere. Relying on mixed and multiple theories for investigation, Alsiary (2016) makes use of Bourdieu's concept of field and capital to unveil the perceptions, capital and translation policies, as well as translation norms of four selected publishers in the country. Ultimately, Alsiary illustrates that the main factors governing practices in the translation field in Saudi Arabia are the Saudi publishing laws and factors related to society and ideology. Liang's (2010) examination of the practices of translation agents of fantasy fiction in Taiwan, which is similar to this current research, analyses the translation of fantasy fiction at both the macro and micro levels. For the macro level, Liang adopts Bourdieu's sociology to help shed light on the logic of practice of the Taiwanese fantasy fiction market, which leans more towards the heteronomous pole outside the field of Taiwanese literature. This particular pole is driven by economics, meaning the logic of practice in the Taiwanese case is strongly influenced by economic forces (Liang, 2010). In fact, this current research also investigates the

logic of practice of fantasy fiction in translation and likewise finds that it is also inclined more towards the heteronomous pole or the pole related to the economic field of power. However, in Thailand's case, the logic of practice of the production of fantasy fiction in translation has its own transitions and dynamics (which will be discussed further in detail). Moreover, this current research also argues that this very logic of practice also impacts greatly on the translation of youth fantasy fiction.

The Bourdieusean sociological tools illustrated above are employed in this investigation to analyse the practices of Thai translation agents related to the production of youth fantasy fiction in Thailand from 2000 to 2010. The investigation into the translation practices used in the field of youth fantasy fiction helps make manifest the role and influence of youth fantasy fiction on the field of Thai literature and Thai youth fiction itself. The adoption of the sociological lens will help demonstrate that the importation and impact of youth fantasy fiction via translation contribute to the importation of literary capital and the symbolic capital earned by the translation agents involved rather than merely obvious market forces.

2.2 Polysystem theory

For the investigation of the impacts of youth fantasy fiction on the realm of Thai literature, this research employs Even-Zohar's polysystem theory. Through this lens of polysystem theory, literature is regarded as part of a (literary) system that has "functions of literary order which are continual interrelationship with other orders" (Tynjanov, 1927/71, p.72 as cited in Munday, 2008, p. 108). Due to its "continual interrelationship with other orders (Tynjanov, 1927/71, p.72 as cited in Munday, 2008, p.108)", literature can therefore be deemed as an element of social, cultural and historical domains, resulting in it being able to be studied and looked at closely within frameworks that relate to social, cultural and historical territories (Munday, 2008, p. 108). In other words, all kinds of literature, including translated literature, should be studied under the framework of system.

Due to its stratification structure, polysystem is a system of struggle continuously made by members (literature) partaking in it. That is to say, the elements inside the polysystem need to compete with one another to take higher positions. If a higher position is taken by the conservative or the conventional literature producers, the lower position is then taken by the other, namely an innovative producer of literature. The hierarchy within the polysystem here is where translated literature can lend its hand to elevate the position of the target culture's literature. In this light, translated literature plays a distinctive role in the literary polysystem (Even-Zohar, 1990b).

According to Even-Zohar (1990b, pp.47-48), translated literature can either occupy a primary position or secondary position. For the primary position, translated literature would have great impact on target culture/readers, including adding new literary genres and models for the target literary system. However, Even-Zohar (1990b, pp.47-48) points out that there are three scenarios in which translated literature can operate in the primary position: (1) when the target literary system is “young” or recently established, thus seeks for more established models from the older system; (2) when the literature in the target culture is in a “peripheral” or “weak” position, thus the system needs to import new model or genre from a bigger system; and (3) when the target culture or target literary system faces the “turning point” and the existing literary models are not enough to serve the system. In the case where translated literature takes a secondary position in the literary system, the translated literature would not have a major influence on such system and may be blended in with the existing literary model of such system (1990b, pp.47-48).

Having been influenced by Russian school of Formalist theories, Even-Zohar’s polysystem therefore shadows similar theories and concepts concerning systems. However, under those theories and concepts, only high literature is examined leaving translated literature and children’s literature somewhat neglected. Even-Zohar’s polysystem has been adopted by several translation studies scholars examining translation practices and processes in specific areas, including works by Alkharashi (2016) and Ashrafi (2018). As Even-Zohar incorporates the “secondary” kind of literature in his investigation, several researchers thus employed the theory to research on children’s and young adult literature in translation, e.g. Shavit (2006) Ben-Ari (1992) and Hsing (2012). Shavit (2006) explores behavioural models related to children’s literature in translation and how it has travelled across literary and cultural borders. In her research of translation of children’s literature from English into Hebrew, Shavit (2006) explains that translation patterns in children’s literature are propelled mainly by the position of children’s literature within the polysystem of that particular target culture and system. She also indicated that due to the secondary nature of children’s literature, the inflow of translated children’s literature from the source culture to the target culture depends heavily on the existing model of adult literature of that target culture. That is to say, the translation of children’s literature of a specific genre or type can be embraced in the target culture only when that genre or type already exists within the adult literature system. The polysystem theory, then, is included in this research in order to examine the ways the related

literary system –the fields of Thai literature and Thai youth fiction have welcomed youth fantasy fiction. This will be discussed in detail later in the paper.

2.3 Research on fantasy fiction and its translation in Thailand

Youth fantasy fiction in Thailand has been read and studied in various aspects: in the aspect of translation problems and translation strategies adopted by translators of fantasy fiction (cf. Kupratakul, 2011; Leelaniramol, 2011; Limkriangkrai, 2016); the formation of magical elements in Thai fantasy fiction (cf. Patjusanon & Thantawanit, 2017); online community of fantasy fiction readers (cf. Siriphaiboon, 2008); reading culture and habit development caused by fantasy fiction (cf. Sukhonphanich, 2002); and factors influencing fantasy fiction consumption (cf. Rungsaeng, 2011). The limited focus of these studies suggests that one area that is yet to be fully studied is the socio-cultural role and impact of (translated) youth fantasy fiction in Thailand. Most previous studies do not pay attention to the process and impact of literary importation via translation, so this present study will help shed light on literary importation and other aspects that the fantasy genre has introduced to the field of Thai youth fiction.

3. Methodology

This paper is based on a qualitative research that probes the socio-cultural effects translated youth fantasy fiction has on the fields of Thai youth fiction and Thai literature. The research was conducted using a sociological framework as outlined in the previous section. The data was mainly obtained from desk- based research comprising a review of related literature and documents, as well as bibliographical research. The researched data is supplemented by in-depth interviews with the translation agents involved in the translation of youth fantasy fiction in Thailand, such as editors and representatives from publishers –these translation agents were selected by purposive sampling. The collected data was then examined and analysed through the lenses of Bourdieu's sociological approach, and the polysystem theory to unveil the effects of youth fantasy fiction on the field of youth fiction in Thailand. It should be noted that, due to the fact that the research has been approved by the Institutional Review Board on the basis of research with human subjects, the names of the informants are not disclosed and this paper only refers to the names of their organisations.

4. An overview of circulation of youth fantasy fiction worldwide

In the first decade of 2000s, a large volume of youth fantasy fiction was popularised worldwide and most of this can be deemed as crossover fiction – works of fiction initially written for one group of readers (in terms of age-group) that have travelled across the generation barrier to be enjoyed by other age groups (Beckett, 2009; Falconer, 2009). The emergence of the so-called crossover fiction not only forces us to reconsider the definitions of young adult fiction and children's literature – especially that containing fantasy and adventure themes and content – but also shines a light on the upsurge in popularity of youth fantasy fiction worldwide. That is, the crossover phenomenon has provided some flexibility to the definition of children's literature and youth fiction. The flexibility in definition has allowed for an expansion of the age-group of readers from youth to young adults and adult readers which obviously expands the potential market beyond children, youngsters and teenagers. Readers of this type of fiction may now be in their 20's or 30's, and it should be noted that about half of the crossover fiction enjoyed by this newly emerged group of readers contains fantasy themes.

The phenomenal popularity of fantasy fiction at the dawn of the 21st century was greatly fuelled by the publication of the first of seven books of *Harry Potter* set in 1997. The first book of the series was enjoyed by both young and adult readers (Beckett, 2009, p. 1; Masters, 2017) and stoked the reading culture of multiple generations as well as the associated translation and publishing industries worldwide. The production of the book set prompted publications of other youth fiction with similar themes, namely fantasy and adventure themes, but correspondingly diminished the demand for youth fiction with alternative themes, resulting in less variety for children and youths and thereby creating a dilemma in the field of youth fiction (Falconer, 2009, pp.16-17).

Translations of this book set almost certainly played a key role in arousing interest in the series globally and driving the fantasy fiction phenomena. The *Harry Potter* set has been officially translated into 75 languages (Potterglot, 2018), including some dead languages (Latin and Ancient Greek). With 450 million copies published worldwide (Masters, 2017), *Harry Potter* books have become among the most translated book sets in the history. The translation practices of the fantasy fiction during this period were massively stimulated and driven by commercial pressure; translators, editors and publishing houses were under the extreme pressure to quickly publish the translated versions for readers who were unable to read the English original. Therefore, it might be said that during this period, when fantasy fiction was

becoming a popular global phenomenon, translators and editors as translation agents became vital to the publishing process directed at serving the interest of fantasy fiction readers elsewhere (Lathey, 2016, pp.133-134). It should be noted that the global popularity of fantasy fiction was apparent from the early 2000s contributing to several issues related to the new phase of literary distribution. Laws and restrictions relating to literature copyright were introduced and enforced more strictly, while more pirate translations and unauthorized translations could be found on various platforms due to the high demand for fantasy fiction (Lathey, 2016, pp.133-134).

5. The rapid rise of youth fantasy fiction in Thailand

In the early 2000's, publishers in Thailand like many others around the world were quick to jump on the youth fantasy fiction bandwagon. It was apparent that, for about a decade, the Thai literary milieu would be inundated with demand for youth fiction – mostly with fantasy and adventure themes. This juncture marked a new chapter in the fantasy craze in Thailand and not only led to the regular importation of youth fantasy fiction works in translation, but also spurred the production of youth fiction in Thailand.

The flood of youth fantasy fiction overwhelmed Thailand during the 2000s, yet this wave of fantasy fiction was not the pioneer of translated youth fantasy fiction from other languages. In fact, Thailand had been introduced to fantasy fiction and youth fiction with the fantasy and adventure themes since before the Harry Potter fever. During the period between 1979 and 1983, some early youth fantasy fiction was translated and published in Thailand, which included works by renowned children writers-Roald Dahl and C.S. Lewis. The Thai versions of youth fantasy fiction in this period were published by several publishing houses, therefore the publications of the fantasy fiction were scattered and not done with continuity during this early period. Moreover, early wave of translations of the genre in Thailand came in various versions – one title might have been translated and published by several publishers.

According to the bibliographical research of publications of youth fantasy fiction in Thailand, it was found that, despite some translations of youth fantasy fiction being made in Thai prior to the 1980s, Butterfly Publishing House or *Samnakphim Phi Suea* (hereafter – Butterfly)'s regular publication of youth fiction –mostly with fantasy and/or adventure themes – became more apparent in the late 1980s. The published translations by this publisher between the late 1980s and the 1990s included English writer Roald Dahl's children's books – *The Witches* (แม่มด [Mae Mod]), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (โรงแรมช็อคโกแล็ตมหัศ

ຈරຍ [Rongngan Chokkolaed Mahadsachan]) and *Matilda* (ມາທິລດາ [Mathinda]). Butterfly also began to publish translations of youth fantasy fiction by other authors, including C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicle of Narnia* (ຕຳນານແຫ່ງນາງໝັນຍ [Tamnan Haeng Nania]) book set and P.L. Traverse's *Marry Poppins* (ແມ່ຮີ ປຶ້ອປິ້ນສ [Maeri Poppin]). These early efforts made by Butterfly might have paved the way for other publishers and translation agents to import more titles of youth fantasy fiction during the 2000s.

During this time, the Thai literary circle caught its first glimpse of this new youth fantasy fiction phenomenon. The first book of the Harry Potter series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (ແຮຣີ ພອຕເຕອຣ ກັບຄືລາອາດຣົກ [Haeri Phottoe Kap Sila Athan]) and the second book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (ແຮຣີ ພອຕເຕອຣ ກັບທ້ອງແຫ່ງຄວາມລັບ [Haeri Phottoe Kap Hong Haeng Khwamlap]) were published by Nanmeebooks publishing house (hereafter -Nanmeebooks) in 2000. Thai young and adult readers were spell bound by the magical world that the series presented them in translation, and the craze for the genre set off a publishing frenzy of similar works in Thailand over a span of at least five years from 2000.

One of the most obvious consequences of the global and local popularity of these stories was the surge in publications of youth fantasy fiction by various publishers in Thailand. Among many, Praew Yaowachon publishing house (hereafter -Praew) – the subsidiary dealing with youth and young adult books of Amarin publishing house, one of major publishers in Thailand – also upped its fantasy fiction operations by publishing a translation of *The Hobbit* (ເດອະ ຂອບບິຖ [Doe Hopbit]) as well as translations of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (ເດອະ ລອຮົດ ອອຟ ເດອະ ຮິງສ [Doe Lod of de Ring]) in 2001. It should be noted that, even though this publisher had already published some Thai translations of youth fantasy fiction before 2001, this was really only scattered and limited. The success of translations of youth fantasy fiction by these two major publishers came on the coattails of Butterfly's initiative between the late 1980s and the 1990s. The second wave of youth fantasy fiction in Thailand might have also benefitted Butterfly itself, due to the increasing popularity of fantasy fiction in the 2000s. Butterfly, then published and republished numbers of translated works of youth fantasy fiction in response to readers' demand during phenomenal years of fantasy fiction in Thailand.

This so-called phenomenal era of fantasy fiction in Thailand (and also worldwide) spanned at least five to six years (2000-2005). The first decade of the 2000s experienced the emergence of a multitude of publishers specializing in and focusing on youth fiction. Enterbooks publishing house (hereafter -Enterbooks) and Pearl publishing house (hereafter - Pearl) were among these, with Enterbooks publishing translations of the *Percy Jackson* book set (ເພອົ້າຊີ່ຍ ແຈັກສັນ [Persi Jaeksan])

between 2005 and 2009. In 2008, the *Artemis Fowl* book set (ອາՐ්තිමිඩ ພාවල් [Athimid Fao]) was selected by Pearl to be translated and published in Thailand. The second half of the first decade of the twenty-first century marked the third wave of fantasy fiction into Thailand prompted by a large number of newly emerging players and translation agents specializing in Thai translation of youth fiction. The late period of the second and third waves of youth fantasy fiction saw an expansion of online platforms, which possibly fostered the popularity and promotion of the fantasy fiction in the sense that young readers could become writers themselves. However, after the third wave, the Thai literary market witnessed the rise of other types of youth fiction and a revival of romance fiction, which encouraged the field of youth literature to evolve further over time. That is, various new genres of youth fiction were produced by agents in the field of Thai youth literature.

The timeline of the arrival of youth fantasy fiction in Thailand set out in this section provides not only an overview of the entry of youth fantasy fiction into the Thai market, but also outlines its impacts particularly in translation. In the next section, I will analyse the impacts of the youth fantasy fiction on the field of Thai youth fiction in detail through a sociological lens.

6. Impacts of youth fantasy fiction in translation on the field of Thai youth fiction

In the previous sections, I offered an overview of how the introduction of youth fantasy fiction was made to the field of youth fiction in Thailand and the field of Thai literature. In this section, the main impact of youth fantasy fiction in translation on the field of Thai youth fiction will be discussed as viewed through a sociological lens. Essentially, there were three consequences linked to this main effect.

The emerging sub-field of youth fantasy fiction in the field of Thai youth fiction

The section above presented an overall picture of the inrush of fantasy fiction into Thailand, and here I examine the consequential formation of the sub-field of youth fantasy fiction in the field of Thai youth fiction. The arrival of youth fantasy fiction and its translation into Thai was divided into three main waves: the first wave prior to the global popularity of youth fantasy fiction in the first decade of the 2000s; the second wave, occurring alongside the international enthusiasm for the fantasy fiction; and the last wave that benefited from the fantasy fiction phenomenon over the years.

From both the bibliographical research of the youth fantasy fiction published during these three waves and data collected from in-depth interviews with the translation agents of that youth fantasy fiction, it is clear that these three waves had different characteristics based on the process of translation and dissemination. A representative from Butterfly, the translation

agent of the first wave, revealed that items of youth fantasy fiction in the 1980s were selected by editors according to what they considered as good, useful and of great literary, moral and imagination values for young readers. These works included the fantasy fiction which sparked creativity and opened their eyes to the world. A representative from Nanmee, the translation agents during the second wave who published the *Harry Potter* book set, explained that the selection and decision to publish youth fantasy fiction came down to its novelty as well as the originality and popularity of the popular fantasy fiction series among young readers. The representative of this translation agent also pointed out that the domestic popularity of the *Harry Potter* series might have also been ignited by promotional and marketing activities by translation agents and publishers, who conducted several roadshows and held book launches for the book series. Like Nanmee, the representative from Praew, another translation agent from the second wave, also noted that decisions to publish fantasy fiction during the 2000s were made because the stories had enjoyable and imaginative characters which attracted young and adult readers coupled with the fact that the market for fantasy fiction in the 2000s was newly opened. Economic factors involved in the decision to translate and publish youth fantasy fiction were also identified by the representative from Enterbooks, a translation agent of the third wave. This translation agent revealed that the newly open market for youth fantasy fiction and its imaginative content were among the many factors that convinced this particular translation agent to select and publish youth fantasy fiction.

Viewed from a Bourdieusian perspective, the engagement of the translation agents involved might have contributed to the emergence of the sub-field of youth fantasy fiction within the field of Thai youth fiction. The initial formation of this sub-field came thanks to the practices of translation agents of the first wave, who paved the way for other translation agents to join in later periods. According to Bourdieu's notion of field, available positions in the field are to be occupied in a hierarchical order by related agents in accordance with and in their pursuit of various kinds of capital. In doing so, the agents taking positions need to participate in the field by performing their practices to dominate others in order to accumulate more capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.97). The practices made by these agents can determine the boundary of a field. Such struggle and the practices of these agents can be divided into two poles: autonomous and heteronomous (Jenkins, 2002, p.86). The logic of practice of the agents who are towards the autonomous pole in the field of cultural production are driven by the autonomy of the field. An example in the literary field, thanks to their logic of practice includes autonomous agents who produce literature for literature's sake, not for economic

purposes. Heteronomous agents, on the other hand, produce their works based on economic motivations, as they are driven by the other field of power, namely economic field. Since, the sub-field of youth fantasy fiction originally emerged from the field of youth fiction with the field of literature as the field of power, the logic of practice within the field of youth fantasy fiction, then, would follow the logic of practice found in the field of literature – that is, agents of autonomous pole would produce literature for the literary aims and agents of heteronomy would produce literature for economic and other purposes.

The emerging sub-field was gradually formed thanks to the participation and struggle of the agents in the first wave, who might not have fully produced the fantasy fiction in translation at that time but were key to paving the way for the sub-field in Thailand. Given the limited and scattered amount of published youth fantasy fiction in translation during the first wave, and for the reasons given above for publishing during the first wave, it was quite apparent that the early group of translation agents were *more* attracted to the autonomous pole of the field with less interest towards the economic force (heteronomous pole). In the subsequent period, the translation agents in the second wave joined in publishing works in the new field of youth fantasy fiction in Thailand in around 2000. The practices and struggles conducted by this second wave agents can be viewed as leaning towards both the autonomous and heteronomous poles. Their selection of items of youth fantasy fiction to be translated in consideration of the creative and imaginative content reflects features of the autonomous pole, whilst their other practices and struggle illustrate the heteronomous pole of the field. These practices included a focus on the flourishing open market for youth fantasy fiction and the promotional and marketing campaigns and these also occurred during the third wave with translation agents whose logic of practice also leaned more towards the heteronomous pole. This might remind us of Liang's investigation (2010) of Taiwanese market where the practices of agents were leaning towards the logic of book market. However, in the Thai case, even though the practices of agents in later periods were leaning more towards the heteronomous pole, due to its original logic of practice leaning towards autonomous pole, an overshadow of such pole still remained. In this light, through the lens of Bourdieu's notion of field, the emerging sub-field of youth fantasy fiction formed during the first wave with translation agents leaning more towards the autonomous pole due to the logic of practice of related agents. In later periods, the logic of practice was subsequently influenced by the economic forces driving the book market before the sub-field eventually shifted towards the heteronomous pole with a shadow of autonomous pole. In light of this, the logic of practice in the emerging sub-field

of youth fantasy fiction was not fully in accordance with the logic of practice in the field of Thai literature and youth fiction.

The practice of youth fantasy fiction translation in Thailand might have easily been studied through the economic lens, however, the logic of practice in the field leans towards both poles, as discussed above. Three implications from the influx of the translated youth fantasy fiction, especially the third one, show some key interwoven links between the economic and socio-cultural impacts of the importation.

a. The massive production of youth fantasy fiction in translation in the market

One of the most obvious consequences of the emergence of the sub-field of youth fantasy fiction in Thailand was its sudden widespread production and availability. According to the information gathered in an in-depth interview with a representative from Nanmee together with the information derived from its publishing catalog in 2013 (Nanmeebooks, 2013), a vastly increasing amount of youth fantasy fiction was published in this period.

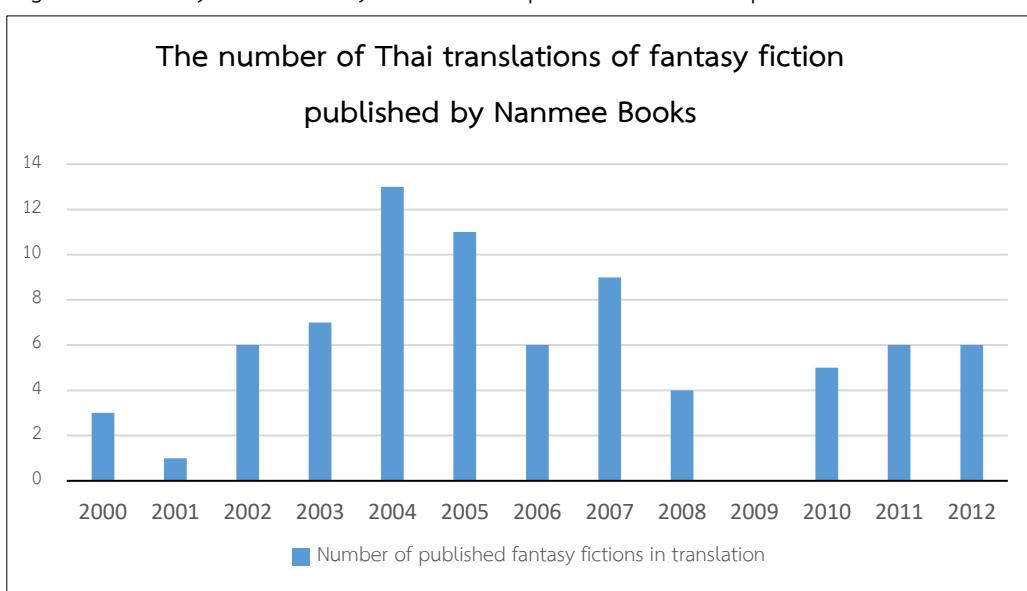


Figure 1 The number of Thai translations of fantasy fiction published by Nanmee Books (Nanmeebooks, 2013)

The graph above shows that from 2000 to 2001, there were still limited amounts of youth fantasy fiction published. The number rapidly increased in 2002 and 2003 and surged to 13 titles in 2004, after which there were fluctuations between 2005 and 2008 before dropping to 0 in 2009, and rising again to around five in 2010. The number of titles published then stabilized between 2011 and 2012 at six for both years. This figure suggests that the number of youth fantasy fiction translation published by Nanmee gradually increased due to

the success of the first two titles from the *Harry Potter* series in 2000. The number of translations reached its peak in 2004, just before the first half mark of the 2000s. The data corresponds with information gathered from several informants from publishers as translation agents and literary agents as another kind of translation agent, who revealed that, the production of youth fantasy fiction soon finished after reaching its peak in Thailand half way through the first decade of the twenty-first century. The number of youth fantasy fiction translations published by Nanmee gradually decreased from 2005 onwards. This was because players other than Nanmee were emerging in the field to compete for market share. The decrease in the number of newly published translations by Nanmee from 2005 might also indicate that they had settled with the success and position as publisher of the *Harry Potter* series, and sought to focus only on that series. Finally, the decline in the number of translated youth fantasy fiction publications had offered consequences, namely that Nanmee started to publish youth (fantasy) fiction written by Thai writers.

b. The newly emerged translation agents

The second obvious consequence of the establishment of the sub-field and the influx of fantasy fiction translated into Thai in the 2000s was the rise in the number of (newly established) translation agents dedicating themselves to the publication of translations of youth fantasy fiction. This might be regarded as a *contributing factor* in the formation of the field of youth fantasy fiction in Thailand or a *consequence* of such impacts in the field. It might also be deemed as the consequence of the massive production of this type of youth fiction in translation.

According to the information gathered from translation agents from Nanmee and Enterbooks, during the first decade of the 2000s, many new publishers were especially focused on youth fantasy fiction in Thailand. Nanmee, as an example, was established before 2000, but its publication of youth fantasy fiction rose significantly during the phenomenal days, and a translation agent from Nanmee also noted that Nanmee's rise to fame was essentially on the back of its publication of *Harry Potter* book set. Thanks to the popularity of the series, the translation agent not only became famous, but the name of the publishing house also became synonymous with fantasy fiction in Thailand. In other words, as a brand, the publisher was immediately linked to the success of youth fantasy fiction in Thai translation. This suggests that, even though Nanmee was properly established before 2000, it gained its reputation as a major publisher of youth fantasy fiction only after 2000 thanks to the phenomenal success of the genre.

Not only Nanmee, who presented itself as a translation agent with the focus on the publication of fantasy fiction, but several translation agents including Enterbooks and Pearl also benefited from the success of books like *Harry Potter*. A representative from Enterbooks also revealed that the translation agent fully participated in the operation of publishing fantasy fiction after publication of the *Percy Jackson* series, which implies that this publisher also fully presented itself as a member of the field after 2000. Viewed through the lens of Bourdieu's notion of field, the participation and struggle of these translation agents in the accumulation of both economic and cultural capital suggests a conflict between the agents of the autonomous and heteronomous poles as described above.

c. The reproduction of youth fantasy fiction by Thai writers

The formation of the sub-field generated from the influx of youth fantasy fiction in translation into the field of Thai youth fiction has contributed to another major impact or consequence in the newly emerged field of youth fantasy fiction in Thailand, namely the reproduction of (youth) fantasy fiction by Thai writers. Several titles of fantasy fiction written by the Thai writers stormed the Thai youth literary scene following the sensational popularity of international fantasy fiction. These titles included Dr. Pop's *The White Road* and Rabbit's *Hua Khamoi Haeng Baramos*, both of which manifest similarities with the *Harry Potter* set in that the main fantasy-adventure story line is set in a school for those with magical powers.

Youth fantasy fiction written by Thai writers was encouraged by and benefited from several contributing factors, including new online platforms and the structures of the fields of the youth fantasy fiction, youth fiction and their field of power. Thanks to the development of advanced online platforms, would-be writers in Thailand, especially those in their adolescent years, were able to channel their literary creativity and enthusiasm through online publications on their personal and public webpages (Saengthong, 2016; Sujjapun, 2009). New platforms used as literary outlets for the young Thai writers were not the only factor in the production of the youth fantasy fiction in Thailand, but the structure of the fields relating to Thai literature also fostered the production of youth fantasy fiction.

It is worth noting that the reproduction of foreign literature during the 2000s was not the first juncture of the literary production prompted by translation into Thai and the structure of the fields. Chittiphalangsri (2014) argues that the emergence of modern Thai literary prose was prompted by literary prose translated into Thai and the negotiation of dynamic literary canonicity. The fictional content presented in works of traditional Thai literature was strongly tied to its poetic form, while, the non-fictional and didactic literary works were presented in prosaic form. When the

translations of fictional literary prose of Corelli's *Vendetta! Or, the Story of One Forgotten* arrived in Siam (today, Thailand) in 1902, readers noticed links between fiction and prose. Nevertheless, early Siamese attempts at prosaic fiction, namely สนุกนี้นึก [Sanuk Nuek] in 1886 and ความไม่พยาบาท [Khwam mai phayabat] in 1915, were not successful and unacceptable to readers because they still associated Siamese fictional literary works with the poetic form. In contrast, even though translated fiction from English was in prosaic form, it was welcomed by readers, due to the fact that they were translations of foreign works, not Siamese creations. Chittiphalangsri (2014) points out that, this was down to the process of Siamese readers taking their time to get used to fictional prosaic literary pieces written in Thai, due to the dynamicity of the polysystem of literature. The translated fictional prosaic literature from other languages, especially English contributed greatly to the emergence of the literariness of the prosaic fictional form in Thai/Siamese literary scene.

The incident discussed by Chittiphalangsri (2014) is similar to what this paper is attempting to illustrate, namely that the translations of foreign literature played a great role in inspiring, if not forming and constructing, a form or genre of literary work in Thailand. I join Chittiphalangsri (2014) in investigating of the association between the impact of translated literature, the structure of the field and the reproduction of literature in the target system. This can be explored by means of Even-Zohar's (1990b) polysystem theory, which states that translated literature can function to strengthen the target system if the target system is weak, peripheral or new. Moreover, translation can create and facilitate the importation of new literary forms, modes and genres if the target system is ready to accept (Even-Zohar, 1990a, p.17).

Children's literature and youth fiction early on in Thailand were largely for educational and didactic purposes, and most texts read for enjoyment were crossed-overs from adult literature. Moreover, the markets for children's and youth literature in Thailand were influenced by the market for adult literature (Phlaiwet, 1983, pp.19-20). In the case of the Thai youth fiction scene, prior to the 2000s, the field of Thai youth fiction might not be very strong as it was governed by the field of Thai literature. The governance by the field of Thai literature can be seen from the low production volume of literature for children and young readers. In other words, children and young readers might have had to traverse the age barrier and read material aimed at adults as there were few literary works designated for their age. The territory or boundary of the field of youth fiction in Thailand was unclear and there was insufficient struggle on the part of the related agents. Seen against this backdrop, the field of Thai youth fiction before the 2000s remained, to use Even-Zohar's (1990b, pp.47-48) terms, "young" and

“weak” and therefore welcomed works in translation form to strengthen it. From a polysystem perspective, youth fantasy fiction made its debut as part of the youth fiction system in Thailand in the primary model, as it had great impact on the system. Translated youth fantasy fiction was good as it strengthened elements in the field of Thai youth fiction. The translation of youth fantasy fiction then served as a catalyst for the importation of works of the fantasy fiction genre and subsequently benefited the sub-field of youth fantasy fiction and the field of Thai youth fiction.

The impact of the imported youth fantasy fiction in translation form might also be viewed as a practice of accumulation of capital from other fields. This too can be scrutinised according to Bourdieu’s notion of capital, as in fact it was by Casanova (2010). According to Casanova (2010), the world’s literary spheres are hierarchical with dominating and dominated literary fields. The dominating factors depend on literary prestige, beliefs and values. In this light, the dominating languages/literary fields would have more of those factors that allow them to hold more literary capital, whereas the dominated fields possess less of those factors and need to earn more capital in order to change their position in the world literary fields. In order to do this, the dominated fields opt to translate literary works derived from the dominating field in order to accumulate capital that can be used to produce works in their own national literary field. This is very much the case with translations of youth fantasy fiction in Thailand. Under this classification of world literary fields, the field of Thai literature is still deemed as one that is dominated. Youth fiction as the sub-field of the field of Thai literature is also deemed as being dominated and therefore needs to import the new modes and genres of youth fiction in order to accumulate capital. The accumulation of capital through the importation of fantasy fiction can be seen in the reproduction of original fantasy fiction written by Thai writers – many works incorporate numerous elements from the foreign youth fantasy fiction that are familiar to readers, be it the settings, plots or Romanized names of characters and places. This consequence of importing translated works cannot be justified simply by reference to economic forces at play in the book market, and socio-cultural tools help shed light on more subtle aspects of literary capital importation through the process of translation.

7. Impact of youth fantasy fiction in translation on the field of Thai literature

The three consequences of the impact of the youth fantasy fiction on the field of Thai youth fiction were discussed in the previous section. This section further discusses the influx of youth fiction in the aspect on the field of Thai literature. In order to do this, the paper will

provide a concise overview of the Thai literary scene and its logic of practice before attempting to pinpoint the role and impact of youth fantasy fiction on the field of Thai literature.

Traditional Thai literature sphere was driven greatly by the social and cultural forces as reflected in practices relating to the early attempts of the Thai novel which were unsuccessful in terms of publication due to social and cultural norms that frowned upon this kind of fictional prose at the time (Chittiphalangsri, 2014, pp. 221, 223-224). However, it was not only at this early stage that publication of Thai fiction was stymied by social and cultural disapproval, but other genres in later eras were also challenged by similar forces prevalent in Thai society. In the 1940s and 1950s, in the midst of political chaos, modern Thai literature was influenced hugely by trend of the Literature for Life movement (Janthimathorn, 1982, p. 275). The emergence of the Literature for Life movement clearly highlights how prevalent social and cultural attitudes could serve as key factors driving Thai literature and its circle.

Such social and cultural aspects depicted in the modern Thai literature were later consecrated as socialist-realist literary capital and celebrated as one of the criteria for literary acclaim ever since (Techawongstien, 2016, pp. 121-123). Socialist-realist literary capital in modern Thai literature can be found not only from its celebration as a criteria for awarding prize, it can also be seen in the categorization of the modern Thai literature as “creative” contemporary literature found on socialist and realist aspects of literature that depict the reality of society (Chotiudompant, 2009). The consecration of the socialist-realist literary capital as well as traditional poetic literary capital therefore has established the norms and forged the autonomy of the field of Thai literature motivating producers and writers to create beautifully written literature that reveals and explores social and cultural reality.

Seen against this backdrop, the field of Thai literature and the field of youth fantasy fiction might have divergent logic of practice. The field of the youth fantasy fiction developed its logic of practice from the production of fantasy fiction in greater accordance with the autonomy of the literary field, as discussed earlier. The logic of practice later changed to logic leaning more towards economics. Being in conflict with the main logic of practice of the field of Thai literature, fantasy fiction did not have as much of a role to play or impact on Thai literary circle as it had on the field of Thai youth fiction, as illustrated in the previous section.

From the perspective of the polysystem theory, translation can play a significant role in introducing new literary forms and genres to the target system, as can be seen with Thai youth fiction. However, Shavit (2006) points out that the status of children’s literature in the polysystem is secondary to adult literature. Translated children’s literature can be important

for adult literature system in the polysystem provided the adult system already comprises the same type or genre of literature in adult form (Shavit, 2006). This means that the only means for translated children's literature to be positioned within the target system is for there to already exist such a genre in adult form. When youth fantasy fiction entered the Thai realm of literature through the practice of translation, it came in youth or children's form. From this perspective, therefore, it might not be able to take major role in the system as it had maintained only a secondary position in the form of translated youth literature. Its impact on the field of Thai literature was therefore less obvious and direct than it was on the field of Thai youth fiction or the youth literary fiction system. However, it should be noted that, even though youth fantasy fiction in translation entered the Thai literary system as a secondary model, the genre became a part of the youth fiction system in Thailand in a primary model, where it had a significant effect on such youth literary system, as shown in the previous section.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper examined the phenomenon of imported youth fantasy fiction through the practice of translation in Thailand and the effects and consequences of such importation. The impacts and consequences of the influx of the youth fantasy fiction into Thailand in the first decade of the 2000s were examined according to Bourdieu's sociological notions and Even-Zohar's polysystem theory. Using these sociological tools, the paper reveals that the main result of the importation of youth fantasy fiction was the emergence of the sub-field of youth fantasy fiction within the field of Thai youth fiction. This newly emerged sub-field was strengthened as a result of the participation and practices of translation agents, i.e. translators, editors and publishers, gaining access to this sub-field in the course of three waves. Each wave contributed significantly, not only to the formation of the sub-field itself and the logic of practice of such sub-field, but especially in innovative practices that had three other impacts linked to both economic and socio-cultural driving forces.

The emergence of this sub-field consequently led to: (i) the mass publication of translated youth fantasy fiction in Thailand, (ii) the emergence of new Thai translation agents with a focus of youth fantasy fiction, and (iii) the (re)production of youth fantasy fiction by local Thai writers. The first two were largely due to one of the logics of practice of the sub-field leaning towards the economic factors, while the third can be read as a consequence of the logic of practice of the field leaning towards both economic and socio-cultural forces. Moreover, the importation of youth fantasy fiction strongly influenced the field of Thai youth

fiction since the field structure was rather new and still young and as such, it welcomed fresh literary forms and modes via translational practices. However, the importation of youth fantasy fiction had less impact on the field of Thai literature. This was because of the field structure and character of the polysystem which regarded children's literature as secondary in the system, thus less imposing on the adult system.

This paper ultimately shows that the sociological tools employed in this study helped shed light on both the economic and socio-cultural facets that have driven the sub-field of youth fantasy fiction, the field of Thai youth fiction and the field of Thai literature. The subtlety of the formation of the new literary genre, imported through the translation process, can be efficiently unveiled using Bourdieu's notion of field and capital and Even-Zohar's polysystem theory. This will be beneficial to further research on the impact of various other literary forms and genres that are imported and exported through translation.

Notes

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